



# OUTLOOK

February, 2016

10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

BethesdaUCC.org

301-365-3387

## ANNUAL MEETING BURIED IN SNOW

Any meeting planned for the Washington area in January or February is always understood to be on a "weather permitting" basis. Well, this time weather did not permit. BUCC's Annual Meeting had to be postponed. It really should not have come as much of a surprise given the amount of television time given to its prediction, formation and approach.

The meeting has been rescheduled for February 21st, (weather permitting.) Substantial snowfall in late February is not unheard of. Whatever people promised to do or bring to the January meeting, they are expected to do the same thing for the February meeting date. We would again ask you to make every effort to attend as we will still need a quorum, and as before there will be a potluck luncheon before we get down to the important business of the church.

## BUCC'S PLANS FOR LENTEN SEASON

The arrival of Ash Wednesday always seems to come as a surprise. (Already?? We still have Christmas candy around, and fruitcake too!)

Ready or not, Ash Wednesday is on February 10th this year. BUCC will mark the occasion with a service at 7:30 PM, including communion and imposition of ashes, if desired.

The UCC's StillSpeaking Writers group has come up with a 2016 daily devotional booklet for the Lenten Season: Heart Soul Mind Strength. They always offer interesting insights or ways of looking at some aspects of the season.

Lent is a meditative period so the Seekers group has offered to coordinate meditative services during Lent. Rev. Dee is planning on leading some labyrinth walks during Lent. One is tentatively scheduled for February 25th. All the details have not been worked out yet but as soon as they are, we will let you know, either through the E-vang email or church bulletin.

## BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet on Tuesday, February 9 at 3:30p in the parlor. The non-fiction selection for discussion is: The professor and the madman : a tale of murder, insanity, and the making of the Oxford English dictionary by Simon Winchester.

This book presents "an extraordinary tale of madness and genius, and the incredible obsessions of two men at the heart of the Oxford English Dictionary and literary history. With riveting insight and detail, Simon Winchester crafts a fascinating glimpse into one man's tortured mind and his contribution to another man's magnificent dictionary." (Summary on Montgomery County Public Library website)

All are welcome to join in on the discussion and fellowship.

*"The darkness asks us questions.  
You are out there and we do not see.  
You invite us into the night,  
the stillness, the loneliness, the desert place..."*  
--William Loader



In the Scriptures, after his baptism as an adult, Jesus is driven into the wilderness to determine what kind of Messiah, what kind of holy son, he will be. Each of the temptations by the Devil reveal questions cloaked in darkness – questions which stir and clarify Jesus' relationship to power, privilege, and protection.

The darkness and the night of questions are not negative of themselves – I would argue that they are necessary in the spiritual life. Questions clarify; questions foster discernment; questions help us to navigate our tricky times and unsettling circumstances. What kind of holy son or holy daughter will we be in these circumstances, in this present darkness, in this deserted place? The darkness asks us questions, and our answers to the questions that arise in dark and quiet moments will ultimately shape and instruct us.

Rabbi David Wolpe writes, "Faith begins with a question, the first question in the Bible. In the garden, God asks Adam, 'Where are you?' This is a question addressed to each of us at every instant, at all times. The Bible [then] answers the first question with the second. The second question in the Bible is asked in the aftermath of murder. When Cain kills Abel, God asks of Cain, 'Where is your brother?' We find out where we are, the first question, by discovering whether we care for others, the second question."

Lent is a kind of darkness, a symbolic "desert" place filled with questions and unexpected angels. "You are out there and we do not see," writes William Loader. Lent is an intentional time of seeing what we might overlook or choose not

to see at other times. As the days lengthen, we are invited to walk with Jesus on paths that will clarify and restore our relationship with ourselves, our neighbor, and God. And we do not walk alone or ask our questions alone.

In Lent, it is customary to "give something up" as a way to examine thoughtfully our dependence on that which is NOT God. But we can just as thoughtfully ask ourselves probing questions about the temptations we face to live less than holy lives. Are we tempted in our work lives to be less than human and more like machines? (Machines that run 24/7 quickly overheat and breakdown.) Are we tempted to depend on material things to satisfy non-material needs? (No matter how we try, no amount of caramel kettle corn will conquer our loneliness, restlessness, or unhappiness.) Are we thirsty in our spiritual life? (Sometimes the "containers" we bring to worship have holes in them.)

What darkness surrounds you at this juncture in your life?

What questions does this darkness ask of you?

How is God even now reaching out across that lonely place inside of you?

As we walk with Jesus to the cross, let us walk with him through his questions and our own.

Wishing you a *bright* Lent full of wonderful, soul-stretching questions – and answers...

Rev Dee

## Bible Reading ... at Home

(Adapted from SeasonsFUSION - *Seasons of the Spirit*@Wood Lake Publishing)

### **February 7 - Fully Alive**

Exodus 34:29-35

2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2

**Luke 9:28-36, (37-43)**

Psalm 99

St. Irenaeus, one of the earliest theologians in the life of the church, once wrote, “the glory of God is humanity fully alive.” It’s not so much that one causes the other – that our being alive makes God glorious – but rather that the two dance together. When we are fully alive, we are filled with God, and God is in turn glorified.

Daily we are invited to be manifestations of God’s glory. Not by being transfigured, not by glowing in white garments, but by living the life that Christ has modeled for us. When we are experiencing the wondrous presence of God in our lives, and when we are seeking to respond to that in acts of justice and love and compassion, then we are truly expressing the fullness of God’s glory. What does it mean to be fully alive? How can we ever enhance the glory of our God in our daily living?

### **February 14 - Sharing Bread on Our Journey**

**Deuteronomy 26:1-11**

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

We begin Lent remembering God’s steadfast love, purpose, and nourishment in wilderness journeys. Lent is a time of journey, reflection, and ritual. We remember the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt and into the desert. We remember Jesus’ journey into the wilderness to be tempted. Our own lives reflect those journeys – journeys with others, passages through challenging times and times of loss, crossing from one stage of life to another. Experiencing God’s grace beckons us to open what we have and who we are in thanksgiving to God, and in sharing with neighbor. What might be some practices or rituals of gratitude in response to all God gives and provides?

### **February 21 - Trusting God**

**Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**

Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36

Psalm 27

Rituals begin journeys and keep us on the journey; we move through the wilderness of Lent, encouraged to trust in the future even if present experiences might count against that.

God’s covenant with us frames our lives with promises. Those promises may seem distant when we feel uprooted or displaced. Yet God honors our questions and encourages us to stand with confidence in the face of fear. God, who would shelter us as a mother hen covers chicks under her wings, journeys with us. Our covenant is with One who saves. As we move through the wilderness of Lent: we trust the future but our present experiences suggest otherwise. What words and rituals do you hold on to that keep you on the journey of faith?

### **February 28 - Praise God Completely**

Isaiah 55:1-9

**Psalm 63:1-8**

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Luke 13:1-9

Our longing for God may at times find expression in a thirsting for a holy and personal encounter. God’s steadfast love promises that such yearning will be satisfied. Our lives continually move between those hopes of encounter and their fulfillment by God. At the beginning of the day and at its end, our seeking of God is met by God’s seeking of us.

A psalm about spiritual longing and desire engages our senses – thirst, taste, sight, touch, hearing – and our entire bodies in praising God.

Our lives find their source and hope in God. As individuals and communities of faith, we are to seek God’s presence as those whose lives depend upon that presence. In what ways have you thirsted for God on your faith journey? What does Psalm 63:1-8 inspire you to do this next week to feed your relationship with God?

# WELCOME

## New Members



### WELCOME GINA & MARK

On Sunday, January 17th we welcomed four new members into our BUCC family. Here is a little background on two of them, so you will have some idea of who they are when you greet them at coffee hour (or elsewhere.)

Gina Capra is a native of New Jersey and went to Trenton State College where she earned a degree in Political Science. She later earned a Masters degree in Public Administration from American University. Gina also attended the Boston University School of Public Health, where she received a certificate in Maternal and Child Health.

Currently, Gina is the Director for Rural Health at the Veterans Health Administration, which is a component of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. She has been there 3 years, following 16 years with the US Department of Health and Human Services managing public health and health service delivery grant programs with State, local and community based entities. Gina is a passionate advocate regarding healthcare access, particularly for underserved and vulnerable populations and communities.

Mark Mohan grew up in Brockton, MA and earned a Bachelors Degree from Bridgewater State College. He also earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration from American U, which is where he and Gina met. His area of concentration was Municipal Management. Mark is a stay at home Dad who keeps their family on track, ensuring that they have some calmness in the otherwise hectic world in which they live! Mark has served as a local Cub Scout leader, baseball coach, DC Soap Box Derby Coordinator, and representative to numerous efforts at the Ashburton Elementary School (Bethesda). Prior to being a stay-at-home Dad, Mark served as a Project Manager at Fidelity Investments in Boston, MA, the Massachusetts Office of Inspector General and the International City/County Management Association.

We welcome Gina, Mark and their children, Lou and Vic to the BUCC family and we hope that they find this to be a comfortable church home.

## WELCOME SARAH

Sarah Swanson became a member of BUCC on January 17th, and we are very happy to include her in our church family. Sarah is native of Cincinnati and attended Kenyon College, majoring in Anthropology. Afterwards she moved to Seattle for 8 years, which included a year living and studying in Xi'an, China.



Sarah then moved to DC for a graduate program at SAIS (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies), with a concentration on China Studies. Currently Sarah works at the National Archives, where she helps develop and maintain the website at [archives.gov](http://archives.gov).

She also is a volunteer board member for Kyrgyz Children's Future, a small non-profit that helps orphanages and disadvantaged children in Kyrgyzstan.

In the past, she believes her most meaningful work has been working with newly-resettled refugees to the U.S. from South East Asia and Ethiopia.

Her church background is typically diverse, growing up in a church that was half Presbyterian and half Episcopalian. She has also attended Unitarian and Methodist churches. We are very pleased that she chose BUCC to be the first church she ever joined.



## WELCOME NOVATO

On the same Sunday as we welcomed Sarah, Gina and Mark, we also welcomed Novato Tornero into our fellowship. At this time, we don't have his biographical information, but next month I will try to include an introductory paragraph.



## CHARLES "CHUCK" RUMBARGER

Chuck Rumbarger, husband of Phyllis Rumbarger, died peacefully at his home in Rockville on January 13th. He was born on June in 1940. After being raised primarily in Lakewood, Ohio, Chuck completed a few years of college, and then entered the Air Force where he served as an air policeman in the Philippines during the build-up of the Vietnam War, and subsequently in Washington DC. Chuck and Phyllis, childhood sweethearts, were married in 1962 and they adventurously started their married life in the Philippines. Chuck was released from active duty in 1966, and they returned to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. After graduating, Chuck and Phyllis lived in Harrisburg, PA and then moved to the Washington DC area where they raised their family, joining BUCC in 2005.

Chuck was a dedicated association executive and organizational consultant for over 40 years. He established the Association Management Group and the executive recruiting firm Association Executive Resources Group. Chuck often reached out to help others, such as anonymously buying dinner for a tired policeman or struggling family. He served in organizations which focused on the needs of underserved children. As a retiree Chuck was a Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer and provided professional guidance to nonprofit organizations such as Child Life Council. Of particular interest during his last years was supporting outdoor experiences for wounded warriors through Freedom Hunters.



George Bernard Shaw once said: "I want to be all used up when I die." Chuck Rumbarger's aim also was to be "all used up" at the time of his death and his family feels he achieved his goal. Chuck's memory will live on through his wife of 53 years, Phyllis, daughter Carrie and her husband Michael Cooke, and son Rick, brother John and his wife Sue, and his extended family, and many friends.

A service celebrating Chuck's life was held at the Bethesda United Church of Christ. Donations in Chuck's memory may be made to either:

Montgomery Hospice [www.montgomeryhospice.org](http://www.montgomeryhospice.org)  
Freedom Hunters [www.freedomhunters.org](http://www.freedomhunters.org).

## BROWN BAG BOOK AND BIBLE STUDY: GIFTS OF THE DARK WOOD

Come join us for an informal book and bible study on Sundays from noon to 1 pm. We will be using Eric Elnes' book, Gifts of the Dark Wood, published by Abingdon Press. Each week will focus on a different theme and chapter(s) of the book. Bring a brown bag lunch for yourself, if possible. We will have crackers and cheese and munchies to stave off hunger. Our discussion will be approx. 1 hour and may incorporate different kinds of modalities for learning and discussion. No previous bible knowledge assumed or needed. Bring yourself; invite a friend! A limited number of books are available after worship prior to the first meeting; the cost is \$13.00; please make check out directly to Rev. Dee. A schedule of our anticipated meetings is listed below; *please check bulletin each week for confirmation of meeting time.*

<b>Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup></b>	"Where We Find Ourselves"
<b>Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup></b>	"The Gift of Uncertainty"
<b>Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>ANNUAL MEETING; no study this day</b>
<b>Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup></b>	"The Gift of Being Thunderstruck"
<b>Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup></b>	"The Gift of Getting Lost"
<b>Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup></b>	"The Gift of Temptation" and "The Gift of Disappearing"
<b>Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup></b>	(Palm/Passion Sunday) "The Gift of Misfits" and "Where Do We Go From Here"

## LENTEN DAILY DEVOTIONALS

If you do not have the UCC's Stillspeaking daily devotionals sent to your email inbox, you are missing out on some interesting and thought provoking comments. For the past few years this same group of writers has published a hard copy set of devotionals for the seasons of Advent and Lent. These devotionals are different from the daily electronic versions. This year the Lenten booklets are called "Heart,Soul Mind Strength" and they are available at church. The fact that they are printed in a booklet makes it easier in that you do not have to log on to a computer to enjoy them. We are asking for a donation of \$4.00 to cover the cost.



## BUCC CONVERSATION WITH ISLAMIC CENTER

With all the anti-Islamic rhetoric being thrown about in recent months, the BUCC Leadership Council and Rev. Dee decided that we should take some step to reassure the Islamic Center of Maryland that not everyone in the community is hostile to them. The following letter was sent to the Islamic Center, which uses our building for its Friday prayer service. Their reply to our letter is also printed here.



Islamic Center of Maryland  
19411 Woodfield Rd,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

December 15, 2015

Dear Imam Jamil Dasti,

Salaam and greetings to you and to your community. Thank you for your kindness in returning my phone call last week and for our very helpful conversation. Your community has been in our community's thoughts and prayers, given recent events in the news and around our country. As a religious leader, I know well the deep love and concern that one has for the people one serves and how important it is to come together at times of unrest and crisis in affirmation of peace and non-hatred.

I am writing with the support of our church leadership. We want your community to know that Bethesda United Church of Christ stands in peaceful solidarity with you. We condemn the vitriolic speech and fear-mongering towards our Muslim brothers and sisters, many of whom are our friends, neighbors, co-workers, partners, and also the stranger in whom we see ourselves. We decry the purported Christianity of those who would threaten, harm, or otherwise intimidate Muslims who simply want to live their lives in peace. Likewise, we do not support legal action that would ban people from this country on the basis of their religion or treat them as second-class citizens.

We are grateful for our inter-faith partnership with you and your community. We have enjoyed hosting the Islamic Community of Maryland for your Friday prayers and look forward to deepening our relationship with you and your community. We take seriously Jesus' injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself" and his example of actively reaching out to those who are unjustly perceived as outsiders.

Thank you for the gifts and graces that your community has brought to Bethesda United Church of Christ. We would welcome further conversation regarding how we might collaborate together to forge closer bonds between our communities and to collectively and actively resist the anti-Muslim sentiments that have been unfortunately broadcast from too many extremists in this country, including those from people who call themselves Christian.

Please give your community our love and prayers from our house of worship to yours.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dee Ledger  
Pastor, Bethesda United Church of Christ

Sean Casey  
Moderator, Bethesda United Church of Christ

Church Council Leaders, Bethesda United Church of Christ:

**ISLAMIC CENTER OF MARYLAND**  
19411 WOODFIELD ROAD  
GAITHERSBURG MD 20879

TEL: 301 840 9440  
FAX: 301 987 8915  
WWW.ICOMD.ORG

Bethesda United Church of Christ  
10010 Fernwood Road  
Bethesda, MD 20817

January 4, 2016

Dear Rev. Dee Ledger and Church Council Leaders

Greetings of Peace

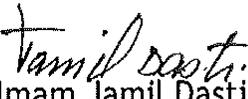
I am writing to thank all of you on behalf of our community and Muslims around the world for your thoughtful, timely letter condemning religious intolerance and hatred.

Many peace loving Muslims today fear for their safety due to the current onslaught of negative press and agitation created by ignorance of the true tenets and history of Islam. However, your letter of support and rejection of the gloomy and dangerous narrative broadcast throughout the world about Muslims and Islam can only be called courageous. When many people are turning a blind eye to the vilification and the dehumanization of 1.2 billion souls, you have turned to the true tenets of Christianity in rejecting this type of persecution.

Your letter is a shining beacon of light in the darkness and real proof of the character, strength and thoughtfulness of our fellow Americans. It was much needed and appreciated in this time of trial and tribulation for our people.

We ask you to keep us in your prayers and we will do the same. A Happy New Year to you and your families.

Best regards

  
Imam Jamil Dasti  
Imam, Islamic Center of Maryland

## A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS THANKS

Many thanks to everybody who so generously donated gifts of toys and warm mittens and hats. BUCC did a fantastic job in helping to make this a wonderful Christmas for children in need.



Please Continue the Spirit of Christmas with these opportunities for sharing Christ's love throughout the year:

1. Donations of nonperishable food for Bethesda Cares. The collection bin is in the narthex.
2. Donations of toiletries, especially the little soaps and bottles of shampoo from hotels for the Men's Shelter and Bethesda Cares. There is a donation box on top of the coat rack in the church hallway.
3. Provide a meal once a month for the 15 residents of Bethesda House Men's Shelter or a portion of a meal for the 35 women at Sophia House Shelter. There are directions and signup sheets on the hall beyond the narthex bulletin board.

Please contact a member of the Sharing Team for more information.  
Thank you.

Bette Pappas



## Love Wins Concert

Feb. 6, 2016  
7:30 p.m.

General Admission: \$20



Purchase Your Ticket Online: <http://hopeucc.org/who-we-are/giving-to-hope/store/>

Hope United Church of Christ | 6130 Old Telegraph Rd. | Alexandria, VA 22310

# BUCC – FEBRUARY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 3:30 PM Worship Team	<b>3</b> 7:00 PM Metro Garden Club	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM Lenten Bible Study	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 3:30 PM BUCC Book Group	<b>10</b> 7:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service	<b>11</b> 7:00 PM Christian Education Team	<b>12</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM Lenten Bible Study	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 7:00 PM Leadership Council Meeting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School  12:00 PM BUCC Annual Meeting	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM Lenten Bible Study	<b>29</b>					

Verna M. Kelly  
author

*Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but look  
what they can do when they stick together.*

**In the Fellowship Hall, following the Worship Service,  
about 12 noon**

**ANNUAL MEETING OF  
BETHESDA  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016**



**OUTLOOK**

Bethesda United Church of Christ  
10010 Fernwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817  
Rev. Darla Dee Ledger

Phone: (301) 365-3387  
Fax: (301) 365-3388  
BethesdaUCC.org