



10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

BethesdaUCC.org

301-365-3387

OUTLOOK

January, 2016

YOU ARE NEEDED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

On January 24th, following the Worship Service, BUCC will hold its Annual Meeting and it is important that you be there. There are some decisions that the congregation needs to make and input from all members is important.

The Annual Meeting is where we elect the new Officers and Team Leaders for the coming year. It is also where we pass the budget for the next year. The budget presents a particular problem this year. As proposed, the budget is running a substantial deficit, which will be made up from dipping into our reserve funds. But like many places in the country, the well is running dry. At the meeting we can come together and perhaps find some places to cut our budget or, alternatively, increase our income.

At this meeting we will take the annual Time and Talents Survey which will let you express your interest in participating in specific areas of the church's life, e.g. ushering, or choir, or one of the teams that carry out the church's mission. Most of the tasks that need doing are really not that hard and when several members get working on one it can be pleasant and fun. The participation of every one involved with the church is what makes BUCC function.

Another, more bureaucratic reason to attend the meeting is to help make a quorum. A quorum is needed to officially take any action.

Another, more practical reason to attend the meeting is that there will be food there. That is, there will be food if you bring it. We are planning on having one of our famous BUCC potluck luncheons prior to the meeting. Bring your favorite casserole, salad, or dessert to share with us. Bringing enough for six people usually works well. Beverages will be supplied, as well as paper plates and plastic ware. It is likely that sign-up sheets will appear in the Narthex in a week or so, to give us some idea of how many people will show up. As usual, child care will be provided.

Following the sumptuous lunch we will get down to the business of going thru the Team Reports, which will be in the printed Annual Report. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about the team activities and their budget.

Then comes the voting, the real reason we have emphasized having a quorum. We will vote on the budget and elect the Church Officers and Team Leaders for next year. The last act of the meeting is the official installation of those members who will lead BUCC into 2016.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE**



Annual Reports of Team activities should be in Colleen's hands by Friday, January 8th so that an Annual Report can be assembled for the Annual Meeting. This important task deserves some thought now, even though it is a busy time of year.

SIMPLE CHURCH

Excerpt from [Acts 2:42, 46-47](#)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers . . . Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

Reflection by Anthony B. Robinson

Sometimes church seems to get awfully complex and terribly busy. So many different groups, organizations, activities, projects, and agendas. We end up going in a hundred different directions and a newcomer may feel as if she has wandered into Grand Central Station instead of a church.

I have a feeling that this busy—too busy—church may be coming to an end, dying, in our own time. I have a sense that there's a yearning, deep and beyond easy articulation, for something we might call "simple church." Not simplistic. Not silly. But simple. Focused on the few things that matter: faithful teaching, fellowship and prayer, sharing bread together and praising God.

There's a way in which our own time is witnessing a breakdown of church as we have known it. But at least sometimes a breakdown can lead to a break-through. A break-through to . . . simple church?

For the first disciples there had definitely been a big-time breakdown. Everything went to hell. One betrayed Jesus, another denied him, and all the rest deserted him. Jesus died. But God surprised them. Beyond that time of terrible breakdown, there was an amazing break-through to a new community and a new time.

In our own times and experiences of things breaking down, can we glimpse the new church that is breaking through, that is being born among us?

Prayer

Help us, dear God, not to cling so tightly to what has been that we stand in the way of something new and better being born, by your grace, in our lives, in our churches. Amen.

StillSpeaking Devotional 4/12/2012.

Bible Reading ... at Home

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

January 3 - Pilgrims to Sacred Places

Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

We celebrate the Epiphany. Epiphanies are sudden realizations and intuitive understandings of ordinary occurrences. By starlight, wise ones look for the baby Jesus and celebrate his birth. The light heralds that which transforms the whole world, calls earthly leaders to account, and restores nations.

Epiphany is more than a celebration of the magi's visit to the child Jesus. The light of God's glory beckons each one of us on a pilgrimage of discovery. How is the journey of the wise ones a pilgrimage? How might you plan a day-long pilgrimage, either alone or in community? To what, or in what new directions, might your journey lead?

January 10 - Named and Claimed

Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Baptism is considered a sacramental act in most Christian denominations, although the theology and the practice of the sacrament vary. Some baptize infants, generally as a sign of the parent's willingness to assume responsibility for the child's spiritual development until each child is old enough to act on its own. Others baptize only adults who have made their own profession of faith. Either way, baptism recognizes a significant time in the life of the individual being baptized and in the life of the church. It is a time to recognize that we are all beloved by God. In what ways might this affirmation enable you and your church to better see and honor God's affirmation of all God's children as beloved and favored?

January 17 - Overflowing Love

Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11 **John 2:1-11**

The John 2 reading closes by describing what happens at the wedding as the first of Jesus' "signs." Signs in John are not simply the works known as miracles; they are the workings of God through Jesus for the purpose of bringing belief.

These passages invite us to trust in the God revealed by Jesus, who provides abundantly for life's needs. When and where have you experienced the extravagance of God's love for you and all creation? How might the worship and serving of your church delight in the abundance of God's love that never runs out?

January 24 - Proclaiming Jubilee

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a **Luke 4:14-21**

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus' public ministry begins in a big way: not with teaching or calling disciples, but with a proclamation. Reading from the Torah, Jesus proclaims that the year of God's favor has finally arrived. Today is the day that the past will be left behind and all people will have a new beginning. This is the day the Spirit empowers us to live out Jubilee with boldness and trust. It will not happen without our participation. How is Jubilee being fulfilled among us here and now? How are we living it out in our communities and our own lives?

January 31 - Ministry on the Edge

Jeremiah 1:4-10 Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13 **Luke 4:21-30**

What God wants for our lives and all creation does not always coincide with our wants. Faith is not always an easy way to live, and always must be a way engaged with love. What have been some hard things for you to learn about God, or following Jesus? What has made it possible for you to hear or follow them? In what ways do we discern for ourselves and with others these "hard" ways of God - and then practice them with love?



NEED SOME HELP HERE, PLEASE

The Christmas Putz has stood in our Sanctuary since early December. Christmas is long gone and it is time to put the Christmas Putz away for another year. The deconstruction date will be Saturday, January 9th. If we could get as many hands taking it down as we had building it, that would be wonderful. Starting time will be 8:00 AM, or as soon as people can get there. The figures have to be wrapped up and boxed, the sand returned to its container and the stumps taken down. All the items have to be returned to the shed. It sounds like a lot, but it usually goes much faster than the construction.

SEEKERS

Seekers will meet on Thursday, January 21 at 7:15 in the BUCC parlor. We will discuss *The Fourth Gospel: Tales of a Jewish Mystic* by John Shelby Spong. Reading of the book is not required. All are invited to attend.

John Shelby Spong, bestselling author and popular proponent of a modern, scholarly, and authentic Christianity, argues that this last gospel to be written was misinterpreted by the framers of the fourth-century creeds to be a literal account of the life of Jesus when in fact it is a literacy, interpretive retelling of the events in Jesus' life through the medium of fictional characters, from Nicodemus and Lazarus to the "Beloved Disciple." The result of this intriguing study not only recaptures the original message of this gospel, but also provides us today with a radical new dimension to the claim that in the humanity of Jesus the reality of God has been met and engaged.

BOOK GROUP



On January 12 at 3:30pm in the BUCC parlor we will meet and discuss [The Children Act](#) by Ian McEwan.

"London High Court Judge Fiona Maye presides over a sensitive case involving a family of Jehovah's Witnesses who won't allow their seventeen-year-old son to get a lifesaving blood transfusion because it conflicts with their religious beliefs. Meanwhile, Fiona's husband, Jack, has just left home, and she begins to feel the pressures of both resolving the case and saving her crumbling marriage." -Abstract - Montgomery County Public Library website.

All are welcome to join in on the discussion of this book.

NEW YEAR -- NEW MEMBERS!

If being a part of a lively, caring and welcoming faith community is on your list of 2016 Resolutions, you are in luck!



On January 10, immediately after worship, the Welcome Team will host a brief Inquirers' Gathering in the library for anyone pondering the idea of becoming a member of BUCC. This will be a time to ask questions about what it means to be a member of BUCC, find out about the UCC in general and get to know other newcomers. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to shannonsross@yahoo.com and let her know if you will need child-care during the meeting.

Then on January 17, we will formally welcome new members to our congregation during the worship service. Remember -- once you are a member of BUCC will be able to vote during the Annual Meeting on January 24 (although everyone is encouraged to attend).

If you have been thinking about joining BUCC, please speak with Rev. Dee or a member of the Welcome Team (Shannon Ross, Jim Burks or Bob Struckman). We are all looking forward to spending 2016 with our BUCC family!

Shannon Ross

HARVEST FROM THE MITTEN TREE

The Mitten Tree that was standing in our parlor produced a bumper crop this year. The harvest was:

Gloves - 112	Hats - 65	Scarves - 11
Mittens - 6	Socks / legwarmers - 4	



This means there will be many fewer cold hands and heads this winter for the children of families being helped by Linkages to Learning, the organization that this effort supports. Many thanks to Judy Bond and Linda Myers for leading this drive and many thanks, too to the members of BUCC who made this possible.

THANK YOU DR. SHERMAN



The Bethesda United Church of Christ would like to thank the estate of Dr. John Sherman for the generous bequest. Dr. Sherman was one of the original members of BUCC, or Bethesda Congregational Church as it was known then, and has always been a generous supporter of our mission.

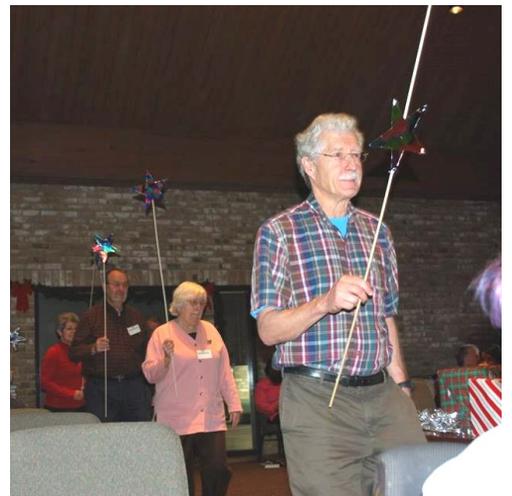


***BUCC
ALL CHURCH
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
DECEMBER 13, 2015***





January, 2016



WHAT IS THE NEW JIM CROW?

The resolution “Dismantling the New Jim Crow” is part of the action plan undertaken by the General Synod, Conferences and local churches of the UCC. Jerry Liddel asked me to write an article for the OUTLOOK providing some information to help us all understand what this resolution is all about. Let me provide some background about the action plan now being designed for the church in the Central Atlantic Conference, UCC.

The “New Jim Crow” is the term used to describe the marginalization and re-subjugation of African Americans under the guise of the so-called War on Drugs and various “get tough on crime” policies. Regardless of many efforts and changes, Institutional Racism continues to live on. Now with the New Jim Crow system in place, millions of African American men and women are under the control of the criminal justice system, unable to vote or serve on juries, and able to be discriminated against legally in employment, housing and federal assistance.

Even though the rate of drug use among white and black Americans is about the same, African Americans are prosecuted more often, receive harsher sentences, and serve longer terms for violations of laws prohibiting the use and distribution of drugs. Indeed, men of color comprise 66% of the people in prison for drug use (African Americans 42% and Hispanics 24%). Young African American men comprise 14% of young men in the USA, yet comprise 40% of young men in prison. Yet, the Supreme Court of the United States has held that such glaring statistical disparities are inadmissible as reasons for bringing actions to remedy these injustices, even in states in which 90% of people imprisoned for violations of drug laws are African Americans. Given this web of institutional racism in the criminal justice system, the UCC has initiated planning for dismantling these policies and practices.. Furthermore, not only does the “War on Drugs” continue unabated, but also the privatization of the prison industrial complex grows unimpeded, with the result that the United States, with only 5 % of the world’s population, incarcerates 25% of the world’s prison population, the highest percentage of incarceration in the world.

Therefore, the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, along with some of its Conferences, most especially the Central Atlantic Conference, reaffirms prior resolutions and pronouncements to engage in prophetic speech and action directed at eliminating systemic racism in all its guises, ending the “War on Drugs”, stopping mass incarceration and growth of the prison-industrial complex, ending racial and class bias in arrests and sentencing, implementing justice in policing, housing, and employment for people who have served felony sentences, providing training and rehabilitation for prison inmates and restoring voting rights for people who have served their sentences. That’s what it’s all about.

Continued on Next Page

ANNUAL ALL-CONGREGATIONAL RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS



On January 10th, the First Sunday after Epiphany, many churches celebrate the baptism of Jesus Christ in worship—through the scripture readings, prayers, and song. In the past, we have also celebrated this special Sunday by **reaffirming our baptismal vows** as a church body and welcoming new members into fellowship. What are baptismal vows? These are the promises that our parents or guardians made on our behalf if we were baptized as infants; they are very similar to the vows that we reaffirm if we are confirmed in the church, and they are also very similar to the affirmations and promises we make when we become members of our local church. This is a wonderful way to remind ourselves of our communal walk with Jesus in the New Year. What if you have never been baptized? Those who have not been baptized into the Christian faith may receive a blessing this day during worship, or they may request to receive the rite of baptism as adults after meeting with the pastor. Please contact Rev. Dee if you have questions about baptism, would like to receive the sacrament on this day, or you are curious about uniting with the BUCC faith community.

THE NEW JIM CROW?

continued

Now, The Challenge Before Us; The effects of the New Jim Crow are clear – the horrible and steady growth in incidents of unarmed African American men and women being profiled, treated unjustly and killed at the hands of police officers across the country, the increase consciousness among everyday citizens of racial profiling, mass incarceration, and the failure of policymakers to end the War on Drugs.

--What is less clear is whether we, as a country, have learned the political and policy lessons from the past that will allow the nation to write a different ending to a history of racism and discriminatory policies in the name of “being tough on crime”.

What you can do, Now!

-Join the CAC Criminal Justice Reform Network;

-Commit to organize a reading and study of the New Jim Crow in their local church (ideally during the first half of 2016).

Art Waidmann



USHER WALT NEEDS YOU!

And so do BUCC ushers Liz, Carla, Dan, Saeidah and Lumi. BUCC needs some additional ushers to allow Walt Bauman and other ushers to achieve a balance between service and meditation in worship and keep them from “burning out”. The current usher deficit often requires “usher double duty” most months. A few more volunteers can remedy this so that usher duty is once a month for all. Your unavailability on a duty day will be no problem because another usher is always willing to trade/substitute for you. As a new usher, an experienced usher will accompany and guide you during your learning period. Written duty guidelines will also be provided.

So why would you (or anyone) want to usher? Well, ushering is rewarding, both spiritually and socially. Specifically:

1. You will continually make (or remake) direct connection with many of your fellow BUCC members and guests by greeting and assisting them during worship – and you will feel valued and appreciated by them for doing so.
2. You will be more closely connected to Rev Dee because you will be her “right hand” serving her during worship.
3. You achieve a sense of fulfillment in the act of extending yourself to serve God, your church community and our guests during worship. It’s like being a Boy (or Girl) Scout again. You’ll get “BUCC prepared” and will be doing a number of “good turns” each duty day.

Mahatma Gandhi said : “ The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”. Find yourself in usher service.

Mother Teresa wrote: “Faith is Love; Love is service and the Fruit of Service is Peace.” May you find that peace. If you feel able and willing to help the Worship Team as an usher, you can declare your intention.

When Time and Talents are solicited on 24 January or you may contact either Carla Evans, Walt Bauman or Dorothy Liddel.

Walt Bauman



NEW BUCC TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

With the new year, it is time for a new BUCC telephone directory. We are updating the telephone directory for publication in February. Draft copies of the directory will be available on Sunday January 24th at the Annual Meeting so members can confirm their listing. If you are unable to make the meeting, please forward any address, telephone and/or e-mail changes to Colleen at the BUCC office either by phone (301) 365-3387 or by e-mail at admin@BethesdaUCC.org.

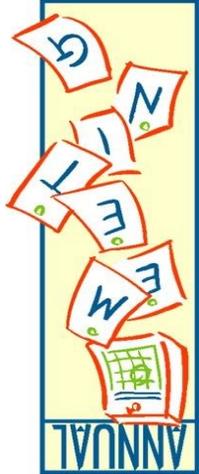
BUCC — JANUARY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	2
3 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School	4	5 3:30 PM Worship Team 7:30 PM West Fernwood Citizens Assn.	6 7:00 PM Metro Garden Club	7	8 12:00 PM TEAM REPORTS DUE 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	9 8:00 AM Deconstructing the Putz
10 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM Inquirers Gathering	11	12 3:30 PM BUCC Book Group	13 7:30 PM Trustees Team	14 7:00 PM Christian Education Team	15 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	16
17 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School	18	19 7:00 PM Leadership Council Meeting	20	21 7:15 PM Seekers	22 12:00 DEADLINE for OUTLOOK articles 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	23
24 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM BUCC Annual Meeting	25	26	27	28	29 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	30
31 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School	<p><i>Outlook</i> Submission Deadline: Friday, January 22, 2016 at 12:00 Noon</p> <p><i>OUTLOOK</i> is published monthly. Please place items for publication in the mailbox in the church office or Email to dotjerliddel@gmail.com with a copy to admin@BethesdaUCC.org</p>					

— Marie Curie,
physicist and chemist

*Each of us must work for his own improvement, and at the same time
share a general responsibility for all humanity."*

**ANNUAL MEETING OF
BETHESDA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2016
In the Fellowship Hall, following the Worship
Service, about 12 noon**



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