



# OUTLOOK

## OCTOBER, 2015

10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

BethesdaUCC.org

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## CHURCH FINANCING 101

There's a popular hymn that sings, *"The Church is not a building, The Church is not a steeple, The Church is not a meeting place, the Church is the people!"*

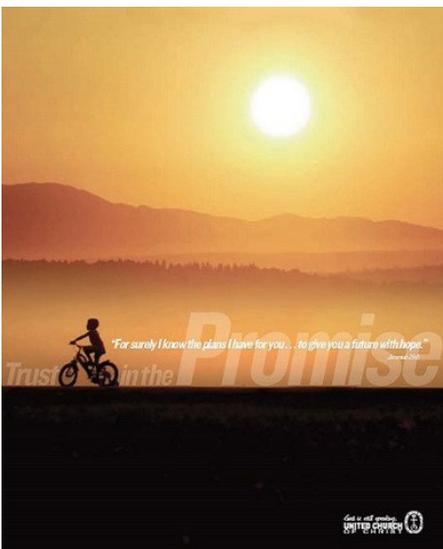
A church can't exist without the support of the people who, taken together, ARE the church. One of the crucial ways all God's people can support the church is through their financial commitments.

As we move into the season of Stewardship, it is a good time to remind ourselves how churches like BUCC are financed and how the money we pledge supports our mission and ministries.

Think of there being three "legs" supporting the church finances: (1) the Operating Budget, (2) the Endowment Fund and (3) a Capital Campaign.

The Operating or "Annual" Budget is prepared by the Trustees after careful consideration from all teams of the church and then adopted at the Annual Meeting in January by voting members of BUCC. The budget provides for the day-to-day funding of BUCC's mission including our church building and its maintenance, the salaries of the pastor and staff, and missions outside our walls. BUCC has a long tradition of supporting organizations in our community as well as the wider UCC. **EVERY DOLLAR THAT YOU PLEDGE GOES TO SUPPORT THE OPERATING BUDGET.**

The second "leg" is the BUCC's Endowment Fund. Ours is small, but growing. As defined by the Bylaws, it must reach a total of \$250,000 before the church can use any of its funds. Our Endowment is funded primarily by memorial gifts but anyone can designate a gift to it. While the Operation Budget is a short-term fund, the Endowment Fund looks to the long-term financial health of BUCC.



The third "leg" is a Capital Campaign, which BUCC successfully completed recently thanks to the generosity of many of you. A Capital Campaign usually occurs when there is a critical need of the church for growth that cannot be addressed by the other two sources of income. As you know, our last Capital Campaign funded the cost of replacing our roof, updating our main HVAC system, and the rejuvenation of our Sanctuary.

When all three legs are strong, churches thrive. We hope that when you consider your support of BUCC this year, you may trust in the promise that God is working in our lives and in our church. *"For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope."* - Jeremiah 29:11

Shannon Ross on behalf of the Stewardship Team

*“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.



While walking to and from the childcare facility that has become a valuable second home for my children, I have plenty of opportunity to notice the neighborhood, streets, buildings, and people. On a certain stretch of the path, the sidewalk is composed of paver stones which interlock snugly, for the most part. However, here and there are stones that have shifted, either jutting upwards or downwards, due to the ground moving below for a variety of circumstances, not the least, the passage of time and weather conditions. Sometimes a few stones jut out so far that a worker from the community must reset them; other times the grass grows somehow between the gaps and makes a natural filling which indirectly helps to level the pavers.

So often when I pass by these stones, I think of the larger Church and how we are connected in relationship, regardless of how independent we believe that we ultimately are. The stones remind me of our inter-dependence on one another and how the shifting ground of our circumstances and internal weather conditions can cause some of us to protrude forward precariously, or sink downward in ways that are painfully out of balance. At these times, we require help to “reset our stones” – covenantal work that often means shared reflection, receiving the loving care and compassion of others, and an understanding of the larger path or purpose of which we are still very much a necessary part. Disruption of “our stones” can happen a number of ways: illness, declining well-being, physical or emotional pain, grief, upheaval in our family lives, a narrowing of our social circles, diminished financial health, etc. Larger social issues can also disrupt our stones: racial tension and a refusal of whites to examine our privilege and history, economic gaps between rich and poor, and holes in our so-called safety net for those who are underprivileged or lacking resources.

We are interdependent on one another to help us to see where our path together is bumpy or

sorely in need of attention for the mutual well-being of all. If we never talk about those things that are making life bumpy for ourselves and others then we have little hope of healing and re-joining that which has become disconnected or broken. To separate ourselves is not only painfully isolating, but also disorienting as we lose the connections that can help us to heal.

While attending two of the racial justice events organized and held in the Potomac Association, I was reminded of how my “stone” of awareness has been out of balance with my brothers and sisters who are part of the church and part of the larger community. Just showing up and listening to the stories, first-hand, makes a small difference by noticing how we are interdependent and how our stones and stories connect with each other or fail to connect. At each conversation, we were asked to consider our pledge to encourage “God’s People” – all of us—“to live together in harmony,” like those paver stones. What can we each do to encourage God’s people to realize our interconnectedness? What can we do to help “re-set” our stones and our shared path in healthy ways?

For myself, I have pledged to do some serious reading on race: two books arrived in the mail the other day: [The New Jim Crow](#), by Michelle Alexander; and a book by Joseph Brandt, called [Understanding and Dismantling Racism](#). Both of these books have been recommended to me multiple times; you may know of others which are just as comprehensive and enlightening. But perhaps “re-setting your stone,” may mean reaching out for care, confessing your alone-ness, or participating more intentionally in community and worship. Perhaps it may mean confronting your sense of entitlement, head-on. Perhaps it may mean considering and confessing your inability to “feel” or your need to stop numbing your emotions or your heart to the news of the day or the reality of your life.

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Bible Reading ... at Home

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

### **October 4 - Broken and Blessed**

Job 1:1; 2:1-10      Psalm 26  
Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

#### **Mark 10:2-16**

Struggling with difficult readings does not mean we need to reject them, but simply to approach them with caution and inquiry. At the heart of these texts is the compassion of God for all, and the blessing of love. The call to approach God's world as children can enable us to strive harder in our dealings with others.

How might we open ourselves to a more childlike embrace of God's reign? What might happen when we do that?

**Reflection:** How deeply you love us, O God. You take us, especially the little ones, the vulnerable ones, into your gracious arms. Like a shepherd you enfold us. May your embrace find expression in our love and respect for one another. Amen.

### **October 11 - Faith Essentials**

Job 23:1-9, 16-17  
Hebrews 4:12-16

Psalm 22:1-15  
**Mark 10:17-31**

Our response to the demanding call to remove stumbling blocks to our following of Jesus is made possible by the loving providence of God. We are invited to live into the reign of God with all its joys and risks.

What does such following ask you to do? How might the church ask the hard questions of discipleship even as it celebrates our following Jesus?

**Reflection:** God of today and tomorrow, help us to be prepared each day to serve you with a true heart, and to do acts of justice and loving kindness in a hurting world. Amen.

### **October 18 - Power to Serve**

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)      Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c  
Hebrews 5:1-10      **Mark 10:35-45**

We all go to God with questions. It's what happens next that can be interesting. Do we demand a hearing, as does Job, or do we ask for special treatment, as do James and John? The world suggests one way,

and yet we find the Bible so often suggesting an alternative.

For those of us who think we are used to being on top and at the front, it is humbling to be invited to view the world from another spot. Our perceptions will be permanently challenged when we have looked out at life from another place; our style of leadership will be different if we have found ourselves in a variety of stations as a follower.

Jesus says to James and John, "It's not up to me. Come and join me in turning the world right-side up, and we'll let the rest sort itself out." If you asked Jesus for a favor, would this kind of answer satisfy you, or leave you wanting? How often do we turn to God wanting one thing, only to have God offer us something else?

**Reflection:** Loving God, how great are the works of your hands! In wisdom you have made them all. In faith, we ear to you in worship. Bless us with the power of your Spirit and hear our call to you. Amen.

### **October 25 - Speak Out**

Job 42:1-6, 10-17      Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)  
Hebrews 7:23-28      **Mark 10:46-52**

We cry out to God: in joy and thanksgiving, in confusion, in desperation. Like Job, we may acknowledge God's goodness, strength, and wisdom. Other times, like Bartimaeus, we may call out for Christ's presence in our lives, to offer healing and new life. What happens next?

**Reflection:** Wondrous God, we know that many cry out for mercy, for healing, for support. We know too well that there are many voices in our world that seek to shut them up, to tell them not to bother, that they have no rights, that they are a nuisance, that they should just fade away. Open our hearts, loving God, that we might notice those that are pushed aside. Guide us to reach out to them and draw them into your loving arms. Amen.



## CHURCH WORKDAY

## LET'S CLEAN UP THE CHURCH

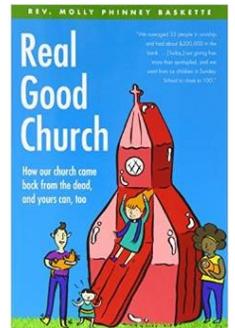
Grunge Saturday has come around again. For anyone who might not know it, Grunge Saturday is the day when willing and able church members gather to fix all the annoying little things around the building that need repairing. This Fall the Trustees have designated Saturday, October 17 as the date. Start time will be 8:00 AM, or whenever you can get there. Tasks usually involve cleaning windows, removing fingerprints from walls, perhaps some touch-up painting and minor repairs. There might be a little landscaping/tree trimming that needs to be done too. It can be a fun morning, working with other BUCC members and friends. Frequently we are joined by members of some of our shared users of the building. At the end of a busy morning the workers usually relax with a lunch of pizza.

It would be helpful if participants brought their own tools. The church has a few, but not many. Saws, rakes, pruning shears, buckets, etc. would help get the jobs done.

The Trustees are compiling a list of things that need to be done. If you have a pet annoyance that needs fixing, let a Trustee know and it will be put on the list. See you on the 17th!

## A VITAL BUCC: BUCKING THE TREND

This fall we are having conversations sparked by our reading the book, Real Good Church. The next two discussions will be Sunday, October 18, at a brown bag lunch after worship in the library (bring your lunch) and Saturday, October 24, 10:00 am in the parlor with refreshments. Come even if you haven't read the book. We want to strengthen the vitality of BUCC and buck the national trend of people's declining interest in being part of a church community.



## BOOK GROUP



The Book Group met twice in September to discuss a long biography. Book selection and meeting time for October was not ready for the Outlook submission time.

Please look for date and book selection announcements in the bulletins and E-vangelism.

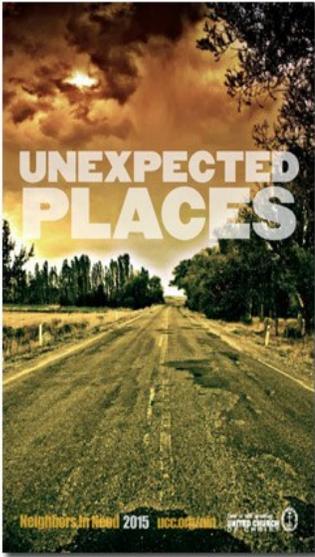
## SEEKERS

### Books, Fun, Friends

Seekers will next meet on Thursday, October 15 at 7:15 pm in the parlor to discuss The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore.

All are invited. Please come and join our lovely discussion even if you haven't read the book.

Come once, come always, or come whenever you have time. You are welcome to join us. For more information, contact Bette Pappas or Jim Burks.



## NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING OCTOBER 4

Neighbors In Need is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. BUCC will be making a special offering on October 4th, to support these projects. It will be in conjunction with World Wide Communion Sunday.

Special NIN Offering envelopes will be provided but as usual, you can write a check to BUCC and note NIN on the memo line and your check will be added to the donation we make to NIN.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering.

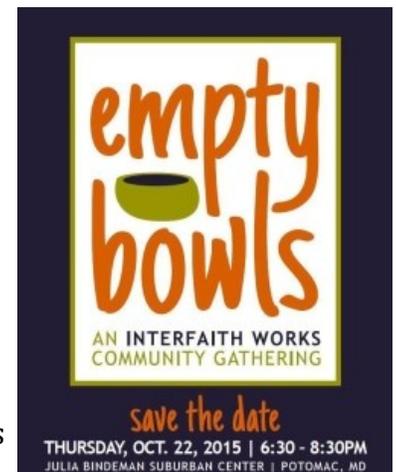
The 2015 theme for NIN is "Unexpected Places" and connects to the work of the UCC's CAIM and our denominational advocacy to address centuries of injustice against Native Americans. Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.

## EMPTY BOWLS AN INTERFAITH WORKS GATHERING

Interfaith Works is hosting "Empty Bowls" on Thursday, October 22nd. It will be a festive community gathering to raise funds for their programs and also to celebrate their many community partners and volunteers.

People are invited to come and share a modest meal of soup and bread with Interfaith Works. Everyone will take home a hand-crafted bowl as a reminder that hunger and homelessness continue to challenge thousands in Montgomery County every day. Proceeds will support Interfaith Works programs helping our vulnerable neighbors in need move from crisis to stability.

The event will be held on October 22, 2015 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Julia Bindeman Center at 11810 Falls Road in Potomac. The cost is \$25 per person. To Order tickets go to <http://bit.ly/EmptyBowls15> For more information call Interfaith Works [301-762-8682](tel:301-762-8682).





*All Saints' Day*

## SPECIAL SERVICE Sunday, November 1 at 7:00 pm

On **All Saints' Day, Sunday, November 1, at 7:00 pm**, Bethesda United Church of Christ will hold a special worship service to remember and name those members and friends of our church community and our larger community who have passed into eternal life.

We will gather to remember, to share, and to light candles and sing hymns in memory of those special to us. This service will offer an opportunity to support others through your presence and participation.

This service is open to the larger community, so invite your friends and neighbors.

**Please spread the word!**



## BLESSING OF OUR ANIMALS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

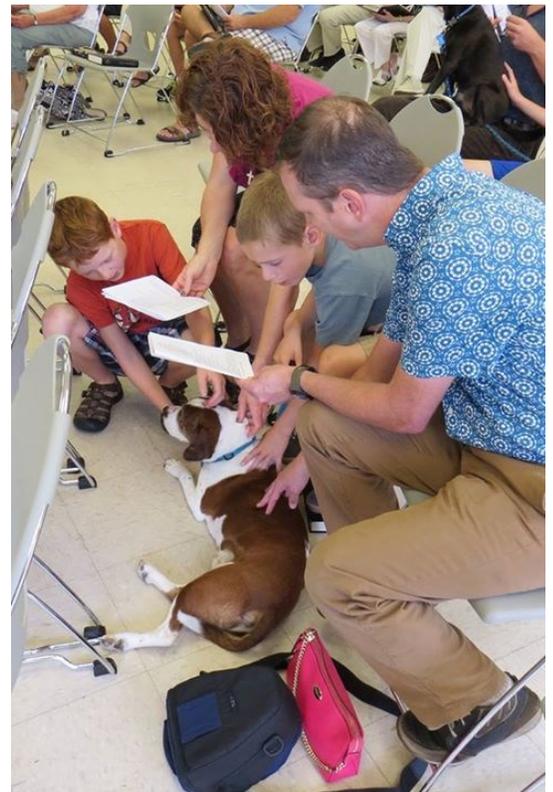


Photo by Jim Smith

# BUCC — OCTOBER, 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> <b>Neighbors In Need Offering</b> <b>World Communion Sunday</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Communion Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 3:30 PM Worship Team	<b>7</b> 7:00 PM Metro Garden Club	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:30 PM Community Meeting (FH) 7:30 PM Trustees Team	<b>15</b> 7:15 PM Seekers	<b>16</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>17</b> 8:00 AM Grunge Saturday
<b>18</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School 12:00 PM BUCC Church Vitality Meeting (Brown bag lunch)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>24</b> 9:00 AM Potomac Association Fall Meeting -- Little River UCC 10:00 AM BUCC Church Vitality Meeting
<b>25</b> 8:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 12:30 PM Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>31</b>

## INTERDEPENDENCE

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Whatever it is, please consider how we are ultimately interdependent on each other. Please consider how your actions or inaction affects others. Please consider how, sometimes, we all need to ask for help from the Holy Worker who sees the larger path and who can re-set what has gone awry with our participation.

Church can and should be a place where we can talk about "it," whatever "it" is. Perhaps talking about "it" happens over brunch, perhaps it happens in quiet prayer, and perhaps it happens whenever two or three are gathered. So consider

this an invitation: What stone is painfully out of place in your life and in the lives of others? What do you pledge to do about that? Showing up to the confusion and messiness is more than half the battle.

***"Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*** 5 Peter 6:9 (NRSV)

In the Peace of Christ,

*Rev Dee*

Rev. Dee Ledger  
8/30/2015

*There are too many words in our universe right now,  
and not enough silences,*

# NEIGHBORS IN NEED Special Offering October 4, 2015



## OUTLOOK

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