



# OUTLOOK

## SEPTEMBER, 2015

10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

BethesdaUCC.org

301-365-3387

### TIME TO GET STARTED

Summer is over, even though temperatures can still be in the 90's we take comfort in the fact that there are not many really hot days left. The faith community that calls itself BUCC is regathering to start another church year. The celebration will be on September 13. We will have the choir back with strong, rested voices. Plus we will celebrate communion during the worship service. After the service there will be a potluck luncheon. So plan to

whip up your favorite casserole, salad, dessert or whatever and bring it along to share with rest of us.

Sign up sheets will probably appear in the Narthex, so watch for them. If you happen to see Bob Struckman, while you are signing up, you can thank him for organizing the affair.

Happy New (church) Year.

### SUNDAY BREAKFAST IN HIBERNATION

You will be on your own for breakfast on the third Sunday of each month, just as you are every other day. The Education Team felt that they should suspend the monthly church breakfasts so that resources can be focused on building and energizing the church school program. The last few breakfasts apparently have been rather sparsely attended, anyway. When this was discussed at the last Leadership Council meeting, some other ideas were discussed. One idea that was floated was for the Breakfast to become a quarterly potluck after the church service. That was only one idea, not a decision, or even a plan. If you have another idea, let someone on the Education Team know about it.

### BLESSING OF OUR ANIMALS



**BLESSING**  
of the Animals

For the past several years BUCC has recognized the blessings and companionship that animals bring to our lives. We plan to continue the tradition this year with a service to be held on Sunday, September 6th at 10:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

Please bring your pets, be they dogs, cats, hamsters, gerbils, or some other species, and we will ask God's blessing for them. If your favorite animal friend is a stuffed animal, you can bring that. If your favorite animal is too large to bring to church, a photograph can be used in its place. The service will acknowledge the blessing that your pet has been to you and pray for God's blessing on them.

**Practical notes:** All animals need to be secured on a leash or in a cage. Water and treats will be available. (Its only fair, we get lemonade and cookies under the tree after the service.)

The Worship Team will be setting up for this service on Saturday September 5 at 10 AM. Help would be appreciated. If you would like to help, please join us.

*"But if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell."* --Nehemiah 1:9



The other day, I stopped by an office supply store to laminate a few pictures. Unwittingly, I found myself amidst a small crowd of people clamoring for Back-to-School supplies. Whether it was the energy of the place or the discount advertising, I found myself intentionally browsing the aisles. Yes, I bought a couple of things that would spruce up my home office, as well as a few things I really needed, like printer paper, pens, glue sticks!, and that nifty magnetic organizer that adheres to a filing cabinet. This bit of shopping was unplanned, but arguably good. There was a spirit of anticipation among the people pushing carts and waiting in line. It was visceral. We were all "in this" together. We were all moving someplace new—someplace *forward*. And consumerism aside, I relished sharing that pleasurable feeling many schoolchildren (and their parents have) of *turning a new, unmarred page* of a fresh, colorful notebook.

As much as I love summertime with its lazy warm days and the wholly different vibe of seeing tourists and *being* tourists, summer can begin to feel like *exile*. The hot, steamy days can become oppressive, the seasonal pressure to cram in vacation-time can become un-restful, young people can become bored or cranky, and even the grass can complain, turning brown and brittle. Fall days frequently bring a welcome refreshment and a change of momentum, as children ready themselves for school and adults are faced with new schedules and routines.

Even though we are still in "ordinary time" in the church year, we like to celebrate the re-gathering of God's people from their summer adventures. We are all "in this" together! Many churches celebrate or host a Rally Sunday or Re-gathering Sunday to mark the return of Church School classes, the return of the choir, and the return of traveling folk who may have been away

from church-life due to vacation or other summer commitments. We come together, like families do, for this reunion of kindred spirits in Christ. The part of us that may feel like we've been in exile, on vacation, or out in left-field tries to re-connect with our "home-base" or that part of our lives that seems more solid and more enduring than seasonal adventures or temporary lodgings. We are no longer tourists. Our souls return from wandering and exile. We return to God and to each other...checking in and catching up on our often too-scattered, too shattered lives.

This fall, we look forward to a renewed vitality as we have re-gathered our energies and hopes for this community on the corner of Fernwood and Democracy. But first, I encourage all of us to re-orient ourselves to the rhythm of worship, prayer, and praise that infuses our ministry and soul-connections with meaning and purpose. If you have been absent from us for a while, we encourage you to celebrate your renewed participation in this faith community by re-charging from your busy life here. Let the prayers and songs call you back and soothe your wandering heart. Let the words of scripture and reflection wash over you and bring renewed energy; let the Spirit flowing through this gathered community give you strength for the living of these days—your days.

*"By all these lovely tokens September days are here,  
With summer's best of weather  
And autumn's best of cheer."*

---Helen Hunt Jackson

Catch the Spirit, friends. Welcome Home.  
See you in church!  
Rev Dee

## Bible Reading ... at Home

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

### **September 6 -Planet Earth Sunday**

**Genesis 1:1-25**                      Psalm 33:1-9  
Romans 1:18-23                      John 1:1-14

In this first week of the Season of Creation, we worship with our planet home, celebrate God's relationship with creation, and cultivate our own relations with and appreciation for our home: Earth. Genesis 1:10b "...and God saw that it was good"

Some people may find aspects of the first creation story in the Bible a little surprising. Notice water already exists before the story starts. Notice also that repeatedly God marvels at the creation. Notice how the world is created with purpose and majesty. Lastly, note that this is simply one story about creation that the Bible gives us : Genesis 2, Psalm 8, and Proverbs 8 all present other views. This reminds us that the Bible is not a science book, but a wonderful collection of tales about God's activity through history, and love for all creation.

How do you experience God present in creation?  
How do you experience God present in your own life?

### **September 13 - Humanity Sunday**

**Genesis 1:26-28**                      Psalm 8  
Philippians 2:1-8                      Mark 10:41-45

We are encouraged to explore the relationship of mutuality that humans share with all creation, invited to reflect on how human action impacts Earth, and question what changes we need to make in life-style and attitude.

Genesis 1:27a "God created humanity in God's own image"

Creation of humans should not be seen as separate from other elements of creation. Rather God created human beings as part of an overall plan that included stars and rivers, animals and trees, nighttime and day as well as people. We are intrinsically part of God's world. And we are called to have "dominion" over creation. Dominion means we are called to be God-like to care for each thing, large and small.

How have you lived your life - as ruler or as a compassionate servant?

### **September 16 -Sky Sunday**

**Jeremiah 4:23-28**                      Psalm 19:1-6  
Philippians 2:14-18                      Mark 15:33-39

Sky Sunday provides opportunity to reflect on the fragile atmosphere from which comes the air we breathe, the rain and the wind that shape our lives and our landscapes, as well as much beauty.

Psalm 19:1a "Heaven is declaring God's glory..."

The unbridled praise of God's creative power in Psalm 19 helps to counter the negative imagery in Jeremiah. Yet while this latter passage speaks of Earth having no hope, still God proclaims, "I will not destroy it completely. Even in the midst of God's anger and despair at humankind - often for way we have abused Creation - still God does not abandon us, or the Earth which is our home. Indeed, we can look to the heavens and feel the power and presence of God.

How do you feel God present in the sky? Take a breath and feel the wondrous presence of God in that air, offering you the gift of a moment of being.

### **September 27 - Mountain Sunday**

**Isaiah 65:17-25**                      Psalm 48:1-11  
Romans 8:28-39                      Mark 16:14-18

Isaiah 65:17a "Look! I'm creating a new heaven and a new earth..."

God is always creating things anew. Even as one thing dies, another comes to life. As plant and animals return to the earth, they nurture the growth of new being. In this kind of world, how can we do anything but rejoice? The prophet Isaiah declares how wonderful life can be in God's new world.

When we remember our place in Creation, and how we can support one another, life on God's "holy mountain" - this planet - becomes wonderful beyond our imagination.

What are the dreams you have for Creation?

## BUCC TO DESIGN ITS OWN BULLETIN COVERS

The Worship Team has decided to make the Sunday bulletin cover uniquely BUCC. Our logo and Mission Statement will be on the cover. The Worship Team invites members and friends to submit suggestions for the special church holidays, Advent, Christmas Eve, Lent, Easter, etc. The team is especially interested in original art work, but if your design includes some work by other people, please be sure the work is in the public domain. We wish to avoid any copyright infringement problems.

If you have an idea for the bulletins, please contact Carla Evans to discuss your idea or leave a sample in the Worship Team mailbox in the office. Ideas/ submissions need to be into the Worship Team by October 18.

## BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet on Tuesday, September 8 at 3:30pm in the church parlor to discuss "Cronkite" by Douglas Brinkley. This biography is long, so the group decided to discuss Parts 1 - 3 on September 8 and Parts 4 - 6 later in the month or in October (date to be decided on at September 8 meeting.)

"This sweeping narrative of Walter Cronkite's life is irresistibly told, beautifully written, and deeply researched. Douglas Brinkley has produced one trustworthy biography after another, each one commanding widespread respect and admiration. And this is one of the very best." (**Doris Kearns Goodwin**)

"A majestic biography. . . *Cronkite* is evidence that a job can be done just about perfectly. That goes for the man and this exceptional biography." (*The New York Times Book Review*)

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



## SEEKERS Books, Fun, Friends

Seekers is the BUCC spiritual book group.

We get together monthly to discuss books, spirituality, life, and many and any other subjects.

All are invited to join us. We usually meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:15 PM in the parlor.

We begin our fall season on September 17 with the book *Real Good Church: How Our Church Came Back From the Dead, and Yours Can Too* by Molly Phinney Baskette.

However, reading the book is not a requirement for joining our lively discussions.

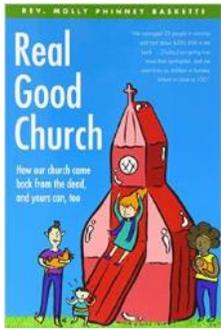
Come once, come always, or come whenever you have time. You are welcome to join us.

For more information, contact Bette Pappas or Jim Burks.

## THE CROSS WE BEAR: RACISM IN OUR CHURCHES & COMMUNITIES

*Telling Our Stories, Sharing Our Suffering, Discussing Our Hopes and Fears*

Please join us on **Saturday, September 19, from 2-4 pm at Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ** (4704 Thirteenth Street, NW Washington, DC 20011) for an afternoon of authentic storytelling and honest discussion as we seek to unmask and confront the racism that mars and disfigures our churches and communities.



## CHURCH VITALITY PLANS

“Real Good Church” is a book written by Rev. Molly Baskette that is being read by several members of BUCC. Rev.

Baskette gave a presentation at a Church Vitality meeting in Catonsville that was

promoted by the Potomac Association. Rev. Baskette shared how a withering church in Somerville, MA was revived and transformed into a growing faith community. Some of our members attended this meeting.

Called to a shrinking, urban area church in a 101 year old building, the book describes the steps that Rev. Baskette took to turn it into an active, growing, involved congregation. It addresses each facet of church life from the children’s program to the building appearance to Pastoral Care and a lot of other items. It describes what they tried in each of these areas and how it worked out.

Thinking there may be some ideas that could be applied to BUCC, a group of people are reading the book with the intention of discussing it and deciding on what we might try here.

Jim Burks ordered 25 copies of the book, published by the UCC, and sold them all to interested members. Three more people are apparently reading the Kindle version. That suggests that a number of people think that there is something to be learned from the book. When all interested parties have read the book, groups will be formed to discuss it. When and where these meetings will take place has yet to be decided, but they will be announced.

Come to the discussions, even though you have not read the book, there is likely something you can share as BUCC explores enhancing its future.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES COLLECTION A SUCCESS

Our Annual School Supplies drive for Linkages to Learning was again a success. Linda Cornelius and the Sharing Team report that, as of August 18, BUCC donated:

- 36 composition books
- 18 folders
- 20 boxes of markers and crayons
- 45 spiral notebooks
- 11 3 ring binders with paper
- 12 backpacks
- 14 pencil packages
- 15 pen packages
- 21 miscellaneous items...rulers, glue, scissors, pencil boxes, etc.

In addition, some \$90 in cash was collected to purchase additional supplies as needed.

This should help many under-privileged children get off to a good start when the school bell rings.



**SCHOOL  
SUPPLY**  
*Drive*

## Education Update



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE

## Church School and Christmas Pageant

The 2015-2016 church school begins **September 13, 2015**. There will be three classes (3-5 year olds, elementary and middle school) and nursery. A big thank you to Marka Hayes who has volunteered to coordinate church school while the education team explores options for paid Christian education staff.

Mark your calendars! The Christmas pageant is scheduled for December 13, 2015.

Questions? Contact Miso Baipidi, Jo Ann Linseisen or Trent Ross.

Jo Ann Linseisen

## CALL FOR EDUCATION TEAM VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to everyone who volunteered this summer as a Sunday School teacher. We know the kids had fun working with a variety of adults and we hope you had a chance to get to know the children of BUCC better!

If you would like to continue this good work, there are several ways to help out this fall beginning on September 13 when Sunday School begins again and when we "Regather" as a church. Here's how:

#1 -- We are planning to provide THREE Sunday School Classes this year -- pre-K, elementary, and middle school. This will stretch our teachers, but it is necessary given the breadth of ages of the children in our church. So anyone who has an inkling to work with a particular age group, please let us know! You will have the choice of using our set curriculum OR you can plan your own lesson based on that Sunday's lectionary reading. Either way, we provide all the materials. Also, we will hold a Teacher Training (likely one Sunday after church) so you have the confidence in the classroom that you'll need. **Contact: Trent Ross** [rtross2000@yahoo.com](mailto:rtross2000@yahoo.com)

#2 -- As a way to integrate the children better into the life of the church, we are exploring the feasibility of designating Service Sundays where the children could work with a member of another team (Sharing Team, Trustees, Welcoming, etc.) to execute simple tasks that would relate to our wider mission. This could mean anything from making sandwiches for Shelter Week, acting as a Young Shepherd at the door, or helping out with a cleaning or organizing task around the building. We need your ideas to make this happen! **Contact: Jo Ann Linseisen** [jlinseisen@gmail.com](mailto:jlinseisen@gmail.com)

#3 -- To be in compliance with the State of Maryland, the nursery sometimes needs more than one attendant depending on the number and ages of babies or toddlers on any given Sunday. While we already have a paid nursery attendant, we are in need of volunteers to help out when needed. Our goal is to have 4 or 5 helpers that could be assigned on a rotation. This will ensure any parent with can attend worship, including visitors! **Contact Shannon Ross** [shannonsross@yahoo.com](mailto:shannonsross@yahoo.com)

We are looking forward to a wonderful Sunday School year and hope you will join us!

Shannon Ross

## SEPTEMBER 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> <b>3:30 PM</b> Worship Team Meeting	<b>2</b> <b>7:00 PM</b> Metro Garden Club	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>5</b> <b>10:00 AM</b> Set Up Fellowship Hall for Worship Service
<b>6</b> Blessing of the Animals <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Fellowship Hall	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>3:30 PM</b> BUCC Book Group	<b>9</b> <b>7:30 PM</b> Trustees Team	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>12</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> Montgomery Pottery Association Sale
<b>13</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Re-Gathering Sunday, Communion Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>7:00 PM</b> Leadership Council Meeting	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>7:15 PM</b> Seekers	<b>18</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>12:00 PM</b> DEADLINE for OUTLOOK Articles	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of Maryland	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			



**REGATHERING SUNDAY**

**POTLUCK LUNCHEON  
after Worship Service  
about noon, September 13**

**Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone else planted a tree a long time ago."**

-- Warren Buffett,  
investor and philanthropist



**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