

Welcome to Little River United Church of Christ



Who We Are



Welcome to Little River United Church of Christ! We gather as Little River United Church of Christ to experience and express the love of God in Jesus Christ. We are a congregation of progressively minded people who value independent thought, diversity, and faithful action to establish a just world for all.

Little River was founded as a desegregated congregation in 1955, when segregation was still the law of the land. We also have the honor of having walked alongside and supported the first lesbian ordained clergy person in the United States in 1982, as she and her partner were members for many years at Little River.

We became an open and affirming congregation in 2001. We are building on this history of racial justice and LGBTQ rights as an antiracist and open and affirming congregation. **When we say that all are welcome here, we mean it.**

Open & Affirming

Open and Affirming congregations in the United Church of Christ publicly declare that people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions are celebrated in the full life and ministry of the church. Intense debate about the place of LGBTQ+ people in our society continues, and widespread discrimination and hostility remains a reality. In the midst of this, we proclaim that God's love, Christ's church, and the Spirit's power are for everyone! We march annually in DC's Pride Parade, celebrate Open and Affirming Sunday, and support our LGBTQ+ members and friends in their daily walks.



Antiracist



The United Church of Christ has been calling on local churches since 1993 to become multiracial, multicultural, and antiracist. This year (2023), the UCC renewed its call for local congregations to confront white supremacy by declaring their communities as “A White Supremacy Free Zone” and to express that “We are confronting White supremacy.” Little River is doing just that by continuing to discuss and study racism and white supremacy, and by participating in direct action and advocacy work related to antiracism. Our antiracism ministry, “Confronting White Supremacy,” meets every Sunday at 11:15 a.m. after worship.

Community of Learning

The United Church of Christ has a long tradition of calling educated clergy and believing in the power of education to transform persons and societies. Little River has a history of educated clergy, and is now served by the Rev. Dr. Shelli Poe who has a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and who was a full-time Religious Studies professor for nearly a decade. She is a nationally and internationally known scholar in the study of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Pastor Shelli teaches adult education in Tuesday Evening Discussions quarterly. In addition to adult education, we have a vibrant Church School program for children and youth, from the nursery to 12th grade. We are also proud to have a historic connection to Arise Campus Ministry at George Mason, and we continue to support their efforts at GMU and at NOVA Community College in Annandale (right across the street from Little River).

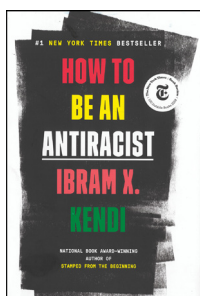


Small Groups



Meditation Group (Sunday A.M.)

The Meditation Group uses traditional Christian meditation and reflection to center the mind and heart, deepening our connection with God, creation, and one another. You are invited every Sunday morning from 9-9:50 A.M. in Room 7 and online: bit.ly/LR-Meditation. Carolyn Yocom leads this group.



Confronting White Supremacy Group (Sunday A.M.)

This group is for those who are interested in learning more about racism in our country and in our own hearts and minds, and who want to engage in the work of antiracism. You are invited every Sunday morning from 11:15 to 12:15 in the Conference Room. Gail Perry and Joanne Zellers co-lead this group.



Religious Studies Group (Monday A.M.)

Want to learn about different religious traditions? Want to dive deep into topical study? Want to learn from others' experiences? Join us on Mondays from 10 A.M. to 12 P.M. in Room 8 or via Zoom for Great Courses videos and discussions led by congregants. The fall 2023 course focuses on Buddhism. bit.ly/LR-ReligiousStudy.



Adult Education (Tuesday P.M.)

Our pastor has more than a decade of experience teaching in undergraduate and graduate classrooms, and has authored numerous books, chapters, and articles. Join us and Pastor Shelli as we discuss topics of great social and theological importance. She offers one class of approximately 5–6 weeks every quarter on Zoom. Email Shelli for current study information.



Chat & Craft

All are welcome to come chat and craft if you want on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. If you would like to attend on Zoom, please email chatcraft@lrucc.org ahead of time. If we're able to offer Zoom that week, we will send you the link.

Music

Sanctuary Choir (Sunday A.M. & Thursday P.M.)

Singing in harmony connects us in a unique way. If you're looking for a way to connect with others in music and friendship, you are welcome to join the choir for rehearsals every Thursday from 7:30 to 9 P.M. in the Choir Room. Choir is led by our Music Director, Craig Stapert (craig@lrucc.org).



Handbell Ensemble (Sunday after worship)

The beautifully resonant sound of handbells played in harmony with others can be a spiritual experience, and greatly enhances our special worship services. Please join the Handbell Ensemble for rehearsals on Sundays at 11:30 in Room 8. The ensemble is led by our Music Director, Craig Stapert.

Children and Youth Choirs (Sunday after worship)

Does your child love singing or performing? Our children and youth are leaders in our worship experiences on Sundays. They meet two weeks out of the month to receive early training in voice, instruments, and performance. Salt of the Earth is a choir for young children, and Joyful Noise is for older children. The choirs are led by our Children and Youth Choir Director, Ashton Streavig (ashton@lrucc.org).



Children

Calling children of all ages! Every Sunday morning, our church school volunteer teachers and professional staff lead children in growing spiritually and socially from pre-K through 12th grade. Children are invited to stay in the service until the Time with Children is concluded, and then make their way to their classrooms (approximately 10:15 to 11 A.M.). Classrooms are in the church school wing of the building, including a nursery and six classrooms. All teachers and leaders are background checked, and we maintain a Safe Community policy that requires two adults in every room where children are present.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Class

Children in Kindergarten and younger are invited to our K/Pre-K class. We use the Godly Play curriculum, which combines a short lesson with Montessori-style exploration of materials each week. This class is staffed by Yris, our paid childcare provider, and John Mingus provides a Godly Play lesson each week.



Elementary School Class

Children who are in first through fourth grades are welcome to join this class. We use Seasons of the Spirit, a lectionary-based curriculum that follows a pattern of Focus, Prepare, Gather, Engage, Respond, Bless, and Reflect. Two teams of two committed teachers each rotate on a two-week basis.



Child care is available every Sunday from 9:30 A.M. to noon. Yris, our nursery staff, and Mia, our church school assistant, are in the nursery every Sunday during worship and after worship at the children's table in the social hall.

Youth Education

Middle and High School Class

Those in fifth through twelfth grades are invited to join this class. Natalie Stapert teaches the class according to the needs and interests of students, designed and developed over her many years of teaching at Little River.

Our Whole Lives Class

The Our Whole Lives curriculum was developed by the UCC and UU denominations as a way to provide sex education for our young people in the context of our faith. Those in seventh through ninth grades are invited to join this special class, offered when there is expressed interest by two teams of two trained facilitators, on rotation. The class is taught during the academic year on Sundays or on a seminar-style basis on the weekends, depending on the needs of the young people and families who are interested in taking the class.



Confirmation Class

Those in eighth and ninth grades are welcome to join a confirmation class after the worship service, led by Pastor Shelli whenever we have eighth and ninth graders in the congregation. The curriculum used is Affirming Faith, a resource provided by the UCC for this purpose, which allows young people to consider the major themes of the Christian faith, to ask questions and express concerns, and to decide whether they would like to confirm the faith of those who brought them into the church to be baptized. (Those who have not been baptized could be baptized and confirmed on the same day.) At the end of this year-long class, those who decide affirmatively are confirmed.

High School Caffeine

Young people in 9th – 12th grade are invited to join “Caffeine,” which meets immediately after the church service ends, from 11am to noon. It is a time for refreshments, community building, and informal discussion using the curriculum, “Caffeine and...” published by Pilgrim Press.

Youth Group

The entire youth group, from 6th through 12th grades, also meets once a month on a Sunday for fun, community-building events, which sometimes include service projects. The youth group is led by two volunteers who commit to growing and learning with our young people for the year: Karen Kleiber and Rebecca Lewis.



Action Groups

Coffee Hour Teams (Sunday A.M.)

Looking for a fun way to connect with a few others? Join one of our coffee teams! We provide coffee and refreshments for coffee hour each week, and each team has their own style. Led by Kathleen Styles.

Media Team

Interested in sound or video, or just curious about technology, join the media team! Team members have a rotation each month and work during services and special programs in the sanctuary. They adjust microphones, change cameras, project recordings on the sanctuary screen, and manage the Sunday Zoom webcast. Led by Craig Stapert.

Educators

Are you eager to teach and lead the next generation? Do you love adult learning? You are invited to join the Church School as a teacher, Youth Group leadership, or Christian Education Committee led by chair Karen Kleiber.

Congregational Care Team

Do you have a heart for those who are hurting, grieving, and/or approaching the end of life? We are assembling a Pastoral Care Team who will be on-call to assist Pastor Shelli in providing pastoral care when congregants need extended support. Please contact deacons@lrucc.org to express your interest.

Women's Ministry Team

The women's ministry includes activities of interest to women of all ages that foster and nurture relationship and spirituality among Little River women and friends (e.g. Tea and Talk, women's retreats, meditative programs).

Food Pantry; Fairfax FISH

We host a food pantry for Fairfax FISH, a network of churches that provide for those in need in Fairfax City and County. Volunteer phone captains receive requests for assistance from the Office of Coordinated Services, which is part of the Fairfax County Department of Human Services. In addition, we volunteer as drivers for FISH, delivering food, clothing, and other necessities to those in need. Contact the office.

Neighbor to Neighbor

This organization provides support and education to Afghan refugees and families year-round. We support them by having a representative on the board, volunteering to teach English and tutor other subjects as requested, and participating in other special events. Led by Janet Parsons Mackey.

Guiding Groups

Deacons

Are you passionate about worship experiences that change hearts and minds? About providing opportunities for social engagement? Are you gifted in supporting people during their times of need? About reaching out to the wider community? We would love for you to become a Deacon.

Outreach and Social Justice

Social justice is at the heart of Little River UCC's history and identity. We are an open and affirming congregation, welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions to lead among us. We are also an antiracist congregation, confronting white supremacy and actively working toward creating a "white supremacy free zone" within our community. If you're excited about actively working for social justice and directing our benevolent giving to local organizations, join our Outreach and Social Justice Team.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees coordinates the overall management of the property, the financial affairs, and the business operations of the church and manages the details of these areas except as specifically delegated to other boards or committees. The Board of Trustees prepares the annual operating budget of the church, which is approved by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting held each January.

To join any of our guiding groups, please contact Nominations and Appointments at nanda@lruc.org.

Contact

We would love to connect with you! There are a variety of ways to get involved, to meet people, and to engage in educational and social justice initiatives at Little River. We hope you'll join us, and/or let us know what other opportunities you're looking for.

STAY IN TOUCH

There are a number of ways to stay in touch throughout the week online. Follow and Like us to get to know us better and stay informed.

- Facebook Page
www.fb.com/LittleRiverUnitedChurchOfChrist
- Facebook Group
www.facebook.com/groups/lrucc
- Instagram
www.instagram.com/littleriverucc
- Website
www.lrucc.org
- YouTube
www.youtube.com/@littleriverunitedchurchofc20



STAFF



Senior Pastor
Shelli Poe
shelli@lrucc.org



Church Office Administrator
Kathy Heyman
office@lrucc.org



Director of Music and Communication
Craig Stapert
craig@lrucc.org



Children and Youth Choir Director
Ashton Streavig
ashton@lrucc.org



Communications Assistant
Jay Shackley
jay@lrucc.org



Building and Grounds Manager
Chris DiMascio
chris@lrucc.org



Child Care Provider
Yris Saenz



Teacher Assistant
Mia Morgan

Sign Me Up!

We would love to connect with you! If you are interested in receiving our communications or would like to express interest in one of our ministries, action groups, or guiding groups, please let us know below.

☐ Friday Newsletter (email)

☐ Monthly Newsletter (print)

☐ Pastoral Support/Prayer

☐ Other: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

How did you find us? _____

Please drop this sheet in the offering plate or hand it to an usher.

**Little River United Church of Christ
8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
703-978-3060**