



# The Seneca Valley Voice

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley  
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## The Mortgages Are Paid!

### *Carolyn's Column*

One of my favorite hymns ends each stanza with the line, "how can I keep from singing?" How *can* we keep from singing, when we begin the new year with such good news?! Thanks to the generosity and stewardship of one of our members, UCCSV received a gift with one stipulation: that it be used to pay off our existing mortgages.

So it is that in the relative quiet between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, our Treasurer, Al Speich, came into the offices and wrote out checks totaling \$311,062.61. This covers all of UCCSV's outstanding debt for four separate mortgages and one grant mortgage. Some of these mortgages date back to loans secured for the initial building of UCCSV's facilities; one was secured to improve signage, and most recently, to repair or renovate our facilities. Each of them is paid in full.

There will be follow-up details to attend to, of course—including a HUGE celebration as we burn the mortgages officially. Certainly we will want to include all those whose initial vision of a UCC congregation in northern Montgomery County first planted the seeds of this community of faith. We will want to share the good news with those friends and former members who supported this congregation in its infancy. And we will want to share the good news with our UCC partners, from those in Potomac Association and Central Atlantic Conference, to those in the national offices of the United Church of Christ.

But perhaps most importantly, we will want to see this now-matured vision continues to blossom into the full ministry to which this congregation is called. That is how we truly show our gratitude, not only for this most amazing gift, but even more, for the gifts of God to each of us.

In the weeks to come, we will be working with the leadership of the Roadmap Advisory Group to decide UCCSV's next steps in living out that vision in the specifics of our mission.

Blessings,

*Carolyn*

## Roadmap Group Workshops

The task of the Roadmap Group is to create a process for determining UCCSV's 3-5 year plan for implementing our mission, which is *to provide a welcoming spiritual home for those seeking God's presence, preparing us to serve others in Jesus' name*. The group will be conducting several workshops in February to accomplish this task.

After review of several approaches and much discussion on how to elicit congregational input, the group agreed to develop information and present it for use in two congregational workshops. The following information will be gathered.

1. UCCSV's demographics
2. UCCSV's strengths (i.e., what do we bring to the table?)
3. The community's demographics
4. The community's needs
5. The gap between the two
6. Our mission to bridge that gap

We will assess community needs through interviews with community leaders. A second set of interviews will be conducted with those who have been guests at UCCSV over the past six months.

Material from both sets of interviews will be compiled for presentation at the first meeting on **February 4, 9:00am-noon**. (Please note the change in date for this meeting.) This material will also be available on our website, will include a summary of the perspectives shared, will note conclusions drawn from the interviews, and will quote points which support the conclusions.

At the meeting, participants will be asked to break into small groups to assess UCCSV's strengths based on our church programs and activities and our ability to develop significant relational groups. We will ask folks to identify the programs/activities that are strongest, as well as those which are becoming strengths.

Finally the groups would be asked to brainstorm ways to build on each of the strengths that is faithful to UCCSV's mission (and the needs of the community), and then to do the same for those programs/activities that are becoming strengths. The final results will be shared with the full group and with the broader congregation.

A subsequent workshop will be held, tentatively scheduled for February 26, to build on the earlier workshop and identify programs and activities the UCCSV should undertake in the next several years. These will be further refined and presented to the congregation for discussion/modification and approval toward the end of March.

Roadmap Group Chair

## From Christian Education Board

**Christmas Eve Family Service:** Thanks to *everyone* who lent their time and talent to making the early service on Christmas Eve a huge success. A special thanks to Jim (our narrator) and Floyd (our songwriter). It was a meaningful and spirited celebration!

**Nursery attendant needed!** Please spread the word! We are in urgent need of a paid nursery attendant (age 21 or older please). Contact the church office if you have someone in mind.

**Nursery attendance:** Parents are kindly reminded that the nursery is designed for the care of pre-K, toddlers, and infants only. All children kindergarten age and older should remain in the sanctuary with their parents if Sunday School is not in session.

~ Chair

**Lectionary Readings – January 2006**  
**Year B**

**Sunday, January 1**

Isaiah 61.10-62.3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4.4-7

Luke 2.22-40

**or** the readings for Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6

Psalm 72.1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3.1-12

Matthew 2.1-12

**Sunday, January 8**

Genesis 1.1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19.1-7

Mark 1.4-11

**Sunday, January 15**

1 Samuel 3.1-10 (11-20)

Psalm 139.1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6.12-20

John 1.43-51

**Sunday, January 22**

Jonah 3.1-5, 10

Psalm 62.5-12

1 Corinthians 7.29-31

Mark 1.14-20

**Sunday, January 29**

Deuteronomy 18.15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8.1-13

Mark 1.21-28



**What Is the ‘Lectionary?’**

The lectionary is a compilation of readings created through the National Council of Churches. It employs a three-year cycle, conveniently labeled Year A, Year B, and Year C, which essentially is a shorthand way of referring to the synoptic\* gospel which receives the primary focus during that year’s readings.

In Year A, the focus is Matthew. Year B is Mark, and Year C is Luke. Because there is no “Year D” in which churches read through John, readings from that gospel are interspersed throughout each of the other three years.

For congregations such as ours, which usually follow the lectionary, this means that worshipers have a better opportunity to read and reflect upon the full body of scripture, and not just on the pastor’s favorite text or book.

Several other factors add to the lectionary readings. The first is that, except for Eastertide, the six-week period between Easter and Pentecost, the first reading is always from one of the books of Hebrew scripture other than the Psalms. The second reading is always a Psalm. The third reading is from one of the Christian scriptures that is not a gospel reading. Usually, it’s one of the letters of Paul, since he was the first and most prolific writer we find in the Christian canon.

Following long-established Jewish practice, readings for all but the Psalms come from the same book in a semi-continuous story during Ordinary Time. Ordinary time includes those Sundays between the second Sunday after Epiphany and the beginning of Lent, and then again, the second Sunday after Pentecost and the beginning of Advent.

Advent begins the church year, always starting the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

\*Synoptic means *same*. The gospels of Matthew and Luke are based on Mark, and are quite similar. John follows a different format.

## From Fellowship Board

The Fellowship Board thanks everyone who contributed cookies and other baked goodies during the month of December. They were used for the Coffee Hours and the reception following the December 18th concert.

Thanks too to John and sons Jeffry and Aaron for the clam chowder "light supper" they provided between services on Christmas Eve.

Again, this year Sue will coordinate the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 28th with the Youth Group. Mark your calendars. Save the date.

## And while we're giving thanks...

### Thanks to

- **Len** for his help with lighting during the Christmas Eve candlelight service.
- **Debbie** and **Helen** for the wonderful new Advent banner.
- **Marilyn** for her warm reception to each person coming to UCCSV, either by phone or in person, as well as her caring and cheerful support of UCCSV's ministries.
- **Floyd, Barbara,** and **Ann** for their on-going help in the office.
- **Heather y, Terri,** and **Patrick e, Laura,** and **Beth** for their creative efforts and strong support in the Christmas Eve family service.
- **Trevor** for the awesome Christmas concert, and to the **UCCSV choir** for its outstanding music throughout Advent and Christmas Eve.
- **Ruth and all those who decorated** the sanctuary and other rooms of the church for Christmas.
- **J.C, Anne** and **John,** and **those who supported** the holiday food baskets and Shaw Community Ministry Caring Tree.

## From the Deacons

### God is still...E-mailing,

The Board of Deacons invites you to submit a meditation, poem, or other brief written piece connected to the Lenten season for inclusion in our 2006 Lenten Devotional Writings.

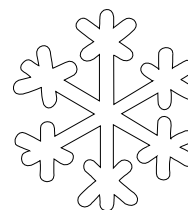
We have decided to send out the meditations by e-mail this year (saving paper and bringing the season of Lent right to your computer screen!). Some printed copies will be made available.

Last year's Lenten Devotional Booklet was helpful to many, and we'd like to continue to share in the journeys of all of our members and friends through this project.

Feel free to give printed copies of submissions to the church office.

## **Potluck & Congregational Meeting to adopt 2006 Budget**

**Noon ~ 29 January 2006**



## Church Calendar

### Ongoing events

#### Sundays during January

Worship – 9:30 and 11:00am

**EXCEPT on New Year's Day**

**Tuesdays** -- Staff meeting

**Thursdays** – 7:30p - Choir

#### Sunday, January 1

9:30a – Worship – one service only

#### Monday, January 2

**Office Closed**

#### Tuesday, January 3

6:30p – Hope Task Force (Lennox home)

#### Thursday, January 5

6:00p – Christian Education Board

#### Sunday, January 8

4:00-7:00p – Confirmation

#### Monday, January 9

7:30p – Social Concerns

#### Tuesday, January 10

7:30p – Fellowship (Bertelmann home)

- Worship Committee

#### Monday, January 16

**Office Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

7:00p – Property Operations

#### Tuesday, January 17

7:30p – Council

#### Sunday, January 22

4:00-7:00p – Confirmation

#### Monday, January 23

Time TBD – Confirmation Class to Wash DC

#### Sunday, January 29

Noon – Potluck and Congregational Meeting to adopt 2006 budget

## Infant/Nursery Care Giver

### Position Description

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley is looking for an Infant/Nursery Care Giver responsible for providing child care to the congregation's children, infant through age three, Sunday mornings from 9:00am - 12:30pm. On occasion, the care giver may be asked to stay longer for special events or meetings. Arrangements for such occasions are requested in advance.

The responsibilities for this position include:

- Interactive, age-appropriate welcome and play using Christian resources
- Maintaining a safe and nurturing environment
- Assisting parents in separating themselves from the young who are reluctant for the parent(s) to leave
- Coordinating coverage for the nursery in the event the care giver would not be able to be there
- Keeping the Christian Education Board informed of needed supplies and of problems/concerns that may arise in the nursery

For more information or to set up an interview, please call the church office at 301-540-3449.

