



# The Seneca Valley Voice

**The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley**  
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## **Carolyn's Column**

Locally, as we complete another program year, we begin simultaneously to transition to summer activities, which typically involves some sort of slowing down, some change of pace—and we gear up for longer-term programs that start first thing in the fall. Thank you's have been deserved and shared—to outgoing officers Sandra, Al and Jean, as well as to outgoing board chairs Jen, Patrick and Susan, and historian Pat. Kudos to all! Thanks to the hard work of our Nominating Committee, we also have in place a strong new set of officers and an equally strong Council. Appreciation to all—no exceptions!!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see updates concerning our progress on ONA, the Open and Affirming study we have undertaken as a congregation. Given the current climate toward gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered (often shortened to GLBT) persons in denominations and congregations across the theological spectrum, it is clear that this is still a very timely concern for us to address.

Our Moderator reported at UCCSV's annual meeting that we received ten new members in 2006. We have received another ten new members thus far in 2007, including two adults who are newly-baptized. What a wonderful testament to the welcome and community UCCSV extends! Again, thank you to each member of this faith community.

Finally, congratulations to UCCSV's many graduates: from high school and from college. Way to go, grads!

Regionally, the Central Atlantic Conference's (CAC) Annual Meeting will be held in Newark, Delaware at the University of Delaware June 8-10. Two members of our congregation will be UCCSV's delegates this year. Following on the church vitality theme of last year's annual meeting, the keynote speaker this year

is Alice Mann, who has co-authored one of the books written by last year's keynote speaker, Gil Rendle. A second keynoter will be the Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson, who currently serves as the President of the North American church of the World Council of Churches. Bernice has also served in a variety of capacities in the United Church of Christ.

Specific issues to be addressed at CAC/UCC's annual meeting include two resolutions, one on climate change, and a second on worker justice at the Smithfield Packing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. Background information concerning this second resolution is available at:

[www.ucc.org/justice/smithfield](http://www.ucc.org/justice/smithfield)

Nationally, the UCC is gearing up for its Fiftieth Anniversary, celebrated June 22-26 in Hartford, Connecticut. It promises to be a truly spectacular event, with a rich tapestry of people engaged in a wide range of activities. Included in a broad spectrum of presentations will be a **Stem Cells Workshop: Science & Theological Ethics, the Neglected Issues**, co-led by one of UCCSV's members. She is a member of the nine-person United Church of Christ Science and Technology Network. Check out the [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) website for a more complete picture of the events marking the UCC's *Let It Shine!* celebration.

One final note: whatever your summer holds in the way of R&R, don't forget that worship is critical to spiritual health and renewal. If you are out of town, find a local church to visit; if you're home, don't get out of the habit of the heart that keeps you engaged in the worshiping community. We are all enriched when you are in worship.

Blessings,

*Carolyn*

# Welcome!

## Open and Affirming (ONA)

Becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation means to publicly declare that those of all sexual orientations are welcome in the full life and ministry of the church. Last spring the UCCSV began a time of study, prayer and conversation that will help us make our own decision about establishing an official statement of welcome to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Recently the congregation was asked for their feedback concerning ONA and we appreciate the responses that many of you have provided. Your comments are helping us plan future ONA activities and have given us a broader perspective in which to consider what becoming ONA may mean to our church.

Some of you expressed impatience that the process was taking so long. Others were concerned about the possibility of some members leaving the church should the church approve an ONA statement. Many have asked why becoming ONA is necessary, because our church is already so open and welcoming.

A few of you asked about how individual churches write their own ONA statements. The United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns makes the following four recommendations:

### 1. What is the essence of an ONA Statement?

*It declares a specific WELCOME to persons who are "gay, lesbian, bisexual" (or persons of all "sexual orientations") into the full life and ministry of the church (e.g., membership, leadership, employment). The Coalition encourages the inclusion of "transgender" persons, as well, or those of all "gender identities."*

### 2. Can we simply say "All people are welcome!"?

*Such general statements are already made by most Christian churches but gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons have learned from painful experiences that this message often does not mean them. ONA congregations are those willing to*

*clarify their openness to and affirmation of LGBT persons as members of Christ's body.*

### 3. Can we adopt only a nondiscrimination statement?

*While such statements are very important and we hope churches will adopt them, they are different from an Open and Affirming Statement, which conveys an attitude of welcome.*

### 4. Do we have to take a vote to become ONA?

*Not necessarily. What is important is that the congregation affirms a statement that can publicly express its position on LGBT inclusion. Most churches do vote, but if a church wishes to make this decision through another process (e.g., consensus), that certainly is acceptable.*

We will provide a more complete summary of your comments soon. The ONA committee is starting to plan several discussion sessions and presentations on LGBT issues that will take place over the summer. We hope to have a draft ONA statement ready for presentation to the Congregation in September, with a vote on an ONA resolution projected this fall, possibly late October.

If you have any additional questions or concerns about ONA, please feel free to contact any committee member.





**It's Hammer Time!  
Habitat for Humanity  
July 15-20**

Once again the UCCSV will be building houses with Habitat for Humanity in Mon County, West Virginia. Anyone 14 years old and over can participate. Ask your friends and co-workers to come along. No prior building experience is required; we will be working under the supervision of experienced builders. They will teach us everything we need to know and guide us through the building process step by step.

Habitat families must contribute "sweat equity" for their future home. Some of the most memorable moments from our past Habitat experiences have been the ones that we've shared working side by side with the future owners. You will also learn a lot about house building and will do things you never thought you could do!

Accommodations are being provided by a local church in downtown Morgantown. All participants will share the cost of meals during our stay, which will be \$10 per day.

The Mon County, WV Habitat also requests that \$25 per day be provided to their program for each participant. This helps defray the costs of the building materials that we will use during the week. The UCCSV Social Concerns Board will help pay for some of this. Additional funds will be sought from members of our church or other fund-raising efforts. If you would like to make a donation, please write your check out to "UCCSV" and write "Habitat" on the memo line.

We will depart for Morgantown directly after worship on Sunday, July 15, and we will start work Monday morning about 8 am. On Friday, July 20, we will depart Morgantown a little after 2 pm and arrive back in Germantown around 5 pm. You can come for the whole week or just a few days. Students can receive credit for 30 to 35 hours towards their high school graduation public service requirement.

If you or someone you know would like to participate, please call the church office at 301-540-3449. You don't have to make a firm commitment at this point, but we would like to get a general idea of how many people might be interested.

## Community Based Shelter

### Save the Date!

Our Community Based Shelter days this year will be September 23-25. The Shelter, which is based in Rockville, now serves 35 women. Our church has been involved with providing and serving meals for several days to a week for a long time. We begin cooking, delivering and serving dinner on Sunday, September 23, and provide all meals until lunch on the 25th. Please think about how you would like to be involved, whether it is cooking part of a meal or serving the food and meeting the residents, or writing a check to help pay for supplies. Watch for the sign-up sheets on the bulletin boards in a few months.

Thanks in advance for your service!



## Christian Education

The Christian Education Board would like to thank those who shared their gifts of faith and teaching with our youth.

And our thanks to all who have supported Christian Education with helping with set-up, take down and in so many other ways.

## Memorial

Dear UCCSV:

Enclosed is a contribution to the church in memory of Susan J. Russ.

Because of the faithful witness and ministry of UCCSV, my life and the lives of my family members have been filled to overflowing with songs, joy, manna, renewal, vision, insight, and blessed assurance. Heaven itself could hardly offer a more gracious and supportive environment. At a time of loss and transition, it is a wondrous thing, an unexpected thing, an unearned thing, to be remembered, to be cared for, to be nourished in all things great and small. These are the things that point to God and speak volumes about a love that will not let us go.

Thanks be to God for what God is doing through all these goodly servants of UCCSV and abroad. It is my ardent prayer that these blessings be multiplied and shared with all of God's people so that the earth might be filled with the knowledge and mercy of the Holy One. To this end, the enclosed check is dedicated.

Peace and joy



## Boy Scout Troop #93

Boy Scout Troop #93 will provide a rabies vaccine clinic on Sunday, June 10, at Untied Church of Christ of Seneca Valley, from 1:00-4:00pm. The church is located on Clopper road across from the Kingsview Village shopping center. Cost is \$10.00 per vaccination. All pets must be leashed. Please come out and protect your pets. If you have any questions please contact Alicia Kiser at [naturelover27@yahoo.com](mailto:naturelover27@yahoo.com) or Susan Austin at 301-515-1580 or [slaustin@apma.org](mailto:slaustin@apma.org).

## Pampered Chef Party

You are invited to a Pampered Chef party to benefit UCCSV's outreach to the community!

◆ When: Wednesday, June 27 from 6-8pm.



For more info contact the church office at [uccsv@verizon.net](mailto:uccsv@verizon.net)

**We welcome our new Church officers and give thanks to those who served so faithfully in the past.**



**Please see next page for  
June/July Calendar of Events.**

## JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8:30a – 8p - 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
3 8:30p AA	4	5 10:00a – Staff Mtg  8:30p - AA	6 7:30-9p – Call Small Group	7 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – Boy Scouts	8	9 8:30a – 8p - 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
10 CE Sunday 1:00-4p – Scouts Fundraiser	11 7:00p – Property Ops	12 7:30-9p – Mind, Body, Spirit 8:30p - AA	13 7:30-9p – Call Small Group	14 6:00p – Choir Party 7:30p – Boy Scouts	15	16 8:30a – 8p - 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
17	16	19  8:30p - AA	20 7:30-9p – Call Small Group	21 7:30p – Boy Scouts	22	23 8:30a – 8p - 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
24	25	26  8:30p - AA	27 7:30-9p – Call Small Group	28 7:30p – Boy Scouts	29	30 8:30a – 8p - 7 <sup>th</sup> Day



### Important July Dates:

**July 15 – UCCSV Recognition of Kaye 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

**July 15-20 – Habitat for Humanity**

**July 20 – Kaye Birthday**

**July 21-31 – Guatemala Trip**

**Please watch the bulletin boards and Sunday bulletins for July calendar updates.**

### Groups who meet regularly at UCCSV;

**Sunday/Tuesday nights: 8:30p – AA**

**Thursday nights: 7:30p – Boy Scouts**

**Saturdays: 8:30a-1:00p and 4:00-8:00p – 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists**