



The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
13421 Clopper Road ♦ Germantown, Maryland 20874
Phone: 301-540-3449 ♦ Website: www.uccsv.org ♦ Email: uccsv@aol.com

Carolyn's Column

Early in July, we handed out index cards to those gathered in worship and asked participants to write out any question they had about faith, the church, or some aspect of our lives together. I responded to several of the questions then, and have held on to the others to address them periodically.

One of the outstanding questions is: "Discerning our call—we are urged to follow the 'call' of our God. How do we know we are following God's call and not our own desires?" It's a fair question, and follows along the lines of the prayer, "Lord, help me to do what you are blessing." That is not the same as, "Lord, please bless what I am doing." Both are valid prayers, but only the first is focused on discernment.

In part, discernment is an ongoing process of self-discovery, a journey in which 'who we are' and 'what we are called to do' work more and more closely together. The call Moses received to challenge Pharaoh is not the call he received to lead Israel through the wilderness, nor is it the call he received to share the covenant of the ten commandments with Israel. With each call, Moses needed to discern not only what it was that God was asking him to do, but also what resources he would need to respond to that call.

Over the years, UCCSV has gone through various stages of discernment as we have discerned the need for a UCC congregation in upper Montgomery County, established a congregation, identified our core values, basic beliefs, the mission to which God calls us, and the specific outcomes of that mission. In the process, we have affirmed that there are certain spiritual characteristics with which we have been blessed that equip us to live into our mission. These characteristics

include a deep commitment to hospitality, an openness to questions and a growing faith, and a desire to serve others.

One of the responses to God's call for UCCSV to serve others has been the Emergency Assistance program, which provides small grants for people in the Germantown-Gaithersburg area dealing with emergency needs. Much has been said recently about the reality that funding for this worthy program is no longer keeping pace with the need. I believe that God's call to support those who face emergency needs is as clear as ever.

I also believe that we must find additional means of providing funds to meet those needs. This probably means a dedicated fund-raising activity. Specifics are limited only by our imaginations, but discernment is an essential first step. Part of that discernment includes:

- a. praying for God's inspiration and guidance
- b. considering the human resources and spiritual gifts present in this congregation.

To return to the initial question, I believe that in addition to an on-going process of self-discovery, discernment also necessarily includes an awareness and acknowledgment of God's active presence in our lives, coupled with the essential recognition that our spiritual gifts are intended to be used in the service of others. Discernment, then, cannot be determined entirely on one's own. Whether we are speaking of personal call or the congregation's call, discernment requires a community of faith both for its validation and for its fullest expression.

Blessings,

Carolyn

From The Moderator

Completing the Circle



During the past several months, much work has been done responding to feedback that members of the church have provided in a variety of ways, including church meetings, conversations with our sabbatical pastor, and individual conversations with church leaders and staff. As a result you've probably noticed some changes around UCCSV such as pew cushions, changes in worship, a different look to the bulletin, communications, and many more. Your concerns and suggestions have been heard.

The next step in the process is to begin a more systematic approach to obtaining and responding to feedback about our ministries at UCCSV. Using a format described in *Completing the Circle*, we will receive feedback about how things are going on a regular basis. Small group feedback sessions focused on a specific facet of our church life will be held periodically. The sessions are open to all and will be announced in the bulletin, *Spirit News*, etc. Each session will be coordinated through Human Resources with a facilitator and note taker. Following the session, the facilitator and note taker will meet with the committee and staff member responsible for the particular area being reviewed to discuss the feedback obtained at each session and to determine appropriate recommendations for action. The results will be reported to council and the congregation. Human Resources will use the information as part of the staff evaluation process.

More information will be provided as the session date approaches. In the meantime if you have any questions please contact anyone on the "completing the circle" team.



Notes From The Deacons

Thank you one and all; Rally Day was not only fun but quite a success. The Deacons are extremely grateful to everyone who so joyfully signed up to be ushers, Sunday School teachers and providers of "Children's Time." It really does "take a village."

Two members deserve some recognition. They were the big winners in the "Do You Know Your Deacon?" Contest. Between the two of them they connected every unique and surprising descriptive identifier to each deacon. Needless to say, they won a fabulous prize!

Kudos go one of our Deacons who pointed out a real need here at UCCSV. There are friends and members who so enjoy coming together to celebrate Sunday worship with the congregation but, because of circumstances, can't get to church on their own. Beth brought up the idea of possibly getting a group together that could share their time and efforts to offer rides on Sunday mornings. That generous thought spiraled into the idea of a Transportation Ministry. *Friends With Wheels* was formally coined. The organization of this ministry will fall to the *Called-To-Care* group. The hope is that people will come forward to assist periodically in this ministry, recognizing that we all need the help of a friend from time to time. If you think you could provide an occasional ride round trip or one way on a Sunday morning, please the church office. *Called-To-Care* will be putting together a list of volunteers; A *Friends With Wheels* coordinator will work with the individual in need and the volunteer regarding the specifics.

In the inimitable words of Dr. Seuss, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Chair, Board of Deacons

Social Concerns

Emergency Assistance

As of Tuesday, September 23, Emergency Assistance has helped 100 families this year. We have given \$9,444.69 to aid with utilities, housing, and medical expenses. Many thanks to all of those who answered the request for additional funds to help keep the Emergency Assistance program solvent. We received over \$2,000 from members and friends. As you know, Emergency Assistance is not funded from the church budget, but only from the amazing generosity of members and friends. Thank you for your continued support.

Community Based Shelter (CBS)

Thanks to all who baked, cooked dinner, served, made lunches, made financial donations, and gave of their time to CBS. Your spirit of giving is appreciated!

Stewardship

Celebrate God's Gifts



As we enter our seasonal focus on stewardship, we are called to remember who we are and how God has acted in our lives.

- What is your story?
- Where do you see God's hand in your life?
- In the lives of those you love?
- What does your story tell you about the possibilities for today and tomorrow?

As we consider *our* story, we are reminded of God's many gifts.

Celebrate God's gifts—support the ministries of this United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley! Pledge your support on Stewardship Sunday, November 2.

Contribute Money to UCCSV while you Shop and Eat

Do you wish there was some way you could give a little extra to the church? Well, in addition to the Giant cards, here's another way you can help: Sign up for eScrip.

eScrip is a national online program to return a percent of sales to charitable organizations. Here's how it works. You go to www.eScrip.com and click on "sign-up." Follow the instructions to register your Safeway card and other credit and debit cards. Instruct them that you want the donations to go to UCCSV. Our eScrip ID number is 151607756.

Then every time you use your card at a participating store or local restaurant, the merchant donates a percent to UCCSV. In addition, you can shop on their online mall at numerous national stores such as Barnes and Noble and Lands End. When you access the online site through eScrip UCCSV also receives a percentage. Or you can choose to install AutoEARN and it will track your purchases automatically from the retail site which is easier than remembering to go to the eScrip site every time you buy online.

While the percent that is donated is generally under 5%, it can add up. Last year we only had four participants and we received over \$150. We have the potential to receive a lot more if members and friends sign up and if we all remember to use the site for online purchases. They will also send you emails about restaurants in the area that are participating in the program. All you have to do is use the credit card that you have registered when you pay your bill.

Please note: If you and your spouse/partner/child have the same credit card with slightly different numbers, you should register all of them.

For those of you who have registered in the past, please make sure your Safeway card is re-registered and your information is up to date. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a member of the Stewardship Board.. Let's go shopping!



Fellowship

Help with Coffee Hour

Anyone who would like to help with coffee hour, please see a member of the Fellowship Board after church. If you've never done it, you might like it. Guaranteed: you'll come away from it feeling good. You can help a little or a lot, so don't be intimidated.

Ladies Night Out

Another ladies night out is coming up! These only happen a few times a year, so don't miss it! Tuesday, September 30, 7 pm at Mi Rancho on Route 118 in Germantown. (It's right next to Royal Bakery). There will be good food at a reasonable price and priceless fun, so plan for a great time and mark your calendars!



Property Operations

Help Wanted to Provide Landscape TLC

If you enjoy working with plants and shrubbery, we would love to have your help in maintaining the prayer garden and the landscaping in front of the church. You can spend time whenever it is convenient to you in weeding, trimming, mulching, etc. Property Operations will provide any mulch or other supplies you might need. Please see a member of the Property Operations Board if you would like to help.

Book Club Starting Up Again

The book club is re-starting. Call the office if you would like to join! All are invited.

Community Based Shelter (CBS) Chicken Casserole



Thanks to a member for her mother-in-law's wonderful chicken casserole recipe. We made it for the ladies at CBS and it was a big hit. A request was made to share the recipe with everyone, so here goes:

- Pepperidge Farm Corn Bread Stuffing
- 1 whole chicken (3.5 lbs) cook, skin, bone and cut into pieces
- Sauce - Blend but do not cook
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup mayo
- 1/2 tsp curry (or use some fresh minced rosemary)
- 1 package Uncle Ben's Long grain Rice and Wild Rice - cooked as directed on pkg.

Directions:

1. Butter 9x13 casserole
2. spread cooked rice on bottom
3. spread chicken over rice
4. spread sauce over chicken
5. sprinkle pepperidge farm corn bread stuffing over sauce (about 1/2" deep)
6. dot with butter
7. bake for 30 minutes at 350 or until mixture bubbles

Casserole can be assembled in advance.



UCC NEWS

News from the United Church of Christ

Once Again, We Did It! The UCC raised \$235,000 nationally to air the *Steeple* ad to a national audience. It will air nationwide beginning Monday, September 29, through Sunday, October 12, on CNN, Bravo, BET and T-One. As the ad reaches a wide audience, UCCSV may also receive additional guests eager to learn more about the United Church of Christ and experience our extravagant welcome.

Tents of Hope, the national movement to show solidarity with the people of Darfur, is holding a "Gathering of the Tents" at the National Mall in the District on November 7-9. The movement will create a refugee camp in the mall by pitching hundreds of canvas tents with uniquely painted panels that serve as an educational tool. Many of the tents will be sent to Sudan following the event. Additional information may be found at www.tentsofhope.org.

News from Central Atlantic Conference

The Rev. Beth O'Malley of Ellicott City has been called to be the first dean of the chapel at Hood College in Frederick. This is a new position for the college and reaffirms the school's historic ties to the United Church of Christ. O'Malley serves as a pastor and counselor for the Hood community. The position was recently endowed by Hood alumna and former trustee Dr. Christine L. McHenry in memory of her parents. Prior to this call, O'Malley served as a campus minister in three urban colleges, and most recently served as co-pastor at Columbia UCC in Chesapeake Association.

News from Potomac Association

Robin McCord

The life of Potomac Association Moderator Robin McCord was celebrated July 27 in a gathering of family, friends and colleagues at a memorial service at Bethel UCC in Arlington. Anne Holmes spoke on behalf of Potomac Association and Central Atlantic Conference, sharing memories of Robin's dedication to her church work, her generous friendship, and her organizational skills. Robin was also a talented musician, and served as music director of a number of

congregations in the area. The Rev. Hank Fairman, pastor for children, youth, and families at Rock Spring Congregational UCC in Arlington, has assumed the position of Association Moderator.

Building the Beloved Community in the Potomac Association, UCC

A Series of Honest and Challenging Conversations about Racism among Potomac Association Pastors, Congregations, and Friends.

- Saturday, October 11 – 9:00-11:45
Bethesda UCC - 10010 Fernwood Road,
Bethesda www.bethesdaucc.org (for more information)
- Saturday, November 1
National City Christian Church
5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington DC
www.nationalcitycc.org (for more information)
- Saturday, November 15
Covenant Baptist church
3845 S. Capitol Street, SW, Washington DC
www.covenantbaptistdc.org (for more information)
or contact Doug Clark (revdlmc@verizon.net)

News from the Ecumenical Community

The World Council of Churches is 60 years old! Sixty years is a short time in the church calendar, but in the six decades since its founding, a number of substantial changes have taken place. General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, notes that the ecumenical movement formed when imperial monarchs ruled much of Europe and Asia, and the peoples of the southern hemisphere were dominated by foreign colonial powers. The ecumenical movement saw the rise and fall of communism, and its leaders played a significant role in the Civil Rights movement. The WCC and NCC formed an important partnership during the liberation struggles of the 20th century. South African President Nelson Mandela credited the worldwide ecumenical movement for being instrumental in dismantling apartheid.



Halloween Party

Mark your calendars now and plan on attending the Youth Group's annual Halloween Party on Sunday, October 26, from 3:00-7:00 pm in the Gathering Room. All members and friends are invited! Watch for more information in the coming weeks!

Artisans' Autumn Studio Tour

October 10, 11, 12
10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Meet and talk with the artisans as they open their studios to offer an array of handcrafted items for sale. Find hand blown glass, prints and paintings, yarn, jewelry, tiles, furniture, garden art, mosaics and local wines. Come out for a breath of fresh air, witness the changing colors of the landscape and see where the artists live and work. Take home a renewed sense of wellbeing and possibly a wonderful piece of art to add to your home. Keep the tradition of American artists alive! .



October Birthdays

Be sure to check the bulletin board for October birthdays.



Scripture Readings – October

Sunday, October 5

Theme: Wisdom for the Way

Exodus 20.1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Psalm 18

Isaiah 5.1-7

Philippians 3.4b-14

Sunday, October 12

Theme: Praiseworthy Living, Part 1

Exodus 32.1-14

Psalm 106.1-6, 19-23

Matthew 22.15-22

Sunday, October 19

Theme: Praiseworthy Living, Part 2

Exodus 33.12-23

Psalm 99

Matthew 22.15-22

Sunday, October 26

Theme: The Compassionate Life

Matthew 22.34-46

Deuteronomy 34.1-12

Psalm 90.1-6, 13-17

1 Thessalonians



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FIRDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:00p – Great World Religions 7:30p – One Anothering	2 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – Boy Scouts	3	4 7 th Day Adventists – am 2:00p – Jim Russ/Sue Teigen wedding Oktoberfest – all day - Germantown
5 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship 8:30p - AA	6 7p Deacons & Prop Ops 7:30p – Social Concerns	7 10a - Staff 7:30p – Mind, Body, Spirit	8 7:00p – Hope Task Force 7:00p – Great World Religions 7:30p – One Anothering	9 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – Boy Scouts	10	11 7 th Day Adventists – all day
12 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship 8:30p - AA	13 Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day – Church office closed	14 10a- Staff	15 7:00p – Great World Religions 7:30p – One Anothering	16 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – Boy Scouts	17	18 7 th Day Adventists – all day
19 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship Noon-2:00p – Inquirer Class 8:30p - AA	20 7:30p - Stewardship	21 7:30p – Council 10a - Staff	22 7:30p – One Anothering 7:00p – Great World Religions Deadline for Voice articles!	23 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – Boy Scouts	24	25 7 th Day Adventists – all day
26 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship Human Res &Transition Team 3-7p – Halloween Party 8:30p - AA	27	28 10a - Staff	29	30	31	