



The Seneca Valley Voice

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

When we asked for suggestions of favorite hymns a couple of weeks ago, one of the respondents added a note asking that we please sing familiar hymns. I can appreciate the sentiment behind the request. One of the great joys of singing is being able to do so without having to check the hymnbook for every phrase. That's why we enjoy it when a familiar song comes up on the radio—we can sing along.

One of the great surprises after we compiled the list of favorite hymns was their tremendous diversity. More than sixty hymns were listed as favorites from a total of twenty responses. [It's not too late to let us know what *your* choice would be, by the way. Simply drop me an e-mail.] Add to that the reality that some hymns tend to be quite seasonal; *In the Bleak Midwinter* comes to mind, but even the most familiar *Silent Night* isn't going to be a candidate during Lent, Easter or Pentecost. The additional effort to have at least passing correspondence between the hymn and the theme for a given Sunday, recognizing that greater diversity within our church family also increases the diversity of what is familiar to an individual worshiper, and the challenges become noticeable.

Other aspects relate to the hymns we sing as well. As we repeat certain hymns, such as *Siyahamba* or *Sanctuary*, they become part of our repertoire. Not only do they lose their newness and become familiar to us, they also become one of the treasures we pass on to our children. This is perhaps one of the most enduring gifts we can offer: our hymns are our primary bearers of our theology.

And of course that raises another issue. At a recent lunch with some of the residents at Asbury, the topic moved from a discussion of favorite hymns to those that decidedly are *not* favorites. The one I remember

distinctly from that discussion was *I Come to the Garden Alone*. When one of the group asked the speaker *why* that was not a favorite, the response was quick and direct: because it's terrible theology!

That's when choosing hymns sometimes puts worship planners such as myself between a rock and a hard place. I confess I'm not big on what some irreverently call 'worm' theology (we're such lowly sinners, such worms, that we can't understand why God would have anything to do with us); I'm equally unimpressed with 'blood' theology (often combined with 'worm' theology, Jesus' bloody death on the cross is the only means to salvation).

Fortunately, there are hundreds of hymns that lift up theological themes that I believe also resound throughout our biblical story, our faith story. Themes of compassion and justice, of hope and healing, of courage, thanksgiving, creation and stewardship. It's enough to make me sing for joy!

Blessings,

Carolyn



***Das Oktoberfest kommt nach Deutschstadt!
(The Oktoberfest is coming to Germantown!)***



Circle Saturday, October 4, on your calendars. After a long absence, **the UCC of Seneca Valley is returning to the Germantown Oktoberfest.** We will be hosting a booth to share brochures and bookmarks with information about our church, as well as small trinkets with our name and web address printed on them. We will also be selling our famous fair-trade coffee.

This is one of the biggest community events in Germantown and it's an excellent opportunity to tell our neighbors a little about ourselves. **Please sign up to help staff our booth.** Festivities run from 11 am until dark. Oktoberfest includes local crafts, music, dancing, food, games for kids, and of course the Oktoberfest Biergarten. We're excited to be a part of this fun day. Come be a part of it too!

Notes From The Deacons

A & W

Ah, you're probably thinking about the "root beer". That would be accurate with a little twist! There is a temptation to call September the start of the New Year. It's the time of magnificent colors, crinkling leaves, cool temperatures and invigoration for just about everything. The deacons are eager to incorporate UCCSV's new focus of ***A & W***; won't you join us?

A & W not only brings to mind that famous 'root beer' but we'd also like to think of the symbol in terms of ***ATTRACTING & WELCOMING***. Rally Sunday, on Sept. 7th, will offer an opportunity to experience both aspects of ***A & W***. You'll not only be able to enjoy a delicious Root Beer Float but you can visit

table sites set up by each board as they display information about what makes them tick. You may want to consider joining or offering some of your time and talents. Everyone has gifts to offer and everyone is welcomed. With the focus of ***A & W***, the intent is to spread the good news about UCCSV. We all acknowledge what a special congregation we have; it is certainly worth sharing.

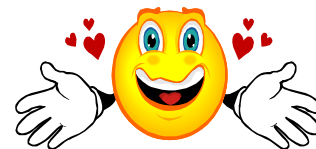
A new "Inquirer's Class" will be offered after services at 12 noon on September 14, 21 & 28. This is a time for interested persons to bring their questions and thoughts while considering joining UCCSV. Simply join Carolyn and the deacons for lunch and conversation. This invitation is extended to current members as well. We'd love to have you share your insights and smiles with prospective new members. We have a lot to be proud of and a lot of work to do, together.

SHINE !

***LET YOUR LIGHT
SHINE BEFORE PEOPLE
THAT THEY WILL SEE
THE GOOD THINGS YOU DO
AND PRAISE YOUR
FATHER IN HEAVEN.***

Matthew 5:16

Chair, Board of Deacons



SOCIAL CONCERNS

Emergency Assistance:

In early August I spent a morning talking on the one hand to neighbors in need and on the other, to providers of help. This was a typical 2008 day for us at the Emergency Assistance desk; many people had called over the previous few days and I called them back to discuss their need. Others made their initial call that day. In addition, calls were received from the County's Department of Human Services (HHS) and the Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN). All in all it was quite busy. Three checks were written and we committed to three other checks. In addition Giant Cards were sent to one person to facilitate the purchase of a prescription.

It is probably helpful to put a face on these neighbors. One, Carol needed \$627 to turn her electricity back on and was directed to UCCSV by HHS. I was able to confirm that HHS was willing to issue \$500 out of emergency funds, and that Alleghany Power would work with her for the last \$27. Our check was issued and her power was restored. Another of our neighbors, Ms L, was really caught up in problems. Her husband died earlier this year and he had handled all the bills. She needed \$2,982 to keep her electricity and water/sewer on. One of the folks at HHS had marshaled the process and the solution included various county agencies/funds: Bethesda Cares, Hand-To-Hand, St. Martin, St. John Newman and UCCSV. Kathleen was somewhat unusual. She needed \$18.55 for a badly needed prescription. We talked to her church, which had helped her the month before and confirmed the circumstances. We sent her \$20 in Giant Cards.

These folks, who all live nearby, include single mothers, disabled, elderly, and recent arrivals; most would be considered working poor. We ask nothing in return. We don't judge or preach – we help. As I sit here at the desk in Marilyn's office, underneath the picture of JC Ilg who labored lovingly at this task for years, I feel sure that we are doing God's work and following Jesus' instructions even if the rest of my religious life is full of uncertainty. We have helped nearly 100 neighbors (and occasionally members) with almost \$8,000 this year and August is only 2/3 over.

We have only about \$1,200 in our Fund at the present time. **WE WILL RUN OUT OF MONEY IN THE NEXT 2-3 WEEKS. WHEN THE PHONE RINGS WE WILL HAVE TO REPORT THAT WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO HELP** - unless we can raise \$4,000 to get us through 2008 that is. I am asking for your prayerful consideration. While every little bit helps (we have our Shalom Church each month) it must be obvious to the reader that we need more. Our neighbors need our help and I think this ministry is important to our mission and identity – PLEASE HELP. Reaching \$4,000 requires deep commitment. I think we have that commitment.

Respectfully written by a UCCSV volunteer.



Community Based Shelter

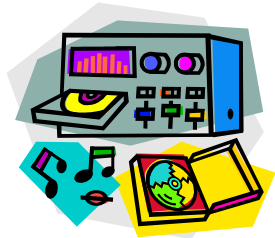
Montgomery County has a program in which homeless people are given training to prepare them for jobs leading to independent living eventually. During the time they are in training they live in a shelter in Rockville. The program is called Community Based Shelter. While living in the shelter the residents are provided food by various churches taking turns preparing and serving dinners and providing breakfast foods and lunches for the residents to take with them when they go out for the day's training.

UCCSV has been taking part in feeding these people for many years and will again do so this September from dinner on September 21 through lunch on September 24. In the coming weeks there will be sign-up sheets on the Social Concerns bulletin board denoting the things that will be needed. Generally we will need people to cook, serve the food and clean up, prepare lunches and provide breakfast foods. Also things like laundry soap come in handy for the residents.

Those UCCSV members who have participated in this program in past years have found it to be a rewarding experience and actually quite a lot of fun. So look for information in the coming weeks in your bulletins and on the bulletin board. There will be names, phone

numbers and e-mail addresses of people to contact if you have further questions.

Please consider signing up for this worthy project. It will make you feel really good inside. If you should want to help but don't want to cook, serve, etc, donations can be given to help with expenses, e.g. providing lunch materials etc.



“Singing for Shaw” Concert

CDs and DVDs Available

On May 17 more than 60 voices from choirs from around the Potomac Association combined in a concert to benefit the Shaw Ministry. Participating churches included Bethesda UCC, Greenbelt Community UCC, Peoples Congregational UCC, Plymouth Congregational UCC, Pilgrim Church UCC, UCCSV, and Westmoreland Congregational UCC. The concert featured classical, contemporary and spiritual anthems, including an original piece composed by Westmoreland's music director and accompanied by organ, timpani, trumpets and oboe. The event raised \$1,800 in support of the Shaw Ministry. If you were not able to attend the concert or would like to have a remembrance of it, DVD and CD recordings were made and will be available for purchase. Pre-orders to help us determine how many copies to make can be placed with Pilgrim Church by calling 301-942-7188 or by email at pilgrimucc61@verizon.net

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Mind, Body, Spirit

Mind, Body, Spirit will resume on Tuesday, September 9, from 7:30-9:00 pm. This group affords the opportunity to learn meditation as a means of improving health through relaxation and provides a path for drawing closer to God. Please call the office at 301-540-3449 to confirm that you are attending and to get directions. All are invited.



Fireplace Operation

We need your help!

Property Operations recently contracted for the repair of our fireplace. There are no restrictions on its use, but we have two important procedures that everyone needs to comply with when operating the fireplace:

1. How to start and keep the equipment operating safely;
2. Insuring that the equipment is properly shut off before you depart the Narthex.

Property Operations will be providing instructions every Sunday in October following the church service. If you think you are going to call a meeting in the Narthex, and want the fireplace lit, please attend one of these fireplace operation and safety briefings.



Happy September Birthdays

September 1 – Maridell
 September 4 – Sue
 September 5 – Ben
 September 13- Caitlin
 September 17 – Tami
 September 19 – Ulric
 September 24 – Suzanne
 September 25 – Stu

If we have missed your birthday, please let the church office know or place your special day on the poster outside the church office.

Do you have extra birthday cards or plain note cards that come in the mail from different organizations that you don't use? The church office could use them. Just leave them on Marilyn's desk.



Scripture Readings - September

Church Council



Sunday, September 7

Theme: Remember, Restore, Renew, Recommit, Reconcile

Exodus 12.1-14

Psalm 149

Romans 13.18-14

Matthew 18.15-20

If you would like information on the church council you may call the office at 301-540-3449.

Sunday, September 14

Theme: Road to Freedom: Deliverance

Exodus 14.19-31

Psalm 114

Romans 14.1-12

Matthew 18.21-35

Sunday, September 21

Theme: Tensions in the Wilderness

Exodus 16.2-15

Psalm 105.1-6, 37-45

Philippians 1.21-30

Matthew 18.21-35

Sunday, September 28

Theme: God's Sustaining Presence

Exodus 17.1-7

Psalm 78.1-4, 12-16

Philippians 2.1-13

Matthew 21.23-32



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FIRDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Labor Day – Office closed	2	3 7:30p – One Anothering	4 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – <i>Boy Scouts</i>	5	6 <i>7th Day Adventists – all day</i>
7 10a – Worship RALLY DAY 11a – Fellowship 8:30p - AA	8 7p Deacons & Prop Ops 7:30p – Social Concerns	9 7:30p – Mind, Body, Spirit	10 7:30p – One Anothering	11 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – <i>Boy Scouts</i>	12	13 <i>7th Day Adventists – all day</i>
14 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship - Spreading the Hope - Noon-2:00p – Inquirer Class 8:30p - AA	15 7:30p - Stewardship	16 7:30p - Council	17 7:30p – One Anothering	18 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – <i>Boy Scouts</i>	19	20 <i>7th Day Adventists – all day</i>
21 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee Noon-2:00p – Inquirer Class 8:30p - AA	22	23	24 7:30p – One Anothering Deadline for Voice articles!	25 7:30p – Choir 7:30p – <i>Boy Scouts</i>	26	27 <i>7th Day Adventists – all day</i>
Community Based Shelter						
28 10a – Worship 11a – Fellowship/coffee After worship - Octoberfest training Noon-2:00p – Inquirer Class 8:30p - AA	29	30				