



The Seneca Valley Voice

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
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Carolyn's Column—What's Going On?

Several conversations with members concerning UCCSV's current strategic planning efforts have made it clear that there is a general feeling of "been there, done that."

I'm not surprised. After all, we have put a great deal of effort into identifying our Core Values, Basic Beliefs, Vision, and Mission. Isn't that the same thing?

In a word, no. That work is *essential* identity work. It clarifies who we are. And it articulates the mission to which we are called: *Our mission is to provide a welcoming spiritual home for those seeking God's presence, preparing us to serve others in Jesus' name.*

But the *form* that mission takes will change every year. Of necessity, it will change over a period of five years or longer.

To reiterate Ed White's analogy, Ford Motor's mission is always the same: it is to make cars. But Ford is no longer making Model T's or Model A's. It is no longer making Edsels. Currently, it is making Explorers, but even as those are rolling off the production lines, plans are being made for a time in which Explorers have been replaced by a newer version of a Ford car that fits better into the culture of its time.

For the past two years, we have been trying to do strategic planning. The Roadmap Advisory Group was formed to lead us in that effort, but despite very sincere efforts on the part of every member of that group, we were not successful.

However, the need to move forward with intentionality was still recognized, so Council approved the form-

ation of a new Strategic Planning Committee.

In the spring of this year, UCCSV's previous Council recognized the need to think outside the box of using members only to lead us in this effort, and brought in Ed White to provide the leadership we needed. Ed is a senior consultant with Alban Institute, a highly respected resource based in Washington D.C. He began his work with the Strategic Planning Committee in May. Because we did not want to lose time over the summer, Ed was introduced to the congregation in June in worship and in two workshops.

They were not terribly well-attended workshops. Nevertheless, the beginning work done by those present has given us good working drafts in the form of "Outcomes."

To return to the Ford analogy, outcomes include a car that seats up to seven passengers, has gas mileage in the range of 15-17mpg, is capable of hauling a trailer, and has room for bulky cargo.

These outcomes are included separately in this newsletter, and are also included in our Sunday bulletin for the next three Sundays. They need refining—and they need to be evaluated to make sure they include those things which are most critical to our mission. We are asking for your input and feedback.

Once the outcomes are in final form, we will put the specifics to them and prioritize them. It's a process of starting with the biggest picture, then breaking it down into its component parts.

In the story of feeding of the multitudes, the outcome was clear. The disciples were to feed the crowds. They couldn't figure out how to do so until Jesus asked what resources they had available. Even then, those resources were broken down into smaller units before they were distributed. And the outcome was fulfilled.

We are in the process of identifying the outcomes that will fulfill our mission. It is a fertile, creative time—a perfect time to begin the new program year.

Blessings,

Carolyn

From the Moderator

Last Sunday was Rally Sunday and what a great Sunday it was! More than 80 people turned out to enjoy food, fellowship, great ice cream, live music, and the moon bounce. Thanks to the CE board for working so hard on this and to everyone else who pitched in to help. The food was awesome and the weather was perfect.

Council did not meet in August, but if you look around the church, you will see they have been busy. Check out the bulletin boards. The first-ever written policies and procedures document is almost done, and we hope to use this and the work of the strategic planning committee to plan for the coming year. Our committees and boards have worked so hard to keep everything running smoothly, the property in good shape, the bills paid, to offer services to those in need, and welcome all who come here.

In September, we begin talking about the budget and the annual stewardship drive. The Christian Education (CE) board has requested that we seriously consider hiring someone on a part-time basis to manage the CE program. That will clearly have an impact on our budget. In addition to the challenge of having the money to pay the salary for this person, the other challenge is finding someone willing and able to do the job. We have been told this is a hard position to fill.

Fall brings our annual stewardship drive and, as Heidi

mentioned in church recently, stewardship is more than just giving your treasures. It's also about your time. We have several openings on committees, including human relations, fellowship, and pastoral relations. The fellowship committee is also looking for people to help at coffee hour on Sundays between the services. This is a great way to meet everyone and help the congregation. Please consider signing up on the bulletin board or calling Marilyn at the church office if you would like to help on one or more Sundays in September or later in the year.

If you have been to church this summer, you have also seen the sign-up sheets for helping with the Christian Education program. There are many ways you can help and the great CE team has made it very easy. Please check the bulletin board for ways that you can help and sign up. Families come to a church looking for ways to engage their children in the church, and church school on Sundays is our most visible way.

And lastly, as we begin our new church year, offer a prayer of thanks this month for all the talents and treasures that have been shared with this congregation.

Moderator

Christian Education

Youth Update

The youth group will resume Sunday school class on September 3. The following Sunday, the 10th of September from 5-7 pm, will be the first youth group meeting of the school year. The youth group will meet consistently every other Sunday through the school year from 5-7 pm in the youth room at the church. The youth group is made up of 6 grade – 12 grade. If your child is in this age range we encourage them to join us. The first meeting will consist of some goal setting for the year ahead. The next meeting will then be Sunday, September 24, when the youth will be helping out at the community-based shelter. The time for this event is to be announced. I will keep everyone posted. If you have any questions please feel free to send an e-mail to the church office. We look forward to a great start to a fresh year!

Social Concerns

Emergency Assistance

We welcome Ruth to the volunteer position of Emergency Assistance Coordinator. Ruth will be in the office on Tuesday/Thursdays from 9:00-11:30 am.

The Emergency Assistance ministry is in need of a laptop computer. If you have an old one, or know of someone who would like to make a donation, please let Ruth or Marilyn know.

Thanks from Guatemala!

The children of El Sauce, a small village outside of San Martin, Guatemala, want to thank UCCSV and outside contributors for the generous donations that Beth, Charles and Dan brought with them on their August 5-15 pilgrimage. Included among the treasures were soccer balls (10), air pumps, magic markers, chalk, crayons, water colors, pencils (20 12-packs), pencil sharpeners, scissors (12 pair), stickers and least of all 5 rolls of Duct Tape! Also much appreciated were the clothes for the children: polo shirts, tee shirts, pants, sweaters, shoes and barrettes.

The time and talent portion of the pilgrimage included 5 days of the threesome's unparalleled skills of digging, shoveling, and wheelbarrowing tons of earth for the foundation of a 4-room school house that the children will soon enjoy for their grades 1-6 education. In addition, tons of gravel and sand were moved to the site for mixing the concrete that will support the bricks, and lots of rebar (steel rods) were prepared to strengthen the building in the earthquake prone Mayan highlands.

The trip was organized by Faith At Work, a non-denominational organization, located in Falls Church, VA, and PAVA, the local Guatemalan grassroots organization that secures the village's help and commitment to finish the school project.

Several colorful items from Guatemala, as well as the free-trade coffee and chocolate from Central America, will be on sale periodically during the Fellowship time at UCCSV this fall. Profits will be used for future UCCSV mission trips or other Social Concerns projects.

What an Awesome Adventure- Beth, Charles, Dan

Community Based Shelter

It is that wonderful time of year again where UCCSV members and friends live out our mission in service to the women and men who find themselves homeless and who live at the **Community Based Shelter** (CBS) in Rockville. Our dates to provide meals are Sunday dinner September 24 - providing bag lunches September 27. We encourage you to participate; you will receive a multitude of gifts while serving others as disciples of Christ.

Sign-up Sheets for each day are on the Social Concerns' bulletin board in the hallway to the Gathering Room. There are a variety of ways to participate in our church's mission to serve CBS, such as: preparing a dish, providing breakfast or lunch foods, making lunches, serving the evening meal at the Shelter, purchasing supplies.

If you are unable to physically participate, a monetary gift is much appreciated. It will be used to purchase lunch and breakfast foods not donated, and supplies – paper plates, napkins, paper towels, lunch bags, etc.

We thank you for your generosity of spirit. See the CBS Coordinators with any questions or for more information.

Adopt-A-Road

Sign up now!! Our second **Adopt-A-Road clean-up** is Saturday, September 9. Our first clean-up in July was a huge success! Fourteen UCCSV members and friends picked up 10 bags of trash from our adopted road, Middlebrook, in 1 1/2 hours. Remember, the more people, the less work!

We'll gather at 8:30 am for some light refreshment and start clean-up at 9:00 am. Bring your friends and family - a **sign-up sheet** is on the Social Concerns' bulletin board in the church hall.

Sign up now for an enjoyable time with UCCSV members and friends and to live out our church's commitment to better the community in which we live and worship.

Stewardship

The National United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need offering will be on Sunday, October 1. Frequently asked questions:

1. What is Neighbors in Need?

Through the Neighbors in Need offering, the church expresses a common commitment to justice and compassion throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. One-third of the offering provides much-needed financial support for the work of the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering supports justice advocacy and direct service projects such as Just-Peace programs and community grants.

Most congregations receive Neighbors in Need on the first Sunday of October, World Communion Sunday. A countdown calendar helps congregations plan for the Neighbors in Need offering.

2. How are Neighbors in Need funds shared with others?

Neighbors in Need supports the work of the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), which is the voice for American Indians in the United Church of Christ. CAIM supports the work of 20 American Indian churches and their pastors, encourages youth and young adults, supports persons preparing for Christian ministry, empowers American Indians who are members of non-Indian congregations; and advocates for justice on issues affecting American Indian life.

Neighbors in Need supports program initiatives and direct grants offered by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries. Small but essential grants are made throughout the year to congregations and organizations engaged in community organizing, public policy advocacy, and direct service. Although grants are made to address a wide range of justice priorities, a significant portion of these grants are made to address issues of hunger and poverty.

3. How are Neighbors in Need grants allocated?

Justice and Witness Ministries uses its portion of Neighbors in Need for program initiatives and grant-making, so that funds are directly supporting grassroots advocacy and outreach efforts. Read the list of [2003 grant recipients](#).

Grant applications are reviewed regularly by ministry teams and decisions are made in keeping with funding guidelines and the availability of funds. Most grants are small and non-repeating but are allocated to congregations and organizations where the larger UCC's solidarity can be used to enhance and strengthen the project's overall effectiveness. All applications must include the endorsement of the UCC conference minister.

Although the number and amount of requests far exceed the amount of dollars available, allocated funds are used to plant seeds in congregations and organizations for programs that creatively address systemic issues of injustice on the local, regional, national, or international level. Careful attention is given to make sure that every Neighbors in Need grant recipient reflects the UCC's vision of being a church of Jesus Christ that is multi-racial, multi-cultural, open and affirming, and accessible to all.

4. What American Indian tribes or nations are supported by Neighbors in Need?

Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches with the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Ho-Cak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Northern Nebraska. Today, there are 19 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban inter-tribal congregation in Minneapolis. In addition, there are more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations scattered in nearly every conference in the UCC. Your contributions to Neighbors in Need directly impact the UCC's ability to support American Indian ministries and congregations.

5. What happened to the "Just-Peace Appeal?"

The Just-Peace Appeal is now part of Neighbors in Need. Through Neighbors in Need, the UCC remains strongly committed to ministries of peacemaking, violence reduction, conflict resolution, federal budget priorities, and global solidarity. For more information on Just-Peace/Peace With Justice ministries, contact the Rev. Loey Powell, Justice and Witness Ministries, at 216-736-3715 or by e-mail at powell@ucc.org.

Individuals and congregations with long-standing commitments to the Just-Peace Appeal are encouraged to continue their support for this vital ministry by strengthening their support for Neighbors in Need.

UCCSV Fall Stewardship Campaign

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley will kick off the Fall 2006 Stewardship Campaign on Sunday, October 15 and conclude with Stewardship Sunday on November 5.

Watch future Sunday bulletins for more information.



Board of Deacons

Piano Purchase Needs Your Support

The Board of Deacons and the Church Council have decided to replace the piano in the sanctuary. Toward that end, the church will be accepting donations, marked "Piano." Our choir, accompanists, band members, and guest musicians will continue working hard to bring a Joyful Noise to our worship experiences together during the new church program year; however, we know we are asking too much of our current instrument. If you have questions about this special fundraising effort, please contact a Deacon, Trevor, or Pastor Carolyn. And please be generous!

Audio Visual Upgrade

If you have attended our 11:00 worship service, you have seen our overhead projector displaying the words to the songs and hymns that we sing together. We'd like to upgrade our audio visual capacity in both worship services and for educational programs and special events through the use of computerized equipment. If you know of anyone who would be willing to donate a used laptop computer with capacity for PowerPoint and other audio visual programs, and/or a projector in good condition, please contact the church office. Thank you!

Hope Task Force

Your small change can make a big change – both in our own lives as disciples and the lives of the many who don't know a church like ours exists. Several weeks ago coin boxes were distributed to collect monies in support of the "God is Still Speaking" campaign. Our goal is to raise funds to run

advertising in local newspapers during the Advent season so we can let others know that no matter who they are, or where they are on life's journey, they're welcome at UCCSV. Coin boxes are available in the narthex, and will be collected on Sunday, September 24.

God is Still Speaking – through even our youngest members at UCCSV!

Henry introduced himself to a seven-year-old guest during the passing of the peace -which made a positive impact on both our young guest and his sister. It is believed Henry's friendliness was one of the reasons the children and their mother stayed for the picnic.

Twenty Years of Mission:

The Haystack Anniversary. On a Saturday afternoon in August, 1806, five college students gathered in a field to discuss the spiritual needs of those living in Asian countries. When a thunderstorm arose, they took shelter on the side of a haystack and prayed. This gathering came to be called **The Haystack Prayer Meeting**, launching the modern mission movement.

This fall, Williams College and Williamstown's First Congregational Church celebrate this important anniversary with a weekend-long celebration September 22-24, on the Williams College campus in western Massachusetts.

For more information and registration forms check out <http://haystack.williams.edu> or call 413-458-8220.

UCCSV Outcomes, Strategic Planning Report

The congregation has developed a first draft of outcomes for our church and the committee is inviting more input and comments so all have the opportunity to communicate ideas. We are pleased to have this progress to report and know that the outcomes will help guide our church as we move into the future. There is more work to be done such as setting priorities, identifying strategies and setting timelines but at least we are moving toward seeing a bigger picture now. Thanks to so many of you who have participated in the process.

Steering Committee Chair

Strategic Planning – UCCSV

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley Strategic Planning Background

Two years ago, UCCSV began a sincere in-house effort to clarify the ways in which we will live into our mission *'to provide a welcoming spiritual home for those seeking God's presence, preparing us to serve others in Jesus' name.'* Initial results were frustrating and did not produce the hoped-for outcomes.

In the spring of 2006, with the appointment of a new Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Council approved the services of Alban consultant Ed White to work closely with us in this strategic planning process.

Ed has reviewed the work UCCSV has already completed around basic identity issues, the work that defines our Core Values, Basic Beliefs, Vision, and Mission. He is impressed with that work, and feels that it is only the 'vision' piece that needs additional attention. He drew the analogy that Ford Motor Company's mission is to build cars. Its vision of what that car will look like changes with the culture, as well as the resources and technologies available - from a Model T to a Mustang to a Windstar.

Ed met with the Steering Committee in May, preached June 18, then led the first workshop with the congregation following our two services of worship. He led a second workshop Saturday, June 24. He helped us think in terms of *outcomes*, that is, what are we expecting to be the end result of our ministry in the three fundamental areas of our mission? Those three areas are *inviting, equipping, and sending*.

The following **draft** outcomes are grouped in one of these three areas. Please give them your prayerful consideration. You are encouraged to add to them, or to 'tweak' the existing statements to reflect your own perspectives. After you do so, please give a copy of your comments or edits to Dianne Kaseman, Steering Committee Chair, or send a copy to the office marked to her attention.

Outcomes developed in follow-up to June 18 & 24, 2006 meetings – DRAFT, revised July 13, 2006

We are **called** by Jesus the Christ, outcomes:

1. We are open to all who are seeking to know God and a greater purpose in their lives.
2. We will provide a welcoming and accepting community where one's gifts are identified, confirmed and developed.
3. We will help friends and members in their faith journey.
4. We will support friends and members in discerning their call.
5. Other?

Outcomes developed in follow-up to June 18 & 24, 2006 meetings - DRAFT revised July 13, 2006

We are **equipped** by Jesus the Christ, outcomes:

1. Members and friends of the congregation will understand that spiritual formation is a life-long commitment in the life of discipleship.
2. Interpersonal relationships and discipleship will be nurtured through small groups and intentional community building.
3. All will have an opportunity to experience music as a vital expression of faith.
4. Guests and members will know that they are welcome no matter who they are or where they are in life's journey.
5. Resources will be committed to support spiritual formation, including UCCSV's physical plant, resources, personnel and training.
6. We will affirm the sacredness of each person's spiritual journey.
7. Worship will be inspiring and central to each person's spiritual journey.
8. All boards, committees, and task groups will be communities in which the life of discipleship is also nourished.
9. Other?

Outcomes developed in follow-up to June 18 & 24, 2006 meetings - DRAFT revised July 13, 2006

We are **sent** by Jesus the Christ, outcomes:

1. Many will be participating in a variety of small groups for discipleship nurture, pastoral care and support and specific mission.
2. We will engage with our community in a well-defined local mission focus that is owned by the congregation.
3. We will build strong bonds with the larger community around UCCSV through shared events.
4. The congregation will be an active voice (locally and globally) for justice, building bridges between diverse peoples.
5. The religious and socio-economic diversity of the surrounding community will be reflected in the congregation.
6. Our vital corporate witness will provide a vibrant faith model for the surrounding community. We will welcome the unchurched and seekers and be open to interfaith dialogue toward creating a beloved community.
7. Congregants will discover, develop and exercise their spiritual gifts in their ministry in daily life.
8. Other?

Mind, Body, Spirit group

The first meeting of Mind, Body, Spirit will be held September 12, 2006, from 7:30 to 9:00. There will be an opportunity to identify the dates for future meetings and to experience a meditation session. All persons are invited to attend. Please wear comfortable clothing and bring a floor mat if you wish. For more information, please contact the church office.

A Thank You

Dear Church Friends: I want to thank you for adding our daughter, Kelly, to the memorial stone in the prayer garden. I happened to be driving by one day and decided to stop. It brought tears to my eyes to see her healthy tree and then her name neatly engraved. It means so much to us.

We have many good memories of UCCSV but are now attending Damascus Methodist church because it is so much closer.

Thanks again for making Kelly's memorial so special.
Love, Karen and Matt Taylor

Hi to Tom and Anne Kimmell!

An Important Website to Check Out

One of our members suggests that all women check out this web site link for its important message.

[InflammatoryBreastCancer.aspx](#)

(Press Ctrl and press on link.)

(You will need speakers)

This is a news report about a rare and lesser known breast cancer called IBC - Inflammatory Breast Cancer. Please pass along to all women that you know.

This type of breast cancer is not found on mammograms or detected by lumps. Education is key as this is a very aggressive form of breast cancer.

Church Office

We are looking for someone to answer phones Tuesday mornings in the church office (10:00-11:00 am during staff meetings. If you can help please sign up on the bulletin board outside the church office or call the church office (301-540-3449).

Touched by the Spirit Faith at Work Retreat

The retreat will be held on November 4-5, 2006, at the Inn and Spa at Berkley Springs, WV.

- Need help to stay healthy in all aspects of your life?
- Integrate body, mind and spirit in work and play?
- Focus on wholistic self-care with other fabulous women?
- Experience the Faith At Work process of sharing, meditation and body focus while relaxing at a spa and/or hiking in the woods...

Come away with women of all ages, sizes, life experience, and faith backgrounds to be 'Touched by the Spirit:' to learn from, laugh, rest and listen with each other. We hope you'll join us this fall in Berkley Springs, West Virginia, for a spiritual spa experience!

The location of the retreat is at a lovely inn, next to a modest spa. Women who would like to experience spa services can do so during free time. You may want to hike the WV hills, or sit in the warm springs. Nurturing body, mind and spirit doesn't have to be expensive; an overnight away in a beautiful setting with others on the faith journey may be enough of a spa experience. Or, you may find a spa treatment with a spiritual context is just what you need for deep renewal.

Spiritual Spa Experience Schedule

Saturday.....

11:00 am: Renewing Our Spirits Gathering and check in

12:00 pm: Lunch

12:30 pm: The Joyful Spirit

2:30 pm: The Independent Spirit: Design your own Experience: Spa, Hiking, or Resting

6:30 pm: The Nurturing Spirit: Dinner in town

8:00 pm: The Peaceful Spirit

Sunday....

9:00 am: The Awakened and Integrated Spirit

12:30 pm: Releasing Our Spirits: Return to Everyday Life

Administrative Information:

- Investment: \$195 for retreat activities and leadership, overnight lodging (double room), and lunch on Saturday
- Deposit: \$75 (non-refundable)
- Additional costs:
 - Spa services if you desire on Saturday, from 2:30-5:30 pm. Booked independently at www.OriginSpa.com
 - Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast
- Reserve your place or ask questions:
Email: Tiffany@shalem.org
- Online reservations can be made at: www.FaithAtWork.com

Note: This retreat is not sponsored by the UCC, but is an alternative to the woman's retreat which had been attended by UCCSV women in prior years. Faith At Work is the same organization that sponsored the Guatemala trip.

To learn more about the venue, log on to:

www.TheInnAndSpa.com



September Bible Readings

Sunday, September 3

Song of Solomon 2:8-13
 Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9 or
 Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9
 Psalm 15
 James 1:17-27
 Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Sunday, September 10

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
 Psalm 125 or
 Isaiah 35:4-7a
 Psalm 146
 James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17
 Mark 7:24-37

Sunday, September 17

Proverbs 1:20-33
 Psalm 19 or
 Wisdom of Solomon 7:26-8:1 or
 Isaiah 50:4-9a
 Psalm 116:1-9
 James 3:1-12
 Mark 8:27-38

Sunday, September 24

Proverbs 31:10-31
 Psalm 1 or
 Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22 or
 Jeremiah 11:18-20
 Psalm 54
 James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
 Mark 9:30-37

UCCSV September Calendar

Regular Weekly Meetings

Sunday Worship: 9:30 and 11:00 am.
 Sunday School: 9:30 am
 AA Meetings: Sunday and Tuesday: 8:30 pm
 Staff Meeting – Tuesday – 10:00 am
 Salem Church Choir: Wednesday - 6:30-9:30 pm
 Disciple Class: Wednesday: - 7:00-9:30 pm
 UCCSV Choir: Thursday – 7:30 pm
 Boy Scouts: Thursday – 7:30 PM
 Salem Church: Friday Evening
 7th Day Adventist Church: Saturday – 8:30-12:30 pm
 7th Day Adventist Church: Saturday – 4:30 – 8:30 pm

Other Scheduled Events:

Brandt Baptism: Sunday, Sep 10.- 9:30 am
 Inquirer Class: Sunday, Sep17, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
 Community Based Shelter: Sep 24-27
 Social Concerns Meeting: Monday, Sep 11 – 7:00 pm
 Property Ops Meeting: Monday, Sep 17 – 7:00 pm
 Hope Task Force at Schmidt/Davis Home
 Monday Sep 25 – 6:30 pm
 Church Council: Tuesday, Sep 19- 7:30 pm
 ONA: Tuesday Sep 12 - 7:30