

THE SENECA VALLEY VOICE

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF  
SENECA VALLEY

### Carolyn's Column

Helen and I were miles from the Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast, miles from Peoples Congregational UCC. But we were still on city streets, stopped at a red light, chatting as we waited for it to turn. Helen called my attention to the car on my left—she thought the driver wanted to speak to me. My first thought was that I had a problem with my car—a missing hubcap? A low tire? A burned out tail light?

She'd already lowered her window to talk, so in spite of the 30-something temperature, I followed suit. My instinct that the driver of the other car focused on *my* car was correct—but the object of her focus was my license plate: CAC 0001, and the UCC logo on it. She attracted my attention because she wanted to make connections with another UCC member. We made introductions, talked for a moment, then went our separate ways. It was a delightful encounter.

When I was returning from my sabbatical in Spain, my seat assignment put me next to a gentleman already in his aisle seat. He moved aside so I could access my spot, but we didn't really speak. I responded 'gracias,' and kept to myself 'till well into our flight, when he set aside the English-language newspaper he'd been reading. I asked if I could look at the front page. He said I could have the whole thing if I'd just talk to him. He'd been out of the country for some months, and was delighted to hear an American accent. We talked the rest of the way to Germany; I don't remember ever reading the paper.

Early in the summer of 1971, I was attending a summer course in Berkeley offered by the Center for Urban Black Studies (CUBS). At the end of the first week, they held a reception for Bay Area Black artists who had performed or shared their art with the community. As I was setting down my punch cup to leave the reception, I collided with a

man from the kitchen. The tray of cookies he was carrying was headed for roughly the same spot as my punch cup. He recognized me from Whitworth College. Although we hadn't known each other there, the connection was enough. We were married the following summer.

In a time when our culture seems bent on exploiting and exacerbating differences, incidents like these remind me that it sometimes is the smallest thing that suggests a connection, something we have in common between two otherwise unrelated people...a church affiliation, language, a college, a common experience.

These connections often are grace notes at the moment in which the connection is identified. They also remind us that we are profoundly connected to one another even in ways we frequently fail to recognize. Even the fabled "six degrees of separation" – the experiment showing that it takes no more than six connections to deliver a letter anywhere in the world by passing it to "someone who knows someone" – is a demonstration of our connectedness. Within a community, within a family, within a church there are multiple points of connection, strengthened by many common experiences, a common language, a common affiliation.

The apostle Paul used the wonderful image of the human body to describe these connections within the church, the body of Christ. As we live and serve together over this coming year, I pray that each member and friend of this congregation will grow and be nurtured by our points of connection, that they may be both grace notes and deeper experiences of Christ's presence in our midst.

Blessings,

Carolyn

## Moderator's Note

The poinsettias were beautiful. The children and their parents were in the pews dressed in their Christmas best. The Holy Family was present. It was the holiest of times at UCCSV- Christmas Eve. It reflected the joy of the season in a very real and wonderful way. Thanks to all who decorated, baked cookies, made chowder, sang wonderful carols, hosted get-togethers, played instruments, preached, bought presents for the Shaw community, and were present in our services. It was a very Merry Christmas!

Our Council and Trustees have developed and approved a budget for 2011. It will be presented on January 30, 2011 at a congregational meeting. The Council decided at the January meeting to postpone reviewing our Constitution and Bylaws. We want to concentrate on the areas outlined at our fall retreat (CE and worship). The next council meeting will be on February 7, 2011.

Diane has arranged at concert by Duo Amaral on Friday, April 1 at 7PM. That promises to be a treat for our ears!

I am putting together suggestions for Nominating team members for the Council. Volunteers are welcome!

The worship committee has begun to plan for lent. The first Sunday in Lent is March 13, 2011. God is certainly with us.

Moderator

## Music Ministry

### Duo Amaral Coming to UCCSV!

Internationally acclaimed classical guitarists Mia Pomerantz-Amaral and Jorge Amaral will perform a concert of baroque music at UCCSV on Friday, April 1 at 7:00pm. To learn more about this accomplished husband and wife duo and to hear excerpts of their playing, please visit their website: [www.duoamaral.com](http://www.duoamaral.com)

Ticket prices will be \$10/general and \$5/students. Mark your calendars now; don't miss this opportunity to hear Duo Amaral in our acoustically fine sanctuary.

## Calling All Singers!

This season **Chancel Choir** will be singing 4-and 5-part music for men's chorus, favorite hymns, new arrangements of old spirituals, music from "Godspell" and a piece for speaking chorus (no singing allowed!) We hope you will join us for this exciting time of fun and good music-making.

**SingFest!** and **Morningstars'** song repertoires are growing, and both groups are learning to sing from a music score. Children ages 3-5 are invited to join Morningstars, and those ages 6-12 are invited to SingFest! Times are:

SingFest!	1 <sup>ST</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursdays,
6:30-7:15pm	
Morningstars	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays,
6:30-7:00pm	

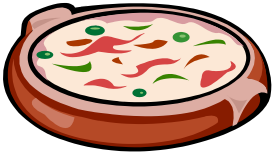
## Social Action

### Emergency Assistance Ministry for 2010

Because of the generosity of UCCSV members and friends, the Emergency Assistance Ministry helped 109 families in 2010, giving a total of \$11,079. You have helped 47 families with their electricity bills, 37 with housing, 14 with water bills and 9 with gas bills. In spite of having to close for three months to replenish our funds, this has been a wonderful amount of help to our community

The Prince of Peace offering on Christmas Eve was approximately \$2,620 The total giving for the month of December, which includes coffee sales, emergency assistance (Shalom church), and other gifts to EA, was \$3,666, up from the last two years.

We thank you for your generous support of the program with financial donations, work in selling Equal Exchange products, Giant coupons, ink cartridge re-cycling, bake sales, the garage sale, and all other donations of time and talents.



## Notes from Fellowship

*Ladies Night Out* is fast approaching. Please mark your calendars for **7:00PM on Monday, January 31**. Once again we have an opportunity to enjoy a night of fellowship and delicious food.

There is good news and bad news regarding our dinner together. The bad news first: Café Mileto, sadly enough, has had to close its doors because of the economy. Tony served us well and the restaurant will be missed. The good news is that we have another restaurant owner who will gladly continue with our tradition.

Kenneth Jones is the new owner of **The Rustic Oven**, which is directly across the street from our church. Kenneth is an engaging young man who feels a real calling to make his restaurant a neighborhood spot. The restaurant is normally closed on Mondays but he is opening for us, **THE LADIES OF UCCSV!** It was a pleasure to meet with him and his manager, Pam. They were eager to give us that same fine service and variety that Tony did at Café Mileto. As in the past there will be the option of a choice among three entrées with salad included for a fixed price of \$17.00.

Please join the group and bring a friend. Look forward to an enjoyable evening; it always is!

## PASTA WITH THE PASTOR

***Two opportunities to offer your thoughts and ask questions of Carolyn***

The cold weather has settled in and folks might be getting a little stir crazy! Fellowship and Council have joined together to bring food and fellowship to the long winter days. Two separate times will be scheduled for conversation and delicious dining!

The Bulgers and the Van Prooyens will each host a pasta dinner and would encourage you to pick the time that works best.

Ruth & Roger Bulger: Sunday, February 20, at 5:00pm

Pam & Jim Van Prooyen: Sunday, March 6, at 5:00pm

*Sign-up sheets will be posted outside the church, office .*

Welcome and bon appetite!

Fellowship Chair

## Pulp Pilgrims Book Club

We have a new date for the Pulp Pilgrims Book Group. We will meet on Sunday, February 6 at 11:30am in the Narthex. The full title of the book is:

**The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East by Sandy Tolan.**

All are invited to join us.

## Super Bowl Invite

The Annual Deckenback-Roberts Super Bowl Party...

February 6, 2011, 6:00 PM until...

No need to RSVP...bring a friend and something to share...



## Property Operations

Have you noticed the Property Operations Bulletin Board to see an area called "Church Mouse Chores"? This area identifies a list of things that need attention around the church facility and grounds. If you are handy at fixing things, painting, pruning and just generally able to lend a hand to keep our church looking beautiful, please see any member of the Property Operations Board and ask, "How can I help?"

## Happy February Birthdays

### February

5 Floyd  
12 Sue, Cathy  
16 Heather  
17 Chris  
19 Joanne  
20 Anne

## Bible Readings

### Sunday, February 6

Theme: Restoring Beauty  
Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)  
Psalm 112:1-9 (10)  
1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16)  
**Matthew 5:13-20**

### Sunday, February 13

Theme: From the Heart  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20  
Psalm 119:1-8  
1 Corinthians 3:1-9  
**Matthew 5:21-37**

### Sunday, February 20

Theme: Expanding Boundaries  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18  
Psalm 119:33-40  
1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23  
**Matthew 5:38-48**

### Sunday, February 27

Theme: Putting Love First  
Isaiah 49:8-16a  
Psalm 131  
1 Corinthians 4:1-5  
**Matthew 6:24-34**

## February Calendar of Events

### Tuesday, February 1

No meetings scheduled

### Wednesday, February 2

11:00a – UCCSV tutoring at Fox Chapel  
1:00p – Duo Amaral meeting

### Thursday, February 3

6:30-7:15p – Singfest! (Ages 6-12)  
7:30-9:15p – Chancel Choir

### Friday, February 4

No meetings scheduled

### Sunday, February 6

9:00a – Church school for all ages  
9:00a – Chancel Choir  
10:00a – Worship  
11:00a – Fellowship/Coffee time  
11:30a – Pulp Pilgrims Book Club  
6:00p – Super Bowl 8:00p – AA

### Monday, February 7

10:00a – Staff meeting  
7:00p – Council

### Tuesday, February 8

No church meetings scheduled

### Wednesday, February 9

11:00a – UCCSV tutoring at Fox Chapel  
No meetings scheduled

### Thursday, February 10

6:30-7:00p – Morningstars (Ages 3-5)  
7:30-9:15p – Chancel Choir

### Friday, February 11

No meetings scheduled

### Saturday, February 12

No church meetings scheduled

### Sunday, February 13

9:00a – Church school for all ages  
9:00a – Chancel Choir  
10:00a – Worship  
11:00a – Fellowship/Coffee time  
8:00p – AA

### Monday, February 14

Happy Valentine's Day  
10:00a – Staff meeting  
7:00p – Social Action

### Tuesday, February 15

No meetings scheduled

**Wednesday, February 16**

11:00a – UCCSV tutoring at Fox Chapel

**Thursday, February 17**

6:30-7:15p – Singfest! (Ages 6-12)

7:30-9:15p – Chancel Choir

**Friday, February 18**

No meetings scheduled

**Saturday, February 19**

No church meetings scheduled

**Sunday, February 20**

9:00a – Church school for all ages

9:00a – Chancel Choir

10:00a – Worship

11:00a – Fellowship/Coffee time

8:00p – AA

**Monday, February 21**

President's Day - Church office closed

**Tuesday, February 22**

No meetings scheduled

1:00p – UCCSV at The Lord's Table (serving meals)

**Wednesday, February 23**

11:00a – UCCSV tutoring at Fox Chapel

No meetings scheduled

**Thursday, February 24**

6:30-7:00p – Moringstars (Ages 3-5)

**Friday, February 25**

No meetings scheduled

**Saturday, February 26**

TBD – Church and Ministry Review

**Sunday, February 27**

9:00a – Church school for all ages

9:00a – Chancel Choir

10:00a – Worship

11:00a – Fellowship/Coffee time

8:00p – AA

**Monday, February 28**

10:00a – Staff meeting

**Scheduled Use by Others**

**First Tuesday of each month**

7:00-9:00p – 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church  
(Narthex only)

**All Saturdays (unless otherwise noted)**

8:00a-8:00p – 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists Church  
(Use of all church space)

**First and Third Wednesday of each month**

7:30 p – Girl Scouts

**Third Thursday of each month**

Upper Montgomery Assistance Network Board



**New from the United Church of Christ**

**Two national UCC officer nominees announced**

Written by Gregg Brekke  
January 10, 2011

Search committees for the available executive minister positions in Wider Church Ministries and Local Church Ministries have announced nominees for these offices. Pending approval at their respective spring board meetings, nominees will be presented for election by delegates at the UCC's 2011 General Synod to be held in Tampa, FL., June 30 - July 5.

An announcement for the available associate general minister position is expected shortly.

The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, Wider Church Ministries, and the Rev. Stephen Sterner, Local Church Ministries, are not seeking additional terms for their respective executive minister positions. Edith Guffey, current associate general minister, has served her term limits and is ineligible for re-election.

The Wider Church Ministries executive minister search committee has nominated the Rev. James

Moos, Senior Pastor of Bismarck United Church of Christ, to lead Wider Church Ministries, serve as one of the newest members of the United Church of Christ five-member Collegium of Officers, and as Co-Executive of the Common Global Ministries Board.

Jim is currently a member of the UCC Executive Council and former chair of the Executive Council. He is a past member of the Wider Church Ministries Board of Directors and chaired its finance and budget committee while serving on the board.

Jim has been deeply engaged with Global Ministries in support of its partnership with the Protestant Church in East Timor. He brings experience in administration and finance, a commitment to the prophetic witness of the United Church of Christ, a passion for connecting local churches to the global body of Christ, and an understanding of the collegial and ecumenical nature of serving as Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries and Co-Executive of the Common Global Ministries Board.

The WCM search committee thanked board members, staff of Wider Church Ministries and the Common Global Ministries Board, mission personnel and others for sharing in their process of discernment.

Wider Church Ministries search committee members are Barbara Kershner Daniel (chair), Angela Menke Ballou, Geoffrey Black, William E. Clarke III, Robert Craig, Shernell Edney, Patsy A. Harris, Linda McCrae, Oliver W. Martin III, Rich Pleva, Bing Tso and Jeanne Tyler.

The Local Church Ministries Executive Minister search committee has nominated the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's Director of Publishing, Identity and Communication, to serve as LCM's Executive Minister and as a member of the United Church of Christ's five-member Collegium of Officers.

Prior to joining the UCC's national staff more than 10 years ago, Ben served as a local church pastor for 12 years. While at Zion UCC in

Henderson, Ky., he led the congregation through a period of significant growth and courageous prophetic witness, earning him recognition with the Just Peace Award presented at the 1997 General Synod.

With graduate education in both religion and public administration, Ben brings knowledge and experience in management, budgeting and programmatic planning. Ben offers visionary, creative and collaborative-styled leadership during a time of sweeping change for every setting of our church, especially our local congregations.

The LCM search committee extended gratitude to board members, national staff and others for walking with them in their discernment process.

Local Church Ministries search committee members are Carol Williams-Swoope (chair), Diane Bennekamper, Geoffrey Black, Susannah Davis, Tim Downs, Hal Drury, Rosa Frias, Trinaka Jamison-Finger, Richard Kamanu, Herbert Perkins, Kevin Peterson and Sharyl Peterson.



## The Christian Century

The UCC, which urged lifting the ban on gays in military in 1993, sees vindication - Jan 07, 2011 by John Dart

The United Church of Christ, with its traditionally liberal leadership, has often passed resolutions at national gatherings that seemed "ahead of their time." Such was the case when the UCC's biennial General Synod in 1993 "strongly urged" the U.S. government to end the ban against gays and lesbians in military service. But it wasn't until the U.S. Senate voted 65 to 31 last month to pass a House-approved bill and President Obama signed the repeal into law in pre-Christmas actions that UCC activists could claim vindication.

Although the 17-year-old military policy carried the label of possible anonymity—"don't ask, don't

tell"—some 13,500 openly lesbian, gay and bisexual persons were discharged from the military in that period.

In a letter from Obama released December 22 at the bill's signing, the president said, "Gay and lesbian service members—brave Americans who enable our freedoms—will no longer have to hide who they are." Before the law signing, Obama encouraged once-discharged military personnel to reenlist: "We will be honored to welcome you into the ranks."

The United Church of Christ noted in its 1993 synod resolution that the Cleveland-based denomination, which has about 1.2 million members in autonomous congregations, had pioneered the ordination of openly gay ministers decades earlier. Its General Synod of 1975 affirmed "the full participation of gays and lesbians in church and society."

The UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns rejoiced alongside like-minded ecumenical groups in the surprising vote to repeal that included several Republican senators.

"Last weekend's dramatic reversal vote was a vindication of decades of hard work, including the courage and self-sacrifice of women and men in uniform who risked their careers to fight for equal dignity," said Andrew Lang, the coalition's interim executive director.

Retired navy chaplain John F. Gundlach, the UCC's minister for governmental chaplaincies, has long opposed the "don't ask/don't tell" policy, according to a UCC news release. In a blog last May, Gundlach and two UCC chaplains said that chaplains who, on religious grounds, oppose homosexuality and openly gay service members do themselves and the armed forces a disservice.

Not only will those chaplains have a negative impact on military effectiveness and cohesion, "they will fail in their primary mission of bringing God to people and people to God," Gundlach and his colleagues wrote. If chaplains cannot care without discrimination, "they need to leave

institutional ministry and return to a more parochial setting."

The UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns raised another issue—one not commonly mentioned in policy debates and news accounts. Transgender citizens "still face hurdles when they choose to serve their country," Lang said. "While this day will go down in history as a decisive move forward for the LGBT community, . . . we cannot allow the moment to obscure the fact that transgender citizens, too, deserve and must have equal protection under the law in all works of life.

Submitted by:

Rev. Dr. John R. Deckenback

Conference Minister

United Church of Christ - Central Atlantic

Conference

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**The deadline for the March 2011 Voice  
is Friday, February 18, 2011.**

