



The Seneca Valley Voice

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
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Recalling Our Journey

Sometimes the creative elements of worship are just too good not to be referred to again. I think this is especially true of Mike Gove's "Recalling Our Journey," which he created after searching his own memories, as well as reviewing UCCSV's annual reports for all 25 years. This litany was included in our 25th Anniversary worship service on October 18, and I'd planned to incorporate it in our service on November 15 as well, but it didn't fit the theme as perfectly as it did in October. I do hope you'll enjoy re-reading it in this, our 25th year of ministry as the United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley

Carolyn

Recalling Our Journey A Litany for Twenty-Five Years ~ a member

We worshiped in homes and in a high school choir room, cafeteria and auditorium. Each and every Sunday the ordinary space of the day-to-day routine was transformed into the sights and sounds of God's House.

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

On September 18, 1988, the United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley began to worship in the church building it had planned, designed and constructed – four years of anxious anticipation and a few setbacks, and finally, the wait is over!

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

The many gifts of time, talent and furnishings have kept this building comfortable, safe and inviting. Pews, several coats of paint, carpets, a paved parking lot, an organ

and piano, a new roof, and colorful banners. As one guest put it – "this place is a light set on the hill."

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

Pastors and moderators have helped shape the fabric of our twenty five years. Many have done the work of the church. Our treasurers have paid the bills and clerks have recorded our meetings. The countless chairs and members of boards have planned and executed hundreds of programs. What was your favorite Advent supper and workshop, or Rally Sunday? Did you check out the moon-bounce at the Chicken Barbecue? Remember when March Madness had nothing to do with basketball and everything to do with making chocolate Easter eggs?

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

The youngest among us are a source of inspiration and have helped shape an environment of love and respect for the contributions of all. Our kids have offered countless smiles from dozens of baptisms, youth choir performances and oh yes, Christmas Pageants. Remember *Angels Aware* or *B is for Bethlehem* or maybe *Charlie Brown's Christmas* or *Matt and Lucy's Version Births*? Our dedicated teachers have provided an invitation to learn for all ages. And our youth have served stacks of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

For twenty five years we have watched over our neighbors. We offer a helping hand for those who cry out for things we take for granted. The homeless have slept within our walls; we have served food at shelters and wrapped scores of Christmas presents for the kids of Shaw Ministry. We are an open and affirming congregation

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love.

Music has been a constant presence in our midst for twenty five years. It is as integral to our worship as the spoken word. Our choirs have the voices of angels, our musicians can make the sun shine, and our directors bring joy to the world. Hallelujah! for the *Messiah* Sing-Along!

Great, great, great are the works of God. We are blessed with God's steadfast love. Great is the glory of God! Amen. And Hallelujah!

Christmas Eve

We will offer two services on Christmas Eve. The first service is especially for families with young children and will offer an opportunity to hear the story of Jesus' birth, to sing familiar carols, and to greet the Holy Family. It will be held at 5:00pm, which is a change from previous years.

The second service will be held at 9:00pm, and will feature lessons and carols. This is our traditional candlelight communion service.



WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From all of the deacons to members and friends of UCCSV, we hope this holiday season is meaningful for all. Through good times and hard, it is so comforting to have the warmth of this community of faith surround each and every one of us. We can walk together into the New Year, with God by our side.

Happy Holidays,

The Deacons



Hark the Herald Angels Sing

When was the last time you went Christmas caroling? Or, have you ever been caroling? If you want to get in the holiday spirit, come to church **Sunday, December 20 at 5:30 pm** and join voices together as we serenade the surrounding community.

We can share cider, a little glass of wine and Christmas cookies. In fact, while you're making your holiday treats, please set aside a few to share that evening. The rest will be provided.

Bring your angelic voice and a flashlight!

Social Action

Emergency Assistance (EA) Program

As of early November the EA program has given over \$12,000 to 124 families in the Germantown area. The normal limit for assistance is \$100 and all of the recipients have been screened by various Social Service agencies in Montgomery County prior to our involvement. All EA payments have been made possible by voluntary donations from members or friends of UCCSV and are not part of our annual budget. The EA dollars have helped to pay for overdue electric, gas and water bills, as well as rents and mortgage payments, and occasionally for medicines (2 cases) or food (with Giant cards in \$10 or \$20 units).

Many thanks the volunteers who run this ministry and to all who have contributed to this extremely successful outreach program at UCCSV.



Prince of Peace Offering

This special offering is traditionally collected at the Christmas evening services and all proceeds go to the Emergency Assistance Program. It is a very thoughtful way to jump start the strength of the program for the new year. If anyone wants to contribute but knows they cannot attend the December 24 service, donations may be mailed in or made at our regular Sunday service.

The Social Action Board

Christmas Fund

For 107 years the Christmas Fund Offering for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency fund has been a way in which members of the United Church of Christ can give aid to those who served in our church and are retired on low pensions. Recipients of aid from this offering are ministers and some lay people who served our church. Approximately 1600 clergy, lay individuals and families received aid from this fund in 2008.

Due to the severe economic downturn our country has experienced since 2007, the financial stress on those with the most limited resources is even greater and there have been an unprecedented number of requests for Ministerial Assistance compared with prior years. In 2008 over one and a half million dollars was received from this fund to provide relief to individuals and families in need.

Some of the ways the funds are used are the following:

- 1) Christmas gift checks to about 900 people. Approximately 20 of these people are over 100 years of age.
- 2) Monthly pension supplements to 453 people. These gifts total \$103,559 per month and most of that amount comes from the Christmas Fund Offering.
- 3) Quarterly Health Premium supplements to 295 people totaling over \$164,000.
- 4) Emergency grants to 39 individuals and families so far in 2009.

The expectation for 2010 is that the need for aid will be even greater than for this year. We at UCCSV can help by being as generous as we can in contributing to the Christmas Fund Offering. The offering for this fund will be received on both the Sunday before Christmas and the Sunday following Christmas. We know that the economic recession has hit our own congregation too, but we ask all of our people to prayerfully consider a gift to this offering.

Contributing to Shaw Community Ministry through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

For UCCSV members who work for both civilian and military agencies of the Federal Government and contribute to the CFC, please consider regular contributions to Shaw Community Ministry. Contributions support after-school mentoring and other support for Shaw children, college preparation and scholarships, job skills training for the unemployed, and nutrition and exercise programs for adults and the elderly. The Shaw Community Ministry's CFC Code is #45101.

Thank you for your support for Shaw through this or other regular UCCSV activities.





WOMEN'S RETREAT - WOMEN'S RETREAT WOMEN'S RETREAT

There was a resounding interest for a women's retreat and so the wheels have started to roll! With the busy holidays upon us we look forward to formulating a program after the New Year.

Look for a notice of a planning session after a church service in January. We need many hands to make this a meaningful gathering for friendship and renewal. Any and all are invited to help plan, so collect your thoughts and ideas and look forward to sharing. Women do that so well!

Happy December Birthday!

December 10	Luzmarina
December 20	Heather
December 23	Jim
December 29	Jen



Readings for December

Sunday, December 6

Theme: Make Ready

Malachi 3. 1-4

Luke 1.68-79

Philippians 1.3-11

Luke 3.1-6

Sunday, December 13

Theme: Look Forward

Zephaniah 3.14-20

Isaiah 12.2-6

Philippians 4.4-7

Luke 3.7-18

Sunday, December 20

Theme: Moving with Mary's Song

Micah 5.2-5a

Psalm 80.1-7

Hebrews 10.5-10

Luke 1.39-45

Sunday, December 27

Theme: Who Is This Child?

1 Samuel 1.18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3.12-17

Luke 2.41-52





Sunday, December 6

10:00a – Worship
11:00 a – Fellowship/Coffee Hour
5:00-7:00p – 7th Day Adventists
8:30p – AA

Monday, December 7

7:00-9:00p – 7th Day Adventists

Tuesday, December 8

10:00a – Staff Meeting
7:30p – Mind, Body, Spirit
7:00-9:00p – 7th Day Adventists

Wednesday, December 9

7:30p – One Anothering (Kimmell home)
7:00-9:00p – 7th Day Adventists
7:30p – Girl Scouts

Thursday, December 10

7:30p – Choir
7:30p – Boy Scouts

Friday, December 11

7:00-9:00p – 7th Day Adventists

Saturday, December 12

7th Day Adventists – all day

Sunday, December 13

10:00a – Worship
11:00 a – Fellowship/Coffee Hour
11:30a – Deacons
8:30p – AA

Monday, December 14

7:30p – Council

Tuesday, December 15

10:00a – Staff meeting

Wednesday, December 16

3:30p – Worship Team
7:30p – One Anothering (Kimmell home)
7:30p – Girl Scouts

Thursday, December 17

7:30p – Choir
7:30p – Boy Scouts

Friday, December 18

No meetings scheduled

Saturday, December 19

7th Day Adventists – all day

Sunday, December 20

10:00a – Worship
11:00a – Fellowship/Coffee Hour
8:30p - AA

Monday, December 21

No meetings scheduled

Tuesday, December 22

10:00a – Staff meeting

Wednesday, December 23

7:30p – One Anothering

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

5:00p – Family Service
9:00p – Candlelight Service

Friday, December 25 - Christmas Day

Church office closed

Saturday, December 26

7th Day Adventists – all day

We wish everyone a very
Merry Christmas and a
Safe and Happy New Year!

The Church Staff