



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

As we welcomed Amy into full membership of this congregation last month, I found myself reflecting – again – on that part of the litany that reads, “Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.” I am especially touched by the recognition that ours is not the only community of faith that provides a spiritual home—that those who join us on the journey are with us only for a period, and it is very rare when that period is a full lifetime.

This reflects our transient culture, of course. And as far as it goes, it is a beautiful affirmation of the ways in which we are formed by the body of Christ in its many expressions and communions.

There is a more personal component to our spiritual formation that is equally vital. Within the course of this program year, various members of the congregation have approached me to ask if they could help lead worship or coordinate a service around a particular theme. Christie coordinated the service around the theme of science and faith, which brought us reflections from Mike, Calvin and Dan.

In January the *One Anothering* small group brought us a very different service, offering reflections leading from art work that Sally

had shared with the group. She shared it once again in the context of our Sunday morning worship.

As I write this column Diane and members of the Social Action Board are preparing to share their faith in relation to stewardship of the Earth on the Sunday following Earth Day. From sermon to children’s time to the offertory music, members of that Board and others of the congregation are sharing their faith in worship. Truly, this is a ministry of all believers!

In yet more testimony, Suzanne shares her faith journey as she brings us up to date on her seminary progress and her “in care” status. As her local church, we support Suzanne in her journey toward ordained ministry and acknowledge her special relationship to us and to the Potomac Association.

In and through all of this, we create the spiritual home we know as the United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley. In and through all of this, we are nurtured in faith.

May *your* journey be strengthened by the cloud of witnesses that surrounds us in this spiritual home.

With thanksgiving for the witness you each bear, blessings,

Carolyn

Social Action

Calling all UCCSV'ers !

Your Social Action Board invites you to stretch your faith and involve yourself in one or more of the following events. You will find great fellowship, exciting pathways of service, and faith break-throughs:

1. Walk (or just show up if you're not a walker) in the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless "Shelter Walk 'n Roll" Sunday, May 3, 1:00pm at the Rockville Town Center. Information and Registration can be accomplished by visiting the Coalition website at www.mcch.net. This event seeks to raise awareness of the needs of the homeless in our county and to raise money to meet their needs.
2. Adopt-a-Road Saturday, May 9, 9:00 to 10:30am at Seneca Valley High School – Middlebrook Road parking lot. Trash bags, gloves, pik-sticks and reflective vests are supplied by the county. This event seeks to help our church be a good neighbor and a contributing citizen by removing trash and litter from our assigned section of Middlebrook Road.
3. Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ, Friday, June 12, through Sunday, June 14, at University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware. Cost varies, starting at \$240 depending on the type of housing you desire. Cost includes food. By registering before May 1, you save \$50. This event seeks to inspire us and our churches to live greener. One of our country's most distinguished theological environmentalists, Dr. Larry Rasmussen, will be the key-note speaker. An added bonus will be great preaching and singing. Information and registration can be accomplished by visiting the Conference website at www.cacucc.org.

If you've got something else marked on your calendar for these dates, just cross it off and replace it with these events. You'll thank me for the change. Jim Russ

Seminarian Update

Dear Congregation,

Many of you have inquired as to my studies at Wesley Theological Seminary (WTS) in Washington, DC. Your interest and support mean a great deal to me. As someone who is "in care" with UCCSV, I would like to give you an official update on my progress at this point. By the way, "in care" refers to the relationship that exists between a student preparing for ordination, his or her local church, and his or her Association.

In the summer of 2006, I started taking classes at WTS, one course a semester. I am now taking at least 11 credits a semester, which is considered fulltime. In September, I will have completed two thirds of my requirements (90 credits in all). Graduation is May 9, 2011. Before then, here is what I'll be up to:

- In May it's off to Breezewood, PA, for two weeks to participate in what my seminary calls an Intercultural Immersion; this means that we are asked to be part of a ministry very different from our own culture. My assignment will be to work hand-in-hand with Chaplain Bruce Maxwell of the Truckers' and Travelers' Ministry in Breezewood.
- In June I begin a 10-week full-time chaplaincy internship program at our local Shady Grove Hospital. I will work directly with patients three days a week and take Clinical Pastoral Education classes two days a week.
- This fall is the start of my two-year placement at Evangelical Reformed UCC in Frederick. You may be wondering why ER UCC and not UCCSV. The seminary strongly urges that we do our placement in a church other than our own. So starting in the fall, I will be serving and worshipping with ER UCC for two years as required by WTS.

On my desk is a plaque which my daughter-in-law Erin gave to me. It reads, "Sometimes your only available transportation is a leap of faith." Most days it feels like starting seminary in my late 50's

is definitely a giant leap. But our God is faithful and provides us with mercies beyond our imagining. In my case, one of those important mercies includes my biggest cheerleader, my beloved Dan. He has jumped in with both feet by editing my papers and quizzing me before my exams. He is also spending more time going to the grocery and keeping things going at home! Without him, this leap would be impossible.

What happens upon graduation is still to be determined. I am open to the Holy Spirit's leading. As Billy Graham said, "I know not what the future holds; but I know Who holds the future." I am traveling into that future by God's grace and it's bound to be a ride full of holy surprises!

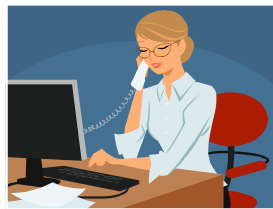
Faithfully and fondly,
Suzanne



Note form Molly

Dear Congregation: Thank you so, so much for my Easter basket! I was so touched by the fact that you all came together (once again) to do something so nice for me and my sisters. I feel so blessed to have you all in my life.

Love,
Molly



Admin Professionals Day

Many thanks for the kind remembrances on Administrative Professionals' Day. They meant a lot to me.

Peace, Marilyn



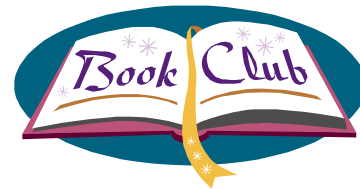
Special Activities Group

Please join the "Special Activities Group." We need folks who are willing to help out occasionally in the planning of fun activities for our church. Creativity welcomed! Please contact Jeanne or Pam n if you are interested.



Marriage Equality Makes Strides

On April 1, 2009, Sweden became the fifth European country and the seventh country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage. The following week, Iowa and Vermont became the third and fourth states in the U.S. to legalize same-sex marriage. On April 7, 2009, the District of Columbia city council passed a preliminary vote to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states to be legally recognized within the District; the law will have to be approved by Congress to take effect.



Pulp Pilgrims Book Group

The Pulp Pilgrim Book Group is currently reading *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (aunt & niece). We enjoy each other's company, we enjoy our discussions, ideas, and opinions, and we welcome everyone to join us. Questions? Call or e-mail the office at 301-540-3449 or uccsv@verizon.net

United Church News Publication

UCC to cease print publication, move online exclusively

Written by Staff Reports
March 23, 2009

United Church News will end its newsprint edition later this year and move online its delivery of denominational news.

The decision was made on March 20 by the board of directors of the Office of General Ministries, (OGM), which has been struggling with skyrocketing costs for the newspaper's production. Postage and printing costs have more than doubled during the past five years, with those costs now surpassing \$125,000 per issue.

The National edition will publish three more monthly issues in April, June and September. The Conference editions or "wrap-arounds" will end in April, although Conferences will have the opportunity to print one additional issue if willing to share the costs equally with the UCC's National setting.

"This was a difficult decision for board members, because it was rooted in significant financial angst," said the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's communications director and a former editor of United Church News. "But it also paves the way for the development of an expanded online news portal and, most likely, a new and different print publication for the United Church of Christ."

In Spring 2010, the UCC's communication staff hopes to launch a new, magazine-format publication that will be mailed to members' homes twice annually by paid subscription. "We envision an oversized, full-color, coffee-table publication of 80-to100 pages," Guess said. "Something that will be as 'keep-worthy' and 'share-worthy' as it is news-worthy."

The OGM board decision came after it convened a day-long United Church News consultation on February 23, attended by representatives of the OGM board and Executive Council, four

Conference Ministers, a Conference Editor, several national staff and the five-person Collegium of Officers.

"What we heard over and over is that most people said they would mourn the loss of an 'identity publication' for the denomination, even if they went online to read the most-recent news headlines," Guess said. "And I have maintained that newsprint is not the best mechanism for accomplishing that particular goal if we're wanting a publication that evokes a sense of belonging and has a shelf life."

Guess said other communication tools will be employed to deliver news to church members, including the weekly "Keeping You e-Posted" e-zine launched in October 2008 which now reaches 52,000 readers each Tuesday. "We're receiving tremendous feedback about KYeP and the open-rate numbers indicate success," Guess said.

In April the denomination's new online social networking community "MyUCC" will launch officially. "MyUCC will encourage unfiltered 'citizen journalism' in the UCC since every user can create and maintain a blog to report news and reflections for all to read," Guess said.

A successor publication to A.D. Magazine and the United Church Herald, United Church News was founded in 1985 under the leadership of its then-publisher Beverly Chain and its editor, the Rev. W. Evan Golder. The Rev. Robert Chase became its publisher in 1999. The newspaper produced ten editions per year, until 2005, when that number was reduced to six.

As part of its action, the OGM board expressed deep appreciation for the editors, reporters, photographers, designers, advertisers and readers who have contributed to the quality of the print publication over the years.

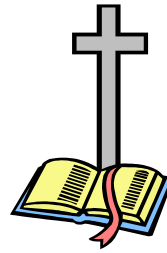
"United Church News remains committed to publishing the news of our churches and the other settings of the UCC," said the Rev. Gregg Brekke, editor of United Church News since 2008. "The move to online news distribution, coupled with a revamped print publication and citizen journalism,

provides a bridge to communicate into the future while meeting our current needs."



Happy May Birthday

- May 1 Deborah
- May 4 Evelyn
- May 6 Susan
- May 7 Margaret
- May 8 Mike
- May 9 John
- May 18 Renee
- May 20 Diana
- May 21 Beth
- May 23 Randy
- May 26 Mornyng-Rain
- May 28 Gina
- May 30 Calvin



Bible Readings -- May

Sunday, May 3

Acts 4:5-12
 Psalm 23
 1 John 3:16-24
John 10:11-18

Sunday, May 10

Acts 8:26-40
 Psalm 22:25-31
 1 John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8

Sunday, May 17

Acts 10:44-48
 Psalm 98
 1 John 5:1-6
John 15:9-17

Sunday, May 24

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
 Psalm 1
 1 John 5:9-13
John 17:6-19

Sunday, May 31 (Pentecost Sunday)

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14
 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
 Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21
 John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15



**Please see the next page for
the May Calendar of UCCSV Events**



Calendar of Events

Regular Meetings:

- Sundays: Worship: 10:00a; Fellowship/Coffee: 11:00a; 8:30p – AA
- Tuesdays: 10:00a – Staff meeting
- Second Tuesday of each month: 7:30 - Mind, Body, Spirit
- Third Tuesday of each month: 7:30p - Council
- Wednesdays: 7:30p – One Anothering
- Thursdays: 7:30p – Choir (Sanctuary) and Boy Scouts (Gathering Room)
- Saturdays: All Day – Seventh Day Adventist

Saturday, May 2

- 9:30a-3:00p – Labyrinth Workshop at Bethesda UCC

Sunday, May 3

- 1:00p – Shelter Rock n' roll
- 5:00-7:00p – Tapas

Monday, May 4

- 7:00p - Deacons

Monday, May 11

- 7:30p – Social Action

Saturday, May 16

- Potomac Association Meeting

Sunday, May 17

- Congregational Annual Meeting/potluck following worship

Monday, May 25

- Memorial Day – Office closed

Monday, May 26

- Deadline for June/July Issue of Voice

Sunday, May 31 – Pentecost

- 11:15a – Completing the Circle – Confirmation