



The Seneca Valley Voice

UCCSV's 25th Anniversary

When we take part in communion, when we baptize a new member into the Christian community, when we pledge ourselves to a life partner in marriage, when we join a local congregation, we use the language of covenant.

I was reminded of the power of covenant as I read each of the letters we received in celebration of our 25th anniversary. Every person who wrote has a sense of connection with our congregation—even if they have never been to 13421 Clopper Road.

Covenant begins with God. Simply put, it is a solemn agreement that two parties will honor one another and work in each other's best interests.

We recall God's covenant through the story of Noah and the sign of the rainbow, stories of the Exodus and Exile and signs of law and circumcision and new hearts, stories of Jesus and signs of baptism and bread and cup and an empty tomb.

We also covenant between congregations within the larger church, supporting one another in our mutual ministry. Through this covenant, UCCSV received multiple letters of support and congratulations from congregations within our own Potomac Association, from our own Central Atlantic Conference, and from beyond the Conference as well.

Those letters are appended in their entirety at the end of this newsletter. I hope you take the time to read them. Be reminded that within our common covenant, when we celebrate, we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

Blessings,
Carolyn

Notes from the Moderator

Fall is in full swing and the autumn colors are breathtaking. I believe it's God's way of easing us into the winter. By the time this newsletter is published, the Stewardship campaign will be over and we will all be making our plans for Thanksgiving. However, if you haven't yet pledged, there is always time to do so! It has been a tough economic year and the recession is only now showing slight signs of easing up.

Approximately 10% of our members are unemployed. By making a pledge, the church can have an idea of the income we will have and balance that against the bills we must pay. Please remember that every little bit counts. Our pledge drive sometimes mirrors the "Stone Soup" story. We start out with a rock and water in a pot, and if one person adds a carrot and another an onion, pretty soon other folks are contributing and we end up with a wonderful, hearty soup of a pledge income!

Please mark your calendars for 3:00 pm on November 28, the Saturday when we will join in the "Hanging of the Greens" which marks the beginning of the Advent Season. Everyone is invited to help beautify our Sanctuary, and we certainly need lots of help. Also, check the bulletins for an announcement of the date and time, as yet to be determined, for a family fun night of making graham cracker gingerbread houses. Start now to plan your architectural feat of frosting, decorative candies and graham crackers!

Peace



Notes From The Deacons

Save the date: **HANGING OF THE GREENS** on **Saturday, November 28, 3:00pm**

The scarecrows, pumpkins and autumnal flags still grace the yards and here we are planning for the Christmas Season. Yes, it's that time of year to anticipate the warmth and wonder of the Christmastide. Why the rush? Well, it takes planning, manpower and delicious cookies to ready our church for Advent. Consider this a **"SAVE THE DATE MOMENT."**

The start of Advent falls on Sunday, November 29, which means that Saturday is the BIG DAY! Understanding that it is the Thanksgiving weekend and many may be traveling or hosting company, I would ask if possible, that you give an hour or so to help "HANG THE GREENS." Many hands make work easier.

Anticipating Advent must include the thought of hearing wonderful music that undoubtedly stirs our memories and brings warmth to the season. I would like to take a moment on behalf of the deacons and probably the entire congregation to acknowledge our choir. Their dedication, skill and incredible sound, lifts our service consistently every Sunday. Music is important to all of us at UCCSV and we are served so well by our choir members. A sincere thanks to each one of you who participate and bring your musical gifts to our service.

An Advent Walk with the Gospel of Luke

On Sunday, November 29, we will barely have the cranberry sauce and turkey tucked away when we find ourselves beginning the Advent journey that prepares us to receive the holy in our presence.

Advent begins our Christian year, when we turn to one of the three synoptic gospels (synoptic means same) featured each year in rotation. In Year A, Matthew is featured. Year B focuses on Mark, and Year C brings

us Luke. Luke, a second-generation Christian, frequently portrays the ministry of Jesus as a fulfillment (*not* a rejection!) of Judaism and the promises God made.

Luke's themes include:

- 1) The inclusion of those often considered outside the scope of God's love and concern (crucified thieves, Samaritans, prodigals);
- 2) The importance of prayer and worship (Luke begins with Zechariah and ends with the disciples at the temple);
- 3) The concern for justice for those who are poor, along with warnings about wealth (Mary's Magnificat and the Beatitudes).



Director of Music Ministry Search

The process of finding a new Director of Music Ministry has been slower than we had hoped. However, we are in serious conversation with an excellent candidate and hope to have a positive report soon.

In the interim, a round of applause for all those who have been so generous in sharing their time and talent so that each Sunday we have had wonderful leadership through music in our worship. Special thanks to Laura Lineberger, Beth Lauriat and Stu Yeany, and of course to our awesome choir!

As we approach and enter the holiday season, we will be blessed with the additional musical leadership of our good friends Kathy and Alex. Alex will be with us on November 15 and December 20. Kathy will be with us the other Sundays of Advent and on Christmas Eve.

CALLING ALL LADIES!!!!**WE NEED A RETREAT**

It has been several years since the women of UCCSV have had the opportunity to enjoy each others company while renewing and exploring our faith together. It's about time for a WOMEN'S RETREAT!!!!

We could enjoy getting together during the doldrums of winter, or anticipate the hope of spring together. The choice is ours; we simply need to meet and plan. For those interested please save a little time after church on November 15 and we can get the ball rolling. There will be neither agenda nor any set plan; we will be working with a clean slate ready for us to fill in the fun! If you can't make it but are interested in the possibility of a retreat, please contact the church office.

Guest Preacher Steve Sterner

UCCSV is especially fortunate that on Sunday, November 15, Steve Sterner will be our guest preacher. Steve currently is serving the United Church of Christ as the Acting Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries, but also has extensive service pastoring local churches.

Local Church Ministries (LCM) is one of the primary national agencies of the UCC, and has as its charge the ministry of supporting and strengthening local congregations in their ministries. Steve believes that LCM's role is to build relationships with congregations, and that empowering and equipping lay and ordained leaders is one of its extremely important missions.

Steve and his wife are members of Peace United Church of Christ in Clemson, South Carolina.

Social Action

"It Takes a Village"/Church to help a community such as that of Gaithersburg, Germantown and Boyds. UCCSV has been doing a great job in this. Our Emergency Assistance (EA) Ministry has **provided \$11,915 to help 113 families so far this year**. This included giving help to 40 families with electricity bills and to 40 families who were helped with housing, as well as providing help in many other ways.

To fund this help, it has included members and friends who give money directly for the program, those who bake goods or buy them at the Social Action Bake Sales, those who buy Equal Exchange products (helping both EA and the farmers who are involved in growing these products). Special thanks go to Beth and Laura, who suggested to their many friends that they consider giving money to EA .

All these efforts have transformed a dire funds situation into funding support that will certainly help us to stay solvent for the next couple of months. Also thanks to the EA volunteers Jim Van Prooyen, Helen Hanes, Jean Bertelmann and Paula-Marie Read. Thank you all for the help you give to those in our community who are in need.

Emergency Assistance Coordinator

Adopt-a-Road

Come on out to Adopt-a-Road!
Help us make our section of roadway sparkle!

Where - Seneca Valley High School parking lot on Middlebrook Rd.

When - Saturday, November 14, from 9-10:30am

Strength and experience are not required. We train you and supply you with materials needed for the job.

Water and donuts will be available for those who want to bulk up.



Social Action Holiday Activities

The fall and winter holidays are fast approaching. Besides enjoying the holidays with our own families and with our UCCSV family, there are ways in which we can help other folks have a nice Thanksgiving and Christmas too.

Once again we will be collecting food in Thanksgiving baskets for 2 families whose names will be provided to us by Germantown Help. Right now we don't know the makeup of the families but, assuredly, they will have at least some children. As we get into November, sign-up sheets will be in the hallway listing the food needed for the baskets. We also would like to give the recipient families Giant cards so they can purchase their own turkey or other meat of their choosing.

For Christmas we will also give Christmas food baskets to these families, as well as Christmas gifts for them. By Christmas time we will know the makeup of the families and provide that information to the congregation. Once again there will be sign-up sheets in the hallway for requested food. The makeup of the families will be listed so we can provide Christmas gifts to the family members.

Another Christmas project we take on every year is to provide Christmas gifts to a number of children from the Shaw area of Washington, DC. Tags listing the children by age and sex will be placed on our "Caring Tree" in the weeks before Christmas. Feel free to take as many tags and get as many gifts as you are able to provide.

And we must not forget Emergency Assistance. UCCSV has been providing emergency assistance to needy families for many years. There is no money in our church budget for Emergency Assistance so all funds come from donations, special offerings, etc. A main source of money comes from the Prince of Peace offering held on Christmas Eve. Please try to be as generous as you can in giving to this offering. By Christmas time there are usually many families who need help with mortgage or rent, utility bills, etc., and by then our Emergency Assistance funds are generally low.

There is one other special offering we take up at Christmas time. It is the Christmas Fund offering. All proceeds of this offering go to needy retired clergy whose retirement income is low. A number of clergy served their churches many years ago, retired with very small pensions and could use a little help. This offering provides them with some aid.

We realize that the economy of our county is not the best right now and some of our own UCCSV families have had to "tighten their own financial belts." We know that all of our people won't be able to give to all of the projects. But we also know that helping others not only survive, but also have nice holidays, can help a person enjoy his/her own holidays immensely. Try it. We think you'll like it.

World Sunday – November 8

November 8 will be 'Bread for the World' Sunday. Worshippers are invited to come to the Gathering Room after worship. Your Social Action Board will have paper, pens, envelopes, stamps and sample letters. You are encouraged to write a letter to your representative in Congress urging him or her to support legislation updating our country's foreign assistance priorities and structure. Foreign assistance needs to be focused on development goals (instead of defense and diplomacy) and the number of governmental agencies and departments which handle the distribution of this assistance needs to be drastically reduced. Bread for the World has been raising this issue for the last several years.

Most influence peddlers say that a handwritten letter is the most effective way to get the attention of a legislator. Members of your Social Action Board will be on hand to guide you in this important work of advocating for the poor and impoverished.





Kitchen

Thanks to the “cleaning” crew of Jean, Ann, Wayne and John we have a wonderful work space again.

To help us keep it that way (and to keep unwanted six- and eight-legged creatures out) we ask that you wash and dry any dishes you use, put left over food wrapped and dated in the refrigerator, and take home any dishes you brought in. It would also help if you put your name on dishes so we can make sure they are returned to the correct folks.

Nursery

Thanks to Ruth r for cleaning out cabinets and old, broken toys. We now have cabinet space dedicated to UCCSV and to 7th Day Adventists.

Pastor’s Office

Thanks to Aaron for installing cork tiles on the walls to increase the privacy of the Pastor’s office. The cork’s effectiveness was put to the test almost immediately when the hallways were being stripped and re-waxed. In contrast to the sounds in the Administrator’s office, the Pastor’s office was noticeably quieter.

Unfortunately, the project has gone as far as it can for the moment—the original shipment of tiles was incomplete. Quite literally, we are waiting for the freighter to arrive from Portugal....which is projected to be about another four weeks.



Happy Birthday – November

- ☆November 8 Damian
- ☆November 20 Jeanne
- ☆November 22 Stephanie
- ☆November 22 John
- ☆November 23 Dan
- ☆November 30 Bill



Worship Overview - November

Sunday, November 1

Theme: *Wherever You Go*

Ruth 1.1-8

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9.11-14

Mark 12.28-34

Sunday, November 8

Theme: *Risk and Restoration*

Ruth 3.1-5; 4.13-17

Psalm 127 or 1 Kings 17.8-16

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9.24-28

Mark 12.38-44

Sunday, November 15

Theme: *Praise the Holy One*

1 Samuel 1.4-20

1 Samuel 2.1-10 or Daniel 12.1-3

Psalm 16

Hebrews 10.11-14 (15-1), 19-25

Mark 13.1-8

Sunday, November 22

Theme: *A Wise Reign*

2 Samuel 23.1-7

Psalm 132.1-12 (13-18)

Daniel 7.9-10, 13-14

Psalm 93

John 18.33-37

Revelation 1.4b-8

Sunday, November 29

Theme: *Sign of Things to Come*

Jeremiah 33.14-16

Psalm 25.1-10

1 Thessalonians 3.9-13

Luke 21.25-36

Bold print denotes focus Scripture Reading



Weekly Calendar

Sunday, November 1

- Stewardship Sunday
- 10:00a – Worship
- 11:00 a – Fellowship/Coffee Hour
- 11:15a – Begin at the Beginning (Narthex)
- 11:30a – Pulp Fiction Book Club

Monday, November 2

- 7:00p – Deacons

Tuesday, November 3

- 10:00a – Staff Meeting

Wednesday, November 11

- Veteran's Day
- 7:00p – *Companions in Christ*
- 7:30p – *One Anothering*

Thursday, November 12

- 7:30p – Choir

Saturday, November 14

- 9:00a – Adopt-a-Road

Monday, November 16

- 7:00p – Christian Education (Brandt home)

Monday, November 23

- 7:00p – Trustees

Thursday, November 26

- Happy Thanksgiving

Saturday, November 28

- 3:00p – Hanging of the Greens

Monday, November 30

- Pastoral Relations (TBA)

Regular Meetings

Sundays

- 8:30p -- AA

Wednesdays

- 7:00p -- *Companions in Christ*,
- 7:30p – *One Anothering*
Girl Scouts

Thursdays

- 7:30p -- Boy Scouts,
Choir

Saturdays

- All Day -- 7th Day Adventists

Please note the letters of congratulation to
UCCSV on the following pages.

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
13421 Clopper Road ♦ Germantown, Maryland 20874
Phone: 301-540-3449 ♦ Website: www.uccsv.org ♦ Email: uccsv@verizon.net
uccsv@verizon.net

Letters of support and congratulations in celebration of UCCSV's 25th Anniversary



Dear Carolyn,

It is with joy and fond memories that I celebrate that day when The United Church of Seneca Valley officially became a church in the United Church of Christ. I remember a lot of hard work, a lot of cold calling and a lot of stewardship. I also remember a growing beloved community of folk each seeking in their own way to respond to the love of God Jesus. I remember faces, stories and a shared dream. I remember the journey from band room, choir room, auditorium and cafeteria at Seneca Valley High to the hillside on Clopper Road where we could not hide our faith under a bushel. I remember the day we all broke ground together and the day we moved in. I watch the video and name the names. We were all so young and so happy. (Even our older members were young at heart.)

I can not believe that the church is now 25 (nor the fact that I'm feeling a bit old). I think about you every day and on most also pray for you as you continue the journey that you are now called to live. May you prosper as you continue to share the unconditional love of God for all. I do believe that God is still speaking and that the word that is spoken is one of grace, justice and peace.

It is the hope of this family that we might drive north next summer and visit.

Shalom,

Johnny

Rev. Dr. John W. Mingus, organizing minister and founding pastor.



Dear Carolyn and the Seneca Valley UCC Church,

CONGRATULATIONS! INDEED, IT WAS A MINISTRY - A LIVED OUT MINISTRY FOR SENECA VALLEY CHURCH.

I'VE VISITED YOU AND YOUR CHURCH WAY BACK IN THE EARLY 2000: A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH AND BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.

MAY YOUR CONTINUOUS PRAISE TO GOD AND OBEDIENCE OF YOUR MISSION BEAR YOU A GOOD HARVEST FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.

Lucio

Rev. Dr. Lucio B. Mutia,
Chair, UCC-Philippines CPE Program
Chairperson, Center for Pastoral Care Education
Divinity School, Silliman University
Dumaguete City, Philippines



Dear Members of UCC of Seneca Valley,

Greetings and blessings on your 25th anniversary from Rockville United Church.

We pray God's continued blessings on your ministry in Germantown. May the excitement and enthusiasm of these first 25 years carry on into the future.

Peace in Christ,

The Rev. Nancy Clark, Interim Pastor

Rockville United Church

355 Linthicum Street
Rockville, MD 20851
Phone: 301-424-6733



Dear Friends in Christ.

As a clergy-member of the United Church of Christ Potomac Association, I write to express my joy on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Seneca Valley United Church of Christ. Your faithful witness over these years has provided hope and encouragement to your neighbors. Thank you for being a church of extraordinary hospitality, a quality which is all too rare in our world.

May the Lord continue to bless Seneca Valley UCC far into the future. May you increase your love for the still-speaking God, for neighbors far and near, and for one another.

Grace and peace,

The Rev. Denise Giacomozzi May
Minister
Director United College Ministries in Northern Virginia
www.gmu.edu/org/ucm

"Changing lives....Connecting People to God and to Each Other."

703.426.1939



Dear Carolyn

Please convey to the members and friends of the United Church of Seneca Valley my personal congratulations to all of you on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of your congregation.

Peace and blessings,

The Rev. Douglas Clark

Kensington, Maryland



"Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is....All moments are key moments, and life itself is grace." -Frederick Buechner.



Congratulations and Blessings on this special day. ~
Linda Carder



History is important. We often talk about the UCC as a blend of four historic streams (or denominations) in American religious history. . .Congregational, Christian, Evangelical and Reformed. However the UCC of Seneca Valley is beyond that history. You have never been anything other than United Church of Christ. We could say that you have been forever pointed toward the future, rather than grounded in the past.

I am sure that sometimes you have wished that you had more history. But most of the time you can feel liberated. You have always been UCC. You have always been committed to the vision that we (the followers of Jesus) might all be "One." As you celebrate your Twenty-fifth anniversary stand tall. You have only 25 years to overcome and only the future to claim. At the same time remember that your calling is not easy. Blending multiple traditions is never easy, but it is your vocation. Your DNA is United Church of Christ. Wear your commas proudly. Open your doors to all the people, over and over and over. May God continue to bless you and keep you.

Barbara Brown Zikmund

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Dear UCCSV Friends:

Wow!

25 years!

Let's raise the roof!!! Oops...that's already been done...

Seriously, congratulations on the 25th anniversary of the United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley. You are a congregation that I have come to know affectionately primarily through your pastor and my spouse, Carolyn.

What a blessing your 25 years have been. UCCSV has accomplished much and while there are challenges ahead I am confident that these will be overcome with the spirit of constructive fortitude that you have demonstrated so many times in the past.

I am pleased that the United Church of Christ through a combination of prayer along with national and Central Atlantic Conference grants/loans has been a partner in the congregation's growth and development over this quarter century.

We have been blessed by your pastors and your members as they have participated in the life of the Potomac Association, the Conference and national bodies. Likewise, your generous financial support of mission opportunities locally and through the United Church of Christ's Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) has been exemplary.

I deeply regret that I cannot assume my familiar seat on the window side of the sanctuary to join you for the big celebration. I expect it will be a grand celebration--we look forward to many good years to come!!!

Thank you! Bless you! Keep the faith! Indeed, God is Stillspeaking!!!

Faithfully,
John R. Deckenback

Rev. Dr. John R. Deckenback

Conference Minister
United Church of Christ Central Atlantic Conference
916 S. Rolling Road
Baltimore, MD 21228
410 788 4190 (office) 443 253 2343 (cell)



Clearly, our entire wider church family joins in congratulating the United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley and celebrating with you on this anniversary of your 25 years of faithful service. Still, as one who has been a witness to your service during all of those years, I take great pleasure in personally expressing my joy and very special thanksgiving for you at this milestone and as you look to the future.

Peace and blessings.

Kwame Osei Reed



The Rev. Carolyn Roberts and the Congregation of the UCC of Seneca Valley

Greetings! The staff and congregation of Little River United Church of Christ, Annandale, join the churches of the Potomac Association in extending warmest wishes to you on the occasion of your 25th anniversary.

In the past quarter century you have gathered around Christ's table of extravagant welcome, preached the gospel, baptized babies / youth / and (likely) adults, confirmed teens, married young and old, thanked God for the lives of numerous individuals who have passed on, commissioned ministers, welcomed and bid farewell to several pastors, made important decisions affecting the lives of others as well as your corporate life, and--if you're at all like our church--held more meetings than is good for anyone's soul!

Bless you! Bless you for your faithful witness. May the sure foundation you have created become a launching pad for future mission and ministry as you seek transformation and new life for all.

With fondest wishes,

Rev. Verne Arens



Happy 25th Anniversary, Great Seneca Valley UCC!

On behalf of the members and friends of Chapel Hill UCC, Indiana-Kentucky Conference, I want to congratulate you on this landmark day in your history! Every time I have visited and worshipped with you, I've been warmly welcomed and felt like a member of your extended family - and that's how it's supposed to be! The sense of community and mission that you've grown and nurtured through the years says a lot about you and the covenants we share.

To honor your anniversary, Chapel Hill has added you to the "joys" we are lifting up today during our prayer time. I want to share that prayer with you:

"O God, as we lift our joys to you this morning, our hearts join with our sister church, Great Seneca Valley UCC, to thank you for the journey and mission we share. On this anniversary, we pray that your Spirit will bless, nurture, strengthen and empower Great Seneca Valley for many years to come. As they honor the past and embrace the future, surround them with a sense of love and pride from the South, the spunk of the West, the endurance of the North, and the courage of the East.

In your presence, there are no miles separating us from one another. So, as we share this joy, we also share our mutual concerns. In a world full of complexities, strained budgets, and overwhelming needs, it's too easy to despair and forget faith nudges us to keep walking. Where there is scarcity, help us discern providence. Where there is complacency, bring us new awareness and a sense of urgency. Where there is pain and loss, we pray for your peace and comfort. And when we struggle, help us remember that we're not alone.

Thank you, Lord, for the years of blessings and the ties that bind and never fail. For the sisters and brothers of Great Seneca Valley and Chapel Hill, the communities we serve, and the denomination we cherish, we are truly grateful. In the name of the Still-Speaking God, we pray, Amen."

If any of you ever travel to Louisville, we would love to return your hospitality! Just bring the choir with you!

Happy Anniversary! We're proud of you! Blessings and fun on your special day!

From your "yet to be met" friends of Chapel Hill and the one you know,

Rev Bev Lewis

P.S. Forget the Kentucky Derby - We're worth the trip!



Carolyn

We were lay members of a new church start in Charlotte for about 10 years when our family was young and growing. When we joined Pilgrim UCC in 1983, the church was about 15-years old. We have deep and profound memories of their support for us during family crises, discernment to ordained ministry and finally ordination. It takes special gifts to pastor in such conditions.

Please receive the congratulations of St. John's in Richmond and my personal appreciation for your gifts of ministry to the congregation of UCC of Seneca Valley.

Blessings,

Jon

Rev. Jonathan L. Heaslet, Senior Pastor

St. John's United Church of Christ
503 Stuart Circle
Richmond VA 23220
804.358.9291 Extension 11
Journeys wanted!



CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

PASTOR CAROLYN ROBERTS

AND

UCC OF SENECA VALLEY

ON YOUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

*"O Sing to the Lord a new song, for
He has done marvelous things!"
Psalm 98:1*

REVEREND FRANCINE VINSON
FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WASHINGTON, DC

