



# The Seneca Valley Voice

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

John Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, describes our unique denomination as one of the youngest Protestant denominations in the United States...but one with the longest roots. Born in 1957 with the merger of the Congregational Christian Church with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, the UCC demonstrated its uniqueness even in that union.

The Rev. Everett C. Parker comments on that uniqueness in the just-published, *UCC @ 50: our history—our future*, the UCC's anniversary book:

In the last century, a number of church mergers occurred in the United States. The Methodist and Presbyterian churches, North and South, re-united, ending a split caused by the slavery issue. Congregationalists united with frontier Christians, who cherished the same local church freedom. Perhaps the most significant merger was the 1934 union of the mostly German Reformed Church in the U.S. with the Evangelical Synod of North America, established by German refugees from the Thirty Years War, which formed the Evangelical and Reformed Church. But this, too, was a union of like and like.

So, 50 years ago, it was truly a unique demonstration of Christian brotherhood and sisterhood when Fred Hoskins and James Wagner enthusiastically reached out to each other in the handshake that birthed the United Church of Christ. Their act was unique also because it was the first time since World War I that two leading American bodies, one of German, the other of British background, joined hands in respect and devotion.

From July 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007, we will celebrate the UCC's Fiftieth Anniversary in Hartford, Connecticut.

I know, without having any sort of prophetic gift, that the 26<sup>th</sup> General Synod which gathers in that celebration will be vastly different from the one which gathered for the first General Synod. Because for all of the uniqueness of the 1957 merger, it was also very much a merger of like and like. Editor emeritus of *United Church News*, W. Evan Golder, captures it well in his poem, "Where will we be tomorrow?"

Not so long ago  
Not even two generations back  
We knew who we were.

Photos from our first General Synods  
show us:  
nearly all men  
practically all white  
apparently all straight  
in white shirts, suits and ties.

We are *not* the same denomination we were 50 years ago, any more than any one of us is the person we were at the time of our birth. Thank God!

And yet...and yet, the DNA that makes each one of us recognizable *and* unique is there from the beginning and remains with us throughout our lifetime. One of the most visible traits is the conviction that our still-speaking God calls us to address contemporary social issues. The list of UCC "Firsts" is a long one, (see [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org), "About Us", UCC Firsts), marked by numerous instances of faith in the marketplace. To name but a few:

- 1620—Pilgrims seek spiritual freedom.
- 1700 The Rev. Samuel Sewall writes the first anti-slavery pamphlet in America.
- 1773—First act of civil disobedience—the "Boston Tea Party." Colonists met in the Old South Meeting House.

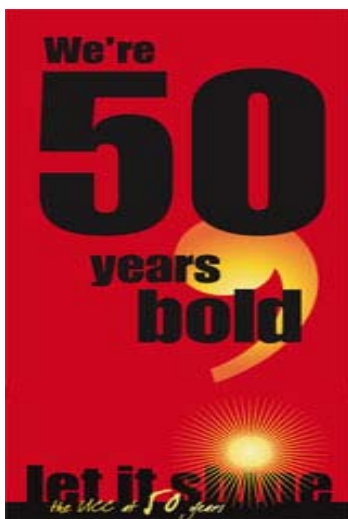
- 1773—First published African American Poet, Phillis Wheatley, a member of the Old South congregation.
- 1785—First ordained African American Protestant—Lemuel Haynes.
- 1840—First united church in US history—the Evangelical Synod, brings together Lutheran and Reformed traditions.
- 1846—First integrated anti-slavery society, an outgrowth of the *Amistad* case.
- 1853—First ordained woman since New Testament times, Antoinette Brown.
- 1959—Airwaves are public property ruling. Southern TV stations had imposed a news blackout on the growing civil rights movement. Everett Parker organizes churches and wins Federal court ruling.
- 1972—Ordination of first openly gay minister, the Rev. William R. Johnson.
- 1976—First African American leader of an integrated denomination, the Rev. Joseph H. Evans.
- 1995—*The New Century Hymnal*—the only hymnal released by a Christian church that honors male and female images of God in equal measure.

God is still speaking, calling each of us to a faith grounded in scripture, in communion with sisters and brothers from around the globe.

See you in Hartford!

Blessings,

*Carolyn*



## UCC 50th Anniversary Kick-Off

Live Web Streaming Event  
 All Saints Sunday, November 5  
 6 p.m. (ET), 5 p.m. (CT) 4 pm (MT), 3 pm (PT) 1 pm (Hawaii)

Planning on watching our live web cast?

Click here for technical information:  
[ucc.org/50/allsaints\\_webcast.html](http://ucc.org/50/allsaints_webcast.html)

Click here to submit a UCC@50 photograph:  
[ucc.org/50/submit.htm](http://ucc.org/50/submit.htm)

Click here for details about creating a YouTube entry:  
[ucc.org/50/youtube.htm](http://ucc.org/50/youtube.htm)

Whether it's just you, a small group of friends and family, or a large group setting, we hope you'll tune in.

## THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

Plan to gather in worship at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, November 22, for our annual Thanksgiving Eve service.

This family-friendly service is a wonderful way to prepare for the holiday in true gratitude for God's many blessings.

Nursery care is provided.



## Moderator's Report

I am pleased to announce that we have hired Thomas (Tom) Rimes as our new Music Director effective October 22. Many of you know that Trevor has resigned due to his increasingly busy schedule with the Washington Opera and other professional performing opportunities. We have been blessed to have Trevor for about two years and have learned and grown from his music ministry. In the future I know we will all hear wonderful news about his musical performances and operatic career. Trevor, we wish you the best.



Now we are blessed to have Tom join us. Tom is a vocal coach and accompanist with the Washington Opera and is participating in the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Tom was born in Fiji and grew up in Australia and his church background is Anglican. He was on the staff of the New Opera Festival di Roma where he served as Assistant Musical Director and Chorus Master for several productions and conducted symphonic concerts. He worked as a church organist in New York City and has a special interest in Gospel and Blues music. A recipient of the Sir Georg Solti Foundation Award for a Young Opera Conductor/Coach, Tom holds degrees from the University of Sydney and the University of Memphis. He is also an active composer and has recently finished writing his first full-length opera, *The Long R*. Those of you who have had an opportunity to hear Tom play the organ will agree that he will be a wonderful addition to our music ministry. Tom and his wife live in Silver Spring. Please welcome Tom when you see him in church.

Fall is often the busiest time of the year and the council is no exception. One of the important activities is setting the budget for 2007. Those of you who have attended the stewardship dinners will have heard information about the budget process. Briefly, the treasurer prepares a first draft based upon the current year's budget, expenses and income year to date, and

projections for the end of the year. Each item is then increased, decreased, or left the same depending on the current year. For example, we expect utility costs to continue to rise and we anticipate increases in contracts with building maintenance, so therefore these increases are built into the first draft. The various boards look at their own budgets and let the treasurer know if they need an increase or can decrease their expenses. Council then reviews this and determines what the total projected budget will be that will be presented to the congregation for the stewardship drive and what amount will be needed from pledges.

Once the stewardship drive is over, the trustees will review the projected income versus expenses and determine the final budget. If we do not meet our pledge goal, then some expenses must be cut. However, our biggest expense is for salaries and benefits for the pastor, music director, accompanist, office manager, and nursery caregiver (this totals about half of the budget). After that are the necessary property maintenance items such as cleaning, lawn mowing, snow removal, and utilities (about one-quarter of the budget). Everything else falls into the last 25%. As you can see, there is not a great deal of discretionary spending, so the decision regarding which expenses to reduce is always difficult.

Once the budget is balanced, or as close as possible, it is presented to the council. The budget must be approved by the congregation at the congregational meeting in January. Throughout the year, council, trustees, and the treasurer monitor spending and income and make adjustments whenever possible. Members are always welcome at council and trustee meetings and our treasurer, Al Speich, is also willing to answer questions.

Throughout this newsletter there is information about a variety of activities taking place during the rest of the year. Participating in these activities is a wonderful way to grow spiritually, intellectually, and socially, to make a new friend, to learn something new, to have fun, or to be a better person, so make sure you put at least some of them on your calendar.

A big thank you to Anne for agreeing to serve as chair of the Fellowship Board.

Sandra

## Christian Education

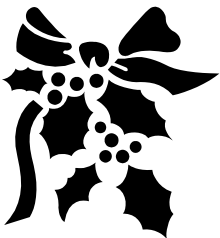


The CE Board is planning a meeting so that all parents of children and youth in our church can voice opinions/concerns/ideas for the development of the Christian Education Program, and discuss the possibility of hiring a CE Director. Look for a letter from the Board Chair outlining details of this meeting in the very near future.

**Save the Date!!!** Wednesday, November 29 (6:00 pm -8:30 pm) is UCCSV's "Hanging of the Greens". The plan is for this to be a full congregational event in decorating our church for the upcoming Christmas Season! More details about this event to follow.

## Youth Update

November Preview: Regular youth meetings at the church on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, and the Walk for the Homeless DC on November 18. Listen to announcements for more information during upcoming Sundays. Don't forget the Hanging of the Greens on November 29.



## Social Concerns

### Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Baskets

The Holidays are again upon us and that means once again we will be giving out food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

This year we have three families we will provide baskets for. These families come to us through Community Ministry of Montgomery County.

Our families this year include two families with one adult and two children, and one family with one adult and three children.

We would like the food baskets to include complete holiday meals as well as some extra food to carry them over.

God has blessed us with many gifts and this is another way of *Loving God Back!*

Sign up sheets will be available on the bulletin board outside the church office beginning Sunday, October 29. As always we thank you for your generosity.

The coordinating team this year includes Floyd, J.C., Debbie and Marilyn.

### Community Based Shelter

In continuing a tradition started in 1995, UCCSV served meals at the Community Based Shelter in Rockville in late September. We served dinner, prepared lunches, and provided breakfast on three successive days. Thanks to all who cooked, served, made bag lunches, shopped, gave a donation, and helped in other ways. Heather and the Youth Group served on Sunday night, Anne was the leader on Monday night, and Jeanne led a group on Tuesday night. Special thanks to Jim who shopped for supplies. The shelter residents expressed their sincere appreciation for such good food and fellowship.



## Board of Deacons

### Piano Purchase Needs Your Support

Music is very important in the life of UCCSV. You may know that the church has been collecting donations to go toward the purchase of a new piano, as our current piano has some "old injuries" that make it hard to keep in tune. Thank you to everyone who has donated already toward this purchase! We will continue to collect donations until we have enough to buy an instrument. To date, we have collected about half of the \$5,000 needed for a healthy re-conditioned piano. Ask a Deacon if you have questions about this effort.

### 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!

### Worship Schedule for Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve

On Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, UCCSV will hold ONE service in the morning at 10:00 am. Plans for an evening service(s) will be communicated as soon as those plans are firm.

On New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31, there will be ONE service in the morning, also at 10:00 am.

## Fellowship

The Fellowship Board announces:

### Tables for 8

It's time to set the table! Many members have enjoyed the **Tables for 8** so we are organizing them again. This is a time of fellowship away from church. It's a chance to get to know each other: where we live, who we are, what we like to do and what matters to us.

How Tables for 8 works:

1. Sign up on the **Tables for 8** sheet on the bulletin board outside of the office.
2. The Fellowship Board will create "tables" of 6-8 participants and assign a leader who will contact you to set up a date and place to get started.
  - a. Your table may meet once or once a month – it's up to the table.
  - b. Your table may meet for lunch at a restaurant or eat dinner at someone's house or picnic in a park – it's up to the table.
3. Eat, drink and be merry, talk of grand and important things deep into the night at the table.
4. Plan to do it again.

**It's Fun! It's Potluck! It's Tables for 8!**

### Hope Task Force



The "God is Still Speaking" message generates a lot of attention and discussion. I often use my UCCSV mug at work and bring in fair trade coffee to share. These things have led to multiple people asking me about our church. One night a co-worker who is Seventh Day Adventist asked why I had a comma on my coffee mug. I replied with "never place a period where God has placed a comma, because God is still speaking." She thought a minute, smiled, repeated the phrase and said "I really like that." It's great how such a simple message can cut across all sorts of lines and be meaningful to so many.

## “Open and Affirming” (ONA)

Becoming Open and Affirming means to publicly declare that those of all sexual orientations are welcome in the full life and ministry of the church.

### Meeting on How ONA Has Changed One Local Church

At 7:00 pm, Sunday, November 5, Reverend Bruce Swanson will join us for coffee and dessert to discuss “How becoming ONA has changed First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ,” which became the 425th ONA church in the UCC in June 2002. Bruce, pastor of First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ in Baltimore since 1989, is also a consultant for the Central Atlantic Conference for ONA concerns from the United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns. He is a graduate of the University of Montana and the Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts.

The United Church of Christ first urged congregations to become Open and Affirming in 1985. At that time the national delegate body of the UCC, the General Synod, adopted a resolution which “encourages the congregations of the United Church of Christ to adopt a non-discrimination policy and a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith.”

The United Church of Christ does not advocate any particular path for congregations to take in discerning the question of becoming ONA. Every church develops its own approach. Becoming ONA will also affect every church and its surrounding community differently. Reverend Swanson will share some of the blessings and challenges that his particular congregation experienced during and since they set off on their own unique ONA journey.

Last spring UCCSV formed a group to initiate a time of study, prayer, and conversation that will help us make our own ONA decision. This forum is the first of several discussions, seminars and other events to be held over the next year or so as we explore what being an ONA church might mean to us here at Seneca Valley.

A list of ONA “Frequently Asked Questions” is at: [www.ucc.org/lgbt/ona.htm](http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/ona.htm)

More detailed ONA information is also available at: [www.uccoalition.org/programs/ona.html](http://www.uccoalition.org/programs/ona.html)

Find out more about First and St. Stephen's at: [www.first-ststephens.org](http://www.first-ststephens.org)

### Mind, Body Spirit Meeting.

The next meditation session will be Tuesday, November 14 from 7:30 pm until 9:00 pm. Please come in informal dress. Please call the church office if you have any questions.

All are welcome.

### What we want our church to be--The Outcomes

Two "Opportunity Sundays" will happen in November, the 12th and the 19th. (Mark your calendar.) We will be able to sign up for the outcomes that call on our talents. After each service posters of each outcome will be available in the gathering room. We are all invited to read about what we are currently doing related to the UCC Seneca Valley outcomes and about some possible activities and strategies. Let's then sign under the outcomes where we will put our energy. So much is possible when we work together in the service of our God.

### Wesley Seminary Display

Seeing God - A Visual Exploration of the Spiritual featuring Susan Due Percy, one of UCCSV's members. October 23-December 15, 2006 - Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20016.



**November Bible Readings**

**Sunday, 5**

Ruth 1:1-18  
Psalm 146 or Deuteronomy 6:1-9  
Psalm 119:1-8  
Hebrews 9:11-14  
Mark 12:28-34

**Sunday, November 12**

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 19**

1 Samuel 1:14-20  
1 Samuel 2:1-10 (as a canticle) or Daniel 12:1-3  
Psalm 16  
Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-19), 19-25  
Mark 13:1-8

**Sunday, November 26**

2 Samuel 23:1-7  
Psalm 132:1-12, (13-18) or Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14  
Psalm 93  
Revelations 1:4b-8  
John 18:33-37

**Please see next page for November calendar.**





## NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 7:30-9:30p – Salem Church 7-9:30p – Disciples	<b>2</b> 7:30p - Choir 7:30p - Scouts	<b>3</b> 6:30p – Salem Church	<b>4</b> 8:00a-2:00p & 6:00-8:00p – 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
<b>5</b> Stewardship Pledge Sunday 7:00p – ONA  8:30p - AA	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 10:00a –Staff  8:30p - AA	<b>8</b> 7:30-9:30p – Salem Church 7-9:30p – Disciples	<b>9</b> 7:30p - Choir 7:30p - Scouts	<b>10</b> 6:30p – Salem Church	<b>11</b> 8:00a-2:00p & 6:00-8:00p – 7 <sup>th</sup> Day <b>Adopt a Road Veterans Day</b>
<b>12</b> Sale of Equal Exchange Coffee 8:30p - AA	<b>13</b> 7:30p – Social Concerns	<b>14</b> 10:00a –Staff 7:30p – Council 8:30p - AA	<b>15</b> 7:30-9:30p – Salem Church 7-9:30p – Disciples	<b>16</b> 7:30p - Choir 7:30 - Scouts	<b>17</b> 6:30p – Salem Church	<b>18</b> 8:00a-2:00p & 6:00-8:00p – 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
<b>19</b> Dedication Sunday 12:00 - Fellowship 8:30p - AA	<b>20</b> 7:00p – Property Ops	<b>21</b> 10:00a –Staff  8:30p - AA	<b>22</b> 7:30p – Thanksgiving Eve Worship	<b>23</b> <b>Happy Thanksgiving</b>	<b>24</b> 6:30p – Salem Church	<b>25</b> 8:00a-2:00p & 6:00-8:00p – 7 <sup>th</sup> Day
<b>26</b> No Church School  8:30p - AA	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 10:00a – Staff 7:30p – Strategic Planning 8:30p - AA	<b>29</b> 6:00-8:00p UCCSV Hanging of the Greens	<b>30</b> 7:30p - Choir 7:30p - Scouts		

### Outside Groups Meeting Regularly at UCCSV:

Sunday & Tuesday Nights – 8:30p – AA

Wednesdays – 7:30p – Salem Church

Thursday Nights – 7:30p – Boy Scouts

Friday Nights – 6:30p - Salem Church

Saturdays – 8:00a-2:00p & 6:00-8:00p – 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists