



# Spirit News

April 19, 2018

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
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## Prayer Requests

- Pray for birthdays. For Rachel, Annabelle, Andrea. Happy, happy prayers (Chloe Jackson).
- Continued prayers for strength and courage for Michelle Cohen as she battles multiple myeloma. Please Lord, give her as much time on this earth as possible so she can spend it with her young daughter (Terri Molaski).
- Continuing prayers for Ed and his family as Ed receives Hospice care (Heidi Harmon).
- Ongoing Prayer for Isaac as he goes along a most difficult path. Give him strength in knowledge of God's grace and his family's love (anonymous).
- Ongoing Prayer for Kyle Plush, the young teen killed in an accident in his mini van. Please help his mother and the rest of his family and friends and community heal from this tragedy. May his soul be at peace (anonymous).
- Ongoing Prayer for my mother, Margaret P. Hall "for illness and God's will," sister's Patti and Brinda Hall – caretakers (Jim Hall)
- Ongoing Prayer for the bereaved families, for the orphans and widows for the sickly and hopeless and for all who are travelling for safe journey to the destinations (anonymous).
- Ongoing Prayer for all our UCCSV Members to prayerfully consider how to best contribute to the many workings of our congregation. We do so many wonderful things. Allow yourself to join the community (anonymous).
- Ongoing Prayer for Wayne Miller (Heidi's boss). Pray for health and healing for Wayne as he faces health challenges (Heidi Harmon).
- Ongoing Prayer for the political situation in Kenya as they are going through ethnic

violence since post election (Maggie Nyamweya).

- Ongoing Prayer for the pain and suffering of so many in our congregation, DC metro area, and those impacted around the world by disaster, catastrophe and hunger (Shelly Moore).
- Ongoing Prayer for Stephen to find a job closer to home to shorten his long daily commute (John Bartkowiak).

*Ongoing Prayer Requests: Please notify Nita at [uccsv@verizon.net](mailto:uccsv@verizon.net) should you wish to change your ongoing requests. Please note that ongoing prayer requests sent anonymously will be removed in one month.*

## Havruta

Our adult bible discussion group on Sunday mornings at 9am is called Havruta, a Jewish term meaning that we seek to wrestle with God's word by studying, analyzing, and debating the text.

For this Sunday our focus will be on  
Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-5

## This Sunday at UCCSV

It's Earth Day and we're celebrating the beauty of God's Creation! Join us for worship this Sunday as we honor the beauty of the earth and the universe in song, prayer, and preaching. Lois Sumser will be preaching about how we are "Swimming in Miracles" and the choir will sing "For the Beauty of the Earth." During Sunday School the children will enjoy a special lesson about our church's green initiatives, going outside to take a look at our solar panels and our rain gardens. Right after worship we hope to take a picture of the congregation in front of our solar panels as a

testimony to how we help care for and protect the environment. This Sunday will also be our final Sunday Confirmation class and we'll be focusing on how and why we worship and the special role music plays in worship here at UCCSV. It's a Sunday you don't want to miss. Celebrate spring, new life, and our beautiful planet by spending time with God and community this Sunday!

## **The Spring Potomac Association Meeting**

Our church is a part of the regional Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ. Twice a year our Association body, made up of area clergy and two delegates per church, meets to discuss business and to continue to get to know other UCC churches in our area. Last Saturday the Spring meeting of the Potomac Association convened at People's Congregational UCC in Washington DC. The Association is in a time of transition, as is the Central Atlantic Conference. This is due in part to the sudden death of our longtime Conference Minister, John Deckenback, in 2016 and also to continuing changes in staff and structure in the wider UCC as it attempts to respond to church needs and an ever shrinking revenue stream. As such this particular Association meeting felt rather chaotic at times. In addition to worshipping together and sharing breakfast and lunch, we also discussed clergy compensation guidelines, had an open ended conversation on race, struggled over voting in a slate of nominees for the various Association level committees (Committee on Ministry, Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, Higher Education, and Social Action and Mission), and met and heard an update from our new interim Conference Minister, Rev. Roddy Duncerson, on the state of the Conference. The good news is that we know there are issues at the Association level and Conference level that we need to tackle and both clergy and lay leaders are dedicated

to making sure we address them and fix what's broken so that we can continue to listen for God's still speaking voice at work in our area. Our Association and our Conference play a very special role in the UCC as one of the most diverse bodies in the UCC and as churches located in our nation's capital. As someone deeply dedicated to seeing the UCC succeed so that its work is possible and its churches thrive, I have volunteered to be a part of the strategic planning process beginning to happen at the Association level and I have been appointed to the Search Committee that will soon begin the search for the new CAC Conference Minister. This is important work, not just for the wider UCC but also for local churches like UCCSV. When our regional bodies are strong and vital they can empower and assist local churches to do the same.

The Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference will be June 8-9 in Bethesda and the theme will be Discerning Our Future. I look forward to sharing more details about the work that is happening in our Association and our Conference with you then. If you have any questions or concerns please let me know at [HollyRJackson@gmail.com](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com).

## **Summer Camp?**

What says Summer more than Summer Camp? So many of us have fond memories of camp experiences. Would you be interested in helping to make some memories for UCCSV kids and the kids in our wider community? I am trying to gauge interest in holding an arts and music focused summer camp/vacation bible school at UCCSV this year (or next) and I need to know if you might be willing to volunteer. This camp could take many forms - it could be a half day day camp. It could also be an evening camp held over the course of a week, or a series of Wednesday evenings held over the course of the summer. Picking a biblical theme we would then come up with art projects, music, storytelling, games, and possibly

science experiments to share with children ages 4-12 or intergenerationally with whole families. But before I start to gather curriculum and plan dates and start publicity, I need to know if there is interest from volunteers. (We can also have youth volunteers but I need enough adults to help supervise.) If you would be willing to volunteer please email me asap at [HollyRJackson@gmail.com](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com) and let me know if daytime or evening would be better for you. Imagine what great camp memories we could make for our kids and the kids in our area!

## **Confirmation Night Out: What Have You Been Doing All Year?!**

On Friday, May 11th, this year's UCCSV Confirmation Class invites the congregation to join us for a great night of intergenerational fun. Starting at 6:30pm with a pizza dinner you will get to experience a lesson in the life of our Confirmands. Play the fun games they have played. Learn how to study the Bible using emojis. Learn some of the ways they have been praying together. Have a great time with this church's youth in celebration of all they have accomplished this year. Then on Sunday, May 20th you'll be ready to cheer them on as they make their Confirmation and become full members of UCCSV. Join us!!

## **The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness Book Discussion**

The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world - higher than Russia, China and Iran. Over 2.3 million men in America are in prison - about half for drug crimes. Thirty years ago, before the "War on Drugs" was implemented, there were only 300,000 people in the American prison system. Seventy percent of all men imprisoned are African-American or Hispanic. An African-American male is sentenced an average of a

20 to 50 times longer prison term than a white male convicted of the same drug crime. These convictions remain on their records permanently, limiting their voting rights and their ability to find employment.

Pastor Holly will lead a discussion of the book and this important social justice issue on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **Ladies Night Out**

Save the date! Monday, April 30, we will be having Ladies Night Out at Mama Lena on Clopper Rd starting at 7pm. We usually dine on pizza & salad. The price is typically \$12-\$15, beverages are extra. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

UCCSV is an inclusive community. Members who identify in any way with the Ladies of our community, you are encouraged to come.

## **Pulp Pilgrims Book Group**

We chose our book for May, *A Gentleman in Moscow: A Novel*, by Amor Towles.

This is a story of Count Alexander Rostov, who in 1922 was deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal. The Count was placed under house arrest in the attic of the Metropol, a grand hotel across from the Kremlin.

Brimming with humor, with a glittering cast of characters, fully rendered one beautiful scene after another, this novel casts a spell as it relates the Count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

A hold is necessary on print & electronic formats at the library.

We will meet Sunday, May 6th at 11:30am in the Narthex.

For you fast readers, we also chose the June book, A River in Darkness by Miasaji Ishikawa.

Happy Reading! Deborah

**Calendar of Events**

- Men's Breakfast (9:00am) – April 21
- Earth Day Group Pix (11:30am) – April 22
- PFLAG (2:30pm) – April 22
- Confirmation Class (11:30am) – April 22
- Lord's Table at St. Martins (1:00pm) – April 24
- The New Jim Crow Book Discussion (7:00pm) – April 25
- Ladies Night Out (7:00pm) – April 30



**Happy Earth Day!**

