



Spirit News

May 3, 2018

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

- Pray for Claudine. I pray that my upcoming surgery goes well and I soon will be able to walk without pain. I want to pray that Congress rejects Trump's cuts on HUD as this will be devastating to the poor, disabled and elderly.
- Pray for Marjory Sgroi as she deals with her diagnosis of Alzheimers (Suzanne Schmidt).
- Pray for Julie and Geoff, as Geoff undergoes new treatments for pancreatic cancer. (Julie is a good friend of Kristin Smith.)
- Pray for Eloise, my Grandmother, who at 95 years old went to be with the Lord. She's no longer suffering and she had very strong faith (Christii Watkins).
- Continued prayers for Liberty Millendez, friend of the Domingo Family, who is undergoing chemo. May God's blessings of healing and strength be with her (Gina Domingo).
- 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 my mother, Margaret P. Hall "for illness and God's will," sister's Patti and Brinda Hall – caretakers (Jim Hall)
- 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 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 James 2:14-26 and 1 Peter 4:8-11

This Sunday at UCCSV

Service is at the heart of the Christian life. Jesus demonstrated this throughout his life and ministry. Through service to others we give back to God. We learn humility and connect with others. We function as God's hands and feet in the world. Without volunteers, from church leadership and fellowship hosts, to greeters and teachers, to choir members and program organizers, this church could not function. But our service also goes beyond our walls to places like The Lord's Table, food for the Women's Shelter, restocking the shelves of Germantown Help and more. So this Sunday we want to celebrate your volunteer service to this community and to this church. We will consider why and how you make a difference and encourage volunteers to know that no

matter their tasks, their work is appreciated. Join us at 10am for worship as we celebrate volunteer service and offer ourselves back to God! This Sunday is also Communion Sunday so come to be fed spiritually and physically as you take an hour out of your week to recharge, feel a sense of belonging and welcome, and remember what truly matters.

Correction from Last Week's Sermon

UCCSV Community, I need to ask for your grace. Last Sunday in my sermon I quoted some numbers about the decline of the UCC in terms of numbers of churches we had lost in the last 10 years. I had heard the number I quoted from another UCC clergy member in the context of the reality of our declining numbers and how our Conferences and Associations were having to consolidate to survive. Whether I heard him wrong or whether the numbers he quoted were wrong, the numbers that I quoted in my sermon about congregational decline were incorrect. We do currently have (as listed in our denomination wide 2017 statistical profile) approximately 5,000 churches as I said in my sermon, but 10 years ago we only had 5,518 churches denomination wide so we only lost over 500 churches in that time. However, if you look at straight membership numbers we have actually lost a little over 300,000 members over the last 10 years which is approximately 30% of our membership. In my sermon I said we were half the denomination we were 10 years ago. That is not correct. We are about 70% of the denomination we were 10 years ago. In terms of membership numbers we are half the denomination we were 30 years ago. If you are statistics buff and you would like to see more information on our denomination please check out: <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/2017-UCC-Statistical-Profile.pdf>

I apologize that I did not fully vet the information I gave you and I promise to do better in the

future. I believe verifiable facts are very important and we should always strive to get them as right as possible. However, while the numbers I quoted were off, the trend I described is still a reality that we have to face. And I still stand by my sermon's main point which was that if we want to address the decline of our denomination and the church in general, we must learn how to better share our faith and the good news of the gospel. That's just a first step, of course, to addressing the problem of declining church membership. There is a recent blog entry on this topic on the UCC website, <https://carducc.wordpress.com/2018/04/30/bringing-on-the-future-letting-go-to-let-come/>, that mentions a quote by Rick Ufford-Chase from his book [Faithful Resistance: Gospel Visions for the Church in A Time of Empire](#). He writes, *"So I ask people like me who have given their lives to the church, can we admit that this thing we love is broken? Can we confess our fear as we watch our membership decline and budgets shrink? Can we open ourselves to the possibility that God may be working a new thing in our midst? This may be not a sign of the demise of everything we cherish, but instead an unbelievable opportunity to participate in the transformation and renewal of the spiritual life of the institution that has become the church."* Let's continue the conversation and imagine how churches like UCCSV can be part of the transformation and renewal of our churches, our denomination, and our wider communities with God's help.

- Pastor Holly

GreenFest

GreenFest is the largest, annual environmental festival in Montgomery County, MD. A free event, GreenFest is a chance for residents, businesses, nonprofits and neighbors, to come together, share ideas and learn. Plus GreenFest has tons of fun activities for the whole family from kids tree-climbing to music

and exhibitors.

What to Expect:

- Almost 100 exhibitors including native plant sale, artisans, and nonprofit organizations
- Kids tree-climbing, arts and crafts and stream maze
- Dance performances from UpRooted Dance
- A Repair Cafe where experts will teach you how to fix common household items
- DIY Demos and 10-minute landscaping tips
- Workshops on beekeeping, container gardening, pickling, and finding green jobs.
- An electric vehicle and hybrid car show

We hope you'll come this Saturday, May 5th, 11am to 4pm at Jesup Blair Park, 900 Jesup Blair Drive, Silver Spring, MD (next to Montgomery College!

For directions:

<http://montgomerycountygreenfest.org/>

May Worship Station

Each Sunday as we begin worship we mention at least three different categories of people who are welcome at UCCSV, often including people who would not or do not traditionally feel welcomed in a church community. Now it's your chance to name some of those groups. At the back of the sanctuary on the board will be the sentence "No Matter _____ you are welcome here." You are invited to fill in the blank. Feel free to list something we usually say on Sunday mornings or to name something totally different. Who would you welcome here to UCCSV? What part of you have you felt like might keep you from being welcomed at a church? What part of your identity do you want to name as specifically welcomed in God's house? Fill in the blank and maybe in the months to come you might hear your answer used as a category of welcome as we begin worship.

Gaithersburg Interfaith Nature Walk

POSTED BY ANNA AWIMBO 17SC ON APRIL 03, 2018 ONLINE AT INTERFAITHCHESAPEAKE.ORG

Join us on a spiritual walk in the park to learn about what's happening to our local Muddy Branch watershed and the web of life that depends on it.

Come learn what you and your congregation can do to be faithful stewards of the environment.

WHEN

This Sunday, May 06, 2018 at 3pm - 5pm

WHERE

Malcolm King Park
1 School Dr
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
United States

[Google map and directions](#)

CONTACT

Bonnie Sorak ·

bonnie@interfaithchesapeake.org · 443-799-0349

To RSVP online, go to:

<http://www.interfaithchesapeake.org/gaithersburgnaturewalk>

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.

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



Ledo Pizza Night May 8

The second Tuesday of each month will be UCC Seneca Valley night at Ledo Pizza on Wisteria Drive in Germantown. Ledo will give UCCSV a portion of its sales (between 10%-20% depending on the amount spent) from both eat in and carry out all day. You must present a flyer (available at church or at Ledos Tuesday evening starting at 5:30pm) to have your sale counted towards our total. Join us for an inexpensive, kid-friendly, evening out and help us raise some funds for UCCSV!

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!!

Adopt-A-Road

Montgomery County's Adopt A Road (AAR) program encourages residents and businesses in the County to participate in a community activity by keeping our roadsides litter free. Currently there are more than 2,500 volunteers who have adopted over 450 road segments and cleaning over 1100 miles of road in an effort to Keep Montgomery County Beautiful. You can be a part of this program too!

Your participation will help reduce trash and litter along County roads and maintain a clean and attractive environment. Ultimately it helps protect the Chesapeake Bay. Litter that is washed into storm drains, travels to nearby creeks, streams, major rivers, and eventually can reach the Bay.

Join UCCSV friends and members as we make a part of Middlebrook Road beautiful.

When: Saturday, May 12th
Where: Meet at Seneca Valley High School
Time: 9:00am

Pride Sunday at UCCSV

On Sunday, June 10th we will celebrate LGBTQ+ pride at UCCSV. This is also the weekend of DC Pride Fest. It would be incredibly powerful on this day to hear stories from UCCSV community members and friends who are LGBTQ+ about why pride is so important to them and what it means to be part of a church that is Open and Affirming where

they are encouraged to continue to grow in their faith journey throughout their life. If you would be willing to share a 3-5 minute testimonial on Pride Sunday, please let Holly know or email her at HollyRJackson@gmail.com. This is not a sermon. It is simply you telling your story of how being able to be out and safe at church has affected your faith journey and/or somehow changed your life. We want to hear your story and offer it up to the God who loves you exactly as you are!



Calendar of Events

- CE Committee Meeting (11:30am) – May 6
- Pulp Pilgrims Book Group (11:30am) - May 6
- Deacons' Meeting (7pm) – May 7
- Pizza Night at Ledos – May 8
- Intergenerational Fun Night (6:30pm) – May 11
- Adopt-A-Road (9am) – May 12
- Mother's Day Service and Baptisms – May 13
- Men's Breakfast (9am) – May 19
- Pentecost and Confirmation – May 20
- Trustees Meeting (6:30pm) – May 21
- Council Meeting (7pm) – May 21
- Lord's Table at St. Martins (1pm) – May 22
- Social Action Committee Meeting (11:15am) –
May 27
- PFLAG (2:30pm) – May 27

