



Spirit News

November 9, 2017

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
An Open and Affirming Congregation
13421 Clopper Road, Germantown, MD
Phone: (301) 540-3449
Email: UCCSV@verizon.net
Website: UCCSenecaValley.org

Prayer Requests

- Prayer of Thanksgiving for the life of Carol Crane-Dupre, who died earlier this week (anonymous).
- Prayer for Greg McClure who is battling lymphoma (anonymous).
- Prayers of gratitude for this faith community at UCCSV for all the love, prayers and support through difficult times (Deb Anderson).
- Pray for Rachel Estrada Fuss. Rachel has lived in Maryland for a year now (anonymous).
- Pray for the Flory and Fuss families as they grieve the unexpected loss of Jen's brother, Eric (anonymous).
- Pray for "Better Together" as our church enters the season of Stewardship. Please be with us as we determine the best ways that all our members and friends are "Better Together!" (anonymous).
- Ongoing Prayer for my friend Bether who has been diagnosed with cervical cancer and undergoing chemo; pray for the political situation in Kenya (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 for Helen for strength as she continues her 3rd fight against cancer (Dee Dee Molaski).
- Ongoing prayer for my aunt Jean who was recently diagnosed with terminal bladder cancer (Terri Molaski).

- Ongoing prayer for Laurene Karimi who is battling stage 3 breast cancer with so much courage (Terri Molaski).
- Ongoing prayer for Phyllis Anderson and family. Phyllis is declining with dementia. Surround her and her daughters who are caregiving. Please grant them patience and peace (Deb Anderson).
- Ongoing Prayer for Patti and Gary Dennison who are suffering through severe illness and very difficult times (Andrea Dennison).
- Ongoing Prayer for Michelle Cohen – Has multiple myeloma (Terri Molaski).
- Ongoing Prayer during my continued treatment and palliative care for cancer (Maridell Mason).

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
Luke 6:27-38**

This Sunday at UCCSV

It's Consecration Sunday and we are having a celebration! Come join us and understand why we say we are "Better Together" with each other and with God at our center. Worship will be a joyous occasion. You won't want to miss

meeting our new Director of Music Ministry Stefan Petrov and hearing his amazing musical gifts. We will make our pledges to support this community and bless this as offerings to God. Holly will preach and the choir will sing. Then make sure to join us after worship for our Stewardship Lunch Celebration including not just a tasty meal, but also a video presentation, a community art project, and more. This will be a very special worship and celebratory Sunday at UCCSV and we want you there to be a part of it. We are better together, but we need your presence and spirit in order to be the best that we can be! Don't miss this special Sunday!

-Holly

Next Steps Team

It's been a year of joining together in renewed ministry at UCCSV and now it's time to ask some crucial questions. What are our next faithful steps together as a community? What is God calling us to? What are the strengths and needs within our church? What are the needs of the community around us? How will we move into the future with confidence and clarity of God's call on our lives and with renewed passion and excitement for our work and lives together? A small team will begin meeting in January to help the congregation move through a process designed to help us answer these questions. Is God calling you to be a part of this team? All of us will be called to participate in some way as we move through this process in the coming year but right now we need people especially interested in helping us guide this process forward. If you have thought, "As a church we should be doing this!" or wondered, "How could we better serve the community?" or simply been excited about the renewed energy and enthusiasm in our church, please consider being part of the Next Steps Team. We are especially looking for people not already engaged in church leadership, and newer voices to the church, although of course all are welcome.

Adopt-A-Road



We have our last road pick-up this Saturday for the year. We won't have another clean up until March. So here's hoping we have a good turn out this Saturday. Dress warmly as it is supposed to be pretty chilly.

As always, we meet in the parking lot of Seneca Valley High School (the lot that faces Middle Brook Rd) at 9 AM.

Dear UCCSV Community,

If you were in church this past Sunday you saw a real life demonstration of the biblical advice from the book of Ecclesiastes that we are better together. Two or more can lift each other up, take care of each other, protect each other, get more done together, have more resources when we share, and much more. **God has created us to live together in community. Doing so makes us better together!** We see that every Sunday in worship. We experience that when we find ourselves in need and hurting and the church community supports us. We experience that when we learn about God together, when we serve others together, when we advocate for justice together, when we take care of God's creation together and when we make music together.

But being better together doesn't just happen. It takes work. It takes commitment. It takes being present to and for each other. Being better together with God in ministry allows us to do amazing things that we could never do alone. But it requires our participation. It requires our resources. It requires our spiritual discipline. **In gratefulness for all we have been given, we**

are asked to give back and to be an active and vital part of this Body of Christ.

This Sunday is Consecration Sunday. That means that in awareness of the health of this community that we love and value, and with hope for the future about all that our support can do, we will pledge to give to the church in 2018. We will promise to support the church through gifts of money, service, and the use of our talents and knowledge. We will fill out pledge cards indicating our promises and we will offer them up to God in worship. Then after worship we will head to the Gathering Room to enjoy a feast for our senses. We will pray together, laugh together, eat together, talk together, make art together, and more. We will also celebrate the arrival of our new Director of Music Ministry, Stefan Petrov. **You won't want to miss this special celebration worship and lunch!**

If you have videos or written testimonies of why we are better together or why you give to support UCCSV, please send them to me! You can send them as late as Thursday evening to have them included in Sunday's video. We want and value your participation!

Maybe you're like me and the last couple of weeks it has been sometimes hard to find hope and good news when there seems to be a new disaster every time we turn on the news. But in such a time as this, churches like ours are crucial to our well being for both members and friends, and also to others out there looking for us who just don't know we exist yet. Our sanctuary is a place where you can laugh, cry, sing, pray, learn, listen, share, and for a moment experience peace and love as it should be. It's one place you will find real hope. That's part of what makes us Better Together. **Pledging our time, talent, and treasure to UCC Seneca Valley this coming Sunday is one tangible way we can demonstrate to the world the good news of the gospel that love**

wins. Know that the shadows hovering around us now may be deep but the light of God we can shine on each other when we work together can chase away the darkest gloom.

Please join us this Consecration Sunday for worship at 10am and our Stewardship Celebration Lunch after service.

Welcome Stefan Petrov as our new Director of Music Ministry!

This Sunday we welcome Stefan Petrov into worship with us as a new member of UCCSV's staff! Stefan has already been working behind the scenes with Pastor Holly and with the help of our volunteer music leaders to make a smooth transition into our community. We are so excited to have him here at UCCSV and look forward to many Sundays of beautiful music with him.

Stefan began his piano studies at the National School for Music and Dance in his home town of Plovdiv, Bulgaria where he played his solo debut recital at age nine and made his first orchestral appearance at age fourteen. After moving to the United States in 2000, he continued his piano studies with Neil Rutman at the University of Central Arkansas and later, Ellen Mack at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. In addition, Stefan studied extensively with Russian-American pianist Vladimir Feltsman. Equally at home as a collaborative pianist, Stefan partners frequently with Israeli-American cellist Amit Peled in recitals across the U.S. and Europe, while also serving as a collaborative piano faculty and piano faculty chair at the Heifetz International Music Institute. Stefan has served as an organist, pianist, and a music director for the last sixteen years. He enjoys a multi-genre style of musical worship spanning across generations and traditions, and reflecting the diversity found in the congregations he serves.

Stefan holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. He lives with his wife Kate in College Park, MD. In their spare time Kate and Stefan enjoy hiking, climbing, skiing and the outdoors.

November Worship Station - Gratitude in Print

Thank you notes are a classic way to express our gratitude to others. However, it's often difficult to take the time and focus to sit down and write one. As a result our thankful thoughts just stay in the back of our minds. We forget that our gratitude can bless others if we pause to share it.

Who has brought joy, relief or peace to your life recently? What small act of kindness meant so much? Who have you never thanked for the contributions they made to your life? What thank you notes are on your heart right now? Use the cards here to write a note to someone or even something (object or situation) that you are thankful for or see as a gift. If you can or wish to mail it take it with you and do so. If your note cannot be mailed for whatever reason, put it in the box on the table and leave it as an offering to God who knows the depths of your gratitude.

Say thank you this month and practice gratitude!

Montgomery County Interfaith Transgender Day of Remembrance

On Monday, November 20th we will host an interfaith service to lament and remember transgender individuals who have been killed in the past year. People will be coming from all over the county, and from different faith traditions, to pray together, to draw strength from one another, and to weave our lives together with those who have been lost. You are invited to attend this service not just as people in the pews, but as hosts. We need your help to welcome those who will be joining us in worship. We have been talking about how we are better together and not just for each other,

but for the impact we can make on and for our greater area. Here is a chance to put our words into actions. Please join us!



Thanksgiving Eve Service - Ground Yourself in God Before The Feast!

Do you sometimes feel like Thanksgiving is more about the food (and sometimes family squabbles) than the actually experiencing or practicing gratitude? Well it doesn't have to be that way! On Wednesday, November 22nd at 7:30pm join us for a contemplative Thanksgiving Eve service. We will have prayer stations to experience in addition to beautiful music, candles to light, and some quiet to enjoy before the bustle of the holiday. Come say thank you to God, and acknowledge the blessings (and challenges) of the last year at this special annual service.

Interfaith Works Shelter Meals 2017

Our congregation is signed up to provide meals for approximately 30-35 shelter guests at the Wilkins Avenue women's shelter in Rockville beginning with dinner on Sunday, November 19 and ending with lunch on Thursday, November 22. Many hands make light work! Please contact Katy Crowley at cek0891@gmail.com to sign up.

The business office will be closed Thanksgiving week (11/22-11/24). There will be no Spirit News that week.

Women's Retreat

SAVE THE DATE for the WOMEN'S RETREAT! Friday MARCH 2nd, 4:00pm through Sunday, MARCH 4th 12:00 noon. Am Kolel will be the site and can accommodate 28 women. Cost will be approximately \$90.00. More info to follow as time draws closer.

Church Email

On occasion, our pastor, our church members and our staff may ask that I send emails to everyone on their behalf. We use the church office email address of uccsv@verizon.net to send mass emails and most often will use the blind carbon copy feature.

If you click "Reply" your message comes to me at the Church Office. Replies are welcomed but you may want to make sure you are replying to the correct party.

Many thanks,

Nita Stone
Office Manager

Calendar of Events for November

Adopt-A-Road (9:00am) – November 11
Consecration Sunday – November 12
Trustee's Meeting (6:00pm) – November 13
Council Meeting (7:00pm) – November 13
Pizza Night at Ledos – November 14
Movie Night (6:30pm) – November 17
Men's Breakfast (9:00am) – November 18
One Anothering Women's Group (10:00am) –
November 18
Confirmation Class (11:30am) –
November 19
Women's Shelter Days - November 19 – 22
Trustee's Meeting (6:00pm) – November 20
Transgender Day of Remembrance (7:00pm) –
November 20
Thanksgiving Eve Service (7:30pm) –
November 22
Social Action Committee Meeting (11:30am) –
November 26
PFLAG (2:30pm) – November 26
Lord's Table at St. Martins (1:00pm) –
November 28