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UCC/VF's Weekly Newsletter

The **FORGE**

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The United Church of Christ at Valley Forge, following in the Way of Jesus, is called by God to deepen our relationships with the Spirit and our faith community so that we will be empowered to reach out widely to our neighbors in love, justice, hospitality, healing, and hope.

Scripture for This Sunday

Psalm 36:5-10
John 2:1-11

REMINDER: Sunday, January 27 - annual Congregational Meeting immediately following Worship.
Please stay and participate in this important meeting!

Washing Away the Walls

But John intervened: "I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house - make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned." 18 There was a lot more of this - words that gave strength to the people, words that put heart in them. The Message! - Luke 3:16-18 (The Message Version)

On Sunday we talked about how a non-violent activist and author friend of Father Richard Rohr shared with him a story of a time he was in Oakland, California, and stopped by to visit his friend Anne Symens-Bucher and the new community she and her family had started. The mother of five, a lifelong peace activist, and committed follower of Christ, Anne, along with her husband, Terry, founded Cantic Farm, a peace and nonviolence community in one of the most violent, run-down blocks in the country. They were awake to the connections between poverty, racism, violence, guns, prisons, war, and environmental destruction and started this community as a viable alternative right there in the thick of everything.

Cantic Farm developed slowly, but after several months, they had fifteen community members living in five houses connected by a large backyard. That backyard became the center point of transformation. Like every other house in the neighborhood, their little houses were separated by fences. And the Spirit called them to "tear down that wall."

"When we took down the fences between our yards," Anne said, "we were also taking down the fences in our hearts. That's when we really began to know and love our neighbors and make peace with one another."

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SUNDAY - JAN. 20

9:00 a.m. God, Change, and the 12-Steps (thru 4/7)

10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration - Sunday School/Sunday Morning Breakfast Club

THIS WEEK

Mon. - 7:00 p.m. Church Council

Wed. - 7:30 p.m. Spiritual Life Group - Matthew

Thur. - 10:30 a.m. Spiritual Life Group - Luke

7:30 p.m. Senior Choir rehearsal

Sat. - 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Prayer Retreat at the IHM Center in Malvern.

NEXT SUNDAY - JAN 27

9:00 a.m. God, Change, and the 12-Steps (thru 4/7)

10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration - Sunday School/Sunday Morning Breakfast Club

Congregational Meeting following worship

UPCOMING

Mon. Jan. 28 - 1:00 p.m. Grief Support Group meeting

They knew that making peace in inner-city Oakland meant going deep into contemplative nonviolence, and that meant somehow connecting with the Holy Spirit and with Mother Earth. They decided to hold hour-long silent meditation sessions every day. Then they launched Canticle Farm Sundays. They started with a worship gathering. While doing this, they reached out to their neighbors and invited them to lunch and to help out with the organic garden. And they offered them seeds to start their own gardens. As they got to know their neighbors and heard their concerns, they began afternoon programs on various practical items such as cooking, growing medicinal plants, and making herbal medicines. In the process, they not only loved their neighbors, their neighbors loved and taught them.

This story reminds us of what happens when we stop building walls inside and outside and daily turn to be immersed in the Spirit who washes those walls away -- and fills us with the power of compassion, forgiveness, healing, and hope. And then we have such gifts to share with others, washing away with God's love the walls of fear we have constructed between us and others.

I invite you to join us for our upcoming Prayer Retreat Day on January 26 (more info on p.4), that we can together learn and practice in this new year immersion in the living water that helps wash away these dividing walls. As we do this it is good news for us and for the world.

Love,

Pastor Michael Bush

Listen to & download Sunday's message

<http://www.uccvf.org/sermonmp3.html>

In Our Prayers

- Comfort and peace for Martha Parrish Bush's sister, Maggie, who has stage 4 bone cancer. Her current course of treatment is no longer working, asking for wisdom to discern next steps for her.
- Prayers of comfort and healing for Blaise, 8 yo son of Deb's friend Annie Davis. He's battling AML (leukemia), after conquering Ewing's Sarcom (bone cancer) three years ago
- Prayers for healing for Carol Schmidt following surgery to remove a malignant tumor.
- Gratitude for healing and strength for Roslyn Nilson.
- Healing for Kathy and Colleen Kait.
- Healing and strength for Emily Mancuso, recently hospitalized.

UPCOMING GREETERS

Jan. 27 - Dianne Ludovic and Mary Urso

Feb. 3 - Brian Wynne

Feb. 10 - Rob and Marni Schultz

UPCOMING USHERS

Jan. 27 - Joe McKeefery and Joe Sciandra

Feb. 3 - Janice Coffey and Rob Schultz

Feb. 10 - Phil and Sue Clark

UPCOMING COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Jan. - The Schultz Flock

Feb. - The Flora Flock

Mar. - The McKinley Flock

SOUNDBOARD

Jan. 27 - Matt Harrington

Feb. 3 - Chris Maurizio

Feb. 10 - Jeff Durst

LIGHTING THE WORSHIP CANDLE

Jan. 27 - The Maugeri family

Feb. 3 - Juliana Flora

Feb. 10 - The Shelton family

UPCOMING LITURGISTS

Jan. 27 - Ellen Matthews

Feb. 3 - Shannon Mudd

Feb. 10 - Cheryl Fredericks

SMALL GROUPS FOR BIRTHING NEW LIFE IN THE NEW YEAR

Whether you have previously participated or not, you are welcome to try one out.

God, Change and the 12 Steps Class (see page 4)

Wednesday Night Spiritual Life Group - Gospel of Matthew

The group meets at 7:30 p.m. We begin with prayer, read a portion of the story of Jesus and his ministry, and then we discuss what the story meant in its own time and how it may form and shape us in our time. Matthew's Gospel is often best known for the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount. We will look at these teachings, the context, the symbols, and more. Pastor Michael Bush will facilitate the conversation.

Thursday Morning Spiritual Life Group - Gospel of Luke

We gather 10:30-11:30 a.m. at UCCVF each week for prayer, conversation, laughter, sharing, learning, and sometimes eating, too. This group is focusing on the stories in the Gospel of Luke to learn and live more fully what it means to follow in the Way of Jesus and to live in God's hospitality, healing, justice, and love in the world. New folks are always welcome to join us. This group is facilitated by Pastor Michael Bush.

Prayer Advocacy Ministry: This group meets quarterly at 12:00 p.m. to learn about prayer practices and pray together. They receive requests in confidence and holds individuals in prayer. For more information contact [Gwynne Hagee](#).

Grief Support Group: Pastor Michael continues leading a monthly Grief Recovery group here at UCCVF for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one and are grieving. Next meeting is on January 28th at 1:00 p.m.

Lean on Me Prayer Ministry: The Lean On Me prayer ministry is a one-on-one prayer time that is offered *every Sunday after worship*. Two of our Prayer Partners will be seated in the chapel chairs in the Sanctuary. You are welcome to come and sit next to one of them, tell them what you would like to pray about (a joy, concern, or thanksgiving) and then the Prayer Partner will lift you up in prayer.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The **Caring Crafters** meet monthly from 7-9 p.m. at UCCVF to create items for charity. No crafting experience necessary! Email the [church office](#) if you would like to join the group.

The **Monthly Dinner Out** group meets monthly at local eateries for fun and fellowship. Members are asked to sign up to pick a place to eat and organize the meal. If you have any suggestions, contact the church office!

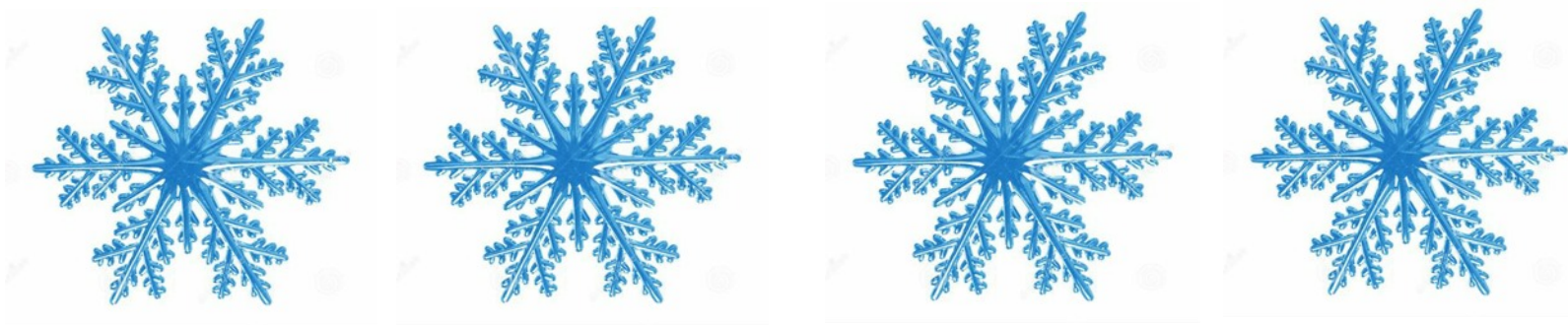
UCCVF Bridge Group - We meet once a month at various locations. All are welcome - any level of expertise is invited from novice to experienced. It is a social group. Dessert and coffee or tea will be served and then we start playing cards. Contact [Phil Clark](#) for more info.



HAVE YOU LIKED US ON FACEBOOK?

Our Facebook page offers links to articles connected with faith life, periodic reminders, photos and more!

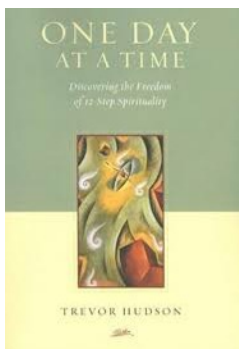
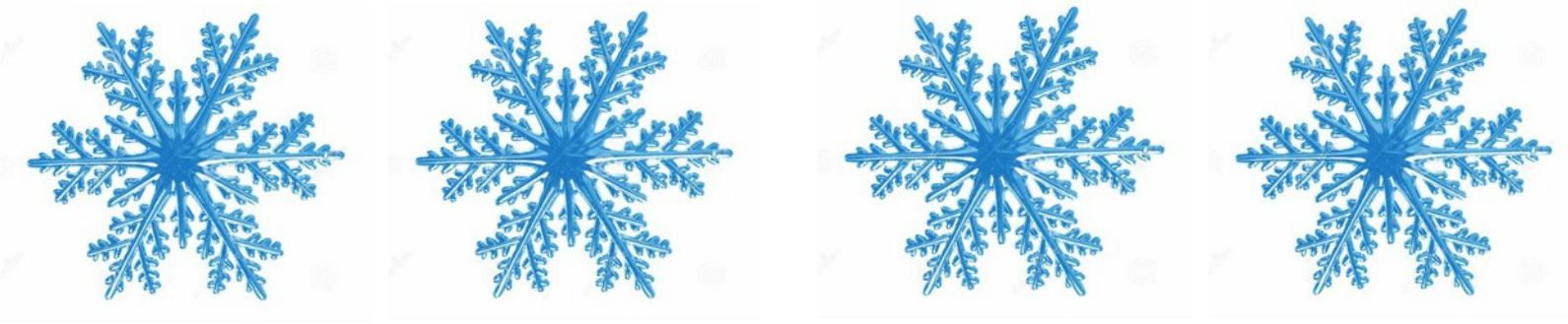
Click [HERE](#) to visit.



Inclement Weather

The Church Office will follow the Tredyffrin Area School District when there is inclement weather. For example: If the school district delays school opening by two hours, our office will also delay opening by 2 hours, and will open at 11:00 a.m. If school and school offices are closed, our office will be closed.

PLEASE NOTE: For information concerning evening meetings and Sunday worship/events, cancellations will be decided on an individual basis. Whenever possible, information will be posted to the [website](#) and our [Facebook page](#).



God, Change, and the 12-Steps

AN ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION CLASS OPPORTUNITY

Starting THIS Sunday 9 am to 10 am through 4/7

How have millions of people survived seemingly hopeless addictions with drugs, alcohol, food, sex, gambling? The list is long, the issues complex. But the solution is the same. They connected with a higher, life-changing power and did so using the tools of 12-step recovery.

Start the new year by learning how the 12 steps can help lead to freedom from self-destructive thinking and behaviors, and provide a stronger connection with God. Join Matt Harrington for 12 weeks on Sunday mornings for this spiritual, non-denominational program, structured around the book *One Day at a Time* by Trevor Hudson.

Using moments in the author's life, the book provides examples of how the 12 steps apply to every day life. There will also be speakers who visit the class to offer their perspectives based on their personal journeys in recovery.

A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Or, send an [email](#) saying "Sign me up!"

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Greeter - Gail Warner

Ushers -The McAleer family

Lighting the Worship Candle -
Chris Jackson

Liturgist - Jane Groves

Soundboard - Joe Sciandra

Lean on Me Prayer Partners -
Angela Steel and Sam Mat-
thews

Infants/Toddlers - Tori Hall
and Mandy Semans



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Mark your calendars now!

On Sunday January 27, we will have our annual Congregational Meeting immediately following Worship. Please stay and participate in this important meeting!

- If you are newer to the church (even if you're not an official member), we invite you to join us for this meeting! It will give you a good overview of the organization and budget and leadership in this church.
- To help parents stay for the meeting, there will be childcare provided for younger children. We encourage high school and college students to attend the Congregational Meeting.
- After the end of the Worship Service, please stay seated, so that we can start the meeting as soon as possible. There will be handouts available of the Annual Reports, the Budget, and the Nominating Committee's candidates for leadership positions.

POWER Metro MLK Day Opportunities

This weekend marks our celebration of the life of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Here are some local opportunities in places where POWER is organizing. Please make every effort to join us, as we celebrate Dr. King's life and continue his mission: to see "justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24, emphasis mine).

Sunday, Jan. 20

3:30pm - Community All Faith Celebration, First Presbyterian Church of Pottstown (750 N. Evans St., Pottstown)

Monday, Jan. 21

8:00am - Day of Service, St. Paul's Baptist Church of West Chester (1 Hagerty Boulevard, West Chester) [lunch provided for people who [pre-register](#) - please see church website to sign up]

9:30am - Day of Service, Beth Am Israel (1301 Hagys Ford Rd., Penn Valley) - Interfaith Gathering with experiential and hands on activities for ALL ages!

11:00am - H-CAN Community Event, Haverford Township Free Library (1601 Darby Rd., Havertown)

1:00pm - POWER Teach-In and Rally, Bibleway Baptist Church (1323 N. 52nd St., Philadelphia) [see [POWER's calendar](#) for more info]

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Marni Schultz and Sue Bradley
Co-Moderators of Elders

Transitional Director of Music
[Jo Ellen Hippenstiel](#)