



05.17.2018

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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

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Acts 2:1-18



This Sunday is Pentecost Sunday. You are encouraged to wear red as a symbol of God's Spirit.

Carry On

When Jesus had said this, as the disciples were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven" - Acts 1:9-11

We have talked together about the drive in us - biological, neurological, emotional - that calls us to leave some kind of mark or legacy in the world when we are gone. We are often willing to sacrifice and risk to make that mark: we have children, invent machines, create art, produce writing, and more.

From a place deeper and wider than genetics or ego, Jesus also did what he did - risked, sacrificed, taught - so that the deepest part of himself, what he was about, would be carried on. In many ways the church has missed this over the centuries. The church has often taught that Jesus did what he did and sacrificed himself so that we would be saved from hell or sent to heaven. The church has also taught that Jesus did what he did so that we would be better citizens, maintain the status quo, be polite, and not make trouble. But Jesus did not give himself away, did not sacrifice his very body and being so we would worship him or engage some random acts of kindness, but so that God's Word and Spirit would continue in a new body, an expanding reproducing Body. This is what Paul called the Body of Christ.

The ascension story (excerpt above) reminds us that Jesus intended to form a community who would carry on his loving, healing, life-expanding, just, Spirit-embodiment work in the world. In our time and place, we carry on this work and ministry that Jesus began when we let go of just being good citizens or trying to get ourselves some afterlife reward, and follow in his way that daily connects us with God and the truth of who we are so that we can then embody God's transforming Spirit in the world.

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SUNDAY - MAY 20
PENTECOST SUNDAY

10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration
Sunday School/ Middle School
Sunday Morning Breakfast Club
12:00 p.m. Membership
Committee meeting
3:00 p.m. Church Softball with
The Apostles

THIS COMING WEEK

Mon.- 7:00 p.m. Church Council
Wed. - 2:00 p.m. Caring Crafters
meets at UCCVF
7:30 p.m. Spiritual Life Group -
Matthew
Thur. - 10:30 a.m. Spiritual Life
Group - Exodus

NEXT SUNDAY - MAY 27

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

**ROCKING IN
WORSHIP**

The all-ages worship team is experimenting with making worship more accessible to all by placing a rocking chair in the back of the sanctuary. This could allow for a parent/guardian to rock with a young one and still stay in the worship space. We will leave it there for a while and evaluate as to whether it seems helpful or not.

Many of us engage estate planning with financial planners and lawyers. Jesus calls us to the daily work of transformation that we will leave a legacy not just of things, but of justice, love, and the fullness of life. Come and see!

Love in Christ,
Michael Bush
Pastor

Listen to & download Sunday's message

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



PLEASE SHARE!

**United Church of Christ at Valley Forge (UCC-VF) seeks
Part-Time Transitional Staff Member(s) for Music Ministry**

As we anticipate the retirement of our current music ministry staff, recognize shifting trends in church music, and honor our congregation's priority of growing into more inclusive all-ages worship, we seek part-time transitional music staff while we develop a longer-term vision for our music ministry. Our professional music ministry needs include: accompanist(s) on piano, organ, and guitar, worship planning for music in consultation with Pastor and worship committee (Sundays, special services, and weddings/funerals), and directing our current adult choir.

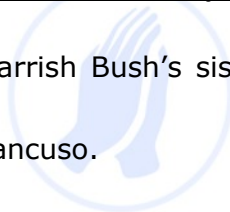
We seek persons of faith for this(these) position(s) who are intentional about their own spiritual lives and who would ground musical selection and performance in the context of supporting the congregation in worship/experience of God. Experience in church music ministry is preferred. Degree in music performance/direction is a plus. We seek staff who will support our current worship models and be willing to vision with us about what the future may hold. As a new model develops, the Transitional Staff for Music Ministry would be eligible to apply for whatever staffing configuration supports the worship music vision.

We recognize that the various areas of competency and experience needed may not reside in one individual, so we are open to a staff team that would share in the ministry responsibilities.

Interested candidates should send resumes to uccvfmusicsearch@gmail.com or United Church of Christ at Valley Forge, 45 Walker Road, Wayne, PA 19087. Please submit applications by May 25, 2018.

In Our Prayers

- Comfort and peace for Martha Parrish Bush's sister, Maggie, who has stage 4 bone cancer.
- Healing and strength for Emily Mancuso.



SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Greeter - Mary Urso

Ushers - The McAleer family

Lighting the Worship Candle
Gwynne Hagee

Liturgist - Holly Branham

Soundboard - Matt Harrington

Lean on Me Prayer Partners -
Eliza Morrison and Jeff Durst

Infants/Toddlers - Tori Hall
and Barb Fox

Strengthen The Church Offering ***This Sunday, May 20***

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

One example of how this helps ministries locally is the Adese Fellowship, a 12-month program that maximizes the capacity of fellows to launch businesses that will help end poverty. Our very own Meagan McLeod, who was our Interim pastor last summer during Michael's sabbatical, received an Adese Fellowship and through this program she hope to provide a place where single mothers can feel significant, secure and supported through her organization, Healing Streams Center.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. We will receive the STC offering on **Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018.**

EQUIPMENT RETURN AMNESTY

In reviewing the current inventory of tables and folding chairs used for social gatherings, we find that 40% of our chairs and a couple long tables are unaccounted for. If you have borrowed any of this equipment, we ask that you please return it to the church as soon as possible. Going forward, please make sure you check in with the church office before borrowing any equipment so that we maintain adequate supplies at all times. We want to be prepared for unexpected large events that randomly occur, and keeping track of our essential equipment enables flexibility and agility.

Thank you for your help to achieve these goals!

The Membership Committee



UPCOMING GREETERS

May 27 - Colin Brigham
June 3 - Gail Warner
June 10 - Deb McAleer

UPCOMING USHERS

May 27 - Joe McKeefery
June 3 - The Bigelow family
June 10 - Matt Harrington and
Angela Steel

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP TIME

May - The McKinley Flock
June - The Bradley Flock
July - The Neubig Flock

SOUNDBOARD

May 27 - Jeff Durst
June 3 - Chris Maurizio
June 10 - Lauren Patrick

WORSHIP CANDLE

May 27 - TBA
June 3 - Jenifer Mudd
June 10 - The Flora family

UPCOMING LITURGISTS

May 27 - The Neubig family
June 3 - Gwynne Hagee
June 10 - Ed Matthews



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.

SMALL GROUPS - Join us as we open to the Spirit who empowers us to carry on the work of Christ in the world.

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

Wednesday Night Spiritual Life Group - Gospel of Matthew

Come join us each Wednesday evening 7:30-8:30 at UCCVF. We open with prayer, sometimes share some goodies, read and talk about the text and how it connects with our contemporary situation, and close with a prayer circle. 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 - Book of Exodus

Many have seen the *Ten Commandments* film that tells part of the Exodus story, but we offer an opportunity to look at this story more fully and connect it with the stories of our own spiritual journey. Some questions we will consider include: What are the stories we have not commonly heard in this narrative? Why did Israel tell this story? How and why has this story so often spoken to oppressed and hurting people (like African slaves)? As citizens of a modern empire and also fragile human beings who can experience bondage in different ways, how does this story of Empire and liberation from bondage speak to us individually and as communities of people? Come join us each Thursday morning from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at UCCVF. We open with prayer, sometimes share some goodies, read and talk about the text and how it connects with our contemporary situation, and close with a prayer circle. Pastor Michael facilitates. Come and see!

Sunday Morning Prayer Advocacy Ministry: This group meets monthly for a time of praying for one another and for anyone requesting prayer. They also read and discuss various books on prayer and healing as a way to grow in understanding and practice of prayer. We meet generally the second Sunday of the month 9:00 AM-10 AM For more information contact [Gwynne Hagee](#). The next meeting will be held Sunday, June 10.

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. The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 4 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.

AN EXTRAORDINARY STAGE PERFORMANCE!

"In The Heart Of The Other"

A Muslim and A Jew Share Stories That Will Delight, Surprise & Inform!



Interfaith Storytelling Event

"In the Heart of the Other" - A Muslim and a Jew Share Stories that will Delight, Surprise, and Inform!

Please join us as Jewish storyteller Noa Baum and Muslim storyteller Arif Choudhury share their fears, hopes, and dreams - and poke fun at how we see one another.

In a world of divisions, fears, and prejudices, we are herded into groups and labeled. We have preconceived notions of "the other" because we don't really know "the other." Instead of focusing on labels, Noa and Arif offer their unique personal stories that celebrate what makes each of us an individual. They weave a tapestry of stories that invite us "into the heart of the other."

June 9, 2018 2:00-4:00 pm

Baptist Church in the Great Valley (945 North Valley Forge Rd, Devon)

Buy tickets (\$15 each) at: <https://bcgv.ticketleap.com/in-the-heart>

WIDENING OUR REACH

As an example of "reaching out widely to our neighbors in love, justice, hospitality, healing and hope" [from our UCCVF Purpose Statement], UCCVF is proud to continue its sponsorship and participation in the **3rd Annual Chester County PRIDE Festival (Saturday June 2, 2018)** and **4th Annual PRIDE Gala (Sunday June 3, 2018)**! We have participated in this event since it began, and we are honored to show people that we are a church community where ALL people can feel welcome! More info about the PRIDE weekend [here](#).



We need volunteers to set up and staff a table with information about our church, and talk with attendees who might be interested. It's a great way to increase the visibility of our church in the community, and spread a message of extravagant welcome and inclusion - especially to those who may not have felt welcome at other churches.

If you can help on Saturday June 2 (anytime between 11-5), please contact [Christine Durst](#).

Also, let Christine know **if you are interested in attending the Gala on Sunday June 3 (12-5)**. Enjoy brunch, prizes, auction items, music, dancing, and special guest speakers. All profits will be used to fund future social and educational events, LGBTQA support groups, local GSA clubs, school district education programs, and student scholarships. **UCCVF has 1 free ticket to the Gala as part of our sponsorship, but you need to give Christine your name by May 27 if you want to use it; you can also purchase additional tickets -- they are \$80 each and are selling fast!**

Save the date and come join us for a fun weekend!

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The **Caring Crafters** meet on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4 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 would like to join the group, please let [Rosemary McKinley](#) know.

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.

OUR TALENTED MEMBERS

Reese Hillman will be performing with the Pennsylvania Girlchoir on May 20. Concerts are 3pm and 6pm at the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill, 8855 Germantown Pike, Chestnut Hill, PA. Tickets on sale soon at pennsylvaniagirlchoir.org.

Both are performing at Brahms! Bernstein! Bon Voyage! at the Perelman Theater at the Kimmel Center on June 17,



Annual "Dave Heller" Memorial Trout Rodeo

THIS Saturday May 19th

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Open to all children 15 and under. Free of Charge and Open To The Public.
Lunch is Provided

Tackle & Bait is Not Provided

Contact [Joe McKeefery](#) for more details.

UPCOMING MEETING

The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Annual meeting will be held June 1-3, 2018 at West Chester University.

Rev. John Dorhauer, General Minister & President, will preach during Opening Worship on Friday evening. The business of the Conference will be handled Saturday morning followed by an afternoon of workshops, including one with Jeff Chu, author of "Does Jesus Really Love Me?", who will also be the speaker for the Saturday evening program. Celebration Worship will take place Sunday morning with guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, followed by lunch and fellowship to end the meeting. During the weekend there will be time for fellowship, perusing exhibit tables and recreation.

Pastor

The Rev. Michael T. Bush

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Administrative Assistant

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Marni Schultz and Sue Bradley

Co-Moderators of Elders