

Contact

May, June & July

May - June - July 2015 Edition

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Moderator's Corner

Commentary: Changing Our Hearts To Change The World

by Jessie Palatucci, Online Communications Specialist, UCC, July 16,

We are living in a time of flux. In the last 12 months alone we, the USA, have been forced to confront a range of moral challenges including issues of racism, police violence, mass incarceration, immigration, LGBT rights and rape culture. There is a lot happening. And the stakes – people's very lives – are high. As someone who engages in online community building, this has been an incredible moment to witness. People are sharing their stories. Occasionally those stories are breaking through our public consciousness and leading to meaningful change. It is an extraordinary thing to behold.

But there's a downside to having these important and difficult conversations on the Internet. For every light-bringing, truth-sharing moment that happens in the digital space, there is a counterpoint of hate, or defensiveness, or unwillingness to hear a story that doesn't match our own needs, wants, or experience. I wrestle with this. The hate is hard to digest. But the piece that deflates me and makes me feel hopeless is the dismissal of other people's lived experience; the unwillingness to imagine the world is a different place for some than it is for others.

I've been struggling to come up with a way to understand how reasonable people could be so dismissive of their fellow humans. In the field of communications we rely on theories of persuasion to guide our work. One example is the theory of cognitive dissonance. It is a model formulated in the 1950's by Leon Festinger which states when a person holds conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviors they experience a feeling of discomfort or unbalance. To alleviate the feeling of discomfort, something in their attitudes, beliefs or behavior must shift.

Say for example I choose not to wear my seatbelt, but am confronted with evidence that demonstrates the danger of driving without one. I value my life and I now know that failing to wear a seatbelt could be deadly. What am I supposed to do with this inconsistency between my knowledge and actions? According to Festinger, I can respond in three basic ways – (1) I can change my behavior to align with my new knowledge; (2) I can seek out alternative sources of information to validate my behavior and counter what I've learned; or (3) I can reduce the importance of the new information I've learned, perhaps by telling myself, "Hey, you have to die of something, so it might as well be this."

I think we do a similar thing when we are confronted with uncomfortable, new knowledge about injustice. Say for example a Native American shares with me the mascot for my favorite team is offensive to them. That might make me uncomfortable. It goes against my personal understanding of what the team means and even my vision of myself as a good person. So, as Festinger suggests, there are different ways I can react. I can receive this new knowledge and, difficult as it might be, I can change my attitude toward my team and their mascot. Or I can go in another direction, seeking out information to counter the narrative that has been shared with me or minimize its importance.

This is what I'm seeing over and over as I read comments and commentaries on the Internet. People are telling their stories of deep hurt and injustice. And in reaction, some people are engaging in hard self-reflection and coming to understand the world in new ways. But others seek out alternative narratives as a way of diminishing what they have learned. Or they step back and refuse to do the hard work of changing their behavior.

I get it. Change is hard. Self-reflection takes work. Listening doesn't always come naturally. But how can we ever get better if we refuse to hear what other people are telling us? How can we advance if we're not willing to evolve our beliefs and our behaviors when we learn new things?

We can be better. But first we must be willing to listen. We must be willing to be uncomfortable. We must commit to transforming our own hearts and minds so we can get to the work of transforming the world.

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Jessie Palatucci

UCC Communications Specialist

Electronic Tithing

By Terry Costello

Tired of writing checks each week or month? Tired of forgetting your offering envelope at home? Why not try Electronic Tithing! With a very simple application you can elect to have your pledged funds automatically withdrawn from your account, or credit card, and delivered to WUCC. No remembering the envelope, no writing a check, and no mailing in your offering if you cannot attend regularly. Try it – you'll have one less thing to do each week.

Fill out an Authorization Form, which is then faxed to Vanco Services and you are done. See Terry Costello for the form. miscellaneous



Church Safety

By Kayla Lennon

91% of church members are concerned about safety & security.*

***Source: 2009 Christian Security Network Poll**

On June 20, 2015, Kayla Lennon represented Warwick UCC at the Richmond Police Department's Place of Worship Safety and Awareness Forum in Richmond, VA. The program provided a template for developing Emergency Plans for faith-based organizations, how to train first responders in your congregation such as ushers and deacons for situations of agitated attenders; how to respond to active shooter situations; and resources for legal assistance when needed.

This was a very timely seminar with the recent mass shooting at Emanuel AME church in Charleston SC. In this shooting a man came into the church's Wednesday night gathering, sat among them for about an hour before opening fire within the sanctuary of the church. According to Officer Wayne Graves with the Richmond Police Department, the most important thing to remember in a possible shooter situation is that, if something does not seem right, trust your

Wee Worship has had an exciting couple of months!

By Kayla Lennon

On May 30th Warwick UCC was proudly represented by Emme McIlhenney at the Eastern Virginia Association UCC Youth Retreat at New Macedonia UCC in Norfolk. It was a day full of fun, games, crafts, learning, praising, worshipping and making new friends. Kayla Lennon provided the closing devotional encouraging the children and youth to aspire to succeed like their role models but to always remember that they were created uniquely perfect. Crystal Lennon provided praise and worship, as well as ending the event with an original song, "You're Beautiful". On June 12th we hosted a movie night at the Warwick UCC building for the neighborhood children and youth! We watched FROZEN (again!) and had fresh popped popcorn and drinks. We were excited to have seven young people from the neighborhood come join us. The next movie night was August 7 at 7:00 PM and was also a great success!

WUCC IS Collecting School Supplies

By Amanda Bartley

During the month of August, we will be collecting school supplies for our neighbor, Deer Park Elementary School! August 7-9 is Virginia's back to school/hurricane readiness/Energy Star sales tax holiday, so that is a great time to pick up school supplies! Teachers are always in need of tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes, in addition to what is on the supply list. Some items you'll find on Deer Park's supply list include black & white composition notebooks, 24 count crayons (Crayola preferably), white school glue and glue sticks, and Ziploc bags. Deer Park's supply list can be found in the store at most major retailers, or online at Deer Park's website, <http://deerpark.nn.k12.va.us/export/sites/Deerpark/documents/deerparksupplylist.pdf>.



As a school employee, I know there are always things that teachers buy for their classrooms with their already limited funds. If you are interested in going "outside the norm," feel free to donate such items as play dough, cap erasers, peanut-free snacks like graham crackers and Cheerios, little toys or items for treasure boxes, or gift cards to Dollar Tree.

We will also be collecting new or gently-used winter coats and sneakers for Marshall Early Learning Center and Watkins Early Childhood Center. As some of you know, I work down at Marshall ELC and so many of those preschoolers and kindergartners came to school in the snow and rain this past winter with nothing but a hoodie on to protect them from the elements. Coats should be sized 4T, 5T, XS, S, and M (there are some big kindergartners!). Sneakers should be toddler sized 10-13 or youth sized 1-3. Clothing is also covered under Virginia's sales tax holiday!

There will be bins near the Nursery for school supplies and coats starting next week! Thanks for supporting our community's children and their education!

Coming Soon...

Upcoming Events

August 22nd Ice Cream Sunday
September 13th Service at the Beach

Ice Cream Sunday!

By Barbara Harvey

Saturday, August 22nd is ICE CREAM Sunday! We will provide free ice cream to everyone at the same time that we have our annual school supply drive for Deer Park Elementary school.



Come join us for some ice cream and please consider bringing some type of school supply (tissues, sanitizer or baby wipes, pencils, composition notebooks, crayons, children's artwork UCC scissors, etc. – anything is appreciated). If you can't attend, please consider a sending a donation and school supplies will be purchased in your name.

Let the ice cream flow!!!

We are going to the beach again!!

By Barbara Harvey

On Sunday, September 13th worship service will take place at the pavilions at Fort Fun (where we were last year) in Huntington Park in Newport News at 11:00 am (rain or shine). Kayla Lennon will preach again this year! We will worship at the pavilion which has limited seating, so bring a beach chair or blanket, sunscreen, a hat and be sure to wear comfortable clothing. Directly after service we will begin our picnic. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided, so bring a side dish to share.

Remember to bring your own beach chair or blanket!



THRIVE Peninsula – Reaching...Restoring...

By Bucky Holmes

Because Warwick UCC has supported THRIVE Peninsula with food, shoes and financial support for some time, it seems appropriate to share both the good news and the still much-needed call to continue our outreach together!

WUCC's support has helped fight hunger with over 15 tons of food being distributed to 1,234 people through THRIVE's food ministry in 2014!

WUCC has helped launch life-sustaining micro-businesses for people in 26 of the most impoverished countries of the world by helping THRIVE donate over 13,600 pairs of shoes thus far. Since fall of 2013, our footwear contributions earned THRIVE over \$5,000 returned to this local community to help families facing enormous financial hardship. This same "Walk a Mile in THEIR Shoes" mission has helped preserve our planet by keeping discarded shoes out of our nation's landfills!

WUCC has aided with 4,893 service requests in 2014—1,759 of them through THRIVE's financial assistance services. Our financial support has aided 195 families in receiving budget mentorship or other extended case management to help preserve their homes and prevent utility cut-off.

THRIVE received requests for emergency aid totaling \$343,261 in 2014! That requested aid represents only a small part of total household financial deficits, which THRIVE endeavors to help families address by financial gifting and developing short and long-term budget plans.

THRIVE has also lent a helping hand in fully equipping (1,146 donated items totaling \$6,026!) literally barren homes of recently homeless families who subsequently secured jobs and apartments.

The need is vast. Though it may be challenging for Warwick to increase its budgeted financial contribution to THRIVE, we can buy more oranges and find more shoes to boost its fundraising activities. By encouraging family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to purchase oranges or donate shoes, you can bolster this part of our support to THRIVE. Answer the call to fill a bag with 25 pairs of used shoes; 100 bags nets THRIVE about \$1,000 to help feed, shelter and educate our neighbors in need! Wow! THIS, Warwick can do and as a challenge—Let's do it!

You have heard it said, "shop on Wednesday, and 'bring your can to church.'" This is another opportunity by which Warwick can increase its THRIVE support. Gifting over 31,000 pounds of food last year was a huge act of service in the mission on hunger relief here in our neighborhoods. However, often times, the pantry shelves become so depleted! We, too, could step-up our food collections and volunteerism in helping to stock and distribute these gifts.

This is just a snapshot of our work together in this collaborative faith-based activity! And there is more to be accomplished! Ponder...what more can each of us do to help THRIVE make a lasting impact in the lives of those in great need? Warwick UCC family, let's reflect, reach and restore hope and financial wellness for families in need!

WUCC is still looking for Wishmakers!

By Barbara Harvey



Here is a list of our wishes:

Wishes that have come true:

- New curtains for the kitchen – Wishmaker is Patsy Gary!!!
- New “glass” for the Sunday School entrance door – Bucky & Shirley Holmes

Wishes needing to be filled:

- New blinds for:
 - ❖ Sunday school room
 - ❖ Meals on Wheels room
 - ❖ Choir room
 - ❖ Church office
 - ❖ Kitchen
 - ❖ Pastor’s office
 - ❖ Fellowship Hall
- Paint & labor (or donations) for the church office, children’s Sunday school room and Meals on Wheels room
- New door locks for the front sanctuary doors
- New computer (tower only) for the church office
- 4 drawer locking file cabinet for the office
- New sink in the ladies room
- New church phone. The office phone does not hold its charge and wording/numbers have been rubbed off due to use
- Contributions to finish the outside painting of the church (1 estimate is \$800-\$900)

Please consider fulfilling a wish or combining your resources with another individual/family to make our wishes come true.

Individuals who fulfill a wish will be recognized for their contribution with a plaque displaying their name, year and contribution.

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