

You Are Welcome Here!



**An "Open and Affirming" Congregation
of the United Church of Christ
in Germantown, MD**

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF SENECA VALLEY

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November 15, 2020

Together for Joy: A Theology of Joy

10:00am Zoom

Our Mission

UCC Seneca Valley is an open and affirming, progressive and inclusive spiritual community that is centered in the belief that we are all beloved children of God. We seek to joyfully share Christ's message of hope through creative expression, deepening connections between people, advocating for justice, and serving our community.

Worship Participants

Greeter: Terri Molaski

Liturgist: Sabine Cox

Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Deacon: John Bartkowiak

Director of Music Ministry: Stefan Petrov

Zoom Technical Support: Patrick Jackson

Instructions for Zoom Worship:

As you sit down to worship bring a candle with you (flame or electric). For the next three weeks we are grounding ourselves in the psalms and in finding joy together. Is it right to be joyful in the midst of so much pain happening around us? When we are working for justice or helping those who are in trouble, does it seem like joy fades in the face of oppression, violence, and greed? How can we hold on to joy and what might joy have to do with our salvation?

Keep your microphone on mute during worship unless told otherwise. Words in bold are meant to be said aloud at home with the Pastor or Liturgist who will say them on the Zoom call. Sing along at home to the sung responses and hymns. Close all non-essential programs on your computer and silence all notifications so you don't become distracted. Use the chat box for the passing of the peace and prayer requests or other worship responses. Chat directly to individuals as appropriate. If you are having technical issues please chat message Patrick Jackson for help. The Zoom room opens at 9:30am and worship begins at 10.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcoming the Light into Worship – Light your candle at home

Prelude

Call to Worship

Liturgist: Let this be the welcoming place, the place of return,

People: and let it be built by a joyful love that bends towards those who return here.

Liturgist: For it is a love that has been waiting like a candle in the window ever lighting the way back and never willing to let go the hope that return is possible and transformative.

People: Let us become a community of restoration and hope.

Liturgist: Let this be a place where the only appropriate response to finding that which is lost is boundless rejoicing, laughter and tears, and a determination to celebrate.

People: Let us sing new songs to God together. Each one a louder and more joyful noise than the last. Here in this community we are the lost, the found, the seekers, and the sought. Together for joy.

Opening Prayer

Liturgist: Holy One, you raise your hand and gently begin the concerto of creation: birds carry the melody while stars keep the beat; mountains dance in merriment and little children clap their hands with joy. Love's Composer, our songs of awe are lifted to you. You invite us to sing to a world deafened by despair and haunted by the tunes of fear. Lord of the Dance, our songs contain both lament and hope as they are lifted to you. Believing we cannot carry a tune, we sometimes hesitate to join in the chorus of praise sung by all creation. So, in this hour softly and gently hum the melody in our hearts until they burst with you, raising a rousing chorus. Music-making Spirit, in this moment of worship let our joyous songs be lifted to you. Amen.

Opening Hymn

"Enter, Rejoice, and Come In"

#576 v.1&2

***Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day, enter, rejoice, and come in.***

***Open yourself to the song. Open yourself to the song.
Today will be a joyful day, enter, rejoice, and come in.***

***Don't be afraid of some change. Don't be afraid of some change.
Today will be a joyful day, enter, rejoice, and come in.***

Invitation to Confession

Liturgist: Search us, O God, and know our hearts. Test us and know our anxious thoughts. Point out anything in us that offends you and guide us on the road to life. We take a moment now to quiet our hearts and open them to you. *(A chime calls us to a moment of silence.)*

Prayer of Confession

People: God of Joy, it is so easy for us to get lost in a sea of despair. Illness, hunger, racism, violence, anger, and destruction swirl around us and we feel lost. We wonder if you are even paying attention. Our souls become anxious, our hearts become hardened, and we lose our way. When we do feel joy we wonder if we should feel guilty because of the pain constantly on display in our world. When we cannot feel joy we instead find ourselves feeding on jealousy and petty squabbles. We fall into old destructive patterns. Our ability to envision a world of hope withers away. Heal us. Remind us how to rejoice and give thanks. Help us to sing out to you even if we can only hear noise instead of harmonies. Help us to return to you and to celebrate and encourage others who remain lost. Let this community be sustained through loving laughter and the promise of a better day. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Liturgist: Hear the good news of the story that no sheep is unworthy of rescue, no coin too small to be missed. Hear the good news that love is stronger than hate and that this power is alive within you now and forever. God's unfailing love brings us together for joy! We are forgiven and freed.

Passing of the Peace

(We will drop out of the powerpoint and unmute you. You are encouraged to wave, say Christ's peace aloud, and/or write your offering of peace to all in the chat.)

Peace Response #526

"We are Marching in the Light of God"

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, we are marching, ooh

we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, we are marching, ooh,

we are marching in the light of God.

We are dancing in the light of God

We are dancing in the light of God

We are dancing in the light of God

We are dancing in the light of God

We are dancing, we are dancing, ooh

*we are dancing in the light of God.
We are dancing, we are dancing, ooh,
we are dancing in the light of God.*

Children's Message

Scripture

Psalm 93:4-6, Luke 15:1-10

Contemporary Reading "A Theology of Joy – Feeling Towards God's Goodness and Love"
By Mary Clark Moschella

Sermon

Rev. Holly Jackson

Musical Response

Community Life and Concerns

(We will drop out of the Powerpoint here. Please feel free to write your prayer concerns in the chat box.)

God is good, **all the time.**

All the time, **God is good!**

Moment of Silence

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

(You are welcome to pray using the words below, or whatever words or version of this prayer is the most meaningful to you.)

**Our Creator in heaven,
hallowed be Your name.
Your realm come, Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayer Response

*Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart*

*be acceptable in your sight.
Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable God to you.*

Stewardship Moment

Ruel Billones

Offertory Invitation

Liturgist: As we reflect on all that troubles our hearts, we remember the faithful whose labors have enabled our hope. They persevered through struggle. They practiced joy in the midst. They revealed the power of community and the divinity of shared labors for liberation. In gratitude for the ones who go before us, the past that enables our future, in the new songs we have learned and are learning to sing together, let us bring our gifts to God.

Offertory Prayer

People: God of grace, it is our delight and our devotion to give these gifts to you. All we are and all we have are yours alone. Accept this joyful offering as a token of our abiding love: use it to bring peace, justice and comfort to all the world, Amen.

Closing Music "For the Beauty of the Earth" By John Rutter UCCSV Choir

"Opening Prayer" adapted from a prayer by Thom Shuman, "Words of Assurance" adapted from a prayer by Karen Hawker, and "Offertory Prayer" written by Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com. Hymns and lyrics reprinted and streamed under ONE LICENSE # 724117-A. All Rights Reserved.

Extinguish The Light

Benediction

Fellowship Time - Those who wish to stay and chat with others will be broken into small group breakouts to allow for more sustained conversation.

New to our Congregation or have questions? Please consider leaving us your contact information at <https://forms.gle/Rjicc2jdMmzCgCFh8>

Congregational Check In/Happy Hour - Fridays at 7 PM

Connecting nowadays can be difficult. Do you sometimes just want to see your fellow UCCSV members and friends for a quick chat? Your wish is granted! There will be a Congregational Check In/Happy Hour every Friday at 7 PM. It will only run for 45 minutes and is a good way to say "hi" and catch up with others. Different Deacons will be hosting each Friday and it is open to all. It will be very casual with no obligations...

stop by when you feel the need and stay as long or short as you want. Take care and we will see you when we see you.-John (Chair of Deacons)

UCC Seneca Valley is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Topic: Congregational Check In/Happy Hour

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89655025431?pwd=V1k0bEQ4VTBGODJ3L2U1WHBFbzBnZz09>

Meeting ID: 896 5502 5431

Passcode: peeps

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 896 5502 5431

Passcode: 565927

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89655025431?pwd=V1k0bEQ4VTBGODJ3L2U1WHBFbzBnZz09>

Stewardship Ribbon - Together for Joy!

You should have received a piece of ribbon in with your stewardship packet. We invite you to write on the ribbon, listing one or two things that have brought you joy these last months. You can drop off your ribbon with your pledge card (or by itself if you use the online pledge card) during Front Porch Hours from 4-6pm on November 12th or 19th or on Sunday November 15th. Or mail it in with your pledge card. We will put these ribbons together in one community piece to be used in worship on November 22nd. We are together in joy!!

Thanksgiving Donation Baskets

It's that time of the year where we gather food and donations for an abundant holiday celebration for our local neighbors in need. **This year we are working with Fox Chapel Elementary School to provide food baskets to five families connected to that school.** As most things this year the way in which we can gather donations is very different.

The families have requested fresh foods whenever possible and given the difficulties of scheduling a drop off time or in person collection of food donations, **the Social Action committee has instead asked if the congregation would simply directly donate funds.** We will then use your monetary donations to buy food and gift cards that we will deliver to Fox Chapel Elementary school on Monday, November 23rd. If you would have bought 5 cans of green beans, instead consider donating \$5 or \$10.

Here are the ways you can donate:

1. You can mail checks to our Post Office Box at PO Box 803, Germantown, MD 2087.

2, You can drop off a check or cash in person during my Front Porch hours on Thursday of this week from 4-6pm at the church or on Sunday, November 15th from 2-4pm when we'll also be collecting Pledge Cards.

3. You can donate via Paypal here: <https://www.uccsenecavalley.org/donate>.

Please be sure if you are mailing your donation or paying by Paypal to indicate that this money is for Thanksgiving Basket Donations.

We have estimated that it will take approximately \$375 to purchase all the food and gift cards for these five baskets. If we raise more than that then we will save those donations and put it towards Christmas gifts for these same families. We realize this is a different way of doing things but we still want to be able to provide a joyous holiday meal to those who truly need our support.

Transgender Day of Remembrance Service, November 20th, 7pm

Please join us for a Transgender Day of Remembrance Service on Zoom on Friday, November 20th at 7pm. This is a day to remember the Trans people lost to violence each year and also to honor the Trans community and strengthen them with our prayers and love. Guest speakers will include Karen Kendra Holmes, a Trans speaker and activist, and Elizabeth Graham, a member of Westmoreland UCC who writes and speaks about the intersection of the Trans community with autism and neurodiversity. We will not be publishing the link to this service publicly but will email the link to our Zoom email list and also offer it to anyone who asks for it directly. All are welcome.