

**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 29, 2020

First Sunday in Advent

I Believe in the Sun Even When it Doesn't Shine - Hope For Tomorrow

10:00 am 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: John Bartkowiak

Liturgist: Jeanne Springmann

Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Deacon: Tim Fuss

Director of Music Ministry: Stefan Petrov

Zoom Technical Support: Patrick Jackson

**Instructions for Zoom Worship:**

As you sit down to worship If you bring your Advent Wreath with you if you have one. If you don't have an Advent Wreath then just bring a candle with you (flame or electric). 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. 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.

## Praying and Searching for Signs of Hope

### Welcome & Announcements

## Prelude

## Call to Worship

Liturgist: We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully.  
The darkness is our friend.

**People:** In the darkness of the womb, we have all been nurtured and protected. In the darkness of the womb the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

Liturgist: It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars, the solitary glowing of the planets. It was the darkness that allowed the Magi to find the star that guided them to where the Christ- child lay.

**People:** In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief from the cruel relentless heat of the sun. In the blessed desert darkness Mary and Joseph were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.

Liturgist: In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed. In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up.

**People:** God spoke to Joseph and the wise men through dreams. God is speaking still.

Liturgist: Sometimes in the solitude of the darkness our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions rise to the surface.

**People:** We come face to face with ourselves and with the road that lies ahead of us. And in that same darkness we find companionship for the journey.

Liturgist: In that same darkness we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry whether the human race is going to survive. And then, in the darkness we know that you are with us, O God, yet still we await your coming.

**People:** In the darkness that contains both our hopelessness and our hope, we watch for a sign of God's hope. For you are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

**Testimony** “In these challenging times, I believe in hope because...”  
Miranda & Clarisse Lin

## Advent Wreath Lighting Prayer – Luz Granada

Reader: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of untiring hope. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when our view is obscured by clouds of doubt, ignite the flame of hope within us, that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out. We

believe in the sun even when it's not shining. Help us face this bleak night of the soul and embrace it as a womb of rebirth.

Pastor: You are invited to light the first candle of your Advent Wreath, the candle of Hope at this time.

**Musical Response**

"I Believe"

Mark Miller

**Invitation to Confession**

Liturgist: In this season of Advent, we are reminded of God's love for us, shown in the impossible act of God becoming incarnate, taking on human flesh, to reach us in love and remind us of how to live together with peace. This is the God to whom we pray, to whom we make our confession. Let us then come to God with the truth of our lives, first in silent prayer. *(A chime calls us to a moment of silence.)*

**Prayer of Confession**

**People: O God, our God, Creator of the stars of night.**

**Forgive us when we forget that darkness and light go hand-in-hand.**

**That the suffering of another is our suffering,**

**That just as light warms and energizes us,**

**so darkness calms us and gives us rest.**

**That there are those who still live in shadows of fear and grief.**

**That we are called to be with them in the dark, and to bring hope.**

**We thank you for day and night, for darkness and light, for the strife and the joy, and for making us whole. Amen.**

**Words of Assurance**

Liturgist: God speaks sweetly to you, saying, I will do the very thing you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name. You are forgiven. Go in peace and hold on to hope always.

**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.)

**Hymn**

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

#115 v.1, 2 & 6

***O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Child of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.***

*O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
and order all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and help us in that way to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your advent here;  
Love stir within the womb of night,  
and death's own shadows put to flight  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

**Listening for Signs of Hope**  
**Children's Message**

**Hebrew Scripture**

Isaiah 40: 1-11

**Gospel Reading**

Mark 1: 1-15

**Sermon**

Rev. Holly Jackson

**Musical Response**

**Responding with Hope in our Hearts**

**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

"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"

#122 v. 1 & 2

*Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set all people free.  
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.*

*Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;  
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.*

### Offertory Invitation

Liturgist: We believe that even when we are discouraged, giving out of our abundance and raising our voices for justice will offer us hope. We believe that even though this year has often been a struggle, grounding ourselves in gratitude and generosity reminds of what is good. We believe that even though our gifts are nowhere near enough to fix the problems of this world, God can multiply them together until they are enough.

### Offertory Prayer

People: Holy One, this Advent season we wait in hope. And we give in hope. Hope for your coming reign; Hope because of your presence with us even now. Receive these generous offerings and use them for your work of healing and hope in our world. Amen.

### Closing Music

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZtNIZmnEMU&pbjreload=101>

### 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.

*"Call to Worship" adapted from a prayer from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand, "Advent Wreath Lighting Prayer" and Worship Theme and Design adapted from Worship Design Studio by Marcia McFee. Used, adapted, and live-streamed with permission. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com). "Invitation to Confession and Prayer of Confession" adapted from work by Beth Merrill Neel. "Offertory Prayer" by Rev. Joanna Harader, from SpaciousFaith.com. Hymns and lyrics reprinted and streamed under ONE LICENSE # 724117-A. All Rights Reserved.*

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

**Please Help! Zoom Worship Volunteer Opportunities – Updated Signup Genius**

Please help us update our signup genius through the end of the year. If you would like to help lead our Zoom worship experience there are ways you can help. We still need a “Greeter” and a “Liturgist” every Sunday. Greeters will welcome people as they come into the meeting before worship by voice or by chat and help by supplying important web links in the chat box. Liturgists will lead the service with Holly. We also welcome musical video offerings of instruments or voice that we can use during worship. In addition, we welcome pictures of our congregation during this time apart

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849a4a722a02-uccsv>

**Time to write postcards again!**

**This time for the GA Senate Runoff Race!**

500 postcards have been ordered for UCCSV! This campaign is organized through Get Out The Vote (GOTV) which is non-partisan. Already folks affiliated with UCCSV have volunteered to write 340 postcards. Such a great response in less than three days!

If you want to volunteer, please email Dan @ [daniel.davis18920@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.davis18920@gmail.com) or Suzanne @ [revsasphd@gmail.com](mailto:revsasphd@gmail.com) and let them know how many cards you would like to complete and mail.

Instructions, cards, stamps, address lists will be available soon and can be picked up at Dan and Suzanne’s house. Home delivery is also possible. Cards must be mailed between December 1-7.