You Are Welcome Here!

An “Open and Affirming” Congregation of the United Church of Christ in Germantown, MD
October 28, 2021

Travelers on the Journey:
Journey To Hope
10:00 a.m.

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
Ushers: Terri & Dee Molaski
Liturgist: Suzanne A. Schmidt
Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson
Deacon: John Bartkowiak
Director of Music Ministry: Stefan Petrov
Zoom Technical Support: Patrick Jackson
Welcome & Announcements

Welcoming the Light into Worship

Prelude
“The Holly and The Ivy” arr. J. Martin

Call to Worship
Liturgist: We have lost our way.
People: We feel distant from hope.
Liturgist: We struggle to move forward.
People: We join together in community for this journey.
Liturgist: Holy God, help us find our way to you. Amen.

Advent Candle Lighting
Reader 1: Every journey requires us to move towards a destination. Sometimes we are not sure where we are going, so we look for clues that can lead us in the right direction. If we can only see the first steps in front of us, then let us seek ways to light the path before us. As we light this candle of hope we acknowledge that though this Advent trip we take together isn't easy, we believe that we are moving towards a better future for all of creation.

Reader 2: God of Hope, light our way, make straight our paths, give us a vision and point us onward. Help us to travel together towards the manger. Amen.

Advent Sung Response
“Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant” #539 (v. 2 &3)

“We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road; We are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load. I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the Hope you long to hear.”

Invitation to Confession
Liturgist: The church should be place where we can admit that we have lost our way. Where we can confess that we cannot find the right path. Where we acknowledge that we have not always treated our fellow travelers with love and care. Let us pray with our whole hearts, in silence and words, for we follow a God who longs to forgive our trespasses and wipe away our debts. (A chime calls us to a moment of silence.)

Confession
People: Merciful God, we hesitate to confess our fascination with apocalyptic visions and talk of the end times. Our culture shows us visions of dystopian futures where violence rules, creation is destroyed, selfishness abounds, and oppression continues. But we don’t need to imagine a future of destruction. We know that path all too well. Forgive us God for whatever part we play in creating such a world now and in the
future. Renew us so that we can work for a better world. Inspire us with visions of what this world could be. Remind us of the possibilities found in the most unexpected places. Light the path before us so that we can walk in your truth. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon
Liturgist: The God of hope has promised us that the days are surely coming when justice and righteousness shall rule the land. In preparation for those days we are forgiven so that we can learn from our struggles and mistakes and be ready and redeemed for the new world to come. Together let us journey towards the bright future God wants for all of creation. Let hope guide you forward and rest in the assurance of God’s love.

Passing of the Peace

Hymn  “Awake, Awake” #107 (v. 1 & 2)

Children’s Time

Hebrew Bible Scripture   Jeremiah 33:14-16
Sermon                   Rev. Holly R. Jackson
Hymn                    “Watcher, Tell us of the Night” #103 (v. 1 & 3)

Community Life and Concerns
  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  “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” #116 (v. 1)
Invitation to the Offering
Liturgist: What will you give towards the journey we take here together? What will you offer in thanksgiving for the vision of hope God has put before us? How will you look for new possibilities and what gifts will you offer when you encounter them? Let us give out of our abundance with hope in our hearts.

Prayer of Dedication
People: Generous God, we offer these gifts to you and to each other as we begin this journey. Use them to spread your good news of Advent hope to a world looking for a path forward. Light the way ahead with these offerings of time, talent, and treasure. Amen.

Closing Hymn “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming” #127

Benediction

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Fellowship Time - After worship we will ask people to leave the building by the side and back doors and not to congregate inside in small groups. If people want to meet and greet after worship, they can do so outside on the side porch or in the parking lot. During the first few weeks we will simply be focused on getting a new routine down, but soon afterwards we hope to have coffee and tea available for those who want to have fellowship outside.

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

Greeters and Liturgists are needed always!
If you are available on Sundays, please consider signing up at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849a4a722a02-uccsv