

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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December 6, 2020

Second Sunday in Advent

I Believe in Love - Daring Right Relationship

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: David Schwab

Liturgist: Jeanne Springmann

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 If you bring your Advent Wreath with you if you have one. If you don't have an Advent Wreath then just bring two candles 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 Love

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 love because..."
Leo Saligan & Russell Shelley

Advent Wreath Lighting Prayer

Reader 1: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of daring love. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when we cannot yet see a better day when we will act like the human family we

are, ignite the flame of love within us, that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.

Reader 2: You are invited to light two candles on your Advent Wreath at home, the one you lit last week and a new one this week.

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: Holy God, giver of life and forgiver of sin,
we come to you now with hope –
hope that you will always love us,
hope that you will not hold our mistakes against us,
hope that you will turn us away from evil and all that destroys,
toward what is good.
Walk with us in this holy season, and help us
to look clearly at our lives and the world,
that we may embrace all with love.
Through Christ we pray. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Liturgist: We know how to love because God first loved us. We know how to forgive because God first forgave us. You are loved beyond measure and you are forgiven your lack of love. Go and live as you were created to, in harmony and community with creation.

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 Love

Children's Message

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 7:1-14

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:17-25

Sermon

Rev. Holly Jackson

Musical Response

Responding with Love 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 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 with love, and we give with love. Love for you, our God; Love for your beautiful people. Receive these generous offerings and use them for your works of love in our world. Amen.

Communion Liturgy

Pastor: There is a story told that during the Blitz in World War II Britain, when the city was strafed and bombed, Operation Pied Piper evacuated many children to the country, but some remained in London and many of those were orphans. Some were sheltered in a Jesuit order of brothers, who noticed the children had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, night after night. When the children were being put to bed one night, one of the brothers guessed the children’s problem was that they were anxious because of uncertainty in their lives, and gave each child a small piece of bread, saying something like this –

“Hold on to your piece of bread while you are sleeping. Remember when you woke up this morning, we fed you and took care of you. When you wake up tomorrow, and we still will be here for you. Let the bread remind you of this. Good night, children.” And the children slept.

Come, to be comforted
in the story of Bethlehem,
and in this the House of Bread.
Come to be comforted at this table
by a handful of bread
and a cup of love,
that will stay with you always.

O, Holy One, we remember your promises
of Emmanuel, and a branch of Jesse's root,
of Leader, Wisdom, Monarch,
Key of all that is locked,
and Dawn of every morning.
And we remember the sacred story,
that happened in the House of Bread
for a new mother
and a fostering father,
sheep and shepherds,
a few wise travelers with gifts
and many, many angels.
And we remember that the baby
named Jesus,
grew up to heal people, love people, and include people the rest of society ignored.
He taught them using strange parables, with words that sometimes gave comfort,
and other times made people angry.
At Passover he broke unleavened bread.
and poured wine and love freely as an example to us all.

On the night on which Jesus was betrayed, he sat at supper with his disciples.
While they were eating, he took a piece of bread.
I invite you now to raise your bread at home up with both hands.
Jesus said a blessing broke it, and gave it to them with the words,
'This is my body. Given for you. Do this to remember me.'
I invite you to break your bread and return it to your plate.

Later, he took a cup of wine, and gave thanks for it.
Raise your cup up now before you.
Jesus said, 'This cup is God's forgiveness poured out for you and for all people.
Drink from it, all of you, to remember me'.
I invite you to put your cup down as we bless these elements.
Emmanuel, God with us,
in our lonely nights, under our guiding stars,
with the hopes and fears of all our years,
we come for comfort,

for peace of mind and peace on earth,
for a blessing on our hands and the bread in them,
on our lips and the cup we lift to it. Amen.

Sharing the Elements

(At this time you are invited to serve yourself or those with you the bread saying something like, “The Body of Christ given for you” or “The Bread of Life given for you”. You can dip the bread in the cup saying something like, “The Cup of Salvation shared with you” or “The Cup of Blessing shared with you.” We will pause here for a few moments so everyone has a chance to receive the elements.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

People: God, we give you thanks that you have come to us – in the child of Bethlehem, in this bread and cup, and in your answer to all of our hopes and your offer of peace, deeper than any truce, truer than the upheaval that surrounds us. You have comforted us with your promise and your presence so that we too may spread the welcome wings of your good tidings. Amen.

Closing Music

“It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”

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. “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/Rjicc2idMmzCgCFh8>

Virtual Christmas Story Time and Cookies

Sunday, December 13, 3:00 – 4:00pm

Settle in with your favorite Christmas cookies or treat to show, tell about and eat. Then listen to fellow UCCSV friends read fun Christmas stories aloud.

Zoom link will be provided closer to the date of the event.

If you would be interested in reading a favorite Christmas story or have any questions, please contact:

Deb Anderson

debralanderson57@gmail.com

or Madelyn Anderson madelyn.andersonfraley@gmail.com

Luminaria for Advent - A Church Wide Art Project

While we can't be together in person this Christmas and Advent we can still create together. We're asking people to make a luminaria as part of their Christmas preparations and take pictures of them and send them to HollyRJackson@gmail.com. Then they will be used in worship. Directions for how to make a luminaria are attached to this Spirit News. If you need bags or candles for the bags please email HollyRJackson@gmail.com and we will get them out to you.

Drive-by Christmas Lights

The Advent Planning Committee is pleased to announce the UCCSV Drive-by Christmas Lights activity. Please join us on Saturday, December 19th at 5 p.m. as we meet in the UCCSV parking lot before departing on a drive-through light show of participating households from the congregation.

The Drive-by Christmas Lights will kick-off with socially distanced merriment including hot apple cider and a photo opportunity in front of the church's new Christmas banner before departing on the drive-through light show at 5:30 p.m.

Those interested in adding their homes to the Drive-by Christmas Lights route should contact Camila Young at cespinapr@gmail.com and/or (240) 801-0412 by Monday, December 14th. Also, those with decorations in need of a helping hand in setting them up may contact Camila about that too, since Bryan is more than happy to help set up outdoor decorative displays.

The final Drive-by Christmas Lights route will be ready by December 15th for those who wish to see the lights, but cannot join us on the day of the drive-through. We hope to see you there!