

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 5, 2021

Travelers on the Journey:

Journey To Peace

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

Advent Wreath Lighters:

Ushers:

Liturgist:

Pastor:

Deacons:

Director of Music Ministry:

Zoom Technical Support:

Terri and Dee Dee Molaski

Joyce Miller

Heidi Harmon

Rev. Holly R. Jackson

John Bartkowiak & Tim Fuss

Stefan Petrov

Patrick Jackson

**Stand as you are able/Rise in body or spirit*

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"

arr. J. Martin

*Call to Worship

Liturgist: We have lost our way.

People: We feel distant from peace.

Liturgist: We can't see our way to justice.

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 get lost along the way, so we look for a map that can help us plot a way forward. How do we plot a path toward peace and justice? They are often elusive destinations. As we light this candle of peace today, we pray our that course will lead us to the manger, where we might find the Prince of Peace.

Reader 2: God of Peace, light our way, make straight our paths, put us on the trail towards a more just and loving world. 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 Peace 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: God of Peace, we are stressed and scrambling around. A path to peace feels anything but straight. We try to gain control ourselves, forcing your path to fit in to our conveniences. We point fingers at others saying peace is possible if only they would change. We ignore prophets who call us into discomfort, so that all may find greater wholeness. Help us to listen again for the cry of those who would lead us to Christ. Tune our ears to your heralds, so that we might also testify to your Peace. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Liturgist: God is constantly calling to us when we are lost in the wilderness of our lives. Let go of your worries, fears and doubts, and embrace the love of the One who is calling you. On each step of our journey, we are forgiven and loved. Go in peace.

***Passing of the Peace**

***Hymn**

"The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore" #115 v. 1&2

Hebrew Bible Scripture

Malachi 3:1-4

New Testament Scripture

Luke 3:1-6

Sermon

Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Hymn

"Comfort, Comfort O My People" #101 v. 1&2

Community Life and Concerns

(In Person participants fill out prayer requests. Zoom participants 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

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" #116 v. 1

Invitation to the Offering

Liturgist: We take offerings as part of our worship service because our giving and sharing are part of our spiritual journey. To find our way, individually and collectively, God calls us to share our prayers, our time, and our money.

Prayer of Dedication

People: God of the stranger and the wanderer, thank you for calling to us from the wilderness to give of ourselves toward your peace in the world. Bless these gifts and all those who will receive ministry from them, that we might all draw nearer to you this season. Amen.

Communion Invitation

Pastor: The God of Peace be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Pastor: Let us journey together.

People: To Christ's Table where we can find true peace.

Communion Prayer

Pastor: We give thanks to you, Most High God, for being our beacon of hope in an otherwise fearful world. You made all of creation for peace, justice, and love, but we have corrupted your vision with shame and violence. Throughout time, we have stumbled on the way you set before us, lost, and longing for your presence. You have reached out to us again and again. Out of the wilderness, you spoke a clear message of hope. To those who walked in the shadows, to those whose paths seemed torturous, to those who felt alone - you spoke comfort and brought peace, which brightened the way. You gave us guides along the path – Moses, Isaiah, Hannah, John the Baptist, Mary, and eventually a star in the sky.

To guide us to you in faith, eventually you sent your son, Jesus to illumine our hearts and lighten our burdens, to accept within himself all that human experience can bring: weakness, vulnerability, joy, and strength of selfless love.

Words of Institution

Pastor: Those of you online can hold up your bread as I will do in a few minutes. The way of faith has always been filled with both love and pain, even for light of the world. On the night he when he gave himself up for love and justice, Jesus took the bread and after giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, broken for you, do this in remembrance of me." Those at home can break your bread and return it to the plate.

Now lift your cup. After supper, he took the cup and gave thanks for it. He offered the cup to those around the table saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink of it, do this in remembrance of me."

(Everyone online and in the sanctuary put your hands out over the bread and cup.)

Pastor: Holy God, pour out your Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup. Swirl around us making us into one body in your love. Remind us that we are never alone on the road when we make sure to leave no one behind.

(Those in the pews are invited to come forward and get the communion elements and then return to your seats. We will bring the elements to those who cannot come forward for any reason. Please wait to consume the elements until all are once again seated. Those at home can listen to the music and ready themselves until we all eat the bread and drink the juice/wine together.)

Pastor: The body of Christ given for you. The Cup of Blessing poured out for you. Enjoy the gifts of God.

***Prayer after Communion**

People: God our Creator, in this meal, you have filled us with love, with community, and with the bread of life, your son, Jesus Christ. Help us to wait for his coming by letting go of discord and by building your Realm. Fill us with love that brings peace; that turns instruments of violence into life-giving tools. We ask this in the name of your love incarnate--the child whose birth we await. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** *"Hark the Herald" #144 v. 1&3*

***Benediction**

Postlude *"Waltz in C-Sharp Minor" by F. Chopin*

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Liturgy written by Rev Amber Henry Neuroth.*

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.

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
[UCC of Seneca Valley: UCCSV Worship Support \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)