

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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March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Healing and Recovery –
Intellectual Health and Creativity

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: Luz Granada

Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Deacon: Asher Beckwitt

Director of Music Ministry: Stefan Petrov

Zoom Technical Support: Patrick Jackson

Instructions for Zoom Worship:

As you sit down to worship bring your Lent To Go Bag (if you have one) and a candle (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.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcoming the Light into Worship – Light your candle at home

Prelude

Call to Worship

Liturgist: We come to you, O God, to thank you for what is good.

People: We come to you, O God, to cry out for what is wrong.

Liturgist: We come to you, O God, to ask for healing and recovery.

People: We come to you, O God, with aching hearts and tired minds.

Liturgist: We come to you, O God, with joy and with gratitude.

People: Let us worship with our whole selves, finding rest and restoration.

Opening Prayer

Liturgist: God of Creation, we come to you today needing Sabbath rest for our minds. After months of isolation, anxiety, grief, and being forced to rethink all of our routines we sometimes find it hard to think clearly. Our creativity lags. Our motivation gets lost. Our hope dwindles. In this hour of worship grant us ease. Let the quiet moments give us room to dream again. Let the music refresh our souls. Let our prayers free us from our burdens. Let the words of scripture and testimony revitalize our intellect and restore us to health. Amen.

Threshold Song

“Holy Vessels”

Chuck Bell

*Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.*

Invitation to Confession

Liturgist: Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives – to speak truth – no matter how broken. The Latin origins of the word “confess” is to “study and acknowledge.” This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing. This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. We begin with a moment of silence to pause and reflect. *(A chime calls us to a moment of silence.)*

Prayer of Confession

People: God of All Possibilities, made in your image, you have tasked us to be co-creators of a better world. You gave us imagination and the ability to learn and progress. But we confess that we are tired. Our energy and enthusiasm wanes. The call for ideas, solutions, work-arounds and arounds and adaptations has been non-

stop for us all—in our schooling or teaching, in figuring out how to maintain a passion for our work in the midst of trying times, or in needing to undo systems of oppression too long affecting our lives and the lives of our neighbors. Too often we want to give up, declare it all too hard and simply isolate, waiting out the time for better days. It all feels overwhelming and so we look away. Help us, Healer. Show us our energy reserves. Forgive our cynicism. Move us one step at a time toward greater care for one another. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Liturgist: God's love and grace surround you this Lenten season and always. You are a precious and holy vessel right now, broken and yet made whole. God's abundance, acceptance, and redemption is meant for all people. No matter what. God grants you sabbath rest in order for you to restore your mind. Take a deep breath in saying, "God grants me..." and breathe out saying, "rest for my mind."

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

"We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness"

*We yearn, O Christ, for wholeness and for your healing touch;
too long we have felt helpless; our burdens seemed too much.
Forgetting all pretenses we make our pleadings heard,
in hope and expectation await your gracious Word.*

*We long to have companions who travel by our side,
strong friends to call and answer with whom we are allied;
As we lift up each other when struggles lay us low,
community develops; our faith and caring grow.*

*We need your living presence, O Christ of Galilee;
a presence that revives us and sets our spirits free.
No longer are we fearful, your love pervades each place.
Empower us with courage to claim your healing grace.*

Children's Message

Scripture

Matthew 9: 18-26

Contemporary Reading

"Late Stage Pandemic is Messing with Your Brain"
by Ellen Cushing

Sermon

Testimony

Aaron and Sabine Cox

Musical Response and Ritual Action

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

"Jesus, Priceless Treasure"

***Banish thoughts of sadness, for the source of gladness,
Jesus, enters in;
Though the clouds may gather,
those who love the Savior still have peace within.
Though I bear much sorrow here,
still in your lies purest pleasure, Jesus priceless treasure.***

Mission Moment

One Great Hour of Sharing

Clarisse and Miranda Lin

Offertory Invitation

Liturgist: During this season of Lent we are practicing healing for ourselves and for our community. We give now to the ministries of this church so that our gifts might be used

towards that healing. We give to remember how God has healed us. We give because sharing what we have helps to heal us and those around us. This morning's offering will now be received.

Offertory Prayer

People: Holy God, we invite you to help us imagine how we might use our creativity and innovation, along with these gifts, to bring rest, healing and recovery to our wider community. Help us to dream anew about possibilities for transformation and restoration. Bless these offerings of our money, our time, and ourselves that they might be healing gifts to the world. Amen.

Closing Music

"In the Midst of New Dimensions"

Extinguish The Light

Benediction

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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>

Greeters and Liturgists Needed

If you are available on Sundays, please consider signing up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849a4a722a02-uccsv>
As always, thank you very much.

Lenten Soupers Wednesday Evenings in Lent

Join us for dinner and conversation at our Lenten Souper meeting. We start at 6:30pm. You are welcome to bring your dinner or just bring yourself as we chat over our shared virtual table. Then at 7pm we will watch a TED talk together and discuss its implications for our lives and our ministry. Each talk in this series will focus on healing and what that means to us as individuals and as a community.

The Zoom link for our meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84186675185?pwd=QnRqdGNEVjRsaUNsditWcEVObkNGQT09>

We will focus on issues of race with a TED talk entitled: How Racism Makes Us Sick. Finally, we will end our series considering what it means to reenter "normal" life after a traumatic event with a TED talk entitled: What almost dying taught me about living.

UCCSV to host "Bearing Witness" a Black Lives Matter Tribute and Community Art Share

On Sunday May 2nd, UCCSV will host an outdoor community art share about bearing witness to the beauty and struggle of black lives. With a focus on justice and affirming that black lives matter, we will encourage community members to share their art to all. This will be an outdoor event (with social distancing and masks required). But we hope to have this be a community event that all can participate in, either as artists or as those who seek to experience and bear witness to the art.

One Great Hour of Sharing

The United Church of Christ as a whole values donating money towards the wellbeing of vulnerable populations worldwide. Every year, churches across the nation celebrate our connection by contributing to One Great Hour of Sharing. This special offering provides support for education, health, refugee, agriculture, and emergency relief efforts both in the United States and across the world. If we were in person, we would collect spare change during Lent to donate to this special offering. This year, March 14 is the offering date for One Great Hour of Sharing. During this difficult time, supporting one another is one of the most powerful things. If you are able, please consider donating to this initiative to support communities beyond ours. For more information, visit <https://www.ucc.org/oghs/> or find them on Facebook at One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC). You can also donate through the UCCSV website: <https://www.uccsenecavalley.org/donate>

