

**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 21, 2021

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Healing and Recovery -Environmental Health

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: To Be Determined

Liturgist: Heidi Harmon

Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Deacon: Deb Anderson

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: Brothers, sisters and siblings in Christ, what hopes do you bring to worship?

**People: We bring our hopes for health and wholeness.**

Liturgist: What afflictions do you bring to worship? Physical pain?

**People: From illness and injury. From age and conditions.**

Liturgist: Emotional pain? Mental pain?

**People: From traumatic and scary life situations. From grief and anxiety.  
From disease of many kinds.**

Liturgist: With all of these afflictions, it's a miracle that any of us have made it to worship this morning!

**People: We are here because we are searching for healing and restoration. We yearn to know God's powerful love and to believe that recovery is possible.**

Liturgist: We are here together in support and solidarity.

**People: When we bring all of who we are—hopeful, afflicted, bold—into relationship with the Divine we believe transformation is possible.**

Liturgist: So come, let us enter this holy space with our whole selves for God meets us here in community.

**People: Come, let us worship!**

#### Opening Prayer

Liturgist: O God, we thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the ocean and streams, for the towering hills and the whispering wind, for the trees and green grass. We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, and see the splendor of fields of golden wheat, and taste autumn's fruit, rejoice in the feel of snow, and smell the breath of spring flowers. Grant us a heart opened wide to all this beauty; let nature heal our souls even as we seek to be a healing balm to all creation. For each new dawn is filled with infinite possibilities for new beginnings and new discoveries. Life is constantly changing and renewing itself. In this new day of new beginnings with God, all things are possible. We are restored and renewed in a joyous awakening to the wonder that our lives are and, yet, can be. 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:** Life-giving God, in the beginning, you created this universe with a phrase, “Let it be...” and the waters and dry land, the sky and the creatures were formed. You set humanity among these wonders and invited us to care and honor all things. We have not successfully answered that call. Seeing the abundance as a feast that would never end, we gorged ourselves, taking more than we could replenish at a rate that could not be sustained. We are beginning to comprehend the magnitude, beginning to see that things cannot just keep going “as usual” and not have dire consequences. Too often we think there is nothing we can do—that the change required is too great. It all feels overwhelming and so we look away, sometimes even from the small things that could make a difference for our own community. Help us, Healer. Show us our ability to chart a different course. Forgive our inaction. Move us one step at a time toward greater care for your creation. 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. Jesus asks us to do hard things, to make changes, knowing we are capable. We can heal this planet we call home even as we are healed ourselves. Take a deep breath in saying, “We are connected...” and breathe out saying, “to God’s 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**

**“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 8: 18-27**

#### **Contemporary Reading**

Quote from John Muir

#### **Sermon**

#### **Testimony**

Amie Barker

### **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

Germantown Help

Noel 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

The Lord Bless You and Keep You  
UCCSV Choir

P. Lutkin

## Extinguish The Light

## Benediction

*"Opening Prayer" adapted from work by Walter Rauschenbusch. Liturgy is adapted from **Holy Vessels Lent Series** from worshipdesignstudio.com. Used by permission. **Holy Vessels** Words: Marcia McFee; Music: Chuck Bell © 2021 Chuck Bell Music. Used by permission. Hymns and lyrics reprinted and streamed under ONE LICENSE # 724117-A. All Rights Reserved.*

**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/Riicc2jdMmzCgCFh8>

## **Greeters and Liturgists Needed**

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

### **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>

### **Lent: 40 Days to Love Mercy**

At the beginning of Lent, the Social Action Board announced that there would be three opportunities to demonstrate the Micah 6:8 directive to “love mercy.”

The first opportunity focused on food insufficiency on the local level and the second at the national and international level through UCC’s annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

The third opportunity is assisting Germantown Help during their Easter outreach. UCCSV is teaming up with two other faith communities in Montgomery County, Journey's Crossing Church (JCC) and Hindu American Community Services, Inc. Most of those receiving groceries will pick them up at JCC’s parking lot. Of the 300 grocery sets, 50 will be set aside for UCCSV to deliver to folks with limited mobility/transportation who cannot come to JCC themselves.

**We need 8-10 UCCSV drivers to show up at JCC (corner of Century Blvd. and Cloverleaf Center Dr.) at 9 a.m. on Saturday April 3rd and deliver the groceries immediately after pickup.** Noel Lin will receive a list of the 50 recipients in advance so that we can contact them to let them know to expect delivery. **If you would like to help with the delivery, please email Noel Lin [noellin50@gmail.com](mailto:noellin50@gmail.com) by March 29.**

If you would like to contribute toward gift cards for Easter food, you may do so through the church website (look for the Germantown Help option) or by sending a check to the church P.O. box.

### **Holy Week Worship**

March 28 - Palm Sunday, Worship at 10am

April 1 - Maundy Thursday, Worship at 7pm

April 2 - Good Friday, Worship at 7pm

April 4 - Easter Sunday, Worship at 10am