

**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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April 25, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Easter

Earth Day Celebration

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: Chloe Jackson

Guest Preacher: Lois Sumser

Pastor: Rev. Holly R. Jackson

Deacon: Joyce Miller

Director of Music Ministry: Stefan Petrov

Zoom Technical Support: Patrick Jackson

**Instructions for Zoom Worship:**

As you sit down to worship bring 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 invite the cosmos to worship with us.

People: **We invite glittering galaxies high in the sky to radiate the splendor of God's presence.**

Liturgist: We call distant domains of space to celebrate with us.

People: **We invite nebula, nova and black holes to thank God for their fascinating formation.**

Liturgist: We summon that piece of stardust called Earth,

People: **To pulse with the rhythm of God's presence and celebrate God's glory in this planet garden.**

Liturgist: We invite millions of living species to dance with life,

People: **The turtle, the toad and the elephant, the earthworm, the ant and the dragonfly.**

Liturgist: We invite every creature in the web of creation

People: **To consciously connect with others in this community called the cosmos.**

Liturgist: In this nano-second we call 'now', in this nano-space we call 'here',

People: **May God's presence be felt among us. Let us worship!**

#### Opening Prayer

Liturgist: God, our Creator, as we reflect on the mysteries of the cosmos, we celebrate the wondrous design of the universe and the Wisdom that guides its course. Help us to discern how we are connected with living members of the cosmic community. Teach us to sense the presence of the cosmic Christ, whose presence fills and reconciles all forces in creation. Teach us to empathize with Earth. Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the land, the seas and the skies. Make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit in creation, groans of longing for a new creation. Divine Creator, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the forest and the air. Teach us to care. Amen.

#### Opening Hymn

"Pray for the Wilderness"

*Pray for the wilderness, vanishing fast,  
pray for the rainforest, open and vast;  
Pray for the waterfalls, pray for the trees,  
pray for the planet brought down by degrees.*

*Work for the justice created things need,  
work for the health of each planet and it's seed;  
Work for the creatures abuse has betrayed,  
work for the garden God's wisdom made.*

*Pray for the atmosphere, pray for the sea,  
learn from the river, the rock, and the tree;  
Work till shalom in full harmony rings.  
Trust the connection of all living things.*

### **Invitation to Confession**

Liturgist: We are conscious of our place in the cosmos. We remember moments of wonder, sensing the infinite world of space, connecting with endless networks in time and feeling the mystery of the moment. But we are also conscious of the times when we have ignored our place in the cosmos, when we have assumed we are the only ones who really matter. We are aware of the moments when we have cut ourselves off from God's creation and used it to serve our own ends instead of God's Realm. We pause now to honestly reflect on our lives and admit our failings so that we can receive grace and find ourselves again. *(A chime calls us to a moment of silence.)*

### **Prayer of Confession**

**People:** Holy God, we remember and confess that we have striven to discover other worlds, while polluting our own atmosphere and ignoring the needs of others with whom we share this planet. We have polluted Earth's atmosphere and turned our greed into global warming. We have ignored our crucial connection with those parts of creation where we live. We have loved progress more than the planet. We are sorry. Forgive us and restore us to right relationship with you, with each other, and with all of your beloved creation. Amen.

### **Words of Assurance**

Liturgist: Christ hears your confession and forgives your sins. You are invited to celebrate Earth as your home, a precious piece in the web of creation. You are freed to make different choices and to work for justice and embody hope.

### **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.)

### **Response**

"We are Marching In the Light of God"

*We are marching in the light of God. (4x)  
We are marching, Oo, we are marching in the light of God*

## **Children's Message**

### **Scripture**

Genesis 1:1-13

### **Contemporary Reading**

### **Sermon**

Lois Sumser

### **Musical Response**

"The Fun Song"

Lois Sumser

### **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 Remember Me"

***Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom***

### **Offertory Invitation**

Liturgist: God has given us the gift of creation, the gift of our very lives. There is nothing we could offer that would ever equal that gift. However, God encourages to give out of

our abundance, to offer back to the world the talents we have, the hours of service we can give to our community, and the financial resources that can benefit others. These gifts may seem small by themselves, but offered together as a community we believe that God can use them to transform the world.

### **Offertory Prayer**

**People: God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our concern for those in need on planet Earth. With all the cosmos, we bless our Creator. Amen.**

### **Closing Music**

"Holy Ground"

Spectrum Connections

### **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>

### **3-in-1 Working/Walking Fellowship Opportunity (New Date)**

Please join us on Sunday, April 25 between 1 and 3 for a chance (brought to you by Property Operations) to help tidy up our grounds while walking in fellowship with others; pick sticks and trash bags in hand. There will also be some tidying up of the beds in the back by the labyrinth if you prefer. The Fellowship Committee will provide drinks and some snacks and Bethany Fuss, on behalf of the Social Action Board, will be selling Equal Exchange coffee and chocolate (the kind where the farmers get a fair price for their products).

And while we're at it, let's show our neighbors we are a community of kindness and support. There will also be two opportunities that day to donate; either food, garden flowers or a little of both. The food collected will go to Germantown Help which provides food for needy Germantown families. The flowers will be put into bouquets and given, along with cards we will sign, to neighboring Asian owned businesses to show our support and solidarity in light of the most recent attacks on the broader Asian

community in this country. It's a colorful way to say, 'We see you and we value you and your place in our community.'

As always, proper COVID protocols will be used, with masks and social distancing required.

**"Bearing Witness" - a Black Lives Matter Tribute and Community Art Share**

On Sunday May 2nd, from 1pm until 8pm, the community Art Share will be an event at the church, where everybody, young and old, has the opportunity to make an artistic contribution to our experiences with racism and exclusion, re-affirming that black and brown peoples lives matter.

Art is many things. It can be a drawing, painting or sculpture, but it can also be a poem, a photograph or a story. It can be a song or a dance. The intention is to share our church communities' contributions, to begin and continue a dialog among us, as well as the wider communities around us.

We want to especially encourage the young people to contribute and share, as well as younger children and their parents, who may be able to relate to the topic.

In sharing our experiences, emotions and perspectives with art, we are attempting to create a community and be a haven for all of us to express ourselves artistically. While some pieces may be more professionally rendered than others, the message and importance of each piece is the focus and will be appreciated. This could be the beginning of an annual occurrence. Please contact Sabine Cox ([sabineecox@gmail.com](mailto:sabineecox@gmail.com)) if any questions.

**Upcoming Sunday Worship at UCCSV**

May 2- Practicing Resurrection: What's Perfect Love Got to Do with It? (Communion Sunday)

May 9 - Practicing Resurrection: Why Bodily Resurrection Matters

May 16 - Practicing Resurrection: New Life Rooted in Justice

May 23 - Pentecost Sunday - Practicing Resurrection: The Resurrection of the Church

May 30 - Central Atlantic Conference Worship