



Spirit News

April 22, 2020

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
An Open and Affirming Congregation
13421 Clopper Road, Germantown, MD
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Website: UCCSenecaValley.org

Prayer Requests

- Ongoing Prayer to grant our leaders wisdom and compassion to address the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Ongoing Prayer for inspiration and motivation in Dave's job search; healing for Shelly's knee (recent fall) and family health concerns (Shelly Moore).
- Ongoing Prayer for Alexis Symanski who is home and recovering beautifully from her massive surgery. Praise God for answered prayers (Suzanne Schmidt and Dan Davis).
- Ongoing Prayer for Maggie's Dad. Continue to pray for my Dad who is recuperating well after his fall (Maggie).
- Ongoing Prayer for Dawn Oler, our dear friend, who is having surgery to remove a tumor. We pray it is benign and her recovery is easy (Terri & Dee Dee).
- Ongoing Prayer for Cheryl's grandmother who is in a coma; pray for Ben who is battling stomach cancer (Maggie).

Ongoing Prayer Requests: Please notify Nita at uccsv@verizon.net should you wish to change your ongoing requests. Please note that ongoing prayer requests will be removed after one month. Feel free to resubmit your ongoing prayer requests.

Havruta Returns via Zoom

Our adult bible discussion group on Sunday mornings at 9am is called Havruta, a Jewish term meaning that we seek to wrestle with God's word by studying, analyzing, and debating the text. Contact Russell Shelley at russellshelley92@gmail.com for Zoom details.

This Sunday at UCCSV

We're celebrating Earth Day at UCC Seneca Valley, virtually of course! Join us for our Zoom worship as we lift up God's creation and celebrate nature. Lois Sumser will give the reflection. There will be special music with an Earth Day theme. We invite you to bring your candle as always and also to bring into your home worship space something from nature, maybe something you picked up on one of your walks this week, a flower or leaf or rock. Our zoom room opens at 9:30am and worship begins at 10am. There will be fellowship breakout rooms available for those who wish to stay and chat after worship. (Bring your own coffee and goodies!) Be a part of community and find joy this weekend with us!

Topic: Sunday Worship

Time: Apr 26, 2020 09:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86576654670?pwd=bDhRS0UvdDZaNVF5Z3dhSmFkZDhOdz09>

Meeting ID: 865 7665 4670

Password: 20874

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 865 7665 4670

Password: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/k5i26Z9zm>

Congregational Meeting

Our Congregational Meeting is currently scheduled for May 17th.

More info to follow in the coming days.

May Worship Series - Unraveled: Seeking God When Our Plans Fall Apart

Through the 5 Sundays in May we will go on a journey asking ourselves what happens when our plans fall apart and unravel as they have in the past few months in the midst of a pandemic. What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we're on—comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be? In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed. This worship series explores 5 different stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. These are stories where God meets us in the spiraling, unraveling our plans—and us—into something new.

We'll have some personal testimonies, beautiful music, storytelling, and more to help the stories come alive and let us live into the lessons God wants us to learn. Join us as God weaves us into a new creation!

May 3 - JOB 28:12-28 || Job's Lament and Loss
(*Seeking Understanding When Everything Has Fallen Apart*)

May 10 – MATTHEW 14:22-33 || Peter Sinks in the Water (*Unraveled by Uncertainty*)

May 17 - EXODUS 1:22, 2:1-10 || Moses' Mother Gives Moses Up So He Can Live (*When Our Plans for Our Children Unravel*)

May 26 – 2 SAMUEL 3:7; 21:1-14 || Rizpah Mourns Her Sons (*Public Grief That Inspires Action*)

May 31 – (Pentecost) ACTS 9:1-20 || The Conversion of Saul to Paul (*Discovering a New Path*)

Wednesday Bible Story Study 7:30pm starting April 29th

For those who are interested in having a little more thoughtful discussion about the Unraveled bible stories from our worship series, engaging in prayer time, and spending some time in fellowship we will be holding a one hour Zoom meeting Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30pm through May. We will be exploring stories and art that will be reflective of the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. We will also pray for our concerns and the concerns of our world. On April 29th we will begin with reading a passage from the Book of Job and looking at an art piece called "Step Into the Swell" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity. All are welcome!!

Topic: Wednesday Evening Study and Prayer
Time: Apr 29, 2020 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88630782324?pwd=NkpLT280NUVENnRXeWI1M3FXTXIHZz09>

Meeting ID: 886 3078 2324

Password: 20874

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 886 3078 2324

Password: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/k5i26Z9z>

Dear UCCSV Community,

If you weren't able to join us last Sunday in worship you missed some serious laughs and moments of joy as Rev. Suzanne Adele Schmidt and Adam DeBaugh led us in a fun Holy Humor Sunday worship, including some epic jokes from members of our congregation. The great thing about Zoom worship though is that if you missed it yesterday, you can still watch it today! Find the recording for our service here:

Meeting Recording:

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/1O8pIIDq6SBjbZXiskzwRbQLDqLqX6a8hiBL-PQOmR1pawTVrxYRQRn9RrD9Xd0G>

Peace,
Holly

Extra Stimulus Money?

Maybe as you receive your government stimulus checks you will find that you don't need all those funds and you will be looking to donate them to people who do. If you are looking for ideas on where to donate here are some suggestions:

1. While we have yet to get significant requests for financial help from our within our congregation you might **consider donating to our Community Assistance Fund** for future requests. Whatever funds we don't use for helping members or friends of our congregation we will donate to the Upper Montgomery Assistance Network.
<http://www.uccsenecavalley.org/donate>

2. As a church we regularly partner with and donate to four different local charity organizations that can always use more donations.

Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN - prevents homelessness and utility shut-off) <http://uman-mc.org/>

Interfaith Works (helps homeless and those in poverty) <https://www.iworksmc.org/>

Germantown Help (food pantry) <https://germantownhelp.org/>

WUMCO Help (food and other assistance) <http://www.wumcohelp.org/>

3. Immigrants are especially hard hit during this pandemic because they are often ineligible for government assistance. **Consider donating to the Congregational Action Network's mutual aid campaign.** 100% of donations will go directly to immigrant families in faith communities across the DMV who have lost their income due to COVID-19 and don't qualify for local, state, or federal support. This is a local group that several metro area UCC churches are working with.

<https://cancovidfund.causevox.com/>

4. If you haven't already donated to our Medical Debt Buyback efforts please consider doing so. Even just a small donation goes a long way. We are continuing to collect funds through the end of April. <http://www.uccsenecavalley.org/donate>

Giving to UCCSV

It is crucial for you to continue giving to the church even as we are not gathering together in person. Your church staff is still working hard and needs to be paid and we still have utility and supplies bills coming in. So if you can continue to give please do so in one of the following ways:

1. Mail your offering check to the church. We have people coming in to the church at least once a week to gather these.

2. Set up online bill pay to the church through your bank. Yes, they will still mail the church a

check but at least you didn't have to write the check yourself! This is also usually a free option.

3. Use Paypal through our website. Use the general fund for your regular pledge. You can also give here to special funds we have set up. Please consider covering the processing fees so that more of your donation goes to the church. <http://www.uccsenecavalley.org/donate>

Thank you!

Sunday Volunteers Still Needed

Even though we are worshiping online Sunday volunteers are still needed. I am looking for greeters whose job will be to come on the Zoom call at 9:30am when the "building opens" and greet everyone as they come in verbally and by chat. I also need liturgists who will help me to lead the worship so I am not the only face and voice people are experiencing on Sunday mornings. You must be comfortable with Zoom in order to do these jobs. Please email me at HollyRJackson@gmail.com to volunteer.

Share Your Gifts and Talents in Worship

We're looking for you to be a part of our Zoom worship experience. If you have art work to share please share pictures with us so we can use it on our powerpoint. If you play music or sing Stefan will be coordinating having people take videos of themselves and then we'll use those for offertory music or preludes or postludes. Share your talent with us and enhance our worship experience. For information send pictures or videos or questions to HollyRJackson@gmail.com.

Important Information from Pastor Holly

As always we ask you to let us know if you need help or get ill. If you end up at the hospital for any reason and you do not have your phone on you or don't want to have to tell other members of your family to call, you can always ask the hospital chaplain to get a hold of me and they will look up my number and contact me. The best thing we can do for each other during this difficult time is to be there for one another and to support each other the best we can. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need anything. My cell phone number is 202-247-8592.



The Dilemma

In the past forty years, medical costs have doubled, insurance copays and deductibles have spiked, and bankruptcy rates have quadrupled, creating an avalanche of destructive medical debt.

The Burden

Forty-three million Americans owe about \$75 billion in past-due medical debt. Medical debt contributes to more than 60% of all bankruptcies and three-quarters of all individuals in medical bankruptcy *had health insurance coverage*. Lives, households, and dreams are sinking under loads of medical debt.

The Impact

Medical debt restricts individual's freedom with garnished wages and poor credit. A low credit score can deny someone a loan, an apartment, or even a job. The financial effects of one trip to the hospital can hold someone back their entire life, keeping them from ever reaching their full potential.

The Challenge

A dozen United Church of Christ congregations and institutions in Washington, DC and the surrounding counties have banded together in an effort to erase \$2 million or more in medical debt in the area in and around the District.

The Process

We are working with the nonprofit organization, RIP Medical Debt, which locates, buys, and forgives medical debt of individuals in the community who are below twice the federal poverty line, have debts greater than their assets, or have debts greater than 5% of their annual income. Prior to RIP's purchase, these bills have passed through several collection agencies and have been pursued for months or years. RIP offers to purchase these accounts at their present industry market value of pennies on the dollar.

Then the debt is simply forgiven. Debt relief recipients are sent a letter informing them that their medical debt has been bought by a third party and erased with no strings attached. They owe nothing on the debt and face no tax penalty.

How you can help

The United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley in collecting donations during March and April to help reach the combined goal of raising \$25,000 in the local area. Your donations, when combined with others, will enable the purchase of debt in bundled portfolios, millions of dollars at a time at a fraction of the original cost. A

donation equal to the cost of a movie ticket can help relief over a thousand dollars of medical debt for a needy individual or family.

Matching gifts

Every donation from the congregation will be matched by an equal allocation from the UCCSV Social Action Fund. **This enables every dollar of your gift to buy back over \$200 in medical debt!**