



Spirit News

December 16, 2020

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley
An Open and Affirming Congregation
13421 Clopper Road, Germantown, MD
Phone: (301) 540-3449
Email: UCCSV@verizon.net
Website: UCCSenecaValley.org

Prayer Requests

- Please pray for my sister in law who has Covid. Her name is Farida. She is in Colombia (Luz Granada).
- Those who are struggling with Covid: Lucy and Kevin Hogan and Kim West and her family (Dan and Suzanne).
- Please pray for my and about to start chemo friend who is recovering from surgery for breast cancer (Asher Beckwitt).
- Prayers for Isaac and his recovery from an injury and surgery (Deb and Madelyn).
- Prayers for Bob to find permanent housing soon (Deb and Madelyn).

This Sunday at UCCSV

What is peace anyway? For the fourth Sunday in Advent we consider one more text from Isaiah and the opening of the Gospel of John. The "great light" prophesied by Isaiah in today's text is echoed in the first strains of John's Gospel good news: the light that brings peace—that saves the people from all that would extinguish it—has been there from the beginning. Our mantra this week is "I believe in the light that has come and is coming." But how do we believe in that light or in peace when there is so much hatred and injustice and pain? What is this light that has come and is coming and how will it bring peace? Do we have a part to play bringing peace and what might that be? Join us for worship at 10am as we wrestle with these questions and celebrate that we are almost to our Christmas Eve celebration. Pastor Holly will preach, Dick and Jean Bertlemann will share a testimony about why they still believe in peace, and we'll focus on pictures of luminaries and bringing light

into the world. If you have made a luminary bag (or enough to line your drive) either this year or from years past please send a picture of it to HollyRJackson@gmail.com

As you sit down to worship bring your Advent Wreath if you have one. If you don't have an Advent Wreath then bring four candles which will stand in as the first, second, third, and fourth candles of the season. As always the Zoom room opens at 9:30am and worship begins at 10am and will also be livestreamed to our facebook page and recorded for later posting to our website.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84470757726?pwd=VUhkWDZacGZBUFBwYWISU3QxN3dlUT09>

Meeting ID: 844 7075 7726

Passcode: 20874

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

Meeting ID: 844 7075 7726

Passcode: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84470757726?pwd=VUhkWDZacGZBUFBwYWISU3QxN3dlUT09>

Men's Breakfast

Men's breakfast via Zoom this Saturday 12/19 at 9 a.m.: Come join the good-natured Grinches for our pre-Christmas confab on issues great and small. Please contact Noel (noellin50@gmail.com) for login info.

Drive-by Christmas Lights

The Advent Planning Committee is pleased to announce the UCCSV Drive-by Christmas Lights activity. Please join us on Saturday, December 19th at 5 p.m. as we meet in the UCCSV parking lot before departing on a drive-through light show of participating households from the congregation.

The Drive-by Christmas Lights will kick-off with socially distanced merriment including hot apple cider and a photo opportunity in front of the church's new Christmas banner before departing on the drive-through light show at 5:30 p.m.

Those interested in adding their homes to the Drive-by Christmas Lights route should contact Camila Young at cespinapr@gmail.com and/or (240) 801-0412. Also, those with decorations in need of a helping hand in setting them up may contact Camila about that too, since Bryan is more than happy to help set up outdoor decorative displays.

We hope to see you there!

Congregational Check In/Happy Hour - Fridays at 7 PM

Connecting nowadays can be difficult. Do you sometimes just want to see your fellow UCCSV members and friends for a quick chat? Your wish is granted! There will be a Congregational Check In/Happy Hour every Friday at 7 PM. It will only run for **1 hour** and is a good way to say "hi" and catch up with others. Different Deacons will be hosting each Friday and it is open to all. It will be very casual with no obligations... stop by when you feel the need and stay as long or short as you want. Take care and we will see you when we see you.

-John (Chair of Deacons)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89655025431?pwd=V1k0bEQ4VTBGODJ3L2U1WHBFbzBnZz09>

Meeting ID: 896 5502 5431

Passcode: peeps

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 896 5502 5431

Passcode: 565927

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89655025431?pwd=V1k0bEQ4VTBGODJ3L2U1WHBFbzBnZz09>

Christmas Eve at UCCSV

Christmas Eve is usually one of the most beautiful and holy and joyful services of the year. How can we possibly recreate that on Zoom? Well, we can't. Not entirely. But we can create a service that has its own beauty and holiness as we gather together as best we can on this Christmas Eve like no other. Can't see your family in person? Invite them to join us on Zoom and you can still worship all together! There will be beautiful music, lessons and carols, candlelight and communion. Worship will start at 7pm, the room will open at 6:30pm. In order to get the most out of this interactive service we suggest you have with you a nativity set with at least a few moveable pieces you can add to the scene as we go through the service, an Advent Wreath if you have one or at least one candle you can light for singing with Silent Night, and bread or a cracker and juice or wine for communion. Let us find the beauty in this particular Christmas and celebrate Christ's birth together!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82774403081?pwd=K09GVUQ3MwGwTFhCNjArUnBrQzM0dz09>

Meeting ID: 827 7440 3081

Passcode: 20874

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

Meeting ID: 827 7440 3081

Passcode: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kVKSb7btd>

Update on Gifts for Fox Chapel Elementary School

The response to providing gifts for 5 families at FCES has been generous. Quite an accomplishment in less than one week. Thanks to all who signed up!

There is one slot left for a 10-year-old girl (suggestions: board game, art and craft supplies, legos) and 5 slots left for gift cards (Suggestion: Walmart or store located in Milestone) for adults. If you wish to claim one of those slots, you can do so by going directly to Sign-Up Genius using the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d48afae28abfa7-christmas>

Gifts are due (wrapped and marked) to The Schmidt Davis Home by this Friday evening, December 18. You'll find a bin on the front porch marked UCC SV Drop Off. Gifts will be taken to the school on Monday, December 21.

Helpful Resource addressing Mental Illness

Author John Swinton writes that frequently severe mental health issues are often misunderstood by people of faith, but churches have a responsibility to listen to and see each person as a person.

Swinton states that it begins with better language. In his most recent book, "Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges." Please note the link below to read more.

<https://faithandleadership.com/john-swinton-helping-christians-mental-health-issues-starts-better-language?> - Social Action Board

Do You Have a Story About Your 2020 Star Word?

On Sunday, January 3rd, we will celebrate Epiphany and receive our new Star Words for 2021. (These will be mailed to you. If you want a Star Word and we don't have your mailing address, please get it to us so we can mail one to you.) If you have a story about your 2020 Star Word and you are willing to share it with the congregation please let Holly know -email HollyRJackson@gmail.com. You can share live on Zoom, send in a video you make, share a picture, or write a short paragraph to be shared in worship. This has become a beloved tradition at UCCSV and we are excited to see how God has been moving in your life through your Star Word this past year.

Advent at UCCSV - I Believe Even When..

This year our Advent theme is "I Believe Even When..." 2020 has been a year of challenge and grief and sometimes even rediscovery. Can we proclaim that during this season, as the days grow shorter and the news sometimes frightens us, as illness spreads and financial struggles multiply, that we still believe in and affirm the goodness of God, the hope for a better day, and the good news of the Gospel that we are loved,

always? The history of humanity is fraught with pain—especially the pain that comes accompanied by fear and leads to oppression and violence of one people against another. This is the world into which Jesus was born and through which his teachings would challenge and call for transformation. The opening words of an anonymous Jewish poet, “I believe in the sun, even when the sun is not shining,” were scrawled on a wall during the Holocaust. This theme song for our season calls us to examine our penchant for annihilating fear by annihilating each other. The power of narrative and music will call us to a different response—transformation and reconciliation through hope, love, joy, and peace. This Advent and Christmas, let us fill the night with music and light and affirm and act on the reasons why we can still “believe, even when” we are discouraged.

Santas Wanted!

Germantown HELP is looking for teams of drivers to deliver holiday gifts to Germantown residents, most likely between Dec. 19 and 21. Donations would be welcome, too. If you are interested, please contact Noel at noellin50@gmail.com.

Christmas Pictures Still Needed

We have a few services left where we need your Christmas pictures. I am looking for luminaries or special candles for this Sunday as our focus is on the light that has come and is coming. If you are missing some dear family that you will not be able to see this Christmas, send us their pictures and let them be a part of our Christmas Eve worship. Send your pictures to HollyRJackson@gmail.com. For this Sunday, send luminary or candle or "light" pictures by Friday night. For Christmas Eve send pictures of loved ones you are missing by Monday, December 21st. Thank you for making our

worship so special and so particular to our congregation.

Luminaria for Advent - A Church Wide Art Project

While we can't be together in person this Christmas and Advent we can still create together. We're asking people to make a luminaria as part of their Christmas preparations and take pictures of them and send them to HollyRJackson@gmail.com. Then they will be used in worship. Directions for how to make a luminaria are attached to this Spirit News. If you need bags or candles for the bags please email HollyRJackson@gmail.com and we will get them out to you.

Happy Birthday December

Luzmarina Granada	12/10
Claro Yu	12/13
Clarisse Lin	12/21
Miranda Lin	12/21
Noel Lin	12/26
Jen Fuss	12/29

Resources recommended by the Intergenerational Book Club

Here is a list compiled by those who participated in the intergenerational book club that read "This book is Anti-Racist" by Tiffany Jewell. Of course we recommend this book but check out the link below for other suggestions.

Please let us know if there is anything you recommend adding to this list of books, websites and videos that you would like to share.

Resource

list: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kG9DuMc0BS2B51f13Cw8bvxrR1BaL54nlfCCtHkShB8/edit?usp=sharing>

Education is the first step!

Susan Pearcy for the
Social Action Committee

Upcoming Sundays at UCCSV

December 27th - Link to the National UCC
Christmas Pageant

January 3rd - Star Word Sunday (You will get
your Star Word in the mail or picked out and
given out over the chat.)

Office Closure

The church office will be closed the week of
December 28th.