



Spirit News

December 19, 2019

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

- Prayer for Greg Hyer, Father-in-law of Isaac Anderson who is in last days of his life on earth. Comfort Greg and his family (Deb Anderson).
- Prayer for Wayne Miller. Please pray for Wayne and his family as Wayne finds another job after being let go this week (Heidi Harmon).
- Prayer for Julie Hower who is suffering with cancer (Suzanne).
- Prayer for Bob Fraley; continued healing.
- Ongoing Prayer for Bill Hayes. Prayers for recovery after shoulder surgery (Suzanne Schmidt).
- 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 for my niece, Lina, who lost her job 3 months ago and now is getting desperate (Luz).
- Ongoing Prayer for Dawn. She is going through a lot of health issues and needs all the prayers she can get (Terri & Dee Dee).
- Ongoing Prayer for Jill and her son, Spencer. Also, Nanny (Chloe Jackson).
- Ongoing Prayer for Alexis Symanski recently diagnosed with breast cancer who is facing a radical mastectomy and hysterectomy (Suzanne Schmidt).
- Ongoing prayer for God to forgive us for destroying your forests. Help us to know and

act how important forests are to our planet and our lives (Deb Anderson).

- Ongoing prayer for Dave's mom who has breast cancer and had a seizure that left her lethargic and more frail. Traveling mercies for travelers (Shelly Moore).
- Ongoing prayer for Linda Snyder, Tim Fuss's Aunt, in treatment for early stage pancreatic cancer. Prayers for her care team and that her positive outlook will be sustained.

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

This Sunday at UCCSV

It's the last Sunday in Advent and we're focusing on love and exploring Joseph's story. What must it have been like for him to accept Mary's pregnancy? What courage did he need to stand against society's censure? What can Joseph teach us about masculinity and being a partner and ally? Join us for worship at 10am as we wrestle with these questions and more. The choir will sing, Aaron Cox will play his horn, and we will continue to prepare ourselves for the birth of the Christ child.

A Cozy Christmas Eve, 7:30pm Worship

Please join us (and bring your friends and family) for a joyous and beautiful Intergenerational Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7:30pm on Tuesday, December 24th. Children are welcome and so are the young at heart of all ages. We'll sing your

favorite Christmas songs while listening to scripture and poetry that tell us the familiar and yet amazing Christmas story. Together we'll create a mash up manger scene at the front of the sanctuary. Using candles and glow sticks we'll create a cozy space where darkness and light both find their place. There will be wonderful special music from our choir, several brass instruments, and more! You won't want to miss this once a year unique service at UCCSV.

Your Generous Christmas Basket Donations

A huge thank you to all who donated and helped to organize our Christmas Basket donations this year! Three local families in need, as identified by our local elementary school, will this week be receiving an overflowing box of non-perishable food, a \$30 gift card to Giant for perishables and main dishes, scarves and hats, and a \$25 gift card (or gift) for each person in the family (including parents). Our church has truly shown extravagant generosity and love to our neighbors this Christmas season. Thank you in particular to Joyce Miller who worked with the elementary school to identify families in need and then helped to deliver the baskets to those same families and to the UCCSV Youth who organized the after worship "Market" for the non-perishable items for the baskets a few weeks ago. Three local families will be well fed and cared for this holiday season because of you!



Stewardship and Financial Update

As we close out 2019 and start looking towards 2020 we want to update you on stewardship and giving.

In 2019 UCCSV Members and Friends pledged \$158,100 towards our church's general budget for the year. We are presently on track to receive 95% of those pledges by the end of the calendar year. That's a wonderful testament to our commitment to this community! However, if you are behind on your pledge and you'd like to help us get to 100% you still have two more Sundays to catch up. (Christmas Eve's offering will go to Germantown Help and UMAN, not to UCCSV.) The reality of our financial situation, particularly because of an expensive HVAC repair this summer (remember when we had no AC?!), is that **depending on end of year giving we will close out 2019 with a deficit that may be as high as \$10,000.** So if you are behind on your pledge and can catch up or if you want to give an extra donation to the church to help us close that gap it would be much appreciated.

After this fall's stewardship campaign **UCCSV Members and Friends have now pledged to give \$164,462 toward our church's general budget for 2020.** That is an approximately 4% increase over last year! We have 46 repeat pledges and 5 brand new pledges this year. 35% of existing pledges also increased their giving this year. Thank you so much for pledging and giving of your time and talent to our community!

The Church Council is now working on a budget for the new year given these figures. While we are excited about our newest pledges and the overall increase in our pledge totals, given increases in overall building and

maintenance costs and other costs that are out of our control, the preliminary budget plans for next year presently include a staff salary freeze and little to no increase in funding for our ministry programs in order for us to try to minimize next year's deficit. If you would like to increase your pledge for 2020 or to newly pledge to our church please contact the office at uccsv@verizon.net or 301-540-3449.

As always thank you for your ongoing support for UCCSV! It's because of your pledges of time, talent, and treasure that we can continue to do God's work!

Fixing The Blinking Lights

Maybe you've noticed that some Sundays in the Sanctuary during worship there are blinking lights, almost like a strobe effect. This is because our lighting in the sanctuary is powered by energy efficient LED bulbs but the dimmer switches that run those bulbs, that are original to our building, are not equipped to deal with LEDs. As a result sometimes the switches cause the lights to flicker very subtly. This would be an expensive problem to fix. However, thankfully due to the volunteer time and talent of one of our newest members, Bryan Young, we will be replacing those switches over time to newer units that are equipped to deal with LED lights. One switch has already been replaced and works great. Thank you Bryan! Your helps makes a huge difference to our congregation!

Do You Have a Story About Last Year's Star Word?

It's a new year and so a new chance to get a word from the Spirit in 2020. On January 5th we will get a new Star Word for the year, but we want to know if you have any stories about your word from 2019. Do you still have your 2019

word somewhere? Did it figure into your life somehow? Would you like to share your story with the congregation either through your own testimony or with a story Holly could incorporate into the sermon? Would you like to preach on your Star Word? Let Holly know at HollyRJackson@gmail.com

Coming Up in Worship in December and Beyond

December 29th - A Service of Poems and Hymns for Christmas and the New Year
January 5th - Epiphany Celebration - Get your Star Word for 2020
January 12th - Introducing a New UCCSV Mission Statement

Volunteers Needed ASAP!

We are in need of Liturgists and Ushers for January. If you are available, please sign up on the bulletin board outside the church office. Many thanks for all you do!

Next Sunday, December 29th at UCCSV

Christmas Day may have past but our celebrations of the Christ child continue! Sunday, December 29th will be our last cozy Christmas celebration at UCCSV. You are welcome to dress down, maybe even wear your favorite Christmas pjs, as we get tucked in for a morning of reflection and song. This year our first Sunday after Christmas celebration will include poetry and singing hymns we may have heard on a limited basis so far this Christmas season. George Benskin IV will be our pianist for the day and the Deacons will lead the rest of this intimate and contemplative worship.



UCCSV Playground Project Update

There may be a chill in the air but come January a team of folks will start planning for our new church playground. The goal is installation in the spring/early summer. Lots needs to happen before then but we are hopeful that the implementation will go smoothly allowing us to meet that goal. Thanks to all who contributed to the playground fund. To date we have donations totaling \$5,000. In the coming months, as exact project costs are calculated, you'll be hearing from the team about additional needs and progress on the project.

Faces from Our Pageant



Office Closure

The church office will be closed December 25th thru January 1st. There will be no Spirit News during the holidays.

Calendar

- Mens Breakfast (9am) – Dec. 21
- PFLAG (2:30pm) – Dec. 22
- Christmas Eve Service (7:30pm) – Dec. 24
- One Anothering Group (10am) – Dec. 28
- CE Committee Meeting (11:30am) – Jan. 5
- Deacons Meeting (7pm) – Jan. 6
- Adopt-A-Road (9:00am) – Jan. 11
- Listening Circle Strategic Planning (11:30am) – Jan. 12
- Pizza Night at Ledos – Jan. 14
- Mens Breakfast (9am) – Jan. 18
- Immigration Appointment Accompaniment Training (1:30pm) – Jan. 19
- One Anothering Group (10:00am) – Jan. 25
- Congregational Meeting – Jan. 26
- PFLAG (2:30pm) – Jan. 26
- Trustees Meeting (6pm) – Jan. 26
- Council Meeting (7pm) – Jan. 26

See you next Year!

