



# Spirit News

December 9, 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](mailto:UCCSV@verizon.net)  
Website: [UCCSenecaValley.org](http://UCCSenecaValley.org)

## Prayer Requests

- Prayer for Suzi Davis who is struggling with memory loss. Prayer for Jennifer who is facing double mastectomy soon (Dan and Suzanne).
- Prayers for the homeless people (Sabine Cox).
- Prayers for WUMCO as we search for a new larger building (Adam DeBaugh).
- Prayers for all who are depressed, lonely, and alone (Adam DeBaugh).
- Prayers for my mom and dad (Patrick Johnson).
- Gratitude for the love between Leo and Russell (Joyce).
- Prayers for all those sick with covid and all those taking care of them (Deb and Madelyn).
- Prayer that responsible mask wearing, social distancing, and coming vaccines bring blessings for a better and healthier 2021 (John Bartkowiak).
- Prayer for my sister Annie who will undergo knee surgery tomorrow (Regina Domingo).
- Prayers of joy for the birthday of Katie Hyer Anderson (Deb and Madelyn).
- Prayer of Thanksgiving for Ronna's recovery from mild symptoms of covid and for not infecting me and Ron (Regina Domingo).
- Pray for my Grandmother on my dad's side, as she was just diagnosed with dementia and pray for his family to have hope and love (Chloe Jackson).
- Pray for Bryan's father, who was diagnosed with cancer - be with him as he faces this challenge (Bryan Young).

## Blue Christmas Service Tonight

A reminder that tonight is our Blue Christmas Service on Zoom at 7pm. This will be a time of prayer, meditation, scripture reading, and meaningful music. It is for anyone who is struggling to find joy this season or simply wants to acknowledge and lament all our losses from this past year. I will open the Zoom room at 6:45pm but with quiet Christmas music in the background so as to set the mood.

Topic: Blue Christmas Service  
Time: Dec 9, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87387317753?pwd=K1hxa1JkRS9ZcDFDVzlwNWEzSzEwdz09>

Meeting ID: 873 8731 7753

Passcode: 20874

Dial by your location

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

Meeting ID: 873 8731 7753

Passcode: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kez2pZZvCc>

Peace,  
Holly

## This Sunday at UCCSV

In the midst of a pandemic when the death count continues to rise, we may wonder where God is. Is God even paying attention? In those moments it may be a challenge to say, "I believe in God, even when God is silent." Can the scriptures help us find joy in the midst of a time of deep struggle? This week we turn to Luke's writing which is an account in two acts: the Gospel biography of Jesus and then the story of the early church—the "Jesus community." Whether you were a Jew or Gentile in those days, deciding to become a part of this illegal early Christian movement could bring punishment for your allegiance. Surely the message in both Luke and Isaiah that the downcast, lowly, and oppressed would rise up is a welcome and inspirational account. Like the Jewish exiled people of Isaiah's time and the early Christians, we also sometimes wonder where God is in our suffering. We long to hear the promise that a reason for joyful praise is the good news on the way! Let us come together for worship and wrestle with these themes as we wait for the light of God to break through to our world. The choir will gift us with a new Advent hymn, we will explore another hymn of resistance, Maggie will share her testimony of why she believes in joy, and your pictures of Christmas trees will provide a background for our musical interludes (send your pictures of Christmas trees to [HollyRJackson@gmail.com](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com) by Friday evening).

As you sit down to worship bring your Advent Wreath if you have one. If you don't have an Advent Wreath then bring three candles which will stand in as the first, second and third candles of the season (next week we'll add candle #4). 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 (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 844 7075 7726

Passcode: 20874

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcm87sP9zS>

## 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.

## 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](mailto: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.



### Virtual Christmas Story Time and Cookies Sunday, December 13, 3:00 – 4:00pm

Settle in with your favorite Christmas cookies or treat to show, tell about and eat. Then listen to fellow UCCSV friends read fun Christmas stories aloud.

If you would be interested in reading a favorite Christmas story or have any questions, please contact:

Deb Anderson

[debralanderson57@gmail.com](mailto:debralanderson57@gmail.com)

or Madelyn Anderson

[madelyn.andersonfraley@gmail.com](mailto:madelyn.andersonfraley@gmail.com)

Zoom Link

<https://zoom.us/j/97245814468?pwd=U2QzR2VaYXNXZTN3YWJXWWVwY1RoQT09>

## 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](mailto:noellin50@gmail.com).

## Christmas Photos Needed

In order to enhance our online Advent and Christmas worship we need your Christmas photos. Right now we are looking for pictures of Advent Wreaths, Nativity sets, Christmas Trees and similar decorations. These can be of your personal decorations, of church decorations from previous years, or commercial decorations you have taken pictures of. Later in the month I will be asking you to send pictures of people you will miss or not see this Christmas Season. Please hold those until later so I can sort everything out. Send pictures to [HollyRJackson@gmail.com](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com). Thank you!!

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com) and we will get them out to you.

## 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:cespinapr@gmail.com) and/or (240) 801-0412 by Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. 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.

The final Drive-by Christmas Lights route will be ready by December 15<sup>th</sup> for those who wish to see the lights, but cannot join us on the day of the drive-through. 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 45 minutes 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)  
UCC Seneca Valley is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  
Topic: Congregational Check In/Happy Hour

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>

## Fox Chapel Elementary School

We are looking to make the Christmas season a little brighter for five families in need at our local Fox Chapel Elementary School. Please sign up to either buy a giftcard for an adult or a gift for a child. You can find more information and sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D48AFAE28ABFA7-christmas>

All gifts must be wrapped and clearly labeled. Gifts can be mailed to or dropped off with Suzanne Schmidt at 18920 Falling Star Road, Germantown, MD 20874. Gifts can be left on the Schmidt porch for contactless drop off. If you order a gift from Amazon and send it to Suzanne's house PLEASE be sure to have it wrapped and clearly labeled with who it is for. All gifts are due by Friday, December 18th.

## Pastor Holly's Stories to Live By Podcast

Pastor Holly is creating a series of short podcasts where she reads biblical stories and other stories of love and justice for you to listen to on your own time and at your own pace. New stories will come out each week.

You can find these new podcasts here:

<https://anchor.fm/holly-jackson5/>

These stories are primarily created with children and youth in mind as a way to try to make more Christian Education opportunities available for our families that didn't involve a screen. However, the stories might be particularly interesting to people of all ages who maybe just need 10 minutes of listening to a great story. I also have reflection questions at the end of each story to consider and discuss.

## 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



### 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