



# Spirit News

March 26, 2020

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
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Email: [UCCSV@verizon.net](mailto:UCCSV@verizon.net)  
Website: [UCCSenecaValley.org](http://UCCSenecaValley.org)

## Prayer Requests

- Prayer for the family of John Pattison, a member of Rockville United Church who was a tireless advocate for LGBTQ rights. Due to the Corona Virus, John's spouse, Beth and his sons were unable to be with John at the hospital during the last days of his life (Suzanne).
- Prayers of healing for Rev. Eddie Blue who had a kidney removed on March 25. Pastor Blue is married to Pastor Lucy Brady, Suzanne's Schmidt's long time pastoral colleague.
- We pray for all health care workers and their dedication to helping others! (Michelle Singletary)
- Pray for the 1st respondents and everyone who is lonely (Luz Granada)
- Pray for John's friend Kathleen, whose son Kevin died unexpectedly on March 17<sup>th</sup> (John Bartkowiak).
- Prayer for the family of my former colleague, Hai Tang, who passed away last week (Jeanne Springmann).
- Thanksgiving for notification this week that Keoki has all requirements for his AA in music from MC!!! (Catherine Benskin)
- Thankful for my sister Cheryl whose birthday is today. Pray that she stays healthy and bless her in her home alone (Deb Anderson).
- Prayer for all the grocery store workers. Making very little money and no health care in very dangerous conditions to make sure we can eat (Camila Young).
- Prayers for my Dad who is providing rides to people who need to get to the doctor or need groceries. Keep him safe and healthy! (Terri Molaski)

- May God be with the sick who are at hospitals - facing the end by themselves (Camila Young).
- 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. Recovering from a chemo during January and a radical mastectomy on 2.17.20. Alexis is a member of the Schmidt family (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 Requests:** Please notify Nita at [uccsv@verizon.net](mailto: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.

## Last Week's Worship Recording

If you would like to watch a recording of last Sunday's Zoom worship you can do so here: [https://zoom.us/rec/share/-N1IM6PV-D5LW8\\_z-FPWUOK6HKrPeaa82yMWqKdZyUsO1y0cKqIRnHytxdGZ3nxM?startTime=1584886069000](https://zoom.us/rec/share/-N1IM6PV-D5LW8_z-FPWUOK6HKrPeaa82yMWqKdZyUsO1y0cKqIRnHytxdGZ3nxM?startTime=1584886069000)

## **This Sunday at UCCSV**

Every week we get a little bit better at virtually worshipping together on Zoom! This past Sunday Stefan was able to provide us with tracks so that we had piano music, especially for responses and prelude and postlude. This coming Sunday we'll have even better music for responses with a singing voice added to the recording and Laura Lineberger and Beth Lauriat have recorded offertory music for us. Our scripture this week is the story of the resurrection of Lazarus and we'll wrestle with how it must have felt for Lazarus in the tomb and coming back to life and how that can echo our reality right now. The zoom room will open at 9:30am for people to gather and chat before worship starts at 10am and we'll have "fellowship" time after worship breaking in to small groups of 6-8 people to chat and reconnect. Don't forget to bring a candle that you can light as we begin service together. Join us this Sunday and find a bit of normalcy, holy connection, and love as we gather together to sing, pray, and reflect.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/962035283>

Meeting ID: 962 035 283

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,962035283# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 962 035 283

## **Pulp Pilgrims Book Group**

Hi book lovers- Let's plan on pushing the schedule up one month so on April 26<sup>th</sup> we will discuss My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult and do the Michael Desmond Pulitzer Prize book Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City sometime in May. Stay safe but connected by phone, text, email or ZOOM!! Dan

## **Survey Responses Needed**

In order to get a better sense of your needs, wants, and present situation, we have created a short online survey that we'd like everyone to complete by Sunday, March 29th. Based on your answers we will continue to tailor our efforts and virtual options to the needs of our community. We have already had 22 responses to this survey but as we have a little over a hundred members at UCCSV we'd love to see those numbers closer to at least 60 responses so we can feel that the results are a more accurate reflection of our congregation. You do not have to log in or leave your information, just answer 6 short questions. If you have more than one answer to question 5 about what the church could be doing right now that would be more helpful to you, please leave a list of your answers in the "Other (Specify)" comment box. We really appreciate and value your input. Please click here or go to this address at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2MGLSKM>

## **Send Us Photos of Your ZoomSpace**

We're all in different places but we'd love to see how you're worshipping even while we're apart. Take pictures of the place you Zoom in with us. Take pictures of yourself while on Zoom. Take pictures of the candle you're lighting on Sunday or anything else that's helping you find a sacred moment. We want to see you and your worship spaces! We'll take the pictures and put them as part of our Zoom worship so we'll feel more connected. Post pictures to facebook or send them to [colby.aharmon@gmail.com](mailto:colby.aharmon@gmail.com).

## More Ways To Make A Difference

Looking for ways you can help and give back right now? The Maryland government has put together a great list of resources for you to use. Go to <https://governor.maryland.gov/marylandunites> for more information on COVID-19 in Maryland and ways to support our wider community right now.

## Last Lenten Soup-er, April 1st

Join us on Zoom for our final Lenten Soup-er, Wednesday, April 1st at 6:30pm. We will gather for dinner together. (Bring whatever kind of food or drink you want or come just to hang out if you have already eaten.) At 7:15 we will drop off the call to watch the two TED talks for this week and then return at 7:30pm for a discussion. These are two great talks to finish up our series on looking for and maintaining healthy and whole love, in our relationship and with ourselves.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/379091581>

Meeting ID: 379 091 581

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,379091581# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 379 091 581

The TED Talks for this week:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/clint\\_smith\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_silence](https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/luvvie\\_ajayi\\_get\\_comfortable\\_with\\_being\\_uncomfortable](https://www.ted.com/talks/luvvie_ajayi_get_comfortable_with_being_uncomfortable)

## One Anothering Group

One Anothering Group will meet via Zoom March 28 from 10 to 11:30. Deb Anderson will host and send out an email with a link. If you have any questions you may reach Deb at [debralanderson57@gmail.com](mailto:debralanderson57@gmail.com) or by cell 720.260.2544

## If You're Struggling with Zoom Technically

Please note that you can always just call in to a zoom meeting using your phone if you prefer to do it that way. Some people on Sunday also found they could see video but not hear. In that case you may want to set up the video and then also use your phone to connect with the audio. If you need technical help please contact Holly at [HollyRJackson@gmail.com](mailto:HollyRJackson@gmail.com) or call me on my cel phone at 202-247-8592 and I will try to help. Also there are many resources for how to use Zoom on their website, including video tutorials. We're all on a learning curve together!

Check out: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

In particular watch videos on How to Connect to a meeting:

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/vFhAEoCF7jg?rel=0&autoplay=1&cc\\_load\\_policy=1](https://www.youtube.com/embed/vFhAEoCF7jg?rel=0&autoplay=1&cc_load_policy=1)

How to configure your audio and video:

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/HqncX7RE0wM?rel=0&autoplay=1&cc\\_load\\_policy=1](https://www.youtube.com/embed/HqncX7RE0wM?rel=0&autoplay=1&cc_load_policy=1)

This is a wonderful super easy visual guide for Zoom:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b4ccb837e3c3aff68a91faa/t/5ba66614e79c705ac397dade/1537631766152/SUPER-EASY-GUIDE.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0AKVEJJVUIY4RsXbXYPfmejKLaO-7IlUAYoctsYcq-z0THaP0\\_BW-qGWI](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b4ccb837e3c3aff68a91faa/t/5ba66614e79c705ac397dade/1537631766152/SUPER-EASY-GUIDE.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0AKVEJJVUIY4RsXbXYPfmejKLaO-7IlUAYoctsYcq-z0THaP0_BW-qGWI)

## What Can I Do?

As our lives have changed drastically these last weeks it might seem like we have no control over things right now. But that's not true. There are lots of things we can do that can make a huge difference. Here are our top 10 (and please send additional ideas in if you have any):

1. Pray for each other. This is so important right now. Pray and stay connected to the holy. Use a printed prayer, make up your own, journal as a form of prayer, color your prayers, pray the news, make a list of friends, family and church people and go down that list. There are so many ways to pray. Just pick one and do it.
2. Call someone. Call someone each day. Make an effort to talk to others. Remind people of your love and care.
3. Write letters and cards. It's time to go old school. Write letters and cards to those we are not seeing regularly. Send cards to nursing home. Send cards of thanks to hospitals and first responders. Give people a little joy through the mail. (Church friends would love to get mail!)
4. Ask if you need help. If you don't feel safe going to the store or going out and you need help, please ask for it. Call your Deacon or Pastor Holly. Ask a neighbor. Ask a family member who is in a less at risk group. Do not treat this lightly. Ask for help. There are lots of us willing to support you.
5. Offer help. If you are in a low risk group or you feel comfortable helping others, offer your services. Agree to go to the store or run errands. Cook for people. Send them flowers. Read online to their kids. Offer a skill or talent to the world. Be generous with your time.
6. Support small and local businesses. So many small and local businesses are in economic trouble right now. If you know of restaurants that are open order take out if you feel comfortable doing so. If not, buy a gift card to use later. Make a purchase online from a local store or

from your favorite online small business or artist. Have a favorite Etsy store? Buy something if you have the resources to do so. You get the idea.

7. Stay home. It may seem like a thing we are already having to do and not something we choose for ourselves, but by staying home you are doing your part to stop the community spread of this virus. Stay home if you can and if you must go to work, please take every precaution and wash your hands frequently. Practice social distancing when you go out and stay at least 6 feet away from others outside your household.

8. Advocate for justice. This pandemic has shown us the absolute cracks in our system. Inequality will make the effects of this virus so much worse for those who are most vulnerable in our society including the sick, immigrants, victims of abuse and domestic violence, the poor, etc. Spend some time educating yourself about the issues and then call or write letters to your lawmakers and other community leaders advocating for laws and systems that will help the most vulnerable get through this situation.

9. Give to organizations that need your help (including your church). Even though the world seems to be on lockdown non-profits are still doing their work and having to pay their workers. Here at church we are working to continue to pay the salaries and paychecks of our staff and though our building may be closed our bills for utilities and supplies will still pile up. In addition, organizations that seek to help to help the hungry and homeless are seeing increased demands for help and decreased numbers of donations and volunteers. Please consider giving to Germantown Help during this time. We are not collecting donations of food at church, so take the money you would normally spend at the grocery store and donate it here: <https://germantownhelp.org/support-us>. Or give to WUMCO:

<http://www.wumcohelp.org/Donate.html> or other organizations you hold dear.

10. Stay connected to church. Come to Zoom worship or Zoom Lenten Soupers or another virtual church meeting or gathering. You aren't in this alone. We will help get each other through this but that's only possible if we stick together. Make staying connected with your church community a priority in this time. The positives are that your commute to church is now much shorter, it doesn't matter what you wear, and you can even put Pastor Holly on mute if the sermon goes on too long. ;-)

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



### 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!**