



# Spirit News

March 5, 2020

United Church of Christ of Seneca Valley  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
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## Prayer Requests

- Prayers for friends that had their mothers pass (Carol, Howard and Lori). Blessings welcome Baby Hayden (Renee Morales).
- Prayers for Sally Duncan's family. Prayers for Molly in her 54<sup>th</sup> surgery with Chiari (Joyce).
- Pray for Luz. Thank God for my job.
- Pray for Mark Mahone, housemate for Kyle Grissom.
- 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.

## Memorial for Sally Duncan, May 9th at 11am

There will be a Memorial Service to celebrate the life of Sally Duncan on Sat. May 9th at 11am at the Guild Memorial Chapel on the campus of Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg, MD. There will also be a reception following the service in the Club Room (in the same building as the chapel). The funeral home has created a 'memories' page which includes an obituary and a few photos. Here is the link:

<https://interfaithfunerals.com/book-of-memories/4121297/Duncan-Sarah/>

## Havruta

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.

## This Sunday at UCCSV

When disaster strikes, as it seems to do fairly regularly lately, we see the helpers and heroes that emerge from the rubble. Sometimes we look for love and acceptance by feeling like we have to look accomplished or have it all together, never asking for help. But scripture tells us instead to look for love with the helpers, the ones who need help and the ones who offer help, and that our ultimate help, and love, come from God. Join us for worship on Sunday at 10am as we wrestle with what it means to give help and to ask for help. In this season of Lent

we'll reflect on what it means to be vulnerable in healthy ways. The sermon will be a conversation between Pastor Holly and the Rev. Suzanne Adele Schmidt, and they will introduce a community project for the Lenten season. Whether you need help this week or you want to help others, you are welcome here.

## Keeping Us Healthy and Safe

Due to issues around the Corona virus and COVID-19 we have all been thinking about how to keep our community safe. If you were in worship this past Sunday you may have noticed we made some changes from our usual procedures. For right now we recommend the following things to keep our community safe and healthy:

1. If you are ill please stay home. If you miss worship Holly can send you the bulletin and sermon as available. If you need a meal or other help please contact Holly or your Deacon. If you don't know who your Deacon is you can call the office and find out.
2. For those who are in worship or at church events we suggest that you do not shake hands or hug especially if you feel ill or are at high risk for complications from illness. Last Sunday we bumped elbows or bowed to each other during the Passing of the Peace.
3. We will continue to amend our communion practices as needed to reduce germ transmission. This past Sunday we had cut communion bread beforehand and then dipped it into the wine or juice as requested and then handed communion to the recipient. This is not a permanent change to our communion practice. This is an ever evolving process as we balance our rituals with health and safety.

4. If you cough or sneeze in church please use tissues or cough into your elbow and wash or sanitize your hands immediately afterwards.

5. Feel free to use the hand sanitizers throughout the church and/or please wash your hands with soap often.

6. Please wash or sanitize your hands before handling food at fellowship time or other meals. Taking these precautions now helps to keep us as safe and healthy as possible, and is a show of love and care for the more vulnerable among us in our community. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to Holly or to John Bartkowiak, Chair of Deacons.

## Domestic Violence Resources

This week at our Lenten Soup-er we watched a powerful video that we suggest be shared with all teens and young adults about the difference between healthy love and unhealthy love and the point at which that switches over to abuse. You can find the video here:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/katie\\_hood\\_the\\_difference\\_between\\_healthy\\_and\\_unhealthy\\_love](https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_hood_the_difference_between_healthy_and_unhealthy_love)

Here is a list of other resources you might find helpful:

<https://www.loveisrespect.org> (specifically for teens and young adults)

<https://www.thehotline.org/> (National Domestic Violence Hotline)

<https://www.liveyourdream.org/get-help/domestic-violence-resources.html>

(empowering women and ending violence against women)

<https://mnadv.org/find-help/maryland-resources-2/> (Resources in Maryland)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/help-fv>  
(Great list of information and resources)

# Lenten Soupers

Come join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm during Lent for a simple soup dinner followed by a short video and discussion. Since our theme for Lent is "Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places" our videos will be focused on building healthy relationships (not just couple and love relationships, but family relationships and friendships as well), tending to your mental and emotional health, and living out your truth in the world. Please join us for one session or all the sessions. You can watch the videos ahead of time but we will also watch them together as a group. Each video will be paired with a scripture and will also be connected to the themes and issues we'll be wrestling with in worship.

**March 11th - "How To Ask for Help"** by Heidi Grant

[https://www.ted.com/talks/heidi\\_grant\\_how\\_to\\_ask\\_for\\_help\\_and\\_get\\_a\\_yes](https://www.ted.com/talks/heidi_grant_how_to_ask_for_help_and_get_a_yes)

Sign up here to help provide soup or sides:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849A4A722A02-lenten4>

**March 18th - "How to Build Your Confidence and Spark it in Others"** by Brittany Packnett

[https://www.ted.com/talks/brittany\\_packnett\\_how\\_to\\_build\\_your\\_confidence\\_and\\_spark\\_it\\_in\\_others](https://www.ted.com/talks/brittany_packnett_how_to_build_your_confidence_and_spark_it_in_others)

Sign up here to help provide soup or sides:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849A4A722A02-lenten4>

**March 25th - "The Gift and Power of Emotional Courage"** by Susan David

[https://www.ted.com/talks/susan\\_david\\_the\\_gift\\_and\\_power\\_of\\_emotional\\_courage](https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_the_gift_and_power_of_emotional_courage)

Sign up here to help provide soup or sides:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090849A4A722A02-lenten4>

**April 1st - "The Danger of Silence"** by Clint Smith

[https://www.ted.com/talks/clint\\_smith\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_silence](https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence) and **"Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable"** by Luvvie Ajayi  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/luvvie\\_ajayi\\_get\\_comfortable\\_with\\_being\\_uncomfortable](https://www.ted.com/talks/luvvie_ajayi_get_comfortable_with_being_uncomfortable)

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## 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!**

### **Informative videos**

**Last Week Tonight with John Oliver** Explains a lot and makes TV history in less than four minutes (with two bleeped expletives).

UCC medical debt relief **in Chicago**.  
UCC medical debt relief **in Saint Louis**.

## **Look for the Helpers Project**

This Lent our worship theme is "Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places." On Sunday, March 8 our focus will be "Look for the Helpers." Those of us gathered at the Lent Worship Planning Retreat thought it would be interesting to look for the helpers at UCCSV. Our church family can identify ways in which they could use some help (up to 3 hours). And other members of our church family will have the opportunity to help meet those requests.

Although we may resist asking for help for fear of overburdening others or appearing helpless, it's important for us to remember that God created us for community. As a body of believers, we are called to be willing helpers and grateful receivers.

So, come on UCCSV, consider asking for help and providing help! Here's how we are going to Look for the Helpers during Lent...

You'll find a Look for the Helpers Tree in the Gathering Room along with some Helping Hands forms to complete if you would like some help. Those who are willing to help (on a volunteer basis) will take a completed form from

the tree and contact those who are requesting help.

For example, Suzanne Schmidt who is taking the lead has a request for help. She has a Facebook page but has no idea how Facebook works. You'll find her Look for the Helpers form on the tree requesting 3 hours of help with Facebook. She hopes that someone will take her form and volunteer to help her with this task.

The Look for The Helpers tree will be in The Gathering Room March 8 until Palm Sunday, April 5. Projects should be completed by Sunday, May 10.

Learn more about The Look for the Helpers Project this Sunday during worship.

## Women's Retreat

Ladies, the Women's Retreat is just around the corner, May 1st through 3rd. We are totally full with "overnight" participants but would love to open Saturday's schedule to anyone who would like to join in for a day of renewal, community and dining. Starting the morning with breakfast, move through the day with an active agenda and enjoy evening dinner with us. The cost for the day will be \$25.00. Please let Pam Van Prooyen know if you plan to join in (301-275-9931).



## Calendar

- Deacons Meeting (5pm) – March 8
- Lenten Soupers (6:30pm) – March 11
- Social Action Committee Meeting (11:30am) – March 15
- Fellowship Meeting (11:30am) – March 15
- Womens Retreat Planning Meeting (11:30am) – March 15
- Church Council Meeting (7pm) – March 16
- Lenten Soupers (6:30pm) – March 18
- Men's Breakfast (9am) – March 21
- PFLAG (2:30pm) – March 22
- Lenten Soupers (6:30pm) – March 25
- One Anothering (10am) – March 28
- Church Grounds and Nursery Cleanup (11:30am) – March 29

