



11.22.2017

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UCC/VF's Weekly Newsletter

# The FORGE

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

The United Church of Christ at Valley Forge, following in the Way of Jesus, is called by God to deepen our relationships with the Spirit and our faith community so that we will be empowered to reach out widely to our neighbors in love, justice, hospitality, healing, and hope.

### Scripture for This Sunday

Ezekiel 34:11-16

Psalms 100 John 10:2-4

## Living as Light

*For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went out at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. - Jesus in Matthew 25:14-17*

We talked this past Sunday about how when we engage the practices that help us to trust the Giver, and then risk and share the gifts entrusted to us, we more fully receive and share light of hope, healing, love, and justice. Sometimes we ignore the shadow side of our fear and control, shut ourselves down, neither risk nor share much, and then we miss the contrasting light and generosity to, in, and through us. As we move into Thanksgiving and eventually toward the darkest month, we are challenged daily to choose to risk, to trust, and to be vulnerable following in the Way of Jesus that we will name and recognize the shadows and darkness and be empowered to move toward seeing light and being light for and with others. In this spirit, I share a poetic blessing:

### For Light

Light cannot see inside things.  
That is what the dark is for:  
Minding the interior,  
Nurturing the draw of growth  
Through places where death  
In its own way turns into life.

In the glare of neon times,  
Let our eyes not be worn  
By surfaces that shine  
With hunger made attractive.

That our thoughts may be true light,  
Finding their way into words  
Which have the weight of shadow  
To hold the layers of truth.

That we never place our trust  
In minds claimed by empty light,  
Where one-sided certainties  
Are driven by false desire.

When we look into the heart,  
May our eyes have the kindness  
And reverence of candlelight.

That the searching of our minds  
Be equal to the oblique  
Crevices and corners where  
The mystery continues to dwell,  
Glimmering in fugitive light.

SUNDAY - NOV. 26

10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration  
Sunday School/Sunday Morning  
Breakfast Club

Rev. Meagan McLeod will deliver  
the message this morning

THIS WEEK

Mon. - 1:00 p.m. Grief Support  
Group meeting

Wed. - 7:00 p.m. Caring Crafters  
6:30 p.m. All Ages Worship team  
meeting

7:30 p.m. Spiritual Life Group -  
Matthew

Thur. - 10:30 a.m. Spiritual Life  
Group - Matthew

7:30 p.m. Senior Choir rehearsal

NEXT SUNDAY - DEC. 3

COMMUNION

ADVENT 1

9:00 a.m. Advent Meditation Class

10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration  
/Communion

Sunday School/Sunday Morning  
Breakfast Club

**NOTE:**

**We are still missing  
2 long folding  
tables. If you have  
borrowed them,  
please return them  
to the church.  
Thanks!**

When we are confined inside  
The dark house of suffering  
That moonlight might find a window.

When we become false and lost  
That the severe noon-light  
Would cast our shadow clear.

When we love, that dawn-light  
Would lighten our feet  
Upon the waters.

As we grow old, that twilight  
Would illuminate treasure  
In the fields of memory.

And when we come to search for God,  
Let us first be robed in night,  
Put on the mind of morning  
To feel the rush of light  
Spread slowly inside  
The color and stillness  
Of a found world.

- John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space  
Between Us: A Book of Blessings*

Love in Christ,  
*Pastor Michael Bush*

**Listen to & download Sunday's message**

<http://www.uccvf.org/sermonmp3.html>

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET SUBMITTED YOUR PLEDGE CARD,  
PLEASE DO SO RIGHT AWAY!**

**Extra cards are available outside the sanctuary, or email**

[Financial Secretary](#) Charlotte Emrich

In Our Prayers



- Peace and comfort for the friends and family of Reese Bogle who died on Tuesday.
- Comfort for the friends and family of Marilyn Weidner, mother of Roslyn Nilson, who passed away peacefully last week.
- Comfort and peace for Martha Parrish Bush's sister, Maggie, who has stage 4 bone cancer.
- Healing for Walt Glazier, son-in-law of Doug and Joan Johnson who is struggling in his surgical recovery.
- Healing and strength for Emily Mancuso.

# "Health Care for All"

*Sunday, December 3 following worship  
(Lunch and childcare will be provided)*

Dear Congregation,

We have an opportunity to participate in a larger grassroots effort to inform and influence the direction of healthcare in the US. Now is a critical time: the government is looking to cut back funding of critical programs and new models of payment and service are being formulated by both the government, insurance, and businesses.

## **The Problem:**

As people of faith, we should consider our desire to meet the challenge of a system where families struggle to pay insurance premiums, millions remain uninsured, and health care is not provided in an equitable manner. In addition, continued attacks on Medicaid and Medicare, coverage that is working for many Pennsylvanians, are occurring at the state and national level. Many people, including some in our congregation, are directly affected.

## **POWER's Approach:**

POWER envisions an America where no one needs to worry about insurance coverage or access to care—where health care is recognized as a human right. Currently, POWER is fighting plans to slash Medicare, Medicaid and ACA protections. All our faith traditions and holy texts call us to care for one another as we would ourselves, and to respect the sanctity of life. We are putting our faith into action as we imagine a system that serves ALL of us, and as we hold our representatives accountable to build a just health care system for all.

Attached is a brief survey to gauge our collective interest in engaging in the effort to learn, share our stories, and support action to bring better care. Our first step will be a workshop on December 3, please provide feedback so we can make this as relevant as possible.

**Please take five minutes to complete. Your input is valuable.**

Click [here](#) to participate in the survey

Thank you.

*Lauren Patrick*

To find out more about POWER, [click here](#).

**POWER**  
PHILADELPHIANS ORGANIZED TO WITNESS,  
EMPOWER AND REBUILD

## Congregational Priorities Brainstorming -- Last Chance!

For anyone who was not able to attend either the discussion of congregational priorities at the Annual Meeting on Oct 29 or the Make-Up Session on Nov 12, but would still like to **contribute prayerful ideas about commitments that UCCVF could make to deepen our roots in God, deepen our roots in each other, and reach out more widely in the world** -- please contact [Christine Durst](#) or [Mark Fehnel](#) ASAP and we will provide you with the information you need.

We want to make sure everyone has a chance to participate, but **we need all responses compiled by the first week of December, so please act quickly!**



### A Christmas Gift-Giving Opportunity

For this Christmas season, we are partnering with Covenant Presbyterian in Frazer to give Christmas gifts to families who are asking for help this Christmas season. Covenant Presbyterian has received requests from about 75 families stretching across the school districts of Norristown, Great Valley School District, and Coatesville.

The process will be very much like what we've done in previous years, where the name, age, and gift requests of the child will be listed on the bulletin board in the Gathering Area. You can sign your name to one or more of the gifts. Gifts will need to be purchased and tagged with the child's name and dropped off at the church building by Sunday, December 3rd. The gift(s) can also be wrapped, if you wish, but that is not necessary.

The list of names and requested gifts are posted on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, please contact [Nathanael Vissia](#).

On behalf of the CE Committee,

*Nathanael Vissia*

### ADVENT MEDITATION CLASS OPPORTUNITY

*Sundays 9 am to 10 am*

*12/3 - 12/17*

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. It is a season of contemplation and reflection. But how many of us are able to do this when the seasonal activities and festivities take all our energy? This Advent, take the time to allow your soul to quiet, ponder the season, and discover an internal wellspring of calm peacefulness.



Starting on Sunday, December 3, join Leigh Murray as she leads an hour of simple contemplation techniques and meditations with some time set aside to reflect upon and share insights in quiet community.

Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Or, send an email to [church](#) saying "Sign me up!"

On behalf of the Adult Spiritual Formation Team,

*Nathanael Vissia*



## SERVING THIS SUNDAY

### Greeters

- The Neubig family

### Ushers

- The Durst family

### Lighting the Worship Candle

- The Shelton family

### Soundboard

- Chris Maurizio

### Lean on Me Prayer Partners

- Christine Durst

### Infants/Toddlers

-Tori Hall and Gwynne Hagee

## POINSETTIA SIGN UP THIS SUNDAY !

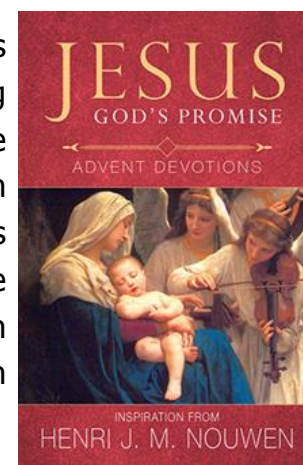


Colors: Red, White, Pink, Marble

Cost : \$8

## Advent Booklets available

Participate in Henri Nouwen's legacy of inspiring millions to grow closer to Jesus and be inspired all Advent long with *Jesus: God's Promise*. The prayerful wisdom of one of the most prolific and beloved spiritual writers in modern times is accompanied by original reflections based on Henri Nouwen's words. There are Scripture readings and prayers for each day of Advent which begins on **Sunday, December 3**. The booklets are on the table in the Gathering Area.



#### UPCOMING GREETERS

Dec. 3 - Lauren Patrick and Jeff Green

Dec. 10 - Brian Wynne

Dec. 17 - The Keller family

#### UPCOMING USHERS

Dec. 3 - Chris Jackson and Randy Hove

Dec. 10 - Jane Groves and Rosemary Kait-McKinley

Dec. 17 - The McAleer family

#### UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP TIME

Dec. - The McKinley Flock

Jan. - The Bradley Flock

Feb. - The Neubig Flock

#### SOUNDBOARD

Dec. 3 - Lauren Patrick

Dec. 10 - Jim McKinley

Dec. 17 - Matt Harrington

## **SMALL GROUPS - Join as we honestly attend to the realities of our darkness and shine the sustaining and healing light of God in the world.**

*Whether you have previously participated or not, you are welcome to try one out.*

### **Advent Meditation Class -Advent Contemplation: Finding Peace and Meaning Within**

Dec. 3 – Dec. 17 | Sundays at 9 a.m.

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. It is a season of contemplation and reflection. But how many of us are able to do this when the seasonal activities and festivities take all our energy? This Advent, take the time to allow your soul to quiet, ponder the season, and discover an internal wellspring of calm peacefulness. Join Leigh Murray on Sunday mornings as she leads an hour of simple contemplation techniques and meditations with some time set aside to reflect upon and share insights in quiet community.

### **Wednesday Night Spiritual Life Group - Gospel of Matthew**

Come join us each Wednesday evening 7:30-8:30 at UCCVF. We open with prayer, sometimes share some goodies, read and talk about the text and how it connects with our contemporary situation, and close with a prayer circle. Matthew's Gospel is often best known for the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount. We will look at these teachings, the context, the symbols, and more. Pastor Michael Bush will facilitate the conversation.

### **Thursday Morning Spiritual Life Group - Gospel of Matthew**

This group meets at UCCVF 10:30-11:30 a.m. each week. We begin with prayer, read a portion of the story of Jesus and his ministry, and then we discuss what the story meant in its own time and how it may form and shape us in our time. Matthew's Gospel is often best known for the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount. We will look at these teachings, the context, the symbols, and more. Pastor Michael Bush will facilitate the conversation.

**Sunday Morning Prayer Advocacy Ministry:** This group meets monthly for a time of praying for one another and for anyone requesting prayer. They also read and discuss various books on prayer and healing as a way to grow in understanding and practice of prayer. We meet generally the second Sunday of the month 9:00 AM-10 AM For more information contact [Gwynne Hagee](#).

**Grief Support Group:** Pastor Michael continues leading a monthly Grief Recovery group here at UCCVF for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one and are grieving. Next meeting Nov. 27 at 1:00 p.m.

**Lean on Me Prayer Ministry:** The Lean On Me prayer ministry is a one-on-one prayer time that is offered *every Sunday after worship*. Two of our Prayer Partners will be seated in the chapel chairs in the Sanctuary. You are welcome to come and sit next to one of them, tell them what you would like to pray about (a joy, concern, or thanksgiving) and then the Prayer Partner will lift you up in prayer.



## **HAVE YOU LIKED US ON FACEBOOK?**

Our Facebook page offers links to articles connected with faith life, periodic reminders, photos and more!

Click [HERE](#) to visit.

# FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The **Caring Crafters** meet on Wednesday evenings from 7-9 p.m. to create items for charity. Email the [church office](#) if you would like to join the group.

The **Monthly Dinner Out** group meets monthly at local eateries for fun and fellowship. Members are asked to sign up to pick a place to eat and organize the meal. If you would like to join the group, please let [Rosemary McKinley](#) know.

**UCCVF Bridge Group** - We meet once a month at various locations. All are welcome - any level of expertise is invited from novice to experienced. It is a social group. Dessert and coffee or tea will be served and then we start playing cards. Contact [Phil Clark](#) for more info.

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## **FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY...**

Pledge time means "numbers time" for me (in more ways than one).

If you are a regular contributor to the Church, and wish to have documentation for your records for your giving history - and DO NOT currently have an Envelope Number or "Envelope Number" - please see me. Also, once assigned, your number should remain the same ad infinitum, because it is easier for all of us. And "regular contributions" are those given weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.

To have a Number or "Number", you do not have to be a member of the congregation, you do not have to have a pledge (although the Finance Committee like to be able to use the pledging results to develop a budget), you need to be a "regular contributor" and you need to ask me.

In many churches, there is a history of donations being given in 'church envelopes' - UCC/VF is different in so many ways. Some people donate cash; some donate by using a check; some checks are placed in the offering plate or handed directly to me on Sunday, some checks are mailed to the church office from the giver's bank; and other people donate appreciated assets (i.e., a stock transfer) via a pre-arranged process. And, before you wonder, I have preferred to stay away from automatic transfers generated by your bank (called ACH), mainly because of the potential for computer hacking.

The physical church envelope is a long-standing tradition for some; if that is you - especially if you donate cash, the Envelope Number which is assigned to you will be between 1 and 100 and, at the end of the year, you will be assigned a cute little box of dated envelopes to use in the upcoming year. Those persons who are regular contributors who do not wish to have physical envelopes are assigned "Envelope Numbers" an identifying number between 101 and 160 - and, if need be, we can go up to 299 - just remember to put your number on you check - and please make sure it is the correct number.

*Charlotte Emrich*, Financial Secretary

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