



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

September-October, Volume 7 Issue 5

REFLECTION

"Autumn is a second spring, when every leaf is a flower."

Albert Camus



COVID 19 UPDATE

On August 11, 2022, CDC released two statements:

1. Guidance on [COVID-19 prevention for K-12 schools and Early Care and Education \(ECE\) programs.](#)
2. Update on [Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#)

The CDC offers the [COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review](#) which has information on testing, reported cases, community levels, wastewater surveillance, hospitalizations, deaths, and vaccinations. Vaccination remains a key element in controlling COVID-19 infections, transmission, serious illness, and hospitalizations. The report notes “The good news is that 77% of adults over age 18 years have received a primary series at this point. The not-so-good news is that only half of booster-eligible adults have gotten a [booster](#), and only 34% of adults ages 50 years and older have gotten a second booster”.

Some people who contract COVID-19 can experience long-term effects from their infection, known as [post-COVID conditions \(PCC\) or long COVID](#). A recent [Brookings Institute review](#) reported that 16 million working-age Americans have Long COVID, keeping up to 4 million out of work. Long COVID, also known as post-COVID conditions, can be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has [guidance information](#) on Long COVID as a disability under the ADA.

MONKEYPOX VIRUS

The [American Nurses Association](#) and the [CDC](#) have created webpages related to the Monkeypox virus.

TO YOUR HEALTH

This month there are two contributions for this section of the newsletter. The first article, posted as a blog by Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry on the Southern New England Conference of the UCC website, is shared by Deborah Ringen MSN, RN-BC Faith Community Nurse (she/her), Minister of Health and Wellness.

Becoming a Dementia-Friendly Church

“Good morning, Gary, I’m Rev. Cindy. It’s nice to meet you; welcome to worship.” Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry, of [UCC Boxborough](#), in Boxborough, MA, introduces herself to the man with the bright smile, and he responds with “Lovely to meet you!” It’s as if they are meeting for the first time, although they saw each other just a few days ago.

Gary has dementia. He is in severe cognitive decline, needs help with basic tasks, and cannot be left alone. He still has good recall of events from decades past, but has trouble even identifying family members. He definitely doesn’t remember his pastor and parishioners of the congregation he’s been a member of for several years. Rev. Cindy noticed it was distressing for him when people talked to him like they knew him, when to him they were strangers. So she just started introducing herself every week, and he responded with delight instead of distress. Like many congregations, UCC Boxborough has a number of parishioners with dementia, and even more who are involved in caregiving for someone with dementia. As an older congregation, and the rate of dementia on the rise, this isn’t surprising. But this congregation has also had younger

members diagnosed with dementia-related illnesses. And so for years they have been working on understanding dementia, supporting caregivers, and exploring best practices to welcome and embrace individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Led by UCC Boxborough's Called to Care Ministry Team, the church offered workshops to the congregation and community, read books, shared resources, and set up visitations. But the team wanted to do more. They explored helping the town of Boxborough become a Dementia Friendly Community, but COVID and town transitions made that a challenge. So instead, they began exploring the possibility of becoming a Dementia Friendly Faith Community. [Click to read the entire article](#)

The second article, posted in the Southern Conference of the UCC e-newsletter July 28, 2022, is shared by Alyson Breisch, MSN, RN-BC, Faith Community Nurse (she/her), Minister for Health and Wellness.

Building Healthy Habits

Have you been thinking about something you could change – or start doing - that would improve your health and wellbeing?

Habits can have a positive or negative effect on health and wellbeing. We often do things automatically without thinking much about them. There are helpful ways to go from having a good intention to make a healthy change and being successful. So stop a moment and think about your daily routines. Does your sleeping schedule leave you well rested or sleepy when you wake? Do you start each day with a healthy breakfast or skip the meal? Do you sit indoors most days, or do you get outdoors each day to walk and enjoy "nature" time? Do you have regular patterns of spiritual reflection and prayer?



The National Institute of Health newsletter posted an article, [Creating Healthy Habits: Make Better Choices Easier](#). It offers recommendations on changing unhealthy habits and how to enhance health and wellbeing. There are several links to other resources on topics including Eating Habits and Behaviors; Quitting Smoking; Aim for a Healthy Weight: Behavior Change; Healthy Habits – Healthy Families; and Drugs, Brains and Behavior – the Science of Addiction.

When starting to form a new habit, it can be helpful to write down some planning notes. Describe the change you want and your motivation. List the steps you choose to develop your new healthy habit. Start with simple changes. Tell a friend or family member your plan; support and encouragement are great reinforcements. Set a date to start and track your progress. Be patient. Accept setbacks and try again. Keep going! Remember, it takes an average of 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic. Reward yourself for your accomplishment. Here's to your health!

HEALTH EDUCATIONAL TOPICS

SEPTEMBER



September is National Preparedness Month

Preparation for natural disasters is always a relevant health and wellness ministries educational topic. The 2022 National Preparedness theme on www.ready.gov is "A Lasting Legacy". It states "The life you've built is worth protecting. Prepare for disasters to create a lasting legacy for you and your family."

The 2022 Hurricane season continues until November 30th. [The Red Cross](#) offers information about how to prepare before a hurricane, what to do during the storm, and how to stay safe after a hurricane. The Red Cross also offers an [Emergency Preparedness Checklist](#).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a one-page flyer that lists helpful [Tips for Hurricane Preparedness](#).

Heavy rains and flooding have caused flooding disasters in several states in August. A common weather phrase is often used to caution people when flooding is possible: "Turn Around, Don't Drown." Helpful U.S. government web-based resources on flooding safety include [homeland security](#), [weather service](#), and [CDC](#). FEMA also offers a booklet, [Protect Your Home From Flooding](#) that includes low-cost projects for homeowners.

OCTOBER



October is Health Literacy Month

Health literacy is defined as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions." (S.C. Ratzan and R.M. Parker. Introduction, National Library of Medicine Current Bibliographies in Medicine: Health Literacy. Bethesda, MD: 2000).

Low health literacy may contribute to medication errors, lower rates of compliance to treatment related to ineffective communication between providers and patients, ineffective management of chronic health conditions, unnecessary emergency room visits, increased hospital readmissions, and higher morbidity and mortality.

Health literacy is a central focus in Healthy People 2030. One of the initiative's [overarching goals](#) demonstrates this focus: "Eliminate health disparities, achieve health equity, and attain health literacy to improve the health and well-being of all."

The definition of health literacy for Healthy People 2030 is different from that used in 2010 and 2020 Healthy People initiatives. The update addresses personal health literacy and organizational health literacy and provides the following definitions:

- "Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- Organizational health literacy is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others."

The [Always Use Teach Back! Training toolkit](#) is a way to explain health information clearly and ask the person (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do. It promotes understanding and if needed, re-explanation to clarify information shared. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides an extensive listing of [health literacy resources](#). The National Institute of Health provides [Clear Communication](#) resource pages and also offers five sessions on [Plain Writing](#) that includes connecting with your readers, presenting your information, formatting and visual clarity, and testing and revising.

WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL TOPICS

1. [UCC Programming Webinars](#)

- [Tuesdays for Nurture](#)
- [Wednesdays with the World](#)
- [Thursdays for the Soul](#)
- [Owl Taking Flight](#)
- [Creation Justice](#)
- [HIV & Faith](#)

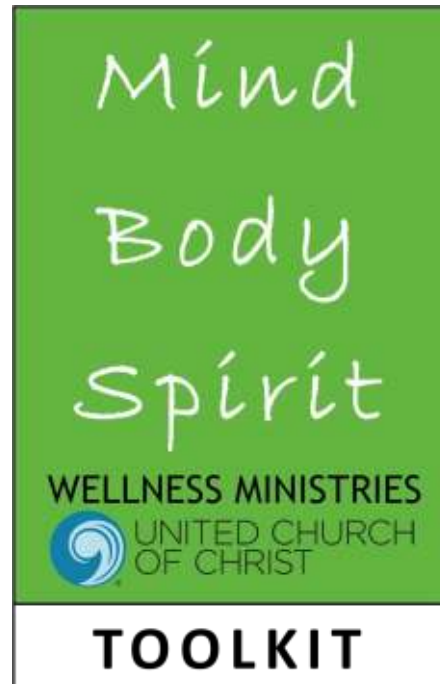
2. **Mark your calendars!** The [Health Ministries Association](#) 32nd Annual Conference: *Discovering Content, Connection, and Calm in the Chaos* will be held virtually on October 18, 20, 25, and 27. Time: 12 PM (PST), 1 PM (MST), 2 PM (CST), 3 PM (EST). CEUs 12.5. Registration will open soon.



WELLNESS MINISTRIES UPDATE

Design and graphics work continues on the **Wellness Ministries Toolkit**. **We invite your participation!** Our ministries benefit when ideas are shared. This Toolkit builds upon the shared work of past contributors to the U.C.C. *Called to Care: A Notebook for Lay Caregivers* and the U.C.C. *Faith Community Nurse Manual*.

Section 3 of the notebook will offer exemplars that describe resources on topics of education, support, advocacy, and referral. Each Program Exemplar includes group served, reason for development and implementation, evaluation, next steps for programming, and reliable resources available through weblinks with description of what they offer. **Find out how easily you may contribute an Exemplar to Section 3.** For more information, e-mail Peggy Matteson at peggymatteson@cox.net or wellnessministries@ucc.org.



KEEP CONNECTED



Visit our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages: Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

An invitation from the Editor, Alyson Breisch:

- Do you have something you want to share with colleagues?
- Do you have an innovative way you've continued to provide wellness ministries during this past year?

Let us hear about it – you could be featured in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

Contact us, wellnessministries@ucc.org

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