



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

November - December 2022, Volume 7, Issue 6

REFLECTION

November: *"It looked like the world was covered in a cobbler crust of brown sugar and cinnamon."* Sarah Addison Allen

November brings many "favorite things" to enjoy: left-over Halloween candy, carved pumpkins on porches, colorful chrysanthemums, bulbs planted for blooms next spring, overnight frost on the lawn, warm woolen sweaters, a visit to an apple orchard or a corn maze, a thermos filled with warm apple cider or soup for a hike, shared gratitude with family and friends, addressing holiday cards, anticipating Advent and Christmas.



ELECTION SEASON: VOTE!



The 2022 United States election will be held on November 8, 2022.

Voting is a very important part of being a citizen. It is an opportunity to participate in the democratic process which elects national government representatives chosen by the people. There are also very important local and state elections to consider. While presidential or other national elections usually draw a significant voter turnout, remember to consider local candidates as well. When you vote, be sure to vote “down the ballot” for local and state positions that can impact your everyday life. Find your [state or local election office website](#) for voting and registration questions and statewide voting guidance. Make voting a priority; every vote counts. The UCC [Our Faith Our Vote](#) initiative has resources for congregations and tools on how to get out the vote.

COVID 19 UPDATE

A concerning fact that cannot be ignored: people remain unvaccinated, under-vaccinated, and unprotected. About 360 deaths per day are still linked to COVID. As of October 19, 2022, 68.2% of the US population has completed the primary series of vaccination, 49.1% has received a first booster dose, and second boosters have been completed by 40.6% of persons age ≥ 50 years of age and 48% of persons ≥ 65 years of age.

These vaccination rates are important since the virus that causes COVID-19 has changed over time resulting in variants. Updated (bivalent) boosters became available September 2, 2022. They are called “bivalent” because they protect against **both** the original virus that causes COVID-19 **and** the more recent Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5. Boosters are an important part of protection against getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.

The CDC encourages people to get the updated Omicron-targeted booster shot this fall. While about 7.5 million Americans have received the updated vaccine booster, half of the eligible population in the U.S. hasn't received any booster dose yet. You are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines if you have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended for you. The CDC Website is a reliable source of information on how to [Stay Up To Date](#) on vaccination and boosters.

MONKEYPOX VIRUS

A 2022 outbreak of Monkeypox has developed in several countries. As of October 25, 2022, 28,061 total confirmed monkeypox/orthopoxvirus cases have occurred in the United States.

There are two types of monkeypox virus: Clade I and Clade II. Infections in the current outbreak are from Clade II, or more specifically, Clade IIb. The CDC provides information on [how it spreads](#). The CDC also provides information on [signs and symptoms](#) and [vaccinations](#). TPOXX (tecovirimat) use for treatment of monkeypox is authorized under Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. As of October 26, 2022, 4,822 patients in the United States were prescribed or treated with TPOXX. A [Patient's Guide to Monkeypox Treatment with TPOXX](#) is available on CDC website.

NOVEMBER HEALTH EDUCATION TOPICS

Alzheimer's Awareness Month:

More than 6.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disorder and is not a normal part of aging.



The Alzheimer's Association, formed in 1980, is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. It offers [Time to Talk](#) resources on having discussions about Alzheimer's or other dementia with loved ones and healthcare providers. The Alzheimer's Foundation of America also offers [Alzheimer's and Dementia Facts and Tips and Resources](#) for Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers.

American Diabetes Month:

The American Diabetes Association has information on Type I and Type II Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes. <https://www.diabetes.org/>. The [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) (NIDDK) of the National Institutes of Health has a [toolkit](#) with a flyer and downloadable resources for public and professional health professionals.

Influenza (flu) Awareness:

The Center for Disease Control is promoting information about seasonal flu and encouraging increased vaccination rates. Timing can vary but flu activity often begins to increase in October, peaks between December and February, while significant activity can last as late as May. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies that protect against flu to develop in the body. Ideally, everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine by the end of October before flu season starts. Cases of flu are now being reported. If you have not



received your annual flu shot, you can still schedule it to begin building your protection.

The CDC [main influenza webpage](#) gives information on preventing flu, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and maps indicating flu activity and surveillance: Near the right bottom corner of the page is the link for the *Flu Vaccine Finder* which uses zip code to locate flu vaccine clinics near you. Simply enter your zip code or city and state to find locations of flu vaccine clinics.

National Hospice and Palliative Care Month:

November and December holidays are a good time to incorporate family discussions on [Advance Directives](#) and End-of-Life wishes. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization resources section has [downloadable resources](#) related to Advance Directives, Planning Ahead, Caregiving, End of Life Care, Grief, Pain, Pediatric, Professional Resources, Serious Illness, and Spanish/English Bilingual Resources.

National Native American Heritage Month:

[National Native American Heritage Month](#) is celebrated each year in November. It is a time to celebrate the traditions, languages, and stories of Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Island communities and ensure their rich histories and contributions continue to thrive with each passing generation. The fourth Thursday in November (Thanksgiving) is recognized as the National Day of Mourning for Native Americans and their allies.

DECEMBER HEALTH EDUCATION TOPICS

World AIDS Day:

December 1. “Rock the Ribbon” activities for schools, colleges and universities, worksites, and communities are available on the [Worlds AIDS Day website](#).



Consider hosting a forum with a local public health official to discuss HIV prevention and the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, include an article in your next newsletter to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS, and encourage your members to find an [HIV testing location](#). Worship materials are available on the [UCAN](#) pages of the [UCC.org](#) website. The UCC HIV/AIDS curriculum, [Affirming Persons, Saving Lives](#) is also available.

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW):

This year's National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 5 – 9 is an intended reminder that there's still time for everyone 6 months and older to get vaccinated against flu. Resources for

2022 NIVW will be available soon on the CDC website. Until then, you can access the [2021 NIVW resources](#). The CDC website has several [one-page infographics](#) you can use on your websites, bulletin boards and printed materials.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES MOMENT

Advent Suggestion:

A yearly project that can contribute to the life of the congregation is an invitation to parishioners to write an Advent Devotional Booklet. One suggestion is to set a theme – as an example, associated with the Advent wreath candles being lit both at home and during weekly Sunday worship services: Hope, Joy, Love, Peace. The booklet includes Scripture reading for each day of Advent accompanied by a two to three-paragraph devotional reflection on the scripture passage or theme written by a parishioner. Printed copies and downloadable copies can be made available for the congregation. Tips for [developing an Advent Devotional](#) can be helpful. A free downloadable [Scripture-reading calendar](#) is available that lists scriptures for each of the days during Advent.

WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL TOPICS

American Diabetes Association: [Virtual Session](#): Ask the Experts: Diabetes Stress: Does it Differ from Clinical Depression?

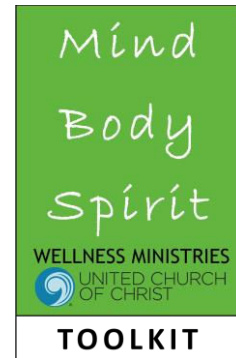
Tuesday, November 8, 2022 Time: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Eastern Time.



UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES UPDATE

Wellness Ministries Toolkit Update:

Work on the Toolkit continues. The Leadership task force has previewed the organizational design of the toolkit. Content is being expanded and web platform structure is being developed to create easy access to sections. It is anticipated that the toolkit will have a roll-out early in 2023. Watch for information in the next issue of this newsletter.



Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer's Retirement:

Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer, Executive for UCC [Health and Wholeness Advocacy Ministries](#), oversees the UCC Wellness Ministries and nine other ministries under the Health and Wholeness Advocacy section of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC.

Rev. Schuenemeyer, led a workshop "Towards Wholeness: A Learning Journey on Matters of Human Sexuality," at the [11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches](#) held Aug. 31—Sept. 8 in Karlsruhe, Germany. A new resource was created by the group, "[Conversations on the Pilgrim Way, Invitation to Journey Together on Matters of Human Sexuality.](#)"



Rev. Schuenemeyer has announced that he will retire from his multiple roles at the national UCC office this December. The Leadership Team of the UCC Wellness Ministries extends heartfelt gratitude for his many years of wise leadership, encouraging inspiration, and generous support for the work of UCC Wellness Ministries and Faith Community Nursing.

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 at wellnessministries@ucc.org



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