



# MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



## UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

October 2023, Volume 8, Issue 10

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### REFLECTION:



Although published forty years ago, the words below still offer direction and hope to all generations as we continue to advocate for and support the health and wholeness of everyone.

*"We have come to realize that we are not alone in our struggles nor separate nor autonomous but that we – white, black, straight, queer, female, male – are connected and interdependent.*

*We are each accountable for what is happening down the street, south of the border, or across the sea. And those of us who have more of anything: brains, physical strength, political power, spiritual energies, are learning to share them with those that don't have....*

*We have begun to come out of the shadows; we have begun to break with routines and oppressive customs and discard taboos; we have commenced to carry with pride the task of thawing hearts and changing consciousness." Anzaldua, Gloria (1983) *This Bridge Called My Back*, (2nd ed), Forward, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.*

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## A TIMELY HEALTH TIP:

October is [Health Literacy Month](#). Health literacy is a self-care justice issue and a vital effort towards eliminating health disparities, achieving health equity, and improving holistic health and wellbeing. We can empower those we serve by enhancing their ability to find and use the relevant information necessary to make well-informed decisions.



[Why Health Literacy is Important](#), [Understanding Health Literacy](#), and Health Literacy [Activities by State](#) provide helpful resources. The [UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit](#) has resources in Section 2 – VIII Handouts: *Advocacy and Empowerment* and *Culturally Congruent Care*. Do you have an exemplar of how you have enhanced health literacy? [Please share it with us!](#)

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## WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS:



October is [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#). Even if we do not know their faces, victims, and batterers sit in our pews and participate within our congregation. [Domestic violence / Intimate partner violence](#) is abuse or aggression that might occur once or many times. An intimate partner can be a current or former spouse or a dating partner. This violence does not require sexual intimacy and occurs among heterosexual or same-sex couples of all ages. [Preventing Intimate Partner Violence](#) and [Preventing Domestic](#)

[Violence in your community](#) are helpful resources that explain the reality of this issue.

The UCC believes the church must be a safe place for gender-based and sexual violence victims to share their stories and seek support. UCC Worship Ways provides [resources for domestic violence survivors and care providers](#). The story of what one church did to increase awareness of the issue, *The Clothesline Project – Exposing The Reality of Domestic Violence*, can be found in the *UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit – Section 3*

Additional Resources are available:

- [The Faith Trust Institute](#) provides downloadable information, blogs, training information, and links to new resources, including services for healing, recognition, remembrance, recovery, and preaching/teaching and prayers specific to the issue of domestic violence.
- [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(NCADV\)](#) offers conferences, speakers, webinars, *Remember My Name* (RMN)™, and many more resources.
- [National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, & Mental Health](#) provides a list of national domestic violence organizations.
- [RAINN \(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network\)](#) operates the confidential National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE [4673]) available in English and Spanish ([online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org) & [rainn.org/es](http://rainn.org/es)) and has programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

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## LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS:

These links take you to information to share in worship bulletins, bulletin board displays, and newsletters and explain actions that may be taken.



### For October:

- [Flu, COVID-19 & RSV Vaccination Information](#) – Accurate, up-to-date information that will help you answer the questions you will be asked during the next few months. Right now, households can again sign up to receive **4 free at-home COVID-19 test kits** at <https://www.covid.gov/tests>
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) - No one should face breast cancer alone. Find your community and connect at [Breastcancer.org](http://Breastcancer.org).
- [Down Syndrome Awareness Month](#) raises awareness and celebrates the many abilities of those with Down Syndrome. UCC Disabilities Ministries provides the [Accessible 2 All](#) information to advocate for the supportive inclusion of people with Down syndrome within our congregations.

- [Prevent Bullying Every Day](#) – Bullying occurs every day, everywhere, even within the walls of our buildings. There are suggestions about how to respond to bullying within our presence and how to support cyberbullying victims.
- [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death \(SUID\) & Sudden Infant Death Syndrome \(SIDS\) Month](#) increases awareness of the sudden, unexplained death of children between one month and one year of age. Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and low-income families are disproportionately impacted.

**For November – to assist those who like to plan ahead:**

- [Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month](#) – Share information about Alzheimer's disease and support the more than 6.1 million Americans living with it and their families. Many of the caretakers are family caretakers in need of support, as listed below.
- [National Diabetes Month](#) – The chance to explain what life for 37 million Americans with diabetes is like and provide ways to support their managing it at church functions.
- [National Family Caregivers Month](#) – The theme for 2013 is [#CaregiversConnect](#). A [Family Caregiver Toolbox](#) will help you support and celebrate family caregivers.
- [National Hospice and Palliative Care Month](#)– Information and outreach tools to help families and the public understand the benefits of this care.

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## UCC INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE:



The use of [Expansive Language](#) is a justice issue. Wellness Ministers communicate often, and our chosen words shape the messages sent. The resources listed below provide terminology that describes God and ensures the inclusion of all God's children.

How we refer to God represents how we envision God, which influences the expression and practice of our faith. A list of [Expansive Language with Reference to God](#) shares the images of God found in scripture, the creeds, and our theological traditions.

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."* Galatians 3:28 NRSV. [Inclusive Language with Reference to the People of God](#) identifies words that exclude and share the words that are inclusive and support the dignity of all God's people

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## WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:



- [Dementia Friendly Congregations](#) – Tues., Oct. 3rd, 2:00-3:00pm ET provides five key messages about dementia and how your congregation can be supportive.
- **Oct.4th deadline date** to register for the [2023 Justice Summit Trans and Nonbinary Belonging in the Church](#) Sat., Oct. 7th, 10:am-5:00pm ET.
- [Faith Formation Round Table: Intergenerational Worship](#) – Thurs., Oct 5th, 11:00am-12:00pm. When different generations collaborate, a sense of connectedness develops.
- [Making the Best of Our 3rd Thirty \(ages 60-90\)](#) – Thurs., Oct. 5th, 2:00-3:00pm ET. Shares how we can Pray, Plan, and Prepare so the last decades of our lives are the best possible.
- [Gun Violence: How Churches Can Be a Part of Prevention](#) – Tues., Oct. 17th, 2:00-3:00pm ET. Three pastors will share how they have worked with congregations on this topic.
- [Moving Forward with Action, Balance, and Clarity](#) is the title of the 2023 Annual Virtual Conference of the [Health Ministries Association](#), our professional organization. It will be presented in an interactive online format on Oct. 25 & 26 and Nov. 1 & 2 in four three-hour sessions, each covering 3 topics. Faith Community Nurses (FCNs) may earn 12 contact hours.
- [Becoming WISE: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness in our Churches and Communities](#) Thursday, November 2nd, 12:00pm - 1:30pm ET. Will share how to reduce stigma and shame so we care for one another with love and compassion.

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## UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM:



We have spent time during our monthly meetings discussing the relevance of [Resolutions](#) approved by Synod delegates to programs of Wellness Ministries. [Guns to Gardens](#) and other Gun Violence Prevention measures addressed during our September meeting led to ideas for supporting safe storage within homes, precautions within our buildings that decrease risks, and joining local activities that strive to reduce harm to all.

The next Wellness Ministries Leadership Meeting is Oct. 12th, 1:45pm to 3:00pm ET. Would you like to join the TEAM? Would you like to raise a question? Would you like to pass along a recommendation? E-mail [wellnessministries@ucc.org](mailto:wellnessministries@ucc.org) and talk with us!

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## KEEP CONNECTED



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

### An invitation from the Editors:

- Do you have something you want to share with colleagues?
- Do you have an innovative way you've provided wellness ministries?
- Have a question about health and wellness ministries?

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

Contact us at [wellnessministries@ucc.org](mailto:wellnessministries@ucc.org)



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