



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

November 2023, Volume 8, Issue 11

REFLECTION:



"Don't wait until the fourth Thursday in November, to sit with family and friends to give thanks. Make every day a day of thanksgiving."

Charmaine J. Forde

A TIMELY HEALTH TIP:

- Autumn's colder temperatures result in closing windows in homes and turning on furnaces and heaters. Heating and cooking equipment in the home that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Increased levels of carbon monoxide in the blood can impair the body's ability to use oxygen, resulting in serious medical emergencies and death. This is a good time to check the status of carbon monoxide detectors in homes. The National Fire Protection Association offers a public education tip sheet on [Carbon Monoxide \(CO\) Safety](#).
- Sitting too much can increase dementia risk in older persons. A recent study published in [JAMA](#) found that people who stay seated for long hours at work and home are at much higher risk of developing dementia than people who sit less. The study found that people that sat for at least 10 hours a day had an 8 percent higher risk of developing dementia than those who sat for fewer than 10 hours a day. A good reason to stand and move more!

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS:



UCC Contemplatives:

The Resolution, "*Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action*" was passed at the Thirty Third General Synod (2021) of the United Church of Christ. A [website](#) is now available to access information about UCC Contemplatives, spiritual practices, articles and videos to explore how best to become a church of "contemplatives in action", and a directory of UCC faith leaders that are contemplative guides. The website was created through funding support from Local Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ), to help resource "Conferences, Associations, local churches, clergy, lay leaders, General Synod and seminaries in practicing and teaching a foundational life of spiritual practices, as modeled in the life of Jesus."

A monthly Zoom session is scheduled for those interested in participating in a brief selected contemplative practice. If you'd like to join these sessions or gain more information, please email ucc.contemplatives@gmail.com or complete the [contact form](#) on the website.

UCC Harm Reduction Overdose Prevention Ministries:

“The [UCC Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Ministries](#) brings together pastors, lay leaders, theologians, people who use drugs, service providers, activists, and other collaborators in order to advocate for and increase the engagement of local churches in ministries with people who use drugs, people who have been affected by drug use, and people who may be at risk for or have experienced incidents of overdose.”

A Resolution, [The Faithful Advocacy for Intersectional and Transformational Healing in Harm Reduction](#), was passed at the 2023 UCC General Synod. Specific steps and processes in the resolution include:

- Encouraging congregations to create harm reduction covenants and commitments, similar to how congregations can be designated as [W.I.S.E.](#) for mental health support or [Open and Affirming](#) for LGBTQ inclusion.
- Encouraging all settings to increase access to resources such as naloxone distribution, overdose prevention programs and syringe access programs.
- Establishing an annual Harm Reduction Justice Sunday to be observed on the third Sunday of August, near International Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 31.

NOTE: A UCC [Resolutions Archive Site](#) has been created where you can browse all Resolutions By the General Synod Year.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS:

Follow these links to find information you can use for worship bulletin inserts, bulletin board displays, and newsletter articles.



National Health Observances:

[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.

[National Diabetes Month](#) – Over 37 million Americans have diabetes and another 96 million have prediabetes. Today, diabetes causes more deaths than breast cancer and AIDS combined.

[National Family Caregivers Month](#) – The National Council on Aging is using [Caregiving Happens](#) as the theme for 2013. The Caregiver Action Network offers a [Family Caregiver Toolbox](#).

[National Hospice and Palliative Care Month](#) – The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization has a program called [CaringInfo](#). Its intent is to help people make informed decisions about care and services before a crisis. Its user-friendly format offers information on advance directives, palliative care, caregiving, and hospice care.



For Those Who Like to Plan Ahead, Here Are Some links for December:

December 1: World AIDS Day – A day to honor those who have died and re-commit to ending the AIDS epidemic. This year marks the 35th commemoration of this important day with the theme “[World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit](#)”.

December 3: International Day of Persons With Disabilities. The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) joins its partners to celebrate under the 2023 theme **A Day for All**, which reflects a growing understanding that disability is part of the human condition.

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. The holidays are times for getting together and celebrating with friends and families. Alcohol-impaired driving crashes increase in December. [Conversation points](#) can be shared with children, friends, family members, and colleagues to promote socializing safely this season.

National Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month. During the holidays, it is good to review [guidelines for choosing safe toys](#).

UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM:

At the October Wellness Ministries Leadership Meeting, guest Rev. Erica Poellet, Minister of Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Ministries, United Church of Christ, discussed the [General Synod Resolution](#) calling on advocacy for intersectional and transformational healing in harm reduction.

The November Leadership Team meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2023, at 2 pm Eastern Time. Please contact us at wellnessministries@ucc.org with ideas or topics for the agenda by November 6th.

Are you interested in serving on the Leadership team? Want to know more about UCC Wellness Ministries' goals and activities? Contact us at wellnessministries@ucc.org.

UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit: This link includes references to the toolkit and the UCC. Anyone who has difficulty accessing the Toolkit, please contact Peggy Matteson directly or send an inquiry to wellnessministries@ucc.org.

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WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:

[Becoming WISE: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness in our Churches and Communities](#)

Thursday, November 2nd, 12:00pm - 1:30pm ET. Offered by The Southern New England Conference of the UCC's Health & Wellness Ministry, the Center for Transformational Leadership, and the W.I.S.E. Task Force, are offering a Zoom Lunch and Learn Series Program.

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

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