



# MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



## UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

December 2023, Volume 8, Issue 12

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### REFLECTION:

Jesus came into the world so that we might have life more abundantly. Does that mean 27 different kinds of cookies, decorations in every corner of the house, mountains of gifts, and parties every weekend? What are you expecting of yourself and others? What are others

expecting of you? How realistic are these expectations? How can you adjust them with attention to self-care?

#### Holiday To-Do List

- \_\_\_ Listen to your heart
- \_\_\_ Worship God
- \_\_\_ Exercise
- \_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_ Rest
- \_\_\_ Give thanks
- \_\_\_ Love one another
- \_\_\_ Be gentle with yourself!

*Dear God, help me to listen to my heart during this busy season. Help me to set aside the expectations of others and then move through this season in a way that most appropriately fits me and honors the birth of Jesus. Amen.*

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## A TIMELY HEALTH TIP:



During this holiday season, people may wish to attend church activities and socialize more like they did during the 2019 holiday season. **As of November 20th**, every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional [four free at-home COVID-19 tests](#). If residents have not already ordered tests this fall, they may place two orders for eight tests. The order of COVID tests is entirely free, and the shipping is also free.

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## WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS:

**World Aids Days**



December 1st marks the 35th commemoration of [World Aids Day](#). It is a reminder of the global efforts to end the transmission of the virus, honor those we have lost, and continue working year round towards a day when H.I.V. is no longer a public health threat.

[HIV](#)(human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system and interferes with the body's ability to fight infection and disease. When HIV is not treated, it can lead to [AIDS](#) (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

There is currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life. However, with proper medical care, HIV can be controlled. People with HIV who get [effective HIV treatment](#) can live long, healthy lives and protect their partners. As of the end of 2021, an estimated 1.2 million people in the U.S., age 13 and older, had been diagnosed with HIV. More than 36,000 people continue to be diagnosed every year. The South is home to more than half (52%) of the number of people HIV infected. The West follows them with 21%. Midwest and Northeast each contain 14%.

[Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. \(EHE\)](#) is a bold, whole-of-society initiative coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). EHE's goals include (1) Reducing new HIV infections in the United States by 75% by 2025 and by 90% by 2030 and (2) Advancing [health equity](#) by scaling up key HIV prevention and treatment strategies.

Wellness Ministries can assist in these efforts through the year. Stigma and discrimination remain formidable barriers to HIV testing, prevention, and care. Programs provided by Wellness Ministries can implement small changes that help end HIV stigma and work to stop the spread of HIV together. The *Let's Stop HIV Together* [stigma language guide](#) provides talking points, a fact sheet, stigma scenarios and ways to take action, and pledge cards to help stop HIV stigma.

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## LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS:



### Some links for December:

- Dec. 9th-15th [National Influenza Vaccination Week](#)
- Dec. 10th [Human Rights Day](#)
- Dec.21st [Winter Solstice Liturgy Longest night](#), [Blue Christmas](#) services

- [National Impaired Driving Month](#)
- [Safe Toys and Gifts Month](#)
- Dec. 31st [Watch Night services](#) – A historical legacy



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

- [Birth Defects Prevention Month](#)
  - [Blood Donor Month](#)
  - [Cervical Health Awareness Month](#)
  - [Glaucoma Awareness Month](#)
  - [Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)
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## RESOURCES:

- [Blue Christmas, Longest Night](#): *You are not alone.* Churches offer alternatives for those struggling this holiday season.
- [Holiday Depression and Stress](#) – Explains the Holiday Blues
- [How to Cope With Holiday Stress and Depression](#) – An expert offers advice on managing the holiday blues.
- [Minding Your Mental Health This Holiday Season](#) – Feeling stressed, lonely, or sad around the holidays? A few changes can help.



- [Monitoring Your Blood Pressure at Home](#) – A helpful guide as more people take on this task.
  - [Spiritual Practices for Shopping](#) – 20 Ways to make shopping a richer and deeper experience.
  - [The Big Ask](#) is a collection of prayers written and shared by Rich Orloff. He offers them as a gift and welcomes us to use them in any way that serves our community.
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## UCC WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:



- December 5th [Global H.O.P.E. Blue Christmas Service](#) – A virtual worship service 4pm ET with Team Global HOPE. Blue Christmas services traditionally provide space for those who don't feel "merry."
  - Dec. 7th *Nurture the Soul* - [Praying Through Advent](#) - A four-week series will explore the Advent story. Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, Dec. 14th, Dec. 21st, 3:00-4:00pm ET
  - Jan. 16th [WISE Congregation Listening Session](#) – Is your Wellness Ministry interested in helping your congregation become WISE (welcoming, inclusive, supportive, engaged)? Southern New England Conference of the UCC invites you to learn more. 6:30 – 7:30pm ET.
  - Jan. 30th [Lessons in Meditation](#) – 2:00 – 3:30pm ET
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## UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM:



The November meeting of our UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team primarily focused on finalizing the goals for the Wellness Ministries of the National Setting of the UCC through 2025. Learn more in the January newsletter.

There are several openings on the Leadership Team, and we invite you to share your God-given talents either for a specific project or as a member of the Board.

Explore the possibilities without committing until you learn more.

E-mail [peggyatteson@cox.net](mailto:peggyatteson@cox.net).

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## KEEP CONNECTED

We are a community of mutually supportive leaders of wellness ministries. Debbie Ringen faithfully posts information on our Facebook and LinkedIn pages that benefits our ministries. Honor her efforts by connecting with other health ministries and joining in conversations.



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/UCCFCN/posts/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6951713/sations.>

**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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