

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER -
Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness
April 2024, Volume 10, Issue 4

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REFLECTION - Why and How to Protect Medicaid, CHIP, and SNAP?

Guided by Jesus, a well-known healer, the UCC proudly stands as a faith community that believes everyone deserves access to affordable, safe, high-quality healthcare and essential nutritious food.

Medicaid was created to provide healthcare for Americans with low incomes or disabilities. Congregants and neighbors are among the 100 million people with health coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and 40 million receive help buying nutritious groceries through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As Christians, we believe that no one should live in or die from poverty. We must speak out!

REGISTER HERE: And then mark on your calendar the two important Zoom training sessions

- **April 4th at 3 pm ET** - How to request a Meeting with a member of Congress.
- **April 11 at 3 pm ET** - How to Meet with a Member of Congress.
- **April 21-April 25:** This week, nationwide, concerned people will be going to in-district meetings with their legislators in support of Medicaid, CHIP, and SNAP.

Deadline for registration: April 1, 2025.

Are you feeling overwhelmed and unsure if your voice can make a difference? We feel the same way. But join us. Together, we can strive to ensure the health and wellness of all of God's children.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS - *Break the Silence Sunday*

April 27th, **Break the Silence Sunday**, raises awareness about the trauma of rape and sexual assault and can support survivors in meaningful ways. Within our faith communities, we can (1) acknowledge the pervasive reality of rape and sexual violence in our world; (2)

support survivors by providing a space where they can share their stories, feel loved and supported, and find encouragement on their healing journey; (3) commit ourselves to the work of transforming the world, striving for a future where rape does not exist.

According to the most conservative estimates from the U.S. Department of Justice, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 33 men will experience rape in their lifetimes. The church can offer a safe space for individuals to share their stories with someone they can trust. The [Break the Silence Clergy Commitment](#) lists what you are committing to if you decide to move forward in support of individuals on a healing journey.

Currently, congregations may pray for individuals with physical ailments and sometimes for those facing mental health challenges. However, victims of sexual violence are almost never mentioned in prayers. However, we must be careful not to revictimize survivors. Contacts on the [Break the Silence](#) website can provide guidance on how to proceed. The website also offers [Break the Silence worship materials](#), including prayers, litanies, reflections, scripture ideas, sermon starters, music suggestions, and other resources.

A TIMELY HEALTH TIP - May 18th is Mental Health Sunday

A place of worship can serve as a safe environment where individuals feel welcome and experience a sense of support and community. Neuroscience research confirms that experiencing God's love has healing power. Spiritual faith provides us with two protective factors for our emotional, social, and mental well-being: we are not alone and we are loved.

The UCC celebrates **Mental Health Sunday** on the **3rd Sunday in May**, Mental Health Awareness Month. The UCC [Mental Health Network](#) offers resources for Mental Health Sunday worship, information on mental wellness and various types of mental illness, guidance on how congregations can become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged for Mental Health), and a range of resource links. (Refer to Section 3 - Exemplars: *Mental Wellness* in the *UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit*).

- A vital community partner for your congregation's Wellness Ministries is the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#). NAMI's state organizations and affiliates actively engage within your community to promote awareness, provide support, and offer educational opportunities. This may include delivering a program for your congregation or youth (refer to the example in Section 3 of the UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit). Their website offers contact information for your local NAMI, access to a Justice Library, free resources for individuals, their families, and friends, and recommendations for advocacy.
- [Mental Health America](#) provides free educational materials for communities of Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, Hispanic, and First Nation descent.

WELLNESS RESOURCES FOR YOU AND THOSE YOU SERVE - Books from Pilgrim Press

- [Caregiving 101](#)- When her brother had a stroke, Taffy Cannon was thrust into the realm of caregiving: the medical lingo, the legal paperwork, the spiritual exhaustion. With compassion and practicality, Cannon assures caregivers that they are not alone.

- [Caring for Ourselves While Caring for Our Elders](#) - Overviews some of the issues in contemporary elder care, offers overarching biblical themes, and provides spiritual "assignments" to support those caring for elders.
- [Don't Just Give Me That Old Time Religion](#) - Religion and Mental Well-being among African American Women. Pastor and psychotherapist Christine Y. Wiley considers the intersection of Black women's lived spirituality and their mental wellbeing.
- [Wild Coin Hunting](#) - The Recovery of Joy While Living with Depression. An honest and difficult look at living with depression. The author shares how little things inched him forward on the road to recovery.

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Welcome to our newest member, Sue Schmitz, Parish Nurse at Pilgrim UCC in Fond du Lac, WI. Health Ministry and leads the WISE Team. Sue has written pieces for her church's newsletter for years and now shares that skill with us for your benefit. Thank you, Sue!

[Do not hide your light under a barrel. Share it with others.](#)

- Have you written any prayers for teens? We need this specific assistance in developing the *Handbook for Visitation with Children, Youth, and their Families*.
- Tool kit additions are needed in Section 3 - Exemplars. Short two-page examples of a program you have offered within your ministry are needed. Pick a program, share the idea and we'll help you prepare it for inclusion. Contact: WellnessMinistries@ucc.org or UCCWellnessMinistriesChair@gmail.com

HEALTH AND JUSTICE-RELATED RESOURCES

- [Take Action - Public Policy Advocacy Guide](#) is a free PDF document from [UCC Resources](#). It provides tips, tools, and theological insights for understanding our call to work for justice through public policy advocacy. The guide also includes tips for organizing and getting your message heard by decision-makers.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- [May 5th - Melanoma Monday](#) is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the deadliest form of skin cancer, which can spread to other parts of the body. Visit the [American Academy of Dermatology](#) for free educational resources, including flyers and posters.

- **May 12 - 18 Women's Health Week** Research shows that when women prioritize their health, their families' well-being improves. [Women's Health Week](#) is celebrated the second full week in May. Each day highlights a different women's health topic and offers resources to share these messages. You can create your own week tailored to the demographics of your congregation or follow the most recent one developed.
- **High Blood Pressure Education Month** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Essentially, a blood pressure reading indicates how hard the heart works to pump blood throughout the body. The [American Heart Association](#) provides educational resources focused on healthy eating, lifestyle, and fitness in a section called "Healthy Living." The CDC offers a [High Blood Pressure Toolkit](#), which includes many downloadable resources and graphics.
- **Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month** - About 10 million Americans suffer from osteoporosis, and another 44 million are at risk due to low bone mass. A combination of eating a healthy diet and weight-bearing exercise aids in prevention. The [Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation](#) provides free educational resources.
- **Stroke Awareness and Prevention Month** - Anyone can experience a stroke at any time, and everyone should be ready. The [American Stroke Association](#) provides free educational materials that explain how to reduce the risk of strokes, recognize a stroke using the F.A.S.T. method, and what actions to take if one occurs. It also offers links to support groups, resources for caregivers, and a comprehensive library of stroke-related materials.

CONNECTED AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Ministry can be lonely work. You have a network of colleagues that will be supportive.

- Facebook - [Wellness Ministries UCC](#)
- Instagram - [wellness.ministries.ucc](#)

Thankfully, Debbie Ringen, MS, FCN, maintains our social media connections so we can easily share with each other. E-mail wellnessministries@ucc.org to share information with her. We guarantee you have a resource or are doing something no one else has thought of!

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.