

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER
Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness
February 2025, Volume 10, Issue 2

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REFLECTION – **February: A Month Associated with Love.**

Many of us experienced the unsettled times during the 10 years between 1965 and 1975 and sang many of the songs of that decade. Today, we could aptly sing them again. These three “oldies” describe the times we now live in and the path we are called to follow.

1. **For What It’s Worth** (Buffalo Springfield): *“There’s something happening here. But what it is ain’t exactly clear. There’s a man with a gun over there telling me I got to beware. I think it’s time we stop. Children, what’s that sound? Everybody look what’s going down.”*
2. **Get Together** (The Youngbloods): *“Love is but a song we sing; fear’s the way we die. You can make the mountains ring or make the angels cry. Though the bird is on the wing, you may not know why. (Chorus) Come on, people, now smile on your brother. Everybody get together. Try to love one another right now. ...You hold the key to love and fear in your trembling hand. Just one key unlocks them both, and it’s there at your command.”*
3. **What the World Needs Now** (Jackie DeShannon): *“What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It’s the only thing there’s just too little of. What the world needs now is love, sweet love. No, not just for some, but for everyone.”*

May my faith be stronger than my fears, and may love and peace start with me. Amen.

A TIMELY HEALTH TIP – **“Blue Envelope” For Adults with Autism Spectrum**

The “Blue Envelope” program was created to improve communication between police officers and people with autism spectrum disorder and other difficulties with communication. Many states have a similar self-identification program that enables individuals to communicate

effectively with law enforcement officers. The program is not right for everyone. It is a personal decision, and participation is voluntary. Check with your state Department of Motor Vehicles or Police Department to learn more. [This link provides more information about the "Blue Envelope" program.](#)

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS – Self-care During Times of Change and Uncertainty

We in Wellness Ministries recognize the challenge of attending to self-care while being expected to meet the needs of others simultaneously. The concept of self-care has been taught for thousands of years. Rabbi Hillel, the Elder, a Jewish scholar & sage (60 b.c.- a.d. 20), wrote, *"You have a solemn obligation to take care of yourself because you never know when the world will need you."*

The New Testament tells stories of Jesus seeking self-care during his three years of ministry. May you and those you minister to do the same during these times.

1. The most essential bodily activity that we can control is our breathing. A deep breath is helpful at any time. The [4-7-8 Calm Breathing Exercise](#) promotes relaxation, reduces anxiety, and can also help you fall asleep more quickly.
2. A personal breath prayer combines two essentials: a conversation with God and breathing. An example is:
(Inhale) God of all creation, (Exhale) fill me now with your peace.
(I) God of all creation, (E) fill me with your love.
(I) God of all creation, (E) guide me in your desires.
(I) God of all creation, (E) grant me the courage to do your will. Amen.
3. Feeling anxious or stressed causes some people to overeat, while others lose their appetite and reject food. [Foods](#) high in Omega-3 fatty acids, protein, fiber, Vitamin B-12, magnesium, and probiotics may help reduce anxiety and stress.
[If you have no appetite](#), maintain your body by drinking water and tea and eating calorie dense foods and protein that you like.
4. Go outdoors and commune with God and nature. Even a small five-minute reprieve from an indoor environment can provide the [Benefits of Being in Nature](#). It frees the mind to think more deeply, gain insights, and meditate.
5. Take the time to [Come and Find the Quiet Center](#) in your life and simply be.

May grace and love abound as we continue to work for a just world for all.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROVIDERS OF WELLNESS MINISTRIES

[Support for developing or updating an abuse prevention policy](#) from the UCC Office of General Counsel. Resources are also available from [The Insurance Board](#).

[Health and Wholeness Advocacy in the UCC](#) – Where the Church is, there are those engaged in "Diakonia" – the ministry of healing, service, care, compassion, and hospitality.

[UCC Contemplatives in Action](#)—This website, created with the support of Local Church Ministries, aims to help "Conferences, Associations, local churches, clergy, lay leaders, General Synod, and seminaries practice and teach spiritual practices.

UCC Health and Human Service Sunday – Observed the last Sunday of January or whatever Sunday works most appropriately for your congregation. There are many materials available for worship, reflection, and meditation.

UPDATES FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM

- A warm welcome to Tammy Lewis Wilborn, M.Div., PhD, the newest member of the Wellness Ministries Leadership Team. Tammy has a strong interest in pastor wellness, a background in counseling, and a desire to collaborate with the Team in developing resources while initiating a program of Wellness Ministries within her congregation in Nashville, TN.
- Interested in collaborating with a caring group of colleagues? These are the 5 projects we are currently working on. Come and join us:
 1. Suggest updates to the 2023 Wellness Ministries Toolkit
 2. Join the editorial team of our monthly newsletter – *Mind, Body, Spirit – Linking Lives for Health and Wellness*
 3. Collaborate in developing a *Handbook for Visitation with Children, Youth, and their Families*
 4. After the webinar *Befriending Loneliness: Tools of Transformation in the Pulpit and the Pew* with Dwight Lee Wolter, we will prepare a second webinar that shares the ideas some churches have tried.
 5. Share your ideas for *Break the Silence Sunday* – April 27th. A time of support for survivors of sexual assault

For more information, e-mail: WellnessMinistries@ucc.org or
UCCWellnessMinistriesChair@gmail.com

UCC HEALTH AND JUSTICE-RELATED RESOURCES

Thriving Through Together – Trans & Non-Binary Siblings Are Devine. *How to Prepare for 'Such a Time as This – 3 Care Practices For Thriving Through*

Women's World Day of Prayer 2025 - Beginning in 1827, the service and celebration has grown from two countries to 150. It is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who gather in local communities for a common day of ecumenical prayer on the first Friday of March. The purpose is to promote justice and equality for women through prayer, partnerships, service, and celebrations. This year, the theme is "*I Made You Wonderful*" (Psalm 139:14), inviting us to recognize that God created each of us with great attention and loving care. Free materials for download and low-cost resources will be increasingly available in February.

Women's Week – March 2nd- 8th – Watch for information on UCC.org during February

New criteria for using the term "healthy" on food labels—After 30 years, food labeling as “healthy” will now be based on current nutrition science. Consumers will find it easier to select a healthy eating pattern. [Infographics are available.](#) This corrects a justice issue because buyers were being misled about the nutritious value of some foods they purchased. These new criteria could reduce the development of cardiac disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOPICS – MARCH

Colorectal Cancer Month – Share information about symptoms, screening, and treatment

National LGBTQ Health Awareness Week 2025 – March 17-21. Vital, Vibrant, Voices

Poison Prevention – Safe storage habits in the home and the church building

WELLNESS MINISTRIES RELATED INFORMATION

Resources related to Wellness

- **Don't Give Me That Old Time Religion** – discusses the intersecting relationship between spirituality and mental well-being for Black women.
- **8 Words to Say When Offering Help—** Why “*What small thing would help you right now?*” can be a game-changer when you want to help someone.
- **How do you manage frustration?** by David L. Odom. With frustration rising, there are possibilities for containing the contagion and harnessing the energy for hope.
- **The Gospel of Loneliness** – encourages our integration of loneliness into the wholeness of life.
- **Wild Coin Hunting** – teaches readers a new spiritual practice to cultivate joy each day

Activities and videos that support Wellness in Children and Youth

- **Carter's Story** – a two-part animated video series that raises awareness of keeping young people safe while playing online video games and provides tips to parents and adults working with youth on recognizing signs of human trafficking.
- **Planting Seeds of Hope** – The UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest for Children and Youth, Feb. 2 to March 14.

STAY CONNECTED AS WE SUPPORT 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](#)

A big thank you to Debbie Ringen, who continues to update our social media connections.

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!