

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

July 2025, Volume 10, Issue 7

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REFLECTION - Each Church Can Be a Place of Wellness

Drive down any commercial street and you'll likely see at least one shop or gym, and maybe even a travel agent with 'wellness' on a sign in their window. The offer of "wellness" has become a major business. Worldwide, the industry is valued at \$7.2 trillion and continues to grow. Sadly, the commercialization of the term has filled many bank accounts while draining others without fulfilling the desires that most people seek.

The church offers opportunities for wellness at no cost. Our body, mind, and spirit are intertwined. The body senses and experiences the environment inside and outside of it. However, it cannot interpret what is happening without help from the mind and spirit. The mind understands and records the body's experiences and then directs the body's functions and movements. If the mind cannot provide direction, the body becomes stressed.

To nourish the spirit, set aside moments each day to strengthen the conscious connection with your spiritual source, using any method that resonates with you. Whether that method is meditation, prayer, walking, singing, or writing doesn't matter, since ultimately the spirit cannot be contained. Unlike the body and mind, the spirit does not focus on survival needs. It is the part of a person that centers on living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Across the world and different faiths, studies show that people who feel they belong to something bigger than themselves tend to be healthier and happier. A sense of spirituality reduces our sense of self-importance and fosters a strong sense of connection with others. Each church can provide a home for wellness and foster the unity it can bring.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS - How are you ministering to you?

Most of you reading this newsletter are ministering to others during this very unsettling time. We, who volunteer on the Leadership Team, are ordinary people just like you, involved in ministry in different parts of the country and in various ways.

Our questions to each other and now to you are: *How are you doing? No, really, how are you doing? How are you caring for yourself while constantly giving to others?*

We know ministry, even on the smoothest days, can be isolating. Now, with these days of division, anxiety, and genuine fear, many conversations are highly challenging. Sometimes, they are just too much to handle.

We need your answers to two requests:

1. What steps are you taking to manage these challenging times? Will you share even the smallest steps? Your self-care method may be helpful to another.
2. Please share your ideas on how we can more intentionally connect with and support you, our colleagues in Wellness Ministries. Ideas are always welcome! wellnessministries@ucc.org

TIMELY HEALTH TIP - Preventing Death from Sudden Cardiac Arrest

The Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Foundation reports that nearly 365,000 people in the United States experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrest each year. This means about 1,000 adults are victims daily. It is also estimated that over 13,000 children suffer a sudden cardiac arrest yearly.

Worship services, gatherings, meetings, and community events bring our family members, friends, and neighbors into our buildings. Churches are saving lives by providing an AED on-site. Without an AED, the chances of survival drop by 10% for each minute that passes without medical intervention. The American Heart Asso. explains [5 Things to Know About AEDs](#) and [AED Implementation](#)

The American Red Cross also provides [information on purchasing an AED](#).

Wellness Resource For You And Those You Serve - The Church's role in Rural Mental Health

This research-based slide deck is designed for rural everyday helpers, churches, and organizations to increase understanding and raise awareness by sharing with others. This free resource may be downloaded here: [Rural Mental Health](#) presentation. Learn the unique mental health challenges in rural communities, the strengths in rural communities, and the role of faith and churches in responding to this crisis.

In summary:

- Rural communities face real mental health challenges
- But they also hold powerful resources
- With the right tools and training, churches can lead the way.
- Together, we can help ensure no one struggles alone.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR

- July 9th-10th - [Open and Affirming National Gathering](#) - Kansas City, MO.
- July 11st - 15th - [General Synod 35](#) in Kansas City, MO. Theme: *Into the Deep*. Luke 5:4.
In the August issue we will provide a report.

WELLNESS IS A JUSTICE ISSUE - COUNTERING PROJECT 2025 WITH LOVE: A UCC RESPONSE

Project 2025 is a compilation of policy proposals and a presidential transition project launched by the Heritage Foundation. Project 2025 is in direct opposition to the United Church of Christ's closely held values of extravagant welcome, abundance, and justice for all. The UCC has responded and is [Countering Project 2025 with Love](#).

Within our diverse Wellness Ministries, we create programs that support staff members, congregants, and the communities we serve. You will likely need to address one or more of these topics through health education and advocacy.

Countering Project 2025 with Love is most effective when we understand the parts of this document that harm the health and wellness of those we minister to and with. These include: environmental justice—especially related to air quality and access to clean water, gender justice, healthcare, LGBTQ+ rights, refugee care, reproductive care and abortion, and racial justice.

More information is available at: [United Church of Christ counters Project 2025](#) with the aim to ‘welcome all, love all, seek justice for all. If you have questions e-mail WellnessMinistries@ucc.org

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR AUGUST

- **National Immunization Awareness Month** is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. <https://www.cdc.gov> and search “Immunizations” for free to download/print vaccine basics, recommended schedules for infants through adults and current Vaccine Information Statements (VIS). You will also find a reminder for parents with children in sports to check whether a sports physical is required—typically a state rule every 1-2 years.
- **Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month:** The American Academy of Ophthalmology provides information to the public that can help protect and preserve a child’s eye health for life. <https://www.aaao.org> for monthly eye health observances and article style information. Actual downloads and copies are copyrighted and permission must be requested.
- **National Minority Donor Awareness Month** heightens awareness to donation and transplantation in multicultural communities - focusing primarily on African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American communities. (*Materials with the National Multiethnic Donor Awareness Month logo are offered as an alternative to the National Minority Donor Awareness Month logo.) <https://donatelife.net> for free to print infographics in English and Spanish
- **National School Backpack Awareness Day** strives to make sure students wear backpacks safely. Improper use can lead to back pain or injury, which can impact learning. (Officially this is September 17th, but shopping for school supplies is done in August....) <https://www.nsc.org> (National Safety Council) has information about backpacks as well as general back to school safety information. Type in *Backpack Safety* in the Search bar for a checklist and information.

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM

- The *Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation with Children and Youth* and the *Handbook for Visitation with Adults* will be available at Synod.
- The 2025 PDF version of the *2025 Wellness Ministries Toolkit* will be available at Synod!
- We will have a table in the Exhibits; manage the Prayer Shawl table, attend the business meetings with Voice without Vote status, support the Resolution brought by the Mental Health

Network, and connect with all those who want to learn more about Wellness Ministries. Stop by our table in the Exhibit Hall and say HELLO! We'll be glad to see you!!

CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Ministry is often lonely work. You have a network of colleagues who will support you and your ministry. Connect with us on:

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

Please send information to post or questions to Debbie Ringen, MS, FCN,
wellnessministries@ucc.org

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.