

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER
Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness
March 2025, Volume 10, Issue 3

- **Reflection** – Feeling Overwhelmed and Worn Out? There's an Antidote For That.
 - **Wellness Ministries Focus** – Health and Wellness are a Justice Issue.
 - **A Timely Health Tip** - Understanding the Spread of Measles.
 - **Wellness Resources For You And Those You Serve** – [Nurture the Soul - What's Next: Befriending Loneliness](#) Register here.
 - **Update From The Wellness Ministries Leadership Team** – Collaboration Opportunities
 - **Health & Justice Resources** – Fill The Jars of God's Economic Justice
 - **Links To National Health and Wellness Educational Materials** - Prepare for April
 - **Connected and Supporting One Another** – Instagram and Facebook addresses
-

REFLECTION – Feeling overwhelmed and worn out? There's an antidote for that.

For several years, [the battle for attention](#) has escalated into an all-out war on our brains and bodies, with the front lines consisting of an ever-growing multitude of micro-skirmishes designed to distract us through a barrage of meaningful, trivial, fabricated, and useless information.

Every day, every hour, every minute, every second: notifications. [No age group is exempt](#) from this capitalist exploitation of our fragmented attention. Absurd amounts of money are funneled into the attention economy, yet we, the consumers, can only measure the toll at the end of the day.

The diagnoses and data are clear: We are left mentally and spiritually impoverished. Lack of focus, burnout, persistent disruptions in our brain's reward centers, and cognitive decline are measurable consequences of trying to understand too much information too quickly. Our precious bodies and remarkable brains cannot keep pace with the overwhelming flow of information, which intentionally diminishes the amount of dopamine, the body's "feel-good" hormone.

However, there is wonderful news: there is an antidote for that. Feeling overwhelmed during these times is ***not*** a natural deficiency. We were created for depth, and each possesses a well within that can draw forth the beautiful, untold wonders of imagination, problem-solving, resilience, and creativity. This well is designed to sustain itself with living waters—***if*** we allow it to. Do your body, mind, and spirit remember that having a Sabbath is your birthright?

Beloved, our Sabbath time is a starting point. It serves as a wellspring, an unyielding source supporting wellness. It is always accessible, and its positive effects sharply contrast with those of the "attention (distraction) economy." Take the time to return to your reservoir of living waters regularly.

Rev. Seth Wispelwey is the Minister for Economic Justice in the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ. To explore deep possibilities for congregational economic justice work, contact him at wispelweys@ucc.org or visit www.ucc.org/fillthejar.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS – Health and Wellness are a Justice Issue

For 40 years the UCC has recognized health and wellness as a justice issue.

- In 1985, at the 18th UCC General Synod 18th, the delegates adopted the *Mission Statement on Health and Welfare* that states in part that:
It is clear that the whole church is involved in this mission of health and welfare. ... good health is a part of God's intention for all people; health involves the whole person—body, mind, and spirit, and healing and health care are good ways of proclaiming the Gospel and ministering in the name of Jesus Christ...
- [Why a Health Ministry?](#) – written by Barbara Baylor, Program Minister for Health and Wellness, Justice and Witness, and published by the UCC almost 30 years ago.
- In 1997, at the 21st UCC General Synod, the delegates adopted the *Reclaiming the Church's Ministry of Health and Healing*, which states in part:
Health is harmony with oneself and others, the environment, and God—a continuum of physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Health ministry promotes healing and health as wholeness as a mission of a faith community to its members and the community it serves. Wellness Ministries promote health and healing by joining with community agencies and social justice groups to advocate for the health and wellbeing of everyone.
- In 2009, at the 27th UCC General Synod, delegates adopted the resolution *An Urgent Call for Advocacy in Support of Health Care for All*, which states in part that:
Based on our belief that health care is not only a basic human NEED but also a basic human RIGHT and our belief that it is a moral imperative to transform healthcare....”, they called upon Justice and Witness Ministries to develop the strategy and program necessary to implement this resolution. Work started within some congregations, Associations, and Conferences, However, there is still much to accomplish.
- [Health Care is a Human Right. Privatizing, Profiteering, and Withholding It is a Violent Evil](#) by Rev. Seth Wispelwey and published on the UCC website Jan. 2, 2025.
- Wellness Ministries, UCC National Ministries, and Rev. Seth Wispelwey, Minister for Economic Justice, UCC National Ministries, are collaborating to raise awareness and promote action regarding this multifaceted and life-saving justice issue. Please email us at WellnessMinistries@UCC.org or wispelweys@ucc.org to share your experiences.

A TIMELY HEALTH TIP – Understanding the Spread of Measles

Measles is a highly infectious, airborne illness that can cause serious rashes. In 2000, it was declared eliminated in the United States. During childhood, over 95% of the population received two doses of the safe and effective measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. However, in recent years, the percentage of vaccinated children has fallen below the 95% threshold required to ensure community protection.

Measles is highly contagious. An infected person can transmit measles for four days before a rash appears. If one person is infected, nine out of ten unvaccinated individuals nearby

may contract the virus. The virus can remain airborne for up to two hours after the infected individual leaves a space.

Eight jurisdictions—AK, CA, GA, NJ, NM, NYC, RI, and TX—reported 93 measles cases as of February 20, 2025. Almost all of those infected individuals were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status. Four percent had received only one dose of the MMR vaccine. No cases were reported in individuals who received the recommended two doses of the MMR vaccine. Research-based [information is available](#) that offers guidance.

WELLNESS RESOURCES FOR YOU AND THOSE YOU SERVE

- **March 17th** 3:30 – 4:30 PM Webinar: [Nurture the Soul/ What's Next: Befriending Loneliness](#) with Dwight Lee Wolter. In a time when we continue to become more divided, many of us may feel and find ourselves lonely. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, loneliness has been brought to the forefront, especially in 2023, when Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared loneliness an epidemic in America. But what might this mean for us now, and how could it contribute to the divide we experience across the United States and beyond?
What role does loneliness play when recalling the “good old days” in all aspects of our lives, including our religious practices, where our memories include full pews and offering baskets, and even Sunday Schools? Our guest will explore and help raise awareness around loneliness, providing us with tools to empower change and transform loneliness into a gateway to empathy, solidarity, creativity, community-building, and (as you will soon discover) fun!
- **April 27th**, [Break the Silence Sunday](#), is an initiative aimed at fostering dialogue within the church about rape and sexual assault. The delegates at the [2019 UCC General Synod affirmed a resolution](#) supporting survivors of rape and sexual violence with care, education, and a commitment to openly discussing the impacts of sexual violence. The Break the Silence website states that, *within the context of our faith communities, we hope to (1) acknowledge the reality of rape and sexual violence in our world; (2) support survivors by creating a space where they can share their stories, feel loved and supported, and find encouragement on their healing journey; and (3) dedicate ourselves to the work of changing the world, creating a future where rape is but a memory.* [Break the Silence worship materials](#) are available.
- **April 24th** - [Armenian Martyrs' Day](#) - *The opportunity for healing is enhanced when families and friends recognize that those who suffered and died for a just cause are acknowledged for their sacrifice.* April 24 commemorates the day when the authorities of the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of modern-day Turkey, murdered hundreds of Armenian community leaders. This marked the beginning of the killing of over a million Armenians. Some children and grandchildren of survivors are active in UCC churches.
- [Feeling lonely in a crowd](#) – Even when surrounded by loved ones, friends, and others, it's still possible to feel completely alone. This may seem strange, but it is quite common.

- [**How can I be okay when the world is terrible?**](#) Just thinking about the sheer amount of awfulness around us can be completely overwhelming—even paralyzing. The problems are far too big for any single person to solve. So what can you do? Should you do anything? Should you give up? Is there any “should” to begin with?
- [**Playing A New Game - A Black Woman's Guide to Being Well and Thriving in the Workplace**](#) Written by Tammy Lewis Wilborn, PhD. Black and brown women have made significant strides in leadership and professional achievement despite facing the dual challenges of sexism and racism in the workplace. However, excelling at work often comes at the expense of their well-being. *Playing a New Game* offers women an innovative path where ambition and wellness can coexist and support each other.

[**The Gospel of Loneliness**](#) by Dwight Lee Wolter encourages integrating loneliness into the wholeness of life. [UCC pastor explains how loneliness is 'an opportunity for transformation'](#)

- [**TRUTH TO POWER - 5 articles For Hard Times Such As These**](#) – We live in a time of unparalleled incivility and abuse. This collection of 5 articles is available for free in pdf format from [UCC Resources](#)
- [**Why We Meditate – The Science and Practice of Clarity and Compassion**](#) – Written by Daniel Goleman and Tsoknyi Rinpoche. “A practical and soul-stirring guide to meditation that offers a much-needed antidote to the forces of stress that overwhelm us.”

[**UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM**](#)

Revitalization can come when collaborating with a caring group of colleagues. What have you learned from others? What can you offer to pay their kindness forward?

Join us in sharing a bit of your experience with one of the five short-term projects we are working on:

1. Suggest updates to the [2023 Wellness Ministries Toolkit](#)
2. Send information for our monthly newsletter – [Mind, Body, Spirit – Linking Lives for Health and Wellness](#)
3. Have experience with ministry to children? Join 5 of us in developing a [Handbook for Visitation with Children, Youth, and their Families](#)
4. Share how you will support survivors of sexual assault during or after [Break the Silence Sunday](#).

E-mail: WellnessMinistries@ucc.org or UCCWellnessMinistriesChair@gmail.com

[**HEALTH AND JUSTICE-RELATED RESOURCES**](#)

- [Fill the Jars of God's Economic Justice](#) – In our Wellness Ministries, we walk alongside congregants and neighbors affected by economic injustice. God calls us to foster economies grounded in (1) justice, (2) universal equity, and (3) compassion, ensuring everyone can thrive in wellness. Discover more about each of these jars that collect resources and select the one to which God may guide your contribution.
- [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

Prepare for APRIL

- [Autism Acceptance Month](#) - Everyone's story is different, and the experience of Autism is not one thing. Learn more about the "Road to Acceptance" project and celebrate differences.
- [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) – This year's theme is "*Building a Hopeful Future, Together*," which focuses on creating a nurturing and supportive environment for children and families nationwide.
- [Donate Life Month](#) – Learn about [organ donation and the transplant process](#) that aims to extend and improve the lives of children and adults facing end-stage organ failure, for whom an organ transplant is the most suitable therapeutic option.
- [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#) – Sexual violence encompasses any sexual activity where consent is not granted or is not willingly provided. It affects every community and individuals of all sexual orientations and ages. Sexual violence can happen in person, online, or through technology. This includes posting or sharing sexual images of someone without their consent or engaging in non-consensual sexting. The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#) (NSVRC) offers research and resources to advocates working on the frontlines to end sexual harassment, assault, and abuse, recognizing that combating sexual violence also involves tackling racism, sexism, and all forms of oppression.
- [Vision and Eye Health Month](#) – Eye exams at all ages and life stages can help maintain strong vision and are essential for overall health care.

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](#)

Debbie Ringen, MS, FCN, 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!

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.