

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

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REFLECTION - Fika: A Time of Self-Care

Fika (pronounced “fee-kah”) is a Swedish word that serves as both a noun and a verb. It roughly translates to “coffee break” in English. However, it actually represents a broader concept— a state of mind.

The concept of Fika emphasizes that we should dedicate time for one or two daily breaks to appreciate life’s simple pleasures. Instead of just grabbing a coffee to boost our energy, it invites us to slow down for at least 15 minutes, or maybe even an hour or two. We set aside our problems and “to do” lists, allowing ourselves to simply be present in that moment and space.

Step away from the daily grind, enjoy your favorite coffee or preferred beverage, indulge in some sweet treats, and engage in conversations with friends or family that aren't work-related. Value the company of others as you reflect on what is truly important in life.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS - Love is Louder- Love Your Neighbor OUT LOUD

June 1st marks the beginning of Pride Month. Pride Month offers an opportunity—and an obligation—to reflect on how we support our LGBTQ+ siblings within our congregations and in the wider community.

Wellness Ministries stands as an ally in a covenantal relationship, being Open and Affirming, as we educate and engage in initiatives that promote the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of all God's children.

Our activities may differ from one setting to another; however, they all cater to individuals of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, educational background, economic circumstance, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, and physical and mental ability, allowing us to journey together in a mutually supportive way towards wholistic spiritual, physical, and mental health.

Pride Month presents an opportunity to enhance general understanding of some of the terminology that may be used more frequently. The Georgetown University LGBTQ Resource Center provides a [Glossary of LGBTQIA+](#).

Other resources include:

- [Love Your Neighbor OUT LOUD Toolkit 01](#) - an initiative of Gender & Sexuality Justice Ministries that seeks to support the well-being of LGBTQIA+ siblings while equipping congregations with resources for faithful action and care.
- [Gender and Sexuality Justice Ministries](#) - seeks transformative justice for our faith communities and congregations by advocating just action and love for all.
- [LGBTQ+ Resources](#) from the UCC store
- Relevant books from [The Pilgrim Press](#)

TIMELY HEALTH TIP - Preventing Dehydration

[Dehydration](#) can occur at any time of year. However, as the heat of summer builds, the risk increases, especially for infants, children, and older adults. Dehydration is the condition of having insufficient water in the body.

The best way to avoid dehydration is to drink before you feel thirsty. If you're thirsty, you're already mildly dehydrated, and that can cause signs of dehydration, such as headaches, fatigue, dizziness, and more. Dehydration can contribute to life-threatening conditions, such as heatstroke.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains [how water and healthy drinks](#) help reduce the risk of dehydration for all ages.

WELLNESS RESOURCES FOR YOU AND THOSE YOU SERVE -

Do you have a Wellness Ministries library available to others?

- [The Faith Trust Institute](#) - Working Together to End Sexual and Domestic Violence was founded in 1977 by the UCC minister Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune. After 45 years they closed their online store. The good news is that all 205 videos are available for free on FaithTrust Institute's [YouTube](#) channel including:

[A Sacred Trust \(Clergy Healthy Boundaries\)](#)

[Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives to Domestic Violence](#)

Their published books and brochures are available as free PDF downloads at [VAWnet](#), the online library of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

The 2022 version of Responding to Spiritual Leader Misconduct: A Handbook. The handbook (PDF, 204 pgs) is free and available to download. [Responding to Spiritual Leader Misconduct](#). A printed copy can be purchased at [Amazon.com](#).

You may contact Faith Trust Institute: e-mail: info@faithtrustinstitute.org.

Or 3250 Airport Way S., Suite 201, Seattle, WA 9813

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR

- Wednesday, June 4th, 12:00pm ET - OWL Taking Flight: [What Fresh Hell is This? The Impact of Identity Erasure](#).

- **Thursday, June 5th**, 3:30pm ET Nurture the Soul - [Lessons, Stories, and Theologies of Small Town and Rural \(STAR\) Churches in 2025](#)
- **Tuesday, June 10th**, 3:30pm ET - [Into the Deep: Womxn 2 Womxn Series Part III](#)
- **Thursday, June 12th**, 3:30pm ET - [A Little One Shall Lead - A Small Church Story Project](#)
- **Thursday, June 19th - Juneteenth National Independence Day** - a national holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It took over two years for the news to reach African Americans in Galveston, Texas. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived, and the residents learned that slavery had been abolished. They immediately began to celebrate, a tradition that continues 160 years later. There are prayer and religious services, speeches, parades, educational events, family gatherings, picnics, and festivals. For more information, please check your local newspapers, visit UCC [Racial Justice Ministries](#), or contact Rev. Dr. Velda Love at lovev@ucc.org.
- **Wednesday, June 25th - 68th anniversary of the United Church of Christ**
- **Sunday, June 29th - Open and Affirming Sunday** - [Open and Affirming](#) (ONA) Resources are available at the link above.
- **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.

Wellness is a Justice Issue - The Pink Tax Women Pay

Does your church provide menstrual products in the bathrooms for use by attendees?

The “pink tax” identifies gender-based price discrimination. Initially, the pink tax focused on feminine hygiene products. It now also includes charging women more than men for essentially identical consumer items and services.

The term “pink tax” refers to state sales tax on menstrual products, such as tampons and feminine pads. Period products are a necessary expense for attending school or work every week of the month. However, 26 states still classify menstrual products as luxuries instead of medical necessities.

The National Organization of Women (NOW) estimates that women spend \$20 on feminine hygiene products per menstrual cycle. On average, women earn about 84 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men, and the cohort of Latina/Hispanic women earn just 57 cents. This is a financial burden. Menstrual products are essential, and the cumulative “pink tax” can cost women thousands over their lifetimes.

The Pink Tax Repeal Act has been introduced several times in Congress but lacks sufficient votes to advance in the House and Senate. Passing this bill will eliminate the “pink tax” nationwide and promote gender equality in product and service costs. This will provide financial benefits to women, which are essential for economic justice and progress.

Learn more and check on the status in your state:

- Consumer Reports - [The Pink Tax Costs People - Usually Women - Up to 48% More for Personal Care Products](#)
- Kiplinger Newsletter - [Pink Tax: What Does Price Discrimination Cost Women?](#)
- National Organization of Women (NOW) - [The Pink Tax: The Cost of Being a Woman](#)
- NBC News - [States have been eliminating taxes on period products for Years. Here's where you'll still pay them.](#)

- U.S. News - [How Inflation Impacts the Pink Tax and the Period Product Industry](#)

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR JULY

- **National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month** was created to bring awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face regarding mental illness in the US. It promotes culturally competent mental health care and equitable access to resources. Go to [Mental Health America](#) and search “Minority Mental Health” for Bebe Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness. There are download/print materials and an online mental health quiz.
Go to [UCC Mental Health Network](#) for general mental health information and tools for congregations, synagogues and organizations.
- **National Park and Recreation Month** - This years’ campaign is to “Build Together Play Together”; expanding their 3 Pillars of “Health and Wellbeing, Equity and Environmental Resilience. [National Recreation and Park Asso.](#) for a free-to-download toolkit, poster, and social media graphics.
- **UV Safety Month:** from the American Academy of Dermatology; raising awareness that UV is the root cause of most skin cancers and encourages the public to take precautions. Go to [American Academy of Dermatology](#) for free materials (infographics, posters, videos for adults and youth) under Patients - Public Health Programs.

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM

- The In-District meetings process, which Abigail Cipparone, Policy Advocate for Domestic Issues at the UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in D.C., Wellness Ministries, and CHHSM collaborated on was a nationwide effort. Thank you to all who expressed concerns to their elected members of Congress about changes to Medicaid and SNAP. To continue domestic justice efforts, please be in touch with Abigail. at cipparonea@ucc.org
- The UCC podcast “[Fill the Jug](#) of Rev. Seth Wispelwey, Minister of Economic Justice, interviewed Peggy Matteson, Chair of Wellness Ministries, about how wellness is a justice issue. It will be posted in the series “God’s Economic Justice.”
- Since September, all the copies of *The Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation* have sold out. A second printing was received last week.
- The Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation with Children and Youth is currently with the designer. We hope to have it printed and available at Synod.
- The 2025 PDF version of the *Wellness Ministries Toolkit* is on track to be completed and available at Synod.
- We will have representatives at the ONA gathering prior to Synod, as well as managing multiple tasks during 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 AND SAY HELLO!

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](https://www.instagram.com/wellness.ministries.ucc)

And now!!! Linked-In - Wellness Ministries UCC [Wellness Ministries UCC](#)
Thank you, Debbie Ringen, MS, FCN, for getting Linked-In re-started.

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.