

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

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[REFLECTION - Offering Reaffirmation to One Another](#)

Because of the unique nature of our roles and the many confidences we hold, ministry can feel very lonely. Each UCC General Synod offers an opportunity that can be revitalizing.

General Synod brings together thousands of members of the United Church of Christ from across the United States and as far away as the South Pacific, representing the diversity of the UCC. Together, we participate in inspiring worship services, enjoy fellowship with old and new friends, debate resolutions, and focus on public witness, church structure, and function.

Although not everyone agrees on every resolution presented, we are united in our belief that we are one body capable of embracing diverse perspectives, accepting disagreement, celebrating our faith, and standing together. We can leave the Synod feeling more connected to colleagues and reaffirmed in our ministries. The challenge is to experience that sense of connection and strengthen supportive local relationships in our own ministry settings.

Know that the Wellness Ministries Leadership Team, as well as others within your local community, UCC Association, or UCC Conference, are both seekers as well as providers of affirmation for your ministry. There are attentive listeners who are capable of embracing diverse perspectives and agreeing to disagree while still maintaining strong relationships. Such a colleague may become the human anchor that is needed as we minister during these uncertain times.

[WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS - Our Ministry At Synod](#)

- At our booth in the Exhibitors Hall, we met hundreds of people who either had experience with Wellness Ministries and wanted to learn more or heard about it for the first time and became eager to share what they learned with their church. The stories they shared were inspiring and heartfelt. Connections were made, and updates will follow.
- We gave away over 300 prayer shawls and prayer squares, crafted by knitters from across the country, with a majority being from the host Kansas-Oklahoma and Missouri Mid-South Conferences. These free gifts were deeply appreciated and sometimes moved recipients to tears as they wrapped themselves in the prayers. Thank you to everyone who created and donated the shawls.

Recipients shared that they felt concern and despair, but when wrapped in the shawl, they experienced a sense of peace. Learn more about a [Prayer Shawl Ministry](#) written by the original initiators of this outreach, Janet Severi Bristow and Victoria A. Cole-Galo.

- Every exhibitor had small giveaways at their booth. Green is the color of Wellness Ministries, so we distributed green mints and pens. Each pen had one of 10 motivational statements: *Be Happy, Be Kind, Believe in Yourself, Keep Going, Make Today Amazing, Never Give Up, Remember Your Why, The Best Is Yet to Come, You Are Enough, or You Got This*. When selecting a pen, the recipient often shared why it had meaning for them. This led to moments of ministry. We distributed 200 pens.
- At the UCC Store, attendees could purchase the new *Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation with Children and Youth*, the *Handbook for Visitation with Adults*, and a flash drive containing the *2025 UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit*. A grateful thank you to Marie Titus, UCC Resource Manager, for organizing the process to make these items available.
- During the Plenary sessions, the 740 delegates from the 36 UCC Conferences discussed and voted on twelve resolutions. The resolution process is the primary avenue for individual UCC members and various bodies of the Church to present an issue to the denomination for discussion and a vote. 35th General Synod delegates overwhelmingly approved the resolution for [Recognition of the Continually-Evolving Language of Mental Health](#). The resolution, proposed by the [Mental Health Network of the United Church of Christ](#), cited the growing need for congregations to be aware of the ever-evolving language and the prior harm caused by certain words. [Deborah Ringen](#), a member of the Wellness Ministries Leadership Team and the Mental Health Network, worked on the development of this resolution and then led the Implementation Discussion after it was approved. Thank you, Debbie!

A TIMELY HEALTH TIP - End of the Summer Information for Parents and Young Adults

During August and early September, parents across the country complete the ritual of preparing and sending their children to school. The reality of change can create concern in both children and parents. Parents may worry about their child's academic performance, health, and relationships with other students and teachers. While they can't supervise their child at school, they can promote healthy habits. Johns Hopkins Medicine has created an infographic to illustrate how parents can support their child's health and wellness from preschool through high school graduation. [Download the infographic here.](#)

There were between 3.8 million and 3.9 million high school graduates this year. Transitioning from high school is a major milestone for any young adult. The modern world demands that students graduate equipped to handle life's challenges successfully. Whether it's getting a job, joining the military, going to college, taking a gap year, traveling, or pursuing a different path, the young adult is now responsible for their own future. High school grads are offered advice with [10 things you should know before your life changes forever](#). Many of the [22 Tips for College Students](#) would also be helpful to any young adult moving away from home.

It can be hard for parents to watch their young adult leave the house. Where did the time go? How did they grow up so quickly? Are they ready? Fortunately, other parents share their stories, so resources are available. [Leaving home for the first time: Tips for Young Adults and Parents](#) and [How to Deal When a Child Heads Off to College: A Parent's Survival Guide](#) may make it easier for parents.

Wellness Resources For You And Those You Serve - NEW! Orientation of Wellness Ministries Volunteers series in September and other Resources

- **New** - *Orientation of Wellness Ministries Volunteers Series* – Begins Sept 23, 2025. More information to available in the Sept. newsletter.
- The *Spirituality of Wellness* is the title of a Care Note booklet last printed in 2014. An explanation of the work of Wellness Ministries and a request to reproduce the booklet were sent to the company since they no longer print it. Permission was granted as long as the author's name remained. If you would like a copy, send a request to UCCWellnessMinistriesChair@gmail.com.
- New from The Pilgrim Press - a resource for the care of Black congregants. [God Help Us! The Bible and Pastoral Care Concerns for Black Churches](#). Grief and loss are familiar stories in the Bible. So are stories of immigration and belonging. So are stories of incarceration, reconciliation, parenting, and complicated families. The six essays in the book uplift concerns that include: depression among Black women, cultural melancholia among African immigrants, systemic grief and trauma, rejection and belonging for Black boys, empowerment of Black girls, and the generational toll of incarceration. [Preorder today!](#)
- [Risk Insights: Avoiding Slip, Trip, and Fall Liabilities](#) is available on page 4 - 7 of the Summer Issue of The Steward, the quarterly newsletter of The Insurance Board.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR - Revitalizing Labor Sunday- Liturgy and Solidarity

- August 7th 3:30 pm ET - Webinar - [Revitalizing Labor Sunday - Liturgy and Solidarity](#)
The affordability of meeting our basic human needs is beyond comfortable reach for more people than ever. Wages, salaries, and worker protections are suppressed. How can churches help meet the needs within their congregations, their communities, and our country? [Register here.](#)

WELLNESS IS A JUSTICE ISSUE - Increasing Access to Care for People with Alzheimer's and other types of Dementia

- [Clergy Guide and Purple Sunday Information](#) - Alzheimer's Asso. and the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition collaborated to create a Clergy Guide that raises awareness of Alzheimer's and other dementias among United Church of Christ congregations. By working together, they can provide information to those with limited access to care and support services, offer guidance on how to participate in research, and promote advocacy.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS - For September

- **Healthy Aging Month** is promoted by the [Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion \(ODPHP\)](#) offers free healthy aging recommendation posters and flyers to download/print in English and Spanish. [May is "Older Americans Month". The information may be used interchangeably.]
- **Falls Prevention Week** - September 22-26 - promoted by the [National Council on Aging](#) , is a nationwide observance with state coalitions and partners to raise awareness on preventing falls, reducing the risk of falls, and helping older adults live without fear of falling. For a free-to-download toolkit with flyers, trifold, and infographics.
- **National Recovery Month:** The tagline, "Every Person, Every Family, Every Community," emphasizes that recovery is possible for everyone. [The Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) offers free-to-download/print general information about addiction and treatment. The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) also offers a free-to-download/print toolkit with infographics.
- **Sepsis Awareness Month:** To remind people of the dangers of this life-threatening disease. The [Sepsis Alliance](#) offers a free-to-download tool kit and general information - in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog.

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM - For August

The monthly meetings of the Wellness Ministries Leadership Team will resume on August 14th. If you would like to be invited or have a request for the agenda please e-mail - [UCC Wellness Ministries Chair](mailto:UCCWellnessMinistriesChair)

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.