

WELLNESS MINISTRIES

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

September 2025, Volume 10, Issue 9

WELLNESS IS A JUSTICE ISSUE

- [Reflection](#) - *We must do the things we think we cannot do.*
 - [Wellness Ministries Focus](#) - Recognizing and Replacing Ableist Language
 - [Timely Resources](#) - For the start of the church's autumn calendar.
 - [Wellness Resources For You & Those You Serve](#) - New! Preparation of Volunteers Series & 2025 Wellness Ministries Toolkit
 - [Links To National Health and Wellness Educational Materials](#) - For October
 - [Items of Interest on the UCC Calendar](#) - Free webinars useful to Wellness Ministries
 - [Wellness Is A Justice Issue](#) - Bring Climate Hope to Sun Day Sept. 21st
 - [Update From The Wellness Ministries Leadership Team](#) - Who do we say we are?
 - [Connecting and Supporting One Another](#) - Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn
-

[REFLECTION - *We must do the things we think we cannot do*](#)

Currently, many are fearful for our future and feel unprepared to deal with the current events. We are left wondering, "What can I do? Can I make a difference?" What might help is finding a person who has asked themselves the same questions.

Consider Eleanor Roosevelt, who grew up feeling unwanted and ugly. Her mother called her "Granny". Her father was an alcoholic. She became an orphan at age 10. Her strict maternal grandparents took her in and further lowered her self-confidence. As a shy teenager, Eleanor was sent to a boarding school in England. After completing her education, she returned to the U.S. At age 20, she married Franklin D. Roosevelt.

When he later became president, she challenged societal expectations of a First Lady and took on many unpopular causes. She held press conferences exclusively for female reporters, which encouraged newspapers to hire women journalists. She was the first president's wife to visit factories, coal mines, and then war zones in Europe, learning from the people. She advocated for civil rights, women's rights, children's causes, the League of Women Voters, and organized support for the poor during the Great Depression. In 1945, she became Chair of the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission and led efforts to establish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Going against societal norms and following her conscience was not easy and sometimes not safe, but she endured. She explained:

*I gained strength, courage, and confidence from every experience
in which I really had to stop and look fear in the face...
We must do the things we think we cannot do.*

[WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS - Recognizing and Replacing Ableist Language](#)

Some people unintentionally use outdated terms that can hurt members of the disability community. Ableist language includes words, phrases, and expressions that belittle, stigmatize, or

exclude people based on their physical, mental, or developmental differences. Recognizing and addressing ableist language is crucial for building a more inclusive and respectful society for everyone. The following resources can have a positive impact within our Wellness Ministries.

- [Ableist Language: Understanding and Eliminating It - A Comprehensive Guide](#)
- [Examples of Ableist Language You May Not Realize You're Using](#)
- [Types of Ableist Language and What to Say Instead](#)

TIMELY RESOURCES - For the start of the church's autumn calendar

Collaborating with Faith Formation: This is the time of year that Rally Day or Homecoming Day appears on a church's calendar. Wellness Ministries, with the focus on spiritual, mental, and physical care, often serve as a resource and collaborate with the Faith Formation team during the church year. These are two timely books.

- [Picture the Bible](#) - features diverse images of people and an understanding of justice grounded in God's love. The fifty-three stories of *Picture the Bible* share God's promises and the invitation to living in God's way. The stories encourage conversations across generations. Support materials are available.
- [God Is](#) offers a profound theology of joy, wonder, and assurance for children of all ages - including those of us who are learning anew, in adulthood, how to have faith like a child.

Ensuring Safe Conduct: Many ministries within the congregation, including Wellness Ministries, become more active during September, and volunteers are interacting with vulnerable people of all ages.

- The Insurance Board, in the Safety Central part of their website, [Safe Conduct™](#) offers a comprehensive toolkit to assist churches in developing a strong abuse prevention program through proper policies, background checks and screening, and state-of-the-art training. Suggestions focus on protecting the vulnerable and those who are serving them.
- The data support the need to pay attention to preventing abuse: of 1 in 4 girls, 1 in 7 boys, and 10% of school children. 40% to 50% of child molestations are committed by juveniles. 80% of abuse does not get reported to authorities.
- As a place of sanctuary that welcomes diverse people within our walls, all must feel safe.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES RESOURCES FOR YOU AND THOSE YOU SERVE - New! Preparation of Volunteers Series & 2025 Wellness Ministries Toolkit

- **Orientation of Wellness Ministries Volunteers**

Join us for a 6-week series, Tuesday, Sept. 23rd through Oct. 28th, from 4:00 to 5:30 pm ET. This series provides information about Wellness Ministries, volunteer orientation, and tips on developing or improving Wellness Ministries within your congregation and the communities you serve. Registration is free! You'll find all the materials and readings for the series on the 2025 Wellness Ministries Toolkit flash drive. It is available at [UCC Resources](#) Store.

Participants are encouraged to attend each session because every topic and discussion will lay the foundation for the next session. Registration is limited to ensure a more personalized experience for each individual. [Register here](#). If you have any questions e-mail WellnessMinistries@ucc.org for more details.

- **The 2025 Wellness Ministries Toolkit -**

This new version is available in a printable, book format on a convenient flash drive. It features a comprehensive 220-page PDF that serves as a helpful and easy-to-understand resource. The content is divided into three sections: #1 - Envisioning Wellness Ministries—the who, what, and why behind Wellness Ministries; #2 - Establishing and Growing Wellness Ministries—insights from colleagues on how to start or expand your programs; and #3 - Exemplars of Wellness Ministries Activities—shared stories from others. Embedded hyperlinks throughout the content offer extra information, insights, or useful tools for your Wellness Ministries. When released the hundreds of links were working perfectly and provided accurate information. The flash drive is available. at [UCC Resources](#) Store. Please send questions and insights to WellnessMinistries@UCC.org.

LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS - For October

- **Mental Illness Awareness Week** (October 6-12) promotes mental health awareness. [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) offers a free to downloadable toolkit.
- **Healthy Lung Month** raises awareness about the rapid escalation of lung disease in the United States. The [American Lung Association](#) provides general information about lung conditions, treatment options, and the effects of the environment. The [Lung Institute](#) is another source for general information about lung conditions and environmental factors.
- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** is an international health campaign that aims to promote screening and prevention of the disease that each year affects 2.3 million women worldwide. The [National Breast Cancer Organization](#) provides general information and offers free copies of its educational materials. The [American Cancer Society](#) offers free-to-download and print: facts sheets, infographics, caregiver resources, and a Breast Cancer Toolkit.
- **National ADHD Awareness Month** Reliable information and resources to help people thrive with ADHD is available from the [Children and Adults with ADD Organization](#) including fact sheets, infographics and toolkits for parents and educators in English and Spanish.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR - For September

- *OWL Taking Flight*: Sept. 3rd | 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm | Register here for [Building a Trans/Nonbinary-Inclusive Teen Library](#) | An accessible library containing these books will help in letting a teen know they are seen and cared about. This may save their life.
- *Nurture the Soul*: Sept. 4th | 3:30 - 4:30 ET | Register here for [Dumpster Fire Ethics: Rethinking How We Follow Jesus](#). This is of interest because Wellness Ministries follow Jesus' directive to care for one another within and beyond our congregation.
- *Nurture the Soul*: Sept. 11th | 3:30 - 4:30 ET | Register here for [Conversation Series on Addiction & Families: Family Matters/ Families Matter - Part 1.](#)
- *Nurture the Soul*: Sept. 18th | 3:30 - 4:30 PM | Register here for [Conversation Series on Addiction & Families: Family Matters/Families Matter - Part II.](#)

- *Nurture the Soul*: Sept. 25th | 3:30 - 4:30 PM | Register here for [Conversation Series on Addiction & Families: Family Matters/Families Matter](#) - Part III.

WELLNESS IS A JUSTICE ISSUE -

- *Bringing Climate Hope to Sun Day* | Sept. 21st | Faith communities across the country will be joining a grassroots day of climate action to celebrate Sun Day. This will be a day to celebrate the gift and power of clean energy, which, when used, will reduce the number of days that poor air quality keeps people inside. [Register your congregation](#) to receive advocacy cards for members to write messages to Congress members on Sun Day.

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM -

During the August meeting, we reviewed our ministry to attendees and supportive interactions with colleagues. Rev. Alice Rauch was recognized for volunteering to assist us at our busy booth. Thank you, Alice! Preliminary plans were shared for the next Synod in 2028 in Cleveland.

After reflecting on Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson's State of the Church address, during which she asked, related to the UCC: Who do people say we are? Who do we say we are? we decided to ask those questions of ourselves related to Wellness Ministries. The initial discussion was fascinating and will continue. We welcome whatever thoughts you have. We encourage your participation so the answers reflect a widespread understanding. Please share your thoughts with us through WellnessMinistries@UCC.org

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)
- 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.