

WELLNESS MINISTRIES - Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

June 2026, Volume 12, Issue 6

Spiritual, Mental, and Physical Wellness are Justice Issues

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REFLECTION – The Gift of Kindness

Unfortunately, we are not typically informed through the media about the numerous acts of kindness that occur daily. If we were, perhaps people would believe that kindness occurs more often than the energetically dark, paralyzing news that is regularly shared. My suspicion is that sharing good news does not draw the same attention or clicks as sharing terrible news, which is less profitable for corporations if that's what they're based on.

"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward,

safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you." Princess Diana

Some might call these full-circle moments karma. I agree! As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our unique and flawed nation, let's consider performing acts of kindness; any return on the gesture will be joyous.

Thoughts shared by Rev. Dr. Bentley de Bardelaben-Phillips, M.Div., D.Min. (he/they)
Team Leader Education for Faithful Action (EFA)
United Church of Christ, National Ministries

The [US of Kindness](#) provides helpful information for individuals and groups.

The [UCC Kindness](#) site, UCC Wellness Ministries, UCC Mental Health Network, and many UCC churches have officially joined in this effort to spread kindness.

AN IDEA TO PROMOTE KINDNESS SHARED BY A WELLNESS MINISTRY COLLEAGUE – Hearts of Kindness

Kindness can change lives, strengthen communities, and rebuild trust. UCC Wellness Ministries joined the campaign because [science shows a simple act of kindness benefits the health of both the giver and the receiver](#). UCC churches nationwide are also accepting the challenge.

First Church in Christ Saybrook, Old Saybrook, CT - On Mental Health Sunday, May 17th, my mental health moment focused on the power of random acts of kindness. We can change the

course of someone's day with a small gesture of kindness. This helps people feel seen and loved and can even help prevent a suicide. It makes both the giver and the receiver feel good!

Each congregant received a cut-out heart and was asked to return it to church with a description of a random act of kindness they performed or that someone did for them. There is a collection box and a bulletin board display at coffee hour. Additional hearts will be available. In the summer or fall, we plan to make hearts available outdoors so the community can participate. Debbie Ringen, thank you for sharing this wonderful idea.

We would love to hear more ideas! E-mail WellnessMinistries@UCC.org

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS – Reducing the Risk and Harm Caused by Tick Bites

Did you know the bite of an infected tick doesn't provide immunity from illness from future bites?

Did you know that some tick-borne pathogens can cross the placenta to an unborn child?

Tick-borne diseases are infections transmitted to humans and animals by the bite of an infected tick. In the U.S., ticks feed on small wild rodents, deer, pets, and humans. Pathogens (bacteria, viruses, and parasites) are transmitted to humans when an infected tick feeds on them.

Resources provide information on reducing the risk of tick bites. If a tick becomes attached, it is important to know how to remove it without increasing the risk of infection.

- [Lyme Basics](#) - Provides reliable information, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure, patient assistance and referrals, and education in support of the Lyme Disease community, in both English and Spanish.
- [Northeast Lyme and Associated Diseases Resource Foundation](#) – Education, advocacy, resources, and support located within the northeast states, where some of the highest rates of infection have been reported.
- [Tick Encounter](#) promotes tick-bite protection and tickborne disease prevention by engaging, educating, and empowering people to take action. Re-imagining tickborne disease prevention education.
- [Tickborne Diseases in the U.S.](#) - With no vaccines and limited treatment options, avoiding tick bites is our best bet in reducing the risk of tickborne illnesses.
- [Lyme Disease Continuing Education](#) – These free continuing education activities from the CDC provide healthcare providers, patients, and families with information on Lyme disease, alpha-gal syndrome, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, and viral tickborne diseases in the U.S.
- [Why Tick Threats Are Rising and How to Stay Safe.](#) – Including information on the tick-borne alpha-gal allergies.

ITEM OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR – June – Understanding Our Neighbors

- **June 6th – Eid al-Adha** - the “Festival of Sacrifice” commemorates how the prophet Abram, the foundational patriarch of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, showed absolute devotion to God by his willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael. God provided a ram to be sacrificed in his place. The holiday is marked by a symbolic animal sacrifice (a sheep, goat, or cow), followed by sharing one-third with family, one-third with friends, and one-third with the poor and needy.

- **June 19th – Juneteenth** – Juneteenth National Independence Day commemorates the day in 1865 that Union soldiers, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, arrived in Galveston, TX, to announce that the Civil War had ended and that all enslaved people were free. The [Southern New England Conference of the UCC](#) invites all churches to recognize the significance of June 10th, 1865, with a prayer vigil for freedom. *Freedom from war. Freedom from fear. Freedom from systems that harm. Freedom from hatred, violence, and division. Freedom for all God's people to live fully into the dignity God has given them.*
Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister & President, SNE, UCC.
- **June 28th – Open and Affirming (ONA) Sunday** is a special observance that publicly celebrates the inclusion, dignity, and gifts of the LGBTQIA+ community. Theme 2026 – We Shall Not Be Moved: Rooted in Love, Justice, and Affirmation. [Worship Resources](#) are available.

LINKS TO NATIONAL WELLNESS MINISTRY MONTHLY RESOURCES– July

- **July 10th - Chronic Disease Awareness Day** is observed annually on July 10th because seven out of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States are chronic diseases. This day is dedicated to increasing public understanding of chronic illnesses, advocating for improved access to healthcare, and supporting those living with long-term health conditions. The [Chronic Disease Day](#) site provides information on self-care and recommends legislative funding for continuing education and research.
- [International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis](#) – ("AiArthritis" for short). Highlights autoimmune illnesses and has information about chronic diseases and support for caregivers.
- **Group B Strep Awareness Month** - Beta Strep is a type of bacteria that is naturally found in the digestive and lower reproductive tracts of both men and women. Babies who are exposed to GBS in utero or shortly after birth may or may not become infected, but an infection can cause miscarriage, a stillborn birth, illness and/or death after birth. [Group B Strep International](#) provides information that increases awareness of Group B Strep disease, thereby reducing infections in babies from before birth through early infancy. Feel free to download the information listed under Research.
- **Sarcoma Awareness Month** - Sarcoma is a rare but serious cancer that arises in bones, soft tissues, and connective tissues, including fat, muscle, nerves, and blood vessels. Sarcomas account for about 1% of adult cancers and 15% of childhood cancers. The monthly observance aims to educate, provide support, and advocate for research funding and improved treatments. [Sarcoma Foundation of America](#) provides an overview of symptoms, causes, diagnosis, and treatment. [Sarcoma Alliance](#) - for free to download patient guide, booklets, podcasts, and a newsletter.
- **UV (Ultraviolet) Safety Month** - Most skin cancers are caused by prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. Protection from UV rays is important year-round. [Resources to teach about skin cancer](#) include YouTube videos, podcasts, and free-to-download

infographics that explain how to reduce the risk of skin cancer. The [American Academy of Dermatologists](#) has free materials - infographics, posters, and videos for adults and youth under "Patients – Public Health Programs."

UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM –

- In response to suggestions, we are now hosting quarterly Wellness Ministries Affinity Group gatherings on the 2nd Monday of May, August, November, and February from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. ET. Each gathering will feature a 15–20-minute focused theme suggested by participants at the prior gathering. It will also include time for other topics as we learn from each other.
- At the May gathering, we began our conversation exploring the relationship of Wellness with the positive effects of acts of kindness for both the giver and the receiver. After the session, a resource list was sent to all attendees. If you would like a copy, email your request to WellnessMinistries@UCC.org.
- Next Wellness Ministries Affinity Gathering - August 10th, 6:30 pm ET. Beginning topic - ***Care of the Caregivers***. It will be announced in the July and August newsletters, as well as in an e-mail invitation with the Zoom connection.

CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER - Our Circle of Colleagues Grows

Every month, we have more contacts coming to our social media sites.

Ministry is often lonely work. Know that you have a network of colleagues who will support you and your ministry. Connect with them through:

- Facebook - [Wellness Ministries UCC](#)
- Instagram - [wellnessministriesucc](https://www.instagram.com/wellnessministriesucc)
- 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.*