

Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

from Robert Dievendorf, retired UCC pastor

November's Commemorations

If I were to ask you – any of you – what comes to mind when you hear the month of November mentioned, I strongly suspect that the overwhelming response would be: Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving. And I have to say, I would totally agree!! These two commemorations (I like that description better than "holidays") are what November is primarily about. And, I believe they are intimately related through the One who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, our God who is still speaking to us today!

You see, all our veterans (those brave men and women who have served during the past 242 years and those who continue to serve in our nation's armed forces) are the reason we can and do live today in the richness of America. These men and women are the reason we Americans can live in and with the freedoms, rights, and privileges that are so basic to our very being.

Yet, this service has not been without cost – great cost. Hundreds of thousands of our sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers have given the ultimate sacrifice, and hundreds of thousands more have sustained wounds, both physical and emotional, for us and our way of life. They have left behind their own families so that we might have the privilege of living with ours.

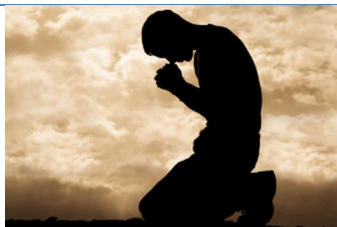
Throughout all their service, I am confident God has been (and continues to be) a constant presence so that America could be, is and will always be a haven for all God's children. Regardless of color, creed or religion, without regard to politics, status or orientation, God has opened the portals of acceptance and tolerance in America to all – and for this we should give thanks!!

It is thanks, of course, that sets the stage for the second great commemoration in November – Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving is a traditional North American *holiday*, which is a form of harvest festival. The

date and whereabouts of the first Thanksgiving celebration is a topic of modest contention, though the earliest attested Thanksgiving celebration was on September 8, 1565 in what is now Saint Augustine, Florida. Despite scholarly research to the contrary, the traditional "first Thanksgiving" is recognized as having occurred at the site of Plymouth Plantation, in 1621. Regardless of when the "first" Thanksgiving occurred, its significance remains in the fact that God was (and is) the recipient of praise for His part in the harvest. Apart from the yield of crops, our forebears in pre-America were mindful that it was through the generosity, love and protective guidance of God that they were able to be sustained for yet another year.

These same attitudes of the generosity, love and protective guidance of God forge our modern-day commemoration on the fourth Thursday of each November. As we traditionally gather with family and friends around the table graced with turkey, stuffing and all the fixin's, our minds and hearts are focused on the undeniable, unsurpassable (and often times undeserved) blessings God has showered upon our lives. As children of God, it is right and proper that we do this – not only on November's fourth Thursday, but each and every day we draw breath.

I think if you but pause and ponder November's two prime commemorations – Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving - you, too, will agree that they find relationship with each other through God and His generously loving heart. In fact, not merely these two commemorations, but all the days of November, all the days of the other eleven months, all the days with which we are gifted here on earth are in relationship with each other through God's abundant and never ceasing love. What we do with them, how we commemorate them is our choice! It is my prayer, my friends, that we choose to constantly and continually with purpose and conviction joyfully give God thanks!!



WNYACIC

November Prayer List

- First Congregational UCC, Angola,
David Donner, Transitional pastor
- Salem UCC, Tonawanda,
Jeremy Lopez, pastor; Alice McDermott,
pastor emerita
- Faith UCC, Williamsville, Rev. Dawn Marie Meier
- Christ Salvation Mission Church (DoC), Buffalo,
Virginia Williams, pastor
- General Office, Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ), Indianapolis, Teresa (Terri) Hord
Owens, GMP
- The Samaritan Society of UCHS (closing after many
years of service)
- New Light Christian Church, Karen Ministry
- Plymouth Crossroads

from Jeff Mason, treasurer, WNYACIC

Treasurer’s Report

We thank the following churches that sent Covenantal Share payments between September 8 and October 15: Arcade UCC, Amherst Community Church, Church of the Nativity (Town of Tonawanda), Ebenezer UCC (West Seneca), Kenilworth UCC (Town of Tonawanda), Lockport UCC, New Light Christian Church (Buffalo), St. James UCC (Hamburg), St. Matthew’s UCC (Hamburg), St. Stephen’s-Bethlehem UCC (Amherst), St. Stephen’s UCC (East Amherst), and Zion UCC (Town of Tonawanda).

As we’ve done for many years, we ask for \$6.00 times the number of members you reported at the start of the previous year. Your 2018 Covenantal Share is based on the membership your church reported in 2017. All Area churches received a report of their 2018 giving in late September or early October.

In addition, the Western Area will be collecting an additional \$2.00 per member in 2019 from our churches in the United Church of Christ for the New York Conference’s new per capita income. Our first church to make its 2019 per capita giving is St. Stephen’s UCC in East Amherst.

from amos acree

**Faith Community Nurse Notes –
Making Time for Exercise**

Regular exercise improves your physical, mental and spiritual health in many ways. Despite its benefits, exercise can be hard to fit into a busy life. But no matter how busy your life seems to be, there are ways to make physical activity a part of your routine. Here are some small steps you can take:

1. Focus on small chunks of time – even 5- 10 minutes have health benefits. Instead of computer or phone time, turn on music and dance, climb stairs, walk.
2. Schedule it in – most people have some leisure activity time. Instead of tv/internet time, find simple exercises. You can even do some seated – like using a rubber exercise band to stretch legs and arms.
3. Make it convenient- Check out an exercise DVD from the library.
4. Don’t forget weekends – Go to the park or a walking trail and enjoy the outdoors and extra time for self/family.
5. Make the most of break time – Just 5-10 minutes to walk around the building, or up some stairs when you have a break.

(adapted from www.healthylife.com – American Institute of Preventive Care)



Do you want a deeper sense of community in your neighborhood? Put this on your signboard to start the conversation. Send photos to acplant@juno.com.



WNYACIC Annual Fall Meeting

Sunday, November 4, 2018

Salem United Church of Christ

114 Morgan Street, Tonawanda, NY 14150

Cost is \$8 per person which includes lunch and can be paid at the registration table the day of the meeting.

Registration and lunch begin at 12:30pm.

Business meeting begins at 2:30pm.

Last minute registration can be made TODAY to Kathy Najuch at uccnywes@verizon.net. Include the name of the church and the name(s) of each delegate attending the meeting.

Vendor and Crafters Fair

Payne Ave. Christian Church,

1459 Payne Ave,

N. Tonawanda, 14120

Saturday, Nov. 17th 10am-4pm

Over 25 vendors and crafters! Entrance is free and earns you a chance at our raffle. Additional sheets of 25 tickets can be purchased for \$5.

Call the Church Office at 716-260-1217 for more information.

Creative Ideas Welcomed

The *In the Vineyard* Editorial Board is inviting responses from church folks who are home schooling Sunday School. Anyone out there? Does your church have a program where the parents tap into Sunday School materials that they can bring home and teach their own children? Is it a crazy notion or one that just might work? UCC Resources (Store@ucc.org), for instance, has a convenient one-room Sunday School kit for 3-to-12 year olds called Deep Blue Kids Curriculum, "At Home with God." The board is anxious to learn about new ideas we can all benefit from. Please respond to inthevineyard@juno.com.



"Widening the Welcome: Living, Learning, Leading"

The United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries, in collaboration with the New York Conference, invites you to join us for the 2018 "Widening the Welcome Conference: Living, Learning, Leading"! This year's event will be held in beautiful Niagara Falls, NY at the Sheraton Niagara Falls, and the Niagara Falls Convention Center. The conference will begin on Thursday, November 1st, and ends after lunch on Saturday, November 3rd, 2018. There will also be an opportunity to register for a Mental Health First Aid class on November 1st. This class, organized with the help of UCC Mental Health Network, is a certificated course, with continuing education credit upon completion.

The Widening the Welcome Conference is built around the UCC's vision for disability inclusion throughout the United Church of Christ. Offered workshops will bring attendees enlightenment in various areas including: Accessibility & Inclusion (A2A), Advocacy, Christian Education and more, from invited speakers and organizations. There will also be a discussion panel consisting of people from different perspectives within the UCC. This will bring awareness and insight on living with a disability into the fullness of service to an accessible, inclusive and loving God.

Invited speakers include: Exec. Minister for Justice and Local Church Ministries- Rev. Traci Blackmon; Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice- Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund; Still Speaking Devotional Writer- Rev. Jennifer Brownell; and keynote speaker, UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer. The event is sure to be an uplifting and rewarding experience!

For more information, or to register, go to: http://www.ucc.org/disabilities_and_mental_health_justice. You may also contact the NYUCC.

Annual Theme Basket & Auction**Luncheon****Saturday, November 3****The Columns Banquets****2221 Transit Rd., Elma, NY 14059****Doors open 11am****Buffet Luncheon 12:30pm****Tickets \$35 per person****Sit with your friends! Reserve a table of
10 for only \$300.****This event will benefit the Elderly &
Disabled Programs of United Church
Manor (ucmanor.org)****For tickets or to make a donation, call:****Jennifer Miller or Karen Zmich at****716-668-5804****Thank you for your support!**

from Pastor Krista Ulrich (Minister of Faith Formation and Pastoral Care at Ebenezer UCC and Western Area Youth Advisor)

WAY (Western Area Youth) Annual Report

The Western Area Youth program continues to grow in strength and numbers. Our Winter Retreat was held at Epiphany UCC last year with 22 youth in attendance. Our speakers were Megan Brodziak (teenage mental health advocate) and Mindy Davey (bullying prevention advocate, singer/song writer). We traveled to Nativity Miguel School to complete community service and enjoyed the 5 Wits escape room at the Galleria Mall. We ended our retreat by participating in worship with the congregational members of Epiphany UCC.

Over the summer we had a group of 35 youth travel to Boston on a mission trip. In August, a bus of 26 youth traveled to our Regional Youth Event in Pittsburgh, PA. While there, many of our youth took an active role in workshop and workshop activities. All youth completed a community service component at a youth center in the city of Pittsburgh. The EKHN delegation from Germany joined us at the RYE.

Our Fall WAY Retreat was held at Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center. There were 40 youth in attendance. In addition to helping with the Halloween Happenings sponsored by DCC, the group completed an educational workshop on

tolerance and diversity and traveled into Fredonia for late-night bowling.

Each WAY Retreat has an interactive Vesper Service on Friday night and a candle light Vesper Service on Saturday night. Each retreat also includes a combination of community service and a time of fellowship.

This past Winter Break, 20 members of our Post High UCC Group gathered for a time of fellowship. We are gradually working at increasing participation in this group with hopes of strengthening youth presence in the Western Area.

**ST. PETER'S U.C.C. PRESENTS
FREE CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca, NY 14224, will present a free Christmas concert on Sunday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The concert will highlight St. Peter's two musical groups, "Strike The Rock" under the direction of Mark Kasprzak and Chancel Choir under the direction of Alfred C. Plant, along with featured musicians.

All are welcome to attend and enjoy an evening of uplifting spiritual music. There is no admission to this concert, but a free-will donation will be requested.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the church office at 716-674-1233 or visiting the church's web site at www.st-petersucc.org.

from Kirsten Albrecht-Carrié, Co-director of the Center of Christian Growth

New Books on the Shelves at the Resource Center

We have added several books to our collection that we hope will be of interest to our UCC constituents, and by extension, to our sisters and brothers in our Disciples of Christ congregations. (If you DoC folk can supply us with information regarding comparable resources for your denomination, we will try to add them to our collection.)

Covenant by Jane Fisler Hoffman traces the biblical theme of covenant from our Old and New Testaments, through our denominational roots and into the United Church of Christ in our time. Each of the nine chapters conclude with options for discussion to be used in small group study as well as self-reflection.

History and Program by Margaret Rowland Post and **Theology and Identity** edited by Daniel L. Johnson and Charles Hambrick-Stowe: These two volumes provide extensive insight into the roots and evolution of our denomination over time. Useful material in both helps to clarify who we are, what we are and how we operate as the United Church of Christ.

Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ edited by Barbara Brown Zigmund offers a collection of stories not traditionally shared in histories of the United Church of Christ. These stories relate to the diversity of church life and connect to “significant developments in American religious and ethnic history.”

The Evolution of a UCC Style by Randi Jones Walker looks at the UCC through its “culture and ethos” not its structures. Themes of inclusiveness, diversity of theological heritage, congregational polity, liberal theological approach and ecumenical spirit are explored as well as the tensions and boundaries of each topic.

New Ecclesiology and Polity by Clyde J Steckel approaches the 21st Century issues of denominational decline from the viewpoint of the UCC, and its need to reexamine and reshape both the doctrine of the church and how it is organized and operates.

from Rev. Hugh Pratt

As I See It...

Exploring Our Core Values for the National Nightmare We Are Living Together

Growing up in the totalitarian society of the South, we were not permitted to speak about our feelings and thoughts on the issues of that day. As a result, the people suffered much hate and violence and regrets. I have always admired the people of the North who seem to be able to voice their feelings. I love New York because of the way it tries to do justice. It often fails but it keeps on trying. The Disciples are no exception, and neither are any other denomination.

It may be helpful for the WNY area to explore our Christian core values at this time in history and their importance to us now. We are in a crisis in our nation. We are in a fall! At this very moment. What are our core values now in WNY? In our own church? In our region? In our nation? Are we free to talk about them? There seems to be a pause in the cause.

What can be done about it now? Can we explore our core values and affirm them for the volatile times we are facing? Can we express them in published newsletters such as *In the Vineyard*, from the pulpit, and in other ways? Or just put our hands in our pocket and walk away saying this is not the business of the church?

Rev. Anne Paris and I invite anyone interested to come to Harriet Tubman Christian Church at Paradise House, 144 Mills Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14212 at 6:30pm on Nov. 14, 2018 for a discussion. Any suggestions? Call 716-861-4487.

(As per the Editorial Board's policy, this submission has been edited.)





News of Our People “A Ministry of the Pen”

Rev. Mr. Hope Douglas Harle-Mould is honored to have seven devotionals published in the current (Oct.-Dec.) issue of the Presbyterian *These Days*. In the United Methodist devotional for youth, *Devozine*, two of his writings are chosen for publication every month. And in *Purpose*, a Mennonite magazine, Hope’s true-life narratives are featured four times a year, including such recent ones as “I Brake for Lemonade Stands,” “The Darkest Day of My Ministry: God’s Gift of Hope,” and “The Day I Finally Found My Courage.”

Along with his supply preaching, performing original guitar songs, and delighting children with his white dove, Gracie, he is active in refugee resettlement through his home church, Pilgrim St. Luke’s/El Nuevo Camino UCC, the first sanctuary church in Buffalo.

Hope also continues to love and cherish his wife, Rev. Linda Harle-Mould, as they approach their 40th anniversary next June. They rejoice in their three adopted children (two from Korea, one multiracial) and three grandchildren.



November Calendar Notes

- 1 WNY UCC & DC Retired Clergy Luncheon, Denny’s, 4610 Genesee St., Cheektowaga 14225 11:30am prayer, 12-2pm lunch, RSVP Cheri Keipper, 585-547-3605
- 1-3 “Widening the Welcome Conference: Living, Learning, Leading,” Sheraton Niagara Falls, 300 3rd St., Niagara Falls 14303 and Niagara Falls Convention Center, 101 Old Falls St., Niagara Falls 14303
- 3 The Lay Academy Spiritual Formation Course, Phoenix UCC, 1280 N. French Rd., Buffalo 14228, 9:30am-12:30pm
- 3 United Church Manor’s Annual Theme Basket Luncheon, The Columns Banquets, 2221 Transit Rd., Elma 14059, doors open 11am, buffet luncheon 12:30pm
- 4 WNYACIC Annual Meeting, Salem UCC, 114 Morgan St., Tonawanda, 14150, registration and lunch, 12:30pm, business meeting, 2:30pm
- 8 North Towns Clergy, Church of the Nativity, 1530 Colvin Blvd., Buffalo, 14223, 12pm
- 8 Education Committee, Resource Center, North Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Forest Rd., Williamsville, 14221, 1pm
- 10 The Lay Academy Spiritual Formation Course, Phoenix UCC, 1280 N. French Rd., Buffalo 14228, 9:30am-12:30pm
- 12 Western Association Church & Ministry, Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224, 9:30am-3:00pm. For more information call 716-882-7705.
- 17 RACHELS - breakfast group for clergy spouses, Denny’s, 3920 Maple Rd., 9am
- 19 WNYACIC Council, St. Stephens-Bethlehem, 750 Wehrle Dr., Buffalo, 14225, 7pm

December Calendar Notes

- 2 Free Christmas Concert, St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca, NY 14224, 7pm
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In the Vineyard is published periodically by the Western New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC).

Editorial Board

amos acree	Larry Paul
Rev. Robert Dievendorf	Pierre Albrecht-Carrié
Alfred C. Plant	

Editorial Assistant -Lois Vidaver

Editor – Shannon King

Distribution-Kathy Najuch
45 Dalton Dr., Buffalo, NY 14223-2310
716-835-4120

E-mail - uccnywes@verizon.net

Visit the new WNYACIC website:

<https://wnyuccdoc.wixsite.com/wnyacic>

Send newsletter items to: inthevineyard@juno.com

In the Vineyard, published 10 times a year, invites you to send us your comments and opinions, expressions of faith and announcements of events by the 14th of each month. We welcome information regarding the health and welfare of our clergy and others in the Western Area. Please write us when you know of a birth or celebration, a serious illness or a death in our church family – please include your name and telephone number.



