

Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

from Rev. Robert Dievendorf

Micah 6:8

Last summer I participated as one of three facilitators for a one-day Boundary Awareness Refresher Training for Authorized Ministers in our Western Association of the New York Conference, United Church of Christ. At these events (which are held yearly as needed) we present and discuss various areas of which clergy should be mindful so as not to create problems or potential problems for themselves or others. These include actual or perceived misconduct in areas such as sexual, financial, dual relationships, use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), gifts, self-care, leave-taking and several more. The training is mandated by our New York Conference every three years for all Authorized Ministers as a way to keep abreast of existing and/or new areas to watch out for. At the conclusion of each two-day event, participants are asked to submit an evaluation form so we, as trainers, can learn where to improve our presentations and areas that are of interest to those attending. Inevitably, one of the responses on most all evaluations mentions the vast scope of potential boundaries that face clergy. One attendee put it so well: *It's not easy following the Lord!!* How very true and insightful is this statement! And it applies NOT just for clergy.

I think it is fair to say that following the path which God desires of us in life is not easy for anyone. I am drawn to that familiar passage from the prophet Micah that tells us: *God has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God!* (Mic. 6:8 NRSV)

Micah was not speaking to the "heathen" of his day to show them the way to salvation. He was, in fact, speaking to people who already have made the decision to follow God, but were not having much success. These people to whom Micah was speaking had a dead faith which did not lead to living a holy life. What Micah was telling these folk was: be fair and uplifting of all peoples, promoting all that God has promised his covenant people and speaking/acting against all that inhibits these

promises; to not only perform acts of kindness but be generous in mercy (forgiving, causing no harm to anyone, being compassionate and caring, loving one another); and fulfill all the duties God asks of us through the Ten Commandments and other of His teachings.

In studying scripture, we can attest that the ancients did in fact NOT faithfully follow God's leadership. Time after time after time God's covenant people turned from Him and found themselves in deep, deep trouble with Him, with each other, and even with themselves! But this truth did not apply only to our ancient forbears. How about you and your walk with God? Are you faithful in all things OR are you a little like the people to which Micah was speaking who had fallen short in their faith? Are you doing justice? Are you loving kindness? Are you walking humbly with the Lord? If you can answer in any way BUT an absolute YES, take heart - you are not alone. I confess to you that I (as clergy) sometimes slip in my faith and find myself in a similar position as our sisters and brothers of old.

But do not give up, just because you may have slipped!! We can be changed. That is why Jesus the Christ, God in the flesh, came into the world. By his death and resurrection and ascension, we are offered forgiveness when we slip and promised the Holy Spirit will personally accompany each and every one of us in our daily walk so that we might be encouraged to live the way God intends for us to live.

But we cannot achieve this change in our lives by merely sitting back on our derrieres. We have to make an effort by reading and studying scripture, being intentional in our prayer time, attending worship to be in fellowship in a special way with God and one another. But, again, you don't have to do this alone. There are many (including ME) who would love to share with you as we ALL journey toward a deeper relationship with God through Jesus the Christ.

Read often Micah 6:8. Memorize it if you wish. Meditate upon it daily. Make it your mantra. You might be surprised at what happens in your life and in the life of others!



WNYACIC

July/August Prayer List

July Prayer List

Phoenix UCC, Amherst, Deborah Baxter, pastor
 Riverside-Salem UCC/DoC, Grand Island
 Catherine/Jon Rieley-Goddard, pastors
 First Congregational UCC, Niagara Falls, supply
 pastors
 Church of the Nativity UCC, Town of Tonawanda
 Ruth Snyder, pastor;
 Kay Woike, pastor emerita;
 Dan Schifeling, pastor emeritus
 East Aurora Christian Church, East Aurora
 Jan Mahle, transitional pastor;
 Charles Lamb, pastor emeritus;
 amos acree, pastor emeritus
 Department of Local Church Ministries
 Voice Buffalo
 Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center

August Prayer List

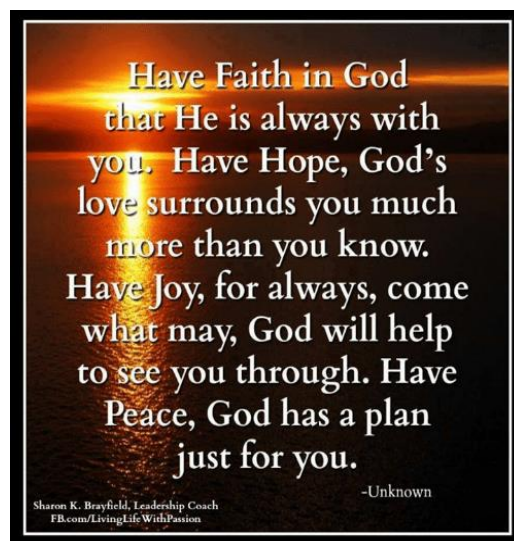
St. James UCC, Hamburg,
 Heather Ramsey Mabrouk, pastor
 Ebenezer UCC, West Seneca,
 Gary Gossel, senior pastor;
 Krista Ulrich, Minister of Visitation/
 Pastoral Care/Faith Formation;
 Ralph Anderson, pastor emeritus
 United Baptist Christian Church, Lewiston
 Vince Eisaman, pastor
 Northeast Region, Christian Church (Disciples of
 Christ), Thaddeus Allen, Interim Regional
 Minister
 Western Area Nominating Committee
 Women's Fellowship, UCC
 Christian Women's Fellowship, DoC
 New Light Christian Church Karen Ministry

from Rev. Robert Dievendorf

Churches in Transition

June 2018

St. Peter's UCC, West Seneca -The search team is narrowing their search for a called pastor.
Kenilworth UCC - The church is being served by Tina Bacon and Thunder Silk. Dale Stanley continues to meet with them.
Faith UCC, Williamsville -The church has entered into an agreement with Rev. Dawn Meir.
St. Matthew's, Hamburg - Lynn Morgan is serving them. Ryan Henderson met with search team on April 10. They have begun to work on Local Church profile.
Pilgrim-St. Luke's -They have a church profile and have begun to receive pastoral profiles.
First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Niagara Falls - Dale Stanley has met with search chair and leaders.
Trinity-Gowanda -Dale Stanley has met with search team. They are working on the profile and will contact Dale when they have completed it.
Jamestown Churches (First Congregational and Pilgrim Memorial) - They have hired an interim by the name of Rev. Dr. Philip Rohler.
Lockport UCC - I met with the church leadership team on June 5th. They are looking toward the future.



<3

Correction from June's Prayer List

First Grace United Church (UCC/Disciple),
 Wellsville, Supply pastors



**Upcoming Retirement for
Rev. Robert Dievendorf –
Open House Reception
Sunday, August 26, 2-5 PM**

Rev. Robert Dievendorf announced his retirement date of August 31, 2018, after 9 ½ years as the pastor of United Church of Christ, Congregational, Arcade. He will be dearly missed by the congregation of Arcade UCC and the many people whose lives he has touched during his time as pastor there. To honor Rev. Dievendorf and his years of pastorate at Arcade UCC, there will be an open house reception on Sunday, August 26, 2018 at the Arcade Village Park Cabin, Grove St., Arcade, 14009, from 2-5pm. All are welcome to come and wish Rev. Dievendorf well in this new chapter of his life! Please RSVP how many will be attending by August 7 to Shannon King, 585-492-4530, or arc-ucc@juno.com. The editorial board of *In the Vineyard* would like to congratulate Pastor Bob on his upcoming retirement and wish him all the very best!

from amos acree

**EAST AURORA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
CELEBRATES 175 YEARS!**

East Aurora Christian Church (EACC) will be celebrating its 175th anniversary this coming summer and fall. A series of events for church and community will be presented, including music and art festivals for families, a Road Rally to the previous three worship sites and some of East Aurora's barn quilts, special worship services and Bible studies, and the Historic & 2018 Quilt Show in conjunction with EA Art Walk.

The anniversary weekend will be October 19-21 with banquet to be determined. There will also be a tea service and EACC Art Show in conjunction with the Roycroft Art Show in December. For more information about specific events/times, contact the Church office at 716-652-5040 or email at eastauroracc@gmail.com

from amos acree

**Samaritan Society Closes and Celebrates
Its Ministries**

For more than 100 years, the Samaritan Society has been an organization that has supported the United Church Home and Society in many ways, but it has decided that its ministries can no longer continue. It will be meeting for its final times in June, July and August. In June, it will be putting together a short history of its work with the UC Home, the UC Manor, and Plymouth Crossroads. It will also decide on how to distribute its remaining funds. In July, it will meet at the UC Manor for its annual ice cream social. Then in August, at its annual picnic, it will celebrate its life in ministry. Well done, good and faithful servants.

from amos acree

**Faith Community Nurse Notes –
“You’re Built for Rest”**

You can't hope to succeed in other areas of health if you neglect your nightly rest. Most adults need 7-9 hours of “worthwhile” sleep each night. That means your body should move through the various sleep stages, including REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. Here are four tips to get started.

1. Maintain a consistent sleep/wake schedule – even on weekends.
2. Make sure your mattress supports you well. Replace your pillows every year or so.
3. Remove all electronic devices from your sleep room. That includes a phone. Use an old-school alarm clock to wake you up.
4. Talk to your health care professional about any sleep issues you have. They may point to other health problems. Stress and anxiety can make life hectic and harder to keep a consistent sleep pattern. Keep a daily journal. Note how stress in life may impact your sleep at night, and if so, talk to a health care professional. (adapted from “Ways to Well-Being 2018 Calendar,” American Institute for Preventive Medicine – www.healthylife.com)

**Northeast Regional Assembly
September 14-15, 2018,
Bronx, NY**

As more details are available, they will be distributed via email/phone messages/snail mail.



from Gordon & Ginger Comstock for NY/HELP

NY/HELP June Trip Returns from Honduras

Five people traveled to Honduras to participate in NY/HELP's June mission trip to the Mataderos tribe, located around La Laguna in the rural mountains of Yoro. Retired school principal Scott "Carlos" Reinhart, education enthusiast Judy Toner, seamstress and sewing expert Connie Frisbee Houde, translators Shelsea Ochoa, and pastor Justo Gonzales (now Regional Conference Minister in Michigan but until recently pastor of Pilgrim-St Luke's / El Nuevo Camino church in Buffalo) spent the week from July 3 to 10 working with the people of the tribe. They were aided by NY/HELP's local coordinator, Joel Ramirez, who made local arrangements to visit schools and observe classes to determine where NY/HELP could assist, and by Aracely Garcia, the local seamstress who had been teaching the women's sewing classes there. These classes apparently paused in February because they ran out of fabric.

Scott says, "We had a work-intensive and highly productive trip. I have to salute the members of our team, Connie, Shelsea, Judy, and Justo for their amazing dedication and caring. We accomplished a great deal and left satisfied that we are making progress."

After the group left, Joel informed us that he was traveling to El Progreso with two patients on the 50.00 dollars that "Carlos" left for two brothers and another little boy with developmental issues.

Connie wrote about the problems with the sewing classes; she is trying to set up a 2-3 year projected budget for the program. We have funds for several more sewing machines. She also found out that (due to an unfortunate error), we owe Aracely back pay for last fall's teaching. This will be

sent ASAP. (Oops... problems with volunteer workers like yours truly.)

The students in the scholarship program at the school there, made plaques thanking the NY/HELP folk.

We will have more reports about NY/HELP's activities in Honduras, as they come in from our participants.

from Kirsten Albrecht-Carrie & Debbie Katz, Co-directors

Summer Hours for Resource Center

The following are the summer hours for the Resource Center for July and August 2018:

There will be staff in the Center for your assistance as follows:

July 2-6: The Center will be closed.
 July 9 and 12 (Monday & Thursday), 4-7pm.
 July 16 and 19, 4-7pm.
 July 23 and 26, 4-7pm.
 July 30 (Monday) 11am - 2pm
 August 1 (Wednesday) 11am - 2pm.
 August 6 and 8 (Monday & Wednesday) 11am-2pm.
 August 13 and 15, 11am - 2pm.
 August 20 and 22, 10am - 1pm.
 August 27 and 29, 11am - 1pm.

If these hours don't match your schedule, please call us at 716-631-0979 to make an appointment. Also, North Presbyterian Church, Williamsville, is generally open from 10am to 3pm Monday through Thursday and you can access the Resource Center to sign out materials yourself.

Regular Hours, Monday through Thursday from 10am to 1pm, will resume after Labor Day.

Have a safe and refreshing summer.



from Jeff Mason, treasurer, WNYACIC

Treasurer's Report

The members of the WNYACIC Council hold several business meetings each year and review the most recent treasurer's report. The editorial board of *In the Vineyard* asked for a copy of the report to be published in this issue to give our readers a better idea of Western Area finances.

(Please see spreadsheet insert/attachment for breakdown of Budgeted Income, Budgeted Expenses, and Funded Account Balances.)

As you can see, the year is 44 percent complete as this is being written, but we have only received 21 percent of our budgeted Covenantal Share income. Fortunately, our expenses have stayed under control, but we are still running a deficit of nearly \$5,000 so far in 2018. Our expenses continue during the summer, so we hope our member churches won't forget about their Covenantal Shares during the warm months.

We thank the following churches that sent Covenantal Share payments between May 13 and June 7: Ebenezer UCC (West Seneca), Payne Avenue Christian Church (North Tonawanda), Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC (Buffalo) and St. Stephen's-Bethlehem UCC (Amherst).

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. 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. The 2019 Western Area Covenantal Share and the UCC per capita will be based on the membership reported by churches in 2018.



DCC is Family to Senior Highs

In the Vineyard asked the following Dunkirk Campers the question: "What brings you back this year to Senior High Camp?"

Carlton Aures, Ebenezer UCC

The cliché answer is that camp is my home. I have been going for 18 years so why stop the streak? There are so many of my best friends that all meet at this place for a week and that might be the only time I see them, yet we pick up like no time has passed. I guess I come back every year because at this point it is a part of me. It is where I've grown both in faith and in person. I can't imagine what a summer would be like if I didn't go for at least a week.

Mari Aures, Ebenezer UCC

Last year was my first year of senior high and it was, if not the best, one of the best weeks of camp I have ever been to. Out of all 16 years that I have been to DCC, that week was surely one to remember. The main reason why I am going back to Senior High is to see my family. The people at camp are not just friends, they are the kindest, most warm-hearted, and beautiful people that I have ever met. They are always welcoming and they never judge who you are. Not only do you become close with the campers, you also create a bond with several of the counselors, if not all. To me, Senior High has the best counselors that you can always trust and count on. The people at DCC are what truly makes it memorable and why I have chosen to return year after year.



