



Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

from Rev. Robert Dievendorf

The True Meaning of Lent

I guess some would say I have too much time on my hands. But the fact is, sometimes I just wonder about strange things. For instance, I've often wondered (and I thank Pope Francis for finally settling this for me) *do pets go to heaven?* Or, how does a delicate budding flower manage to protrude through something like a concrete driveway? Or, why is it colder in Buffalo, NY than in Anchorage, AK? Well, I have another query for ponderance: why is this season of the Christian year called *LENT*? I thought lent is something you did when you gave money to someone in anticipation of being paid in return?

After some searching, here's what I found. The word "Lent" comes from the old English, "lencten," which means "spring." In Middle English are derived the words, *lenten, lente, lent*; related to the Dutch, *lente*, the German, *lenz*, also rendered "spring." In Old German are found the related words: *lenzin, lengizin, and lenzo*, which probably comes from the same root as "long" and referring to "the lengthening days," as the earth moves from the winter solstice toward the spring equinox. In the Christian Church, Lent refers to the period of abstinence preparatory to the Feast of Easter. As this fast falls in the early part of the year, it became confused with the season, and gradually the word Lent, which originally meant spring, was confined to this liturgical use. The Latin name for the fast is *Quadragesima* derived from the Sunday which was the fortieth day before Easter.

So, it was through confusion of the human mind that our liturgical season of Lent is called "spring"! Okay! But maybe it wasn't so coincidental after all!!

What do you think of when you think of spring? Well, I think we would agree that newness, freshness, new starts would describe the word spring to most of us. It's that time of year when trees begin to burst forth with

new leaves, grass starts to green and lengthen, gardens are planted and perennials peek their colorful heads through the ground in a kaleidoscope of colors. It's that time of year when new life emerges from the winter's hiatus.

Lent is much the same. You see, it is during Lent that we Christians look toward a renewal of our very beings; a time when we self-examine and introspect that which challenges our relationship with God so that our foibles might be righted and our rightful relationship with God might be restored and renewed. Using the disciplines of Lent (self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love) we look to make right that which is wrong in us and focus on the new life that is ours through the death, the burial, the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ!

Lent is the time when we prepare ourselves for the blessed promise of everlasting life that comes to us through the sacrificial love of Christ Jesus on the cross.

So you see, like so many, many things in life, I can see God's hand in the naming of Lent and not just the coincidental confusion of the human mind by our Christian forbears.

But whatever the reason for the name, let us be intentional in our disciplines this Lent so that we might journey through a more meaningful Lenten season and be blessed by the work we do to become more like those whom God has created us all to be.



SAVE THESE DATES!

- May 6 – WNYACIC Spring Meeting**
- June 8 & 9 – NY Conference Annual Meeting**
- Crown Plaza Hotel, Syracuse, NY**
- November 4 – WNYACIC Annual Meeting**

WNYACIC

March Prayer List

Peoples Community UCC, Buffalo
 Charles Henderson, pastor
 Epiphany UCC, Clarence Center
 Rev. Lori Burns, pastor
 St. John's UCC, Dunkirk
 Zoe Milliman, pastor
 New Light Christian Church, Buffalo
 Nadine Schrodt, pastor
 Western Area Council
 Center for Christian Growth of WNY
 Plymouth Crossroads, Lancaster
 Jennifer Thorpe, director
 Global Partnership Prayers – Nicaragua, Hong Kong,
 South Africa, Honduras, India

from Jeff Mason, treasurer, WNYACIC

Treasurer's Report

We thank the following churches that sent Covenantal Share payments between January 12 and February 9: Ebenezer UCC (West Seneca); First Congregational UCC (Jamestown); Grace UCC (Buffalo); Lockport UCC; Pilgrim Memorial UCC (Shawnee); 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. Your 2019 Covenantal Share is based on the membership your church reported or will be reporting at the start of 2018. (Disciples of Christ churches have already submitted their reports, while UCC reports are due in early March.)

Disbursements From Endowment

Annual disbursements from our endowment were made recently, as follows: Dunkirk Conference Center, \$6,735; Plymouth Crossroads, \$6,735; Department of Community Ministries for grant funding, \$6,735; United Church Home Society for the Senior Wishes program, \$565; and \$1,685 to our Funded Account to help with expenses of those attending the next UCC General Synod or DC General Meeting.

**WNYACIC Spring Meeting: Sunday, May 6, 2018,
 1:00-5:00 PM, Covenant UCC, 4449 Main St.,
 Gasport, NY 14067**

Krolick's Famous Fish Fry

Friday, March 30, 2018, 4:00-7:00 PM
 Payne Ave. Christian Church, 1459 Payne Ave., North Tonawanda

Dine in or take out. Dinner includes: fish fry, coleslaw, salt potatoes, roll/butter, dessert and drink...All for only \$12.00

For more information and tickets, call Brett at 716-491-6205

from Kathy May

A Beginning and an End

A very dear friend of mine has told me many times when I'm questioning a situation, "Everything has a beginning and an end." So it is with a great deal of sadness that I must end my time as the Editor of *In the Vineyard*. I have completely enjoyed the last 9+ years as your editor and I will treasure the friendships I've made during this time (some in person, some over the phone.) The Vineyard Board has been such a joy to work with and the support they have given me has been invaluable. That being said, I would also like to welcome my replacement, Shannon King, who is not only taking on the challenge of being the *In the Vineyard* Editor, but is also replacing me as the secretary at the United Church of Christ, Congregational in Arcade. Shannon's skills as an editor and as a writer will serve her well in her new position. Please join me in welcoming Shannon to her new "beginning" as your editor!

St. Peter's Meat Raffle

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Rd. in West Seneca, will hold a Meat Raffle on Saturday, May 12, 2018. Doors open at 6 PM. Presale tickets are \$7 per person, \$8 at the door. A table of eight can be bought in advance for \$50. Ticket includes admission, beer, pop, and sandwich. 50/50 raffles will be held throughout the evening. Guests are invited to bring their own snacks and coolers for their winnings. No outside alcohol allowed. A limited number of tickets are available. For further information, call 716-674-1233 or visit www.st-petersucc.org.



Self-Care and Your Family Tree

As we gain a better understanding of our ancestors' vitals as well as their paths in life, we come to a deeper understanding of our own strengths and weaknesses. Magda Miller, a genealogical records searcher, will guide us through some genealogy basics and our own ancestors' records so we can allow our family tree to blossom before us. If you are adopted, we can also explore alternatives. Join us Tuesday, March 27, 2018, 6:30-8 PM at Good Shepherd Community of Faith, 187 Southside Parkway, Buffalo, NY 14220. Everyone is welcome to this time of fellowship. Light refreshments will be available. There is no charge. Contact Sue for further information: 716-697-1657, bsuea@yahoo.com.



Annual Basket Raffle

Saturday, April 21, 2018

Doors Open at 11am
Raffle Begins at 1pm

Epiphany United Church of Christ
9365 Clarence Center Rd.
Clarence Center, NY 14032
Office (716) 741-1441

from Charles Lamb

“As I See It”

Decision Re the “Dreamers”

For those who take the Bible seriously, and may wonder what policy we should take with regard to the dreamers (older children of undocumented refugees born here who know only this country), the following three Scriptures should provide some guidance:

Leviticus (third book in the Bible) chapter 19, verses 33-34 “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

Deuteronomy (fifth book in the Bible) chapter 10, verses 18-19 (It is God) “...who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Matthew 25 (first book of the New Testament) chapter 25, verses 44-45 “Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

St. Stephen’s United Church of Christ

8520 Tonawanda Creek Rd.
Town of Clarence, NY (GPS)

The church that is open on the road that is closed!

Presents

EMERALD ISLE!

A program of Irish, Nautical, Celtic music
For the benefit of

Kevin Guest House, Buffalo, NY

America’s first healthcare hospitality house

Sunday, March 11, 2018, 3:00 PM

Join us on this Sunday just before St. Patrick’s Day!

Note: Please approach St. Stephen’s UCC from the Transit Rd. connection to Tonawanda Creek Rd. You can ignore all “road closed” signs to get to the church!

Are You Prepared?

**Roberta O' Toole, Esq. presents Will and Estate Planning Seminar
 Sunday, March 4, 2018, 2:00-4:00 PM
 Cleveland Heights Christian Church,
 4774 Union Rd., Cheektowaga, NY 14225
 Free and open to the public.
 RSVP 716-464-3205**

Sponsored by Cleveland Heights Christian Church Open and Affirming Committee



ANNUAL EVENT TO BENEFIT SENIOR WISHES

Join us on Thursday, April 19, 2018 from 6-9pm for the 5th annual Sips, Suds and Sweets event to raise funds for the Senior Wishes program. Guests will sample wine, beer and sweet treats while listening to live music and participate in our wine pull, silent auction, basket and wagon of cheer raffle. New this year, a chocolate fountain and photo booth, as well as complimentary candy buffet and valet parking. Contact Fox Run for information and tickets, at 716-508-2122.

Senior Wishes, a program of the UCHS, grants low income seniors and those in care facilities, life-enriching wishes. We believe that just because someone is aging it doesn't mean there are not still things they want to do, places they want to go, or people they want to see again.

CORRECTION!

**"Think Summer" Dunkirk Winter Reunion will be held at St. Matthew's UCC, S-5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY 14075.
 Sunday, March 4, 2018, 2:00-4:30 PM
 Grilled Hot Dogs Provided. Those attending: (A-M) Provide Dessert, (N-Z) Provide Side Dish**

What We Bring to the Neighborhood

"What does your church bring to the neighborhood?"

In a recent *Vineyard* survey, this question brought the following responses. Thank you so much to those who participated!

Pilgrim-St. Luke's/el Nuevo Camino UCC, Buffalo, parishioner Lynn Smith: "The West Side of Buffalo is a very diverse neighborhood, as is Pilgrim-St. Luke's/el Nuevo Camino UCC. The scriptures are printed in four different languages in each Sunday bulletin, the congregation is from many different countries, and we are home to the Food Gnomes, the Samaritan Counseling Center, Unity Church, The Vermont Street Block Club and other neighborhood and cultural organizations. PSL/ENC is a founding congregation of VOICE Buffalo, an Open and Affirming Congregation and a dedicated Sanctuary Church."

Phoenix UCC, Amherst, parishioner Barb Hecker: "Phoenix UCC is involved in our neighborhood in small ways. We offer free evening movies at times and invite the neighbors in. For a nominal price, we rent space to a Marital Arts Class and during the summer months, we offer free space for a dance class."

Riverside-Salem UCC/DC, Grand Island, Rev. Jon Rieley-Goddard: "Riverside-Salem UCC/DCC brings this to the neighborhood: A sense of the levels of the neighborhood itself. Our members are activists locally, nationally, and globally. This is our calling and our gift. We are especially concerned with justice for women and the planet."

St. Stephen's United Church of Christ

8520 Tonawanda Creek Rd.
 Town of Clarence, NY (GPS)

The church that is open on the road that is closed!
 Presents

CARYN & FRIENDS!

Join us for an afternoon of music filled with hope, love and inspiration. Featuring music of Piazzolla, Eva Cassidy, Harold Arlen & many others, let your heart be lifted as the sounds of two flutes and piano soothe your soul.

Kevin Guest House, Buffalo, NY

America's first healthcare hospitality house
Sunday, April 15, 2018, 3:00 PM

Note: Please approach St. Stephen's UCC from the Transit Rd. connection to Tonawanda Creek Rd. You can ignore all "road closed" signs to get to the church!

from Rev. Robert Dievendorf

From your Western Association Church and Ministry Committee

The following is a report of the congregations that are in transition in the Western Association:

Good Shepherd Community of Faith – 187 Southside Parkway, Buffalo, NY 14220

St. Peter's UCC in West Seneca – 1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

Kenilworth UCC – 45 Dalton Drive, Buffalo, NY 14223

Faith UCC Williamsville - 1300 Maple Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

St. Matthew's Hamburg - S-5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY 14075

Pilgrim-St. Luke's / El Nueva Camino United Church of Christ – 335 Richmond Ave, Buffalo, NY 14222

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Niagara Falls – 822 Cleveland Ave, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Trinity UCC, Gowanda – 30 Erie Ave., Gowanda, NY 14070

Jamestown Churches (First Congregational and Pilgrim Memorial) – 70 McKinley Ave, Jamestown, NY 14701

On Sunday, February 11, 2018, the Western Association was blessed to install as Pastor and Teacher the Rev. Lori Keller Burns at Epiphany United Church of Christ, Clarence, NY. We welcome Rev. Burns to our association and lift her in prayer for God's accompaniment as she embarks upon her ministry at Epiphany.

On Sunday, April 22, 2018, the Western Association will joyously install the Rev. Lisa Drysdale as Pastor and Teacher at Amherst Community Church in Snyder, NY. More information will be forthcoming as to the particulars of this celebration.

On Saturday, May 5, 2018, the Western Association will celebrate the Rite of Ordination upon Pastor Jacquelyn Ross-Brown at New Covenant United Church of Christ, Clinton Street, Buffalo, NY. More details will be forthcoming concerning this celebration.

Boundary Awareness

Every three years, our New York Conference requires that ALL Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Licensed and Commissioned) take Boundary Awareness Training, in order to keep their standing with our Western Association current and in good order. To facilitate this requirement, your Church and Ministry Committee is scheduling two training sessions this spring. The first, on Thursday, March 15, 2018, will be held at Church of the Nativity, [1530 Colvin Blvd., Buffalo, NY 14223](#) from 9AM-4PM, and the second is scheduled for Thursday, May 24, 2018 at Ebenezer United Church of Christ, 630 Main Street, West Seneca, NY 14224, again 9AM-4PM. If you

are in need of this mandatory training, please register with Rev. Robert C. Dievendorf, at Arcade UCC, Congregational, PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009 OR at dievenrc@gmail.com OR at 585-322-4958. The cost of each session is \$75 per person if paid 10 days before your desired event (after that date, the fee is \$100). This fee includes all materials and snacks and lunch. Your check may be sent payable to WNYACIC and mailed to the address above. Scholarship monies are available for those who require it. Please send your letter requesting this assistance to the Western Association Church and Ministry Committee, c/o Rev. Robert C. Dievendorf, UCC, Congregational, PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009.

March is "Colorectal Cancer" Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the United States and the second leading cause of death from cancer. Colorectal cancer affects people in all racial and ethnic groups. People over age 50 have the highest risk of colorectal cancer. You may also be at higher risk if you are African American, smoke, or have a family history of colorectal cancer.

The good news? If everyone age 50 and older were screened regularly, six out of ten deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to encourage people to get screened.

Everyone can take these healthy steps to help prevent colorectal cancer:

- Get screened starting at age 50. Encourage your family members and friends over age 50 to get screened.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get plenty of physical activity and eat healthy.
- Be sure to speak to your health care professional at your next visit.

(adapted from www.healthfinder.gov)

Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center

The Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center (DCC) is 110 acres of woodland, streams, playing fields, open grounds, and nature trails overlooking Lake Erie. DCC has been home to thousands of visitors over the last 92 years. They are associated with the United Church of Christ and welcome everyone. Contact them to book your trip or sign up for an upcoming camp session. Early Bird registration discount! Register by March 15 and receive \$25 off/registered camper with \$150 deposit/registered camper. Discount is for week long camps only. To check out available camps and to register, go to Dunkirkcc.com or call 716-366-1900.

