



Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

### Finding God in the Broken Places of History

By Roberta L. Farkas-Huezo

The Justice and Witness Committee at Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC has taken up Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s challenge to investigate "the ideational roots of our hate" by sponsoring a series of discussions focused on short films created around some of the themes in author, educator and community advocate Joel Edward Goza's book, America's Unholy Ghost: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics. In one such recent discussion, the theme of "finding God in the broken places of history" was brought forth, and the exchange of ideas that flowed during this discussion was deeply beautiful and prophetic. The conversation centered the faith-filled experiences of our ancestors and contemporaries whose realities modern day society would deem to be seeped in "broken places," and the lessons which those "broken place" experiences hold for us today – for those of us who live in "broken places" ourselves, but also (and perhaps especially) for those of us who live in the illusion of what modern day society would deem to be a whole or "unbroken" reality.

As our discussion group talked about finding God in "the broken places of history," I thought immediately of the thousands of refugees I have had the honor of working with since 1988, for 12 years in a professional capacity and the remainder in a volunteer capacity. I thought of the Somali man, a devout Muslim and son of an imam, who was fearful that he would betray his Muslim faith if he crossed the threshold of the former convent in Lackawanna

that served as the Vive refugee shelter's original home and that had a large cross over the doorway; he ended up loving the nuns and other staff members at the shelter and, after receiving his refugee status in Canada, served many other refugees of all faiths as a refugee services worker himself. I thought of the young man from Latin America who had suffered extensive discrimination due to his sexual orientation, but who faithfully attended Mass every week, knowing that God had not abandoned him, even when many of his compatriots and at times his church had done so. And I thought of Maria.

María was a young woman from El Salvador, a *campesina* who lived in a part of El Salvador controlled by guerrilla fighters during the Salvadoran Civil War. She had fled her country and come through Vive's refugee shelter on her way to seeking asylum in Canada, and as a refugee services worker at Vive, I was tasked with translating her declaration for her attorney. And this is what her story revealed:

María had gone down to the river from her village to wash clothes. While she was on the shores of the river, a group of Salvadoran soldiers came upon her. They were searching for guerrilla fighters or guerrilla sympathizers, and since María lived in an area controlled by the guerrillas, she and the other *campesinos* in her village were automatically presumed to be guerrilla supporters. The soldiers spoke harshly and in vulgarities to María, questioning her about guerrilla activity in the area.

When she told them that she had no involvement with such activity and had no information to offer them, one of the soldiers replied, “Since you can’t serve us in this way (that is, with information), you will serve us in another.” My blood ran cold when I translated those words. “Oh, no,” I thought. They’re going to rape her.” Rape, unfortunately, was a very common tactic of the Salvadoran military during the civil war. But then came María’s response: “No, sirs, no. God and the Virgin are with me. You can take my life, but you cannot take my dignity.”

***“You can take my life, but you cannot take my dignity.”***

Who, more than María, has found God “in the broken places of history?” In the midst of a brutal 1980’s civil war in a country wracked by poverty and injustice, this young woman – whom her society and our society and, ashamedly, even I had seen as a poor woman with little education and few prospects – proved herself a giantess of faith and spirit and dignity! In a showdown with a group of armed soldiers, this petite, young woman, bolstered by her faith in God and the example of her beloved Virgin Mary, had stood up for herself and her innate dignity. And in so doing, she was victorious, for the soldiers laughed at her, told her she wasn’t worth their time, and continued on their patrol.

María is but one of many extremely brave people I have had the honor of knowing and serving in my refugee work, but hers is a story that affected me profoundly. I have always loved God deeply, but to have a faith like María’s – a faith that *bold*, that *rock solid*, that *immense* – how my heart burns for such a faith! I have thought of María many times over the years, and I wish I had a way of letting her know how much she has inspired me. As a white, American-born, heterosexual, cisgender, middle class, college educated female, I am about as close as you can get to our society’s definition of a whole or “unbroken” reality, and I have searched for God continuously in that existence. But it is through my work with the

imam’s son and the young Latin American gay man and María – and with the many others they represent – that I have found God most closely and most intimately. And I thank God incessantly for those who have taught me to look for God “in the broken places of history.”

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***America’s Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics***  
***By Joel Goza***

Two quotations to reflect on:

*“How white Christianity is different than what Jesus gave His life for is that Jesus gave His life to make us one with Himself and one with those who suffer, to where Jesus said, ‘Listen, if you’re gonna be with Me you gotta be with those people who are in prison, you gotta be with the immigrant, you’ve gotta be with the unhealthy, with the sick, and to get to know My God, you have to be able to know these people very deeply and very intimately.’”*

*“When we look at, for instance, the beauty of the African American spirituals—the African American spirituals display a certain type of intimacy with God that can often be lost without knowing God through the suffering of the African American tradition. The Prophetic Black church had a God that was in harmony with scripture and was very intimate with this brokenness.”*



Roberta Farkas-Huezo & her husband Oscar, members of Pilgrim - St. Luke’s UCC, and their global family (names withheld to protect privacy and families in their homelands).



## Prayerlists – March – May 2023

### March Prayer List

St. John’s UCC, Dunkirk  
 Rev. Zoe Milliman, pastor  
 New Light Christian Church, Buffalo  
 Rev. Nadine Schrodt, pastor  
 Western Area Council  
 Center for Christian Growth of WNY  
 Plymouth Crossroads  
 Jennifer McAndrew, director  
 Global Partnership Prayers – Nicaragua,  
 Hong Kong, South Africa, Honduras, India  
 Center for Racial Justice

### PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

By Richard Vogt IV, age 13, Confirmand at Arcade UCC

**God, you are very important and are all around us all the time.**

**Your time to shine will come, may your plan for all of us become real. And may earth be as great as heaven!**

**Make this day the best ever by giving us things that we need. Forgive us and other people.**

**Take us into Glory and keep us out of hate.**

**For happiness, and freedom, and beauty are yours always. Amen.**

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*from Rev. Gary Ferner, Associate Conference Minister*

### Churches in Transition

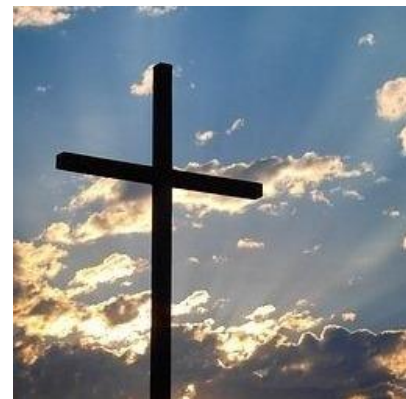
Pilgrim Memorial/First Congregational Jamestown  
 Covenant UCC, Gasport  
 New Covenant UCC, Buffalo  
 Church of the Nativity UCC, Tonawanda

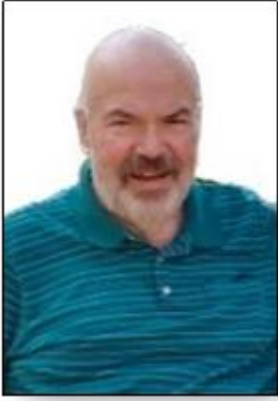
### April Prayer List

Pilgrim-St. Luke’s UCC, Buffalo  
 Rev. Nancy Rosas, pastor  
 St. John’s UCC, Eden  
 Rev. Dr. James Reidling, pastor  
 Lockport UCC, Rev. Dr. Richard Danielson, pastor  
 Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center  
 Coalition for Economic Justice, Buffalo  
 WNY Peace Center  
 Practical Resources for Churches (PRC)

### May Prayer List

Faith UCC, Boston  
 Rev. Dr. Ted Brelsford, pastor  
 Rev. Gary Burdick, Pastor Emeritus  
 Covenant UCC, Gasport  
 St. John's UCC, Strykersville  
 Western Association Church & Ministry Committee  
 Network of Religious Communities  
 UCC Coalition for Rural Ministries





## In Memory of Alfred (Al) C. Plant

Born March 20, 1955

Entered eternal rest February 10, 2023

Mr. Alfred (Al) C. Plant was church musician for University Christian Church, East Aurora Christian Church and St. Peter's United Church of Christ in West Seneca, and also involved in WNYACIC (particularly on the Editorial Board of the Vineyard newsletter) and the Peace Center. He entered into eternal life at 3:30pm on Friday, February 10th at home in Buffalo. Al was under hospice care since May 2022. His beloved wife Petra was present at his passing.

Al was a fifth generation Disciple of Christ. His passion for the arts particularly music and storytelling were much appreciated by all. His poetry, music, theatrical presentations all pointed to God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Truly, Al was a servant of the Lord.

*Condolences may be sent to:*

Petra Plant  
84 West Oakwood  
Buffalo, NY 14214

Click [here](#) for his obituary.

*from Rev. Jan Mahle*

## Remembering Al Plant (March 20, 1955 – February 10, 2023)

Sometimes a task seems too overwhelming like this one: To capture in words the creative energy, the kindness, the gentleness, the actions of this servant of God. Many of the Vineyard readers have been blessed by Al's writings--his poetry, his articles in which he spoke passionately and authentically about life issues and cultural tensions. Of course, these things and his musical prowess were outgrowths of his deep and abiding faith in Christ Jesus.

Al served as a church musician at University Christian Church, East Aurora Christian Church and St. Peter's UCC in West Seneca. In that position in each congregation, he brought a creative energy to each and every worship service. He was "uber" dedicated to matching the worship theme and Scripture with the music to be sung by the choir and the congregation. If he couldn't find an anthem, he wrote one. I can imagine Petra (his wife) being the first to hear Al's lyrics and melodies. I can imagine him saying "Petra, this is in your range. I need you for our duet." And then these songs of faith went to the pastor, the choir and congregation. They are now part of the contemporary psalms of faith.

There is of course more to be said and written about this man of faith. And I hope those of you who worked closely with him and others who were inspired by Al's music, stories or poetry would share that through the Vineyard, which he loved. I encourage you, as Al did, to tap into the Spirit of God to bring about deeper understandings of faith in action.



***In the Vineyard continues to be curious:  
"Describe a mission project unique to your  
congregation."***

***From Krista Ulrich, Ebenezer UCC, West Seneca***

At Ebenezer UCC we have an evening program that focuses on the importance of our Mind, Body, Spirit connections. The program is called Ebaerobics. This program is open to anyone in the community free of charge. We gather to exercise to Christian contemporary music on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30pm – 7-30pm. If you like to dance, this exercise program is for you! In addition to a good work out, the fellowship is wonderful, and each session ends with a moment of prayer before we walk back into the world. Come join us in keeping our mind, body, spirit connections healthy and strong! Contact the church at 716-674-4566.

***From Suzanne Fleming, mission coordinator,  
Payne Avenue Christian Church,  
North Tonawanda***

We have several different missions that have proven to work well within the community.

We have a "Warming Tree" each year (fourth year under our belt now) and it consists of: socks, hats, gloves, anything warm for winter. The ladies of the North Tonawanda knitting group have donated for the last four years to our mission, many handmade items, beautifully hand crafted. Some of the places that these items go to besides what our congregation gathers: North Tonawanda Schools, Heart & Soul (homeless), Vets, clothing pantry of NT,

SonRays (unwed moms with kids), YWCA of Lockport.

We also do a pet month. We gather pet foods, wet and dry, anything an animal would be in need of. We also have had the K9 Unit of NT come to our church with a demo of what his dog does and we donate to them. We take things to the SPCA of Niagara County, Pets Alive, and Tabby Town.

We gather food on weekly basis for the food pantry of NT and we are waiting to have our blessing box built for outside of our church so those in need can help themselves when it's after hours.

Our church consists of many elderly people and we do a good job as far as missions. We want to branch out further in our community. Any other information you would like to know about The Payne Avenue Christian Church, please email me directly at this email address: [srfleming@rochester.rr.com](mailto:srfleming@rochester.rr.com).

***From Lou Ann McMullen, administrator, Trinity United Church of Christ, Gowanda***

Trinity UCC's Community Meal effort is entering its 12th successful year. It all started in 2010 as an idea from our members who wanted to find a special way to give back to our wonderful neighborhood of Gowanda. The Free Community Meal was "born", and our first meal was January 27, 2011. We are very proud of our members and their efforts to keep this meal going and with also adding a giving table, where there are free items to anyone who needs them: clothing, shoes and some household items. Our Giving Table is unfortunately on hold due to Covid restrictions. We started our drive-thru meals in the summer of 2020 and will continue until further notice. Everyone is welcome. There have been over 20,000 people served. There has never been a charge but free will donations are accepted to offset the cost of the food.

When we were able to have eat-in meals, there has been music, special book readings, a play area for the kids, and also lots of laughs and fellowship. We are handicap accessible on Erie Avenue. All the meals are homemade, including the desserts.

Come on down and join everyone at the little white Church on the corner and enjoy some good food and fellowship. Thank you to the community for all of their support for the past 12 years. Trinity members are grateful for this opportunity to serve our neighbors. For more information, call 716-532-3004.

***From Arcade United Church of Christ,  
Congregational***

Arcade UCC partnered with the Arcade Elementary School to provide a “Christmas Extravaganza” for the more than 500 students who visited the church just before Christmas. Students saw beautiful decorations, heard a story read aloud, did an illuminating experiment with the “Happy Scientist” and received a craft to take home with them. This partnership with the school district has been a wonderful way to connect with more youth within the local community.



*Pastor Josh Bower, the “Happy Scientist,” provides students with exciting experiments during their visit to Arcade UCC.*

***From Chris Kolver, St. John's UCC, Strykersville***

St. John's UCC in Strykersville is a very giving congregation. During Lent instead of giving something up, we give - each week we collect food items, sometimes with a theme each week: canned goods, cereal, etc., and then at the end we donate all the items collected to a group of our choosing. We also collect food during November to donate to our local food pantry. In December we collect food and sponsor a family in need for Christmas. Our congregation may be small in number, but we are MIGHTY in spirit!

***from Shirley Lam, Amherst Community Church***

**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS**

Once again, Amherst Community Church, 77 Washington Hwy., Snyder (716-834-9700) will be the drop-off location for Kits for Church World Service in Western New York. Drop-off dates are 4/3/2023 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 4/4/2023 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. If necessary, you can arrange other times by calling me directly at 716-622-7482 (Shirley Lam). All collected kits will be transported to Rochester the beginning of May.

There are several different types of kits your group or you may wish to donate:

- Hygiene kits
- School kits
- Emergency clean-up buckets
- Welcome backpacks
- Period Packs (Menstrual Hygiene Kits)

In the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty, Hygiene Kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families. To assemble these and other kits, you get the current information at <https://cwskits.org>

[Cash donations](#) in lieu of assembled Kits also help Church World Service provide much-needed supplies. You can mail checks to CWS, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515.

*from Deb Wood, Sunday School Superintendent,  
Arcade UCC*

### **Arcade UCC Hosts Its First Winter VBS as Part of Ongoing Community and Youth Outreach**



***Campers and volunteers are bundled up and ready to make the trek to the school with their mission project donations.***



***With the help of police escorts from the Arcade Police Department, the campers and volunteers crossed the street to the Arcade Elementary School to deliver their donations.***

One of the many missions at Arcade UCC is reaching out and making an impact on our local community. Pastor Josh Bower is committed to promoting compassion and justice in this area, especially for the youth.

The church is located in close proximity to the Arcade Elementary branch of the Pioneer School

District and has developed a working relationship with them. Among those endeavors has been supporting their Snack Pack program, filling backpacks with school supplies, helping with past-due lunch debts, participating in the school's Halloween and Christmas events in the Village Park along with hosting the school's 500+ students for a Christmas Extravaganza.

During the Christmas Extravaganza, the children and staff were invited to visit our church and enjoy our decorated doors featuring reindeer, Buddy the Elf, the Grinch, as well as Josh Allen and Stefon Diggs. There were colorful trees and a host of Nativity scenes adding to their delight in Christmas. Each class heard a story before visiting with our in-house "Happy Scientist," Pastor Bower.

During the February winter break, we hosted our first Winter VBS, "Compassion Camp." Compassion Camp is a VBS curriculum where participants explore what it means to have compassion for ourselves, others, and the world. Ash Wednesday fell in the middle of the week and you found Pastor Bower curbside for "Drive-by Imposition of Ashes," beginning at 6:30 am. Our VBS campers heard the Godly Play story of Jesus' time in the desert and Pastor Josh offered ashes for the children as well.

The mission project during VBS supported the school's Snack Pack program. The campers brought items for the packs and the campers delivered them to the school.

#### ***1 Peter 4:10:***

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

from Patti Bartz, Pembroke Community Church

## **Pembroke Gives \$1500 Hand-Powered Trike to Arc Day-Hab Clients**



On January 31, 2023, Pembroke Community Church along with members of Venture Crew—a scout troop for young adults with disabilities, which meets in the church—delivered a special gift to the Arc GLOW\* program in Batavia: a Sun (brand) Handcycle Trike. Individuals in the AIM and WOW Day-Hab programs—many of whom cannot power a traditional bike with their legs—tried out the hand-powered trike indoors that day, and they look forward to enjoying it more outside as nicer weather approaches.

The church raised \$1500 to purchase the trike through a yard sale, a RADA sale and a Denny's event, while Venture Crew members contributed by a candy bar fundraiser.

At the official presentation of the trike, Pastor Linda Harle-Mould and her husband Hope, Mike Egloff, chair of this project, several members of the church, along with a few Venture Crew members, were on hand to speak and to celebrate this special relationship.

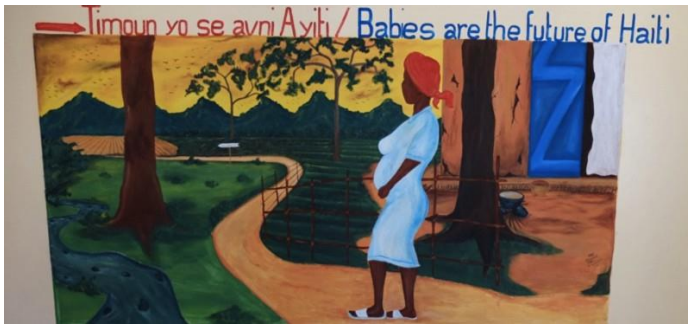
Then the Arc Day-Hab young adults circled 'round to take turns on the trike. Their huge smiles and exuberant joy were definitely evident.

According to Venture Crew/church leader Mike Egloff, the project began when the church wanted to help make it possible for one young adult in Venture Crew to have a bike he could propel with his arms, so he could participate in the group's bike outings. But when he and his mother thought about it, they believed such a bike should be given to and be available to all the Arc young adults who might benefit from it. From their generous decision, the project took off and resulted in this hand-cycle trike blessing the lives of many at Arc.

The church has begun discussing plans to purchase other adaptive equipment for this great cause. And the first donations have already come in!

*\*"The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes."*





**HELPING HANDS FOR  
HAITI**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023**  
**GOOD SHEPHERD COMMUNITY OF  
FAITH**  
**187 SOUTHSIDE PARKWAY,  
Buffalo, 14220**  
**9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

If my calculations are correct, this will be our tenth HH4H event.

Many clean delivery kits have been assembled and shipped to the Grison-Garde area of Haiti.

YOUR efforts are sooooo very much appreciated.

Lunch will be provided so be sure to RSVP. The primary supply needed at this time is sanitary pads.

We will also be gathering toothbrushes and toothpaste to aid in supplying the Robert Ford Orphanage and School as well as Haitian workers at the Tovar Clinic. Donations of any sort are always welcome.

Blessings,  
Sue Allen

716-697-1657; bsuea@yahoo.com

### **Faith Church in Boston Installs New Pastor**

Faith United Church of Christ in Boston is pleased to announce the installation of Rev. Dr. Theodore Brelsford as their Settled Pastor on February 26, 2023. A reception in his honor was held following the ceremony.

Although “Pastor Ted” has served Faith Church since May of 2019 as the Transitional Pastor, he was voted in as Settled Pastor in October 2022.

Rev. Dr. Brelsford is a graduate of Slippery Rock State University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Emory University. He was a full-time faculty member in Candler School of Theology at Emory University from 1998 to 2008 where he continues to hold an appointment as Associate Professor and conduct occasional on-line courses or short on-campus courses in the areas of Religious Education and Practical Theology.

The Orchard Park Community Church was served by “Pastor Ted” prior to coming to Boston. He was ordained there in 2009.

Pastor Ted and his wife Leslie live in Boston, NY, where they are a welcomed part of the community.

For more information about Faith United Church of Christ in Boston, visit our website

[www.faithunitedchurchucc.com](http://www.faithunitedchurchucc.com), see us on

Facebook, or call the church office at 716-941-3529.



## Western Area Church & Ministry Committee News

Greetings from the Western Area Church & Ministry Committee! The Church & Ministry Committee provides valuable resources to the ministers and congregations of our association. We serve as the representatives for the association in the covenant between a minister, a local church, and the association. In this role, we advocate for ministers as they negotiate the terms of a new call, we are involved in determining the conference compensation guidelines, and we confer authorized standing to ministers. The Church & Ministry Committee also shepherds Members in Discernment through the process from discerning a call to ministry to ordination. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that ministers have access to trainings that enhance their ministry and strengthen the local church. The Committee also ensures that ministers are held to high standards of conduct and continue to live within the covenantal relationship to which we are called.

The Church & Ministry Committee is also a resource for local churches. We can help congregations to establish healthy Pastoral Relations Committees, we can help mediate conflict in congregations, and we can serve as moderators during difficult congregational meetings.

The Church & Ministry Committee is composed of authorized ministers and lay members from our local congregations. We meet on the second Monday of every month, at 9:30 am, at Ebenezer UCC in West Seneca. If you would like to learn more about the work of the Church & Ministry Committee, or are interested in serving on the committee in the future, or if your church needs the support of the committee, please reach out to the Rev. Dr. Jeremy Lopez at [jeremylopez@fuller.edu](mailto:jeremylopez@fuller.edu).

### **The Western Area Church & Ministry Committee:**

The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Lopez, Chair  
 Barbara Shifeling, Vice-Chair  
 The Rev. Lauren Heidenreich  
 The Rev. Zoe Milliman  
 The Rev. Gary Gossel  
 The Rev. Paul Werner  
 The Rev. Paula Gustafson  
 Sandra Hamman  
 Ronald Janiszewski  
 Douglas Charles, Registrar  
 Gary Ferner, Associate Conference Minister

*from Rev. Lynn Morgan, treasurer, WNYACIC*

## **Western Area Treasurer’s Report**

The Western Area ended 2022 with a small operating surplus. That surplus is owing to decreased spending; Covenant Share giving decreased last year by about \$3,000 from 2021. Because these trends were evident, the projected budget for this year is based on a more realistic level of Covenant Share giving.

The operating surplus from 2022 will be used to repay the Area’s ‘rainy day’ fund, from which we borrowed in 2019. It is hoped that at the end of 2023 we will be able to replenish the fund to its previous balance of \$10,000.

Each year, the interest income from the Endowment Fund enables the Area to support ministries and mission throughout WNY. This year, the Endowment income (\$29,591) will support Dunkirk Conference Center, the mission initiatives identified by the Department of Community Ministries, and Plymouth Crossroads, as well as Senior Wishes and Western Area Youth.

Thanks to all the churches whose generous giving supports the ministry and mission of the Western Area.

*from Jeff Mason, Finance Committee*

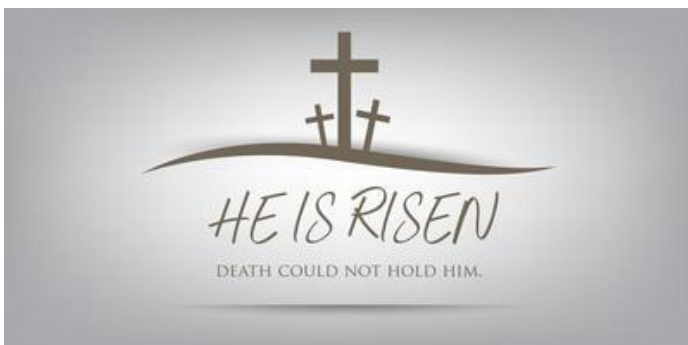
## **ENDOWMENT NEWS**

The financial markets performed better during the fourth quarter of 2022 than they did in the third quarter, so the total value of our endowment showed a gain at the end of the year. As of December 1, 2022, we completed our “dollar cost averaging” process of moving money from the Helen Khan bequest in six monthly installments from our smaller United Church Funds account to the larger one. That’s the reason for most of the change in those two accounts.

As of December 31, 2022, we had \$36,312.30 in the Capital Group American Funds (up from \$32,807.63 at the end of September); \$551,901.80 in the United Church Funds Account 009 (up from \$468,203.50 in September); and \$40,577.53 in the United Church Funds Account 010 (down from \$90,812.37 in September).

The total value of our endowment accounts on December 31 was \$628,791.63, which was an increase of \$36,968.13 from the total on September 30. This brought us back to several thousand dollars above the June 30 total. Unfortunately, our annual disbursement from the endowment is based on the September 30 total, so the disbursement we made to the Western Area checking account was lower than we had hoped it would be.

The January 2023 disbursement was \$29,591.00. Based on the 2023 Western Area budget approved at the annual meeting on November 8, this amount was divided as follows: \$8,877.00 each to the Department of Community Ministries, Dunkirk Conference Center, and Plymouth Crossroads; \$900 to the Western Area general budget; \$1,000 to the United Church Home Society; \$1,000 to Western Area Youth; and \$60 to the general budget contingency fund.



## Grants Available

Grants from the Department of Community Ministries (DCM) are available to congregations to help develop new ministries serving their local community or bringing them into closer connection with their community or neighborhood. If members of your congregations work with local community groups doing community ministry, applications to fund such ministries may be considered.

The intention of these grants is to support, encourage, and provide kickstart funding to churches in responding to the needs of their community. If you have an idea for outreach in your community, feel free to contact us and we will be glad to help you explore and develop a fundable plan.

Examples of recent grants include:

- a “Christ Centered Family Events” series at Arcade UCC
- a Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia Support Group at Good Shepherd Community of Faith
- a community mission project at Erie-Niagara Sunrise Exchange Club together with Cleveland Heights Christian Church
- rent support for a refugee family with Journey’s End Refugee Services in collaboration with Ebenezer UCC and several other Area churches.

Any member congregation in good standing with the WNYACIC is eligible to apply. A grant can be requested for a maximum of \$1500 and can be renewed for a maximum of three years per project, per church. A church may request up to two grants per calendar year.

Inquiries and requests for more information should be directed to Ted Brelsford ([pastor@faithunitedchurchucc.com](mailto:pastor@faithunitedchurchucc.com) 716-941-3925).

from Ginger Comstock, for NY/HELP



For the first time in three years, a group from NY/HELP is traveling to the village of La Laguna in Honduras. Their trip starts on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. They will be there less than a week to see how things are and assess needs. We have been getting regular reports, but it will be good to be on-site to see the new work on the new middle school and to make new plans for continuing the construction. School will be starting shortly (their year starts in February) and some students cannot attend without scholarships NY/HELP has provided in the past. So up-dated information needs to be gathered about which students need these scholarships. The school is free, but the students need to supply their own notebooks, pencils and other materials in order to attend.

NY/HELP Honduras is also in need of funds to help with school supplies and for finishing the building of the new school, as well as repairs on the kindergarten in La Fortuna that was leveled by a hurricane.

We appreciate donations to help our mission continue. During the time, during Covid, when we were not able to travel to Honduras, donations diminished also. Money can be sent to NY/HELP Honduras, c/o Arcade UCC, PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009.



## Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center News

We would like to thank all our supporters for a great 2022 camping season. We observed terrific growth in camper attendance this past year, returning to pre-Covid attendance levels. This confirms that people are ready to get back to socializing and building community, a specialty of DCC. The Board of Trustees would also like to send out a big Thank you to all those who donated in 2022 and to those who participated in the 2nd Century Campaign.

**DCC is excited to announce registration is now open for the 2023 Camping Season which includes camps for everyone! Register Today at [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com).**

Register by April 15<sup>th</sup> to receive the Early Bird Discount. We also offer First-Time Camper, Multi-Week Camper, and Sibling Discounts.

- March 10-12: Scrapbook Weekend II
- April 28-30: Superhero Weekend Camp
- May 19-21: Scrapbook Weekend III
- June 2-4: Women's Weekend
- June 25-July 1: Senior High Camp
- June 25-28: Pilgrim Mini Camp
- June 25-July 1: Pilgrim Camp
- July 2-8: Junior High Camp
- July 9-15: Family Camp I
  
- July 16-22: Outdoor Adventure Camp
- July 23-29: Family Camp II
- July 30-Aug 5: Pioneer Camp

- August 4-6: Faith Formation Retreat
- August 6-12: Soccer Camp
- August 6-12: Swim Camp
- August 24-27: One Piece at a Time Autism Camp
- September 15-17: Star Wars Weekend
- September 22-24: Harry Potter Weekend
- October 20-22: Fall Adventure Weekend
- November 10-12: Scrapbook Weekend IV

For information about renting at our facility for Weddings & Receptions, Banquets, Meetings, Picnics and more, visit our website [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com) or call our camp office @ 716-366-1900. Pilgrim Lodge is open year-round for week-long or weekend retreats for small groups.

## Upcoming Events at St. John's UCC 608 Centerline Rd., Strykersville, 14145



### Chiavetta's Chicken BBQ

Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup> from 11am-Sold Out  
Includes: Chicken, Roll & Butter, two Sides, and Dessert

**\*\* Take Out ONLY\*\***

St. John's United Church of Christ  
Located at the corner of Dutch Hollow & Centerline Roads in Strykersville  
Handicap Accessible



### Treasure Sale

Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>  
Doors open at 9:00AM  
Something for EVERYONE! One person's trash is another's treasure!  
St. John's United Church of Christ  
Located at the corner of Dutch Hollow & Centerline Roads in Strykersville  
Handicap Accessible



*South Buffalo Community*



**"BEEF & BASKETS"**

*Roast Beef Sandwich*

*Luncheon &*

*Basket Raffle with Baked*

*Goods Sale*

**Sunday, May 21, 2023**

**12 noon – 3:00 pm**

**\$9.00 Roast Beef Lunch**

**Pre-sale Special! \$8.00**

**Good Shepherd**

**Community of Faith**

(Across from South Park High School)

**187 Southside Parkway**

**Buffalo, NY 14220**

**716-824-4112**

**gscfchurch@gmail.com**

*from Pat Burgstahler, Council Representative*

**Kenmore UCC Offering Emergency Awareness Program**

There will be an Emergency Awareness Program (offered by the National Guard) open to anyone who is interested in learning about how to be prepared in your home in case of an emergency. The workshop will be offered at Kenmore United Church of Christ, 295 Delaware Rd., Kenmore, 14217, on Saturday, April 22 at 11 AM. A light lunch will be provided as well as an emergency kit for you to keep on hand.

Registration is required by Friday, April 14th. Please call the church at 716-875-1725 or email at [kenmoreucc@gmail.com](mailto:kenmoreucc@gmail.com). If necessary, please leave a clear message and contact information. Our council President Jim Aichinger is happy to answer any questions you may have. We hope to see many of you there.

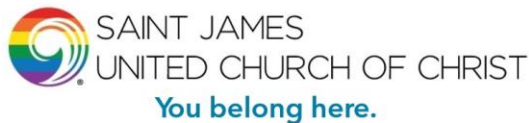


## FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1300 Maple Rd Williamsville, New York

### 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY LUNCH FRIDAY FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

EVERY FRIDAY IN MARCH,  
11:30 AM – GONE  
TWO SELECTIONS EACH WEEK  
**DRIVE THRU ONLY**



## Join our team!

### Church Administrator Part-time (20 hours per week)

Are you looking to work in a friendly and inclusive environment?

To learn more and to apply:  
[saintjamesucc.com](http://saintjamesucc.com)



## Mental Health First Aid Training for UCC NY Churches

Sat., March 25, 2023

9:00 AM

Online\*


Registration opened February 27.

NOTE: Only the first 30 people to register will be allowed to participate in this course offering! Classes are kept intentionally small for the sake of intimacy and sharing.

\*Pre-work will be required by all who attend. Pre-work will be sent to your inbox by the facilitator and take no more than 2 HOURS (approximately) to complete. It is a mix of videos and multiple choice questions that are available online. All work should be done prior to class.

To learn more, click the link below:

<https://wixsite.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212&id=cdcf5fa0da&e=30c8f7013f>

Cost: 



## One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) - Offering 2023

The theme for the 2023 One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering is **“It’s Time to Share,”** based on Galatians 6:9-10 (The MSG):

*So let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all...*

The apostle Paul wrote these words to the church in Galatia to exhort them to encourage each other and to be generous in caring for others. Through your collective generosity, the United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries continues to work with both domestic and global partners to care for others: providing food, water, medicines, education, disaster recovery resources and opportunities for sustainable development to individuals and communities in crisis around the world.

**Sunday, March 19, 2023**, the fourth Sunday of Lent, is the recommended date for the offering. Unlike previous years, OGHS promotional materials will **NOT** be automatically mailed to your churches this year so that you may order only the quantities you need from **UCC Resources**. If you have not already received a postcard reminding you to place your orders, you will be receiving it soon.

For your newsletters and worship planning purposes, graphics, videos and other resources are already available for download on the **OGHS website**. Additional resources will be added soon.

Thank you for your enthusiasm in promoting the One Great Hour of Sharing offering in your churches, and for sharing your generous gifts to ensure that we work for the benefit of all.



### Disaster Relief

The news continues to unfold about the devastating earthquakes on the border of Turkey and Syria.

The death toll continues to rise. At this time, the UCC is issuing an appeal to help recovery efforts in Turkey and Syria.

**Donations may be sent by check made payable to the United Church of Christ, PO BOX 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194.**

**Please be sure to note “Turkey and Syria” on your check in the memo section.**

**You may also text UCCDISASTER to 41444,**

**or**  
**click [here](#) to donate online.**

**Thank you.**







## New York Conference Annual Meeting, June 16-17, 2023

Due to pandemic bookings, we've had to slightly alter the previously announced Annual Meeting 2023 location. We are happy to announce the **2023 UCCNY Annual Meeting** will take place in scenic **Niagara Falls!** The Niagara Convention Center and adjacent Sheraton Hotel will be the location for our gathering beginning on June 15, 2023, with the Continuing Education Institute and Annual Meeting, June 16-17th.

Mark Your Calendars! -- Bring the family! -- Come early or stay after closing worship and enjoy The Falls.

**For more information, scan the QR code below or stay tuned to future emailing from the Conference!**



**KICKIN' IT TOGETHER**

NEW YORK CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**STATE YOUTH EVENT**

**March 10-12th, 2023**  
**The YMCA at Watson Woods**  
Painted Post, NY

**SYE Full Event,**  
**\$110 per person**  
**Youth ages 12-18**

**Confirmation Special:**  
Saturday afternoon-Sunday  
\$60-includes meals

**Full event :**  
<https://uccny.info/SYE2023>

**Pre-Confirmation :**  
<https://uccny.info/PreConfirm23>

The event will also include a confirmation piece for Saturday night for any group thinking of a retreat.

<https://uccny.info/PreConfirm23>

If anyone has questions, contact:

Wanda Chase, Salem UCC, Tonawanda, 716-510-9616 (please leave a message) or Pastor Marcia Tolman, Phoenix UCC, Amherst, 518-281-4065 (cell) [pastorphoenixucc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorphoenixucc@gmail.com)

NEEDED:

- 1~ We are always looking for adults who would be willing to serve as regional advisors – if you feel this call on your heart.
- 2~ Do you have any adults (over 21 years old) who could serve as a nurse or medical professional in an emergency situation at a Youth Event? In either case, please speak to Rev. Ryan W. Henderson at [rhenderson@uccny.org](mailto:rhenderson@uccny.org)

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing to share an opportunity with you. In my last four months in office, I am going to host a series of online discussions about subject matters that I think are of great interest to the life and health of the church. I am calling it “Create PlaySpace with the President.”

From now through the end of May, on eight Wednesdays from 1pm ET/10am PT and for one hour, we will gather in virtual space to discuss with each other vital perspectives and emerging strategies in in key areas of our shared life.

Each week, a key leader in the area we will be discussing will begin the hour with a brief presentation to try and prime the pump for the discussion that will follow.

All voices will be welcome. You will want to participate whether you have something important to contribute or whether you are just curious about hearing what others are thinking. It promises to be interesting, engaging, insightful – and our hope is also very helpful. [Please find the dates, times, subjects, and presenters here.](#)

I hope you are able to join us for at least a few, if not all, of these. We live in an interdependent world. We need each other. And we are discovering new ways of engaging with each other in spaces that were not available to us a short while ago. By taking advantage of these newly developing tools and resources we can create new capacities for learning, exploring, and crafting new pathways to future vitality.

I look forward to seeing you in our PlaySpace.

Shalom,  
Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer  
General Minister and President

**HAM & SCALLOPED  
POTATO DINNER**  
**Sunday, March 26, 2023**  
**11:30 AM - 4:30 PM or sold out**  
**First Congregational UCC**  
**132 N. Main Street**  
**Angola, NY 14006**  
**716-549-2115**  
Dine-In or Take-Out Available  
Includes: Ham, scalloped potatoes,  
vegetable,  
roll and dessert  
**\$ 12.00 / person**  
**Pre-sale encouraged Mon-Fri**  
**9am-1pm at the church office**  
**Or call 716-549-2115**  
**Raffle: Buffalo Sabres Stick signed**  
**by #28 Zemgus Girgensons,**  
**tickets are \$5.00 each**

**SAVE THE  
DATE!**  
**WNYACIC**  
**AREA MEETING &  
WORKSHOPS!**  
**Saturday, April 22, 2023**  
Where: TBD  
*(email Elizabeth Duffy at duffy.pastor@gmail.com if  
your church is interested in hosting.)*  
When: 9am-2pm  
Why: We'll have educational workshops  
following a brief service of recognition  
of anniversaries.



MHAWNY Presents

# MENTAL HEALTH VERSES LIVE: THE JOURNEY

At Pilgrim- St. Luke's United Church of Christ  
335 Richmond Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222

Hosted By  
**Karl Shallowhorn**

**Thursday, March 2nd**  
at 7 PM

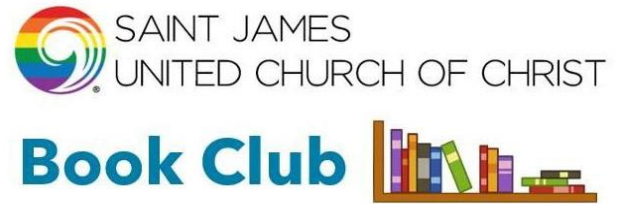
Mental Health Advocates of WNY Director of Youth Programs, Karl Shallowhorn, will be presenting Mental Health Verses: Live, a multi-media talk based on his 91.3 FM WBNY radio program of the same name. Drawing from his personal history as a person in long-term recovery from co-occurring bipolar disorder and addiction and more than 20 years in the behavioral health field, Karl will share inspirational stories that demonstrate the intersectionality between mental health, music and spirituality in a way you've never seen before.

All proceeds to benefit Mental Health Advocates of Western New York and Pilgrim- St. Luke's United Church of Christ

Scan Here For More Information

MHA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES OF WESTERN NEW YORK

PILGRIM ST. LUKE'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

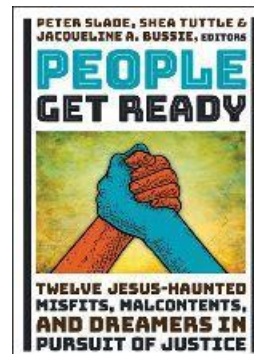


SAINT JAMES  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Book Club

We will be discussing *People Get Ready: Twelve Jesus-Haunted Misfits, Malcontents, and Dreamers in Pursuit of Justice*, edited by Peter Slade, Shea Tuttle, and Jacqueline A. Bussie (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2023). It began on **Tuesday, February 28.**

**12 sessions: February 28 - May 23 (no session on April 11)**



In a political climate where Christianity is increasingly seen as reactionary, *People Get Ready* offers a revolutionary alternative. This collection of succinct and evocative biographies tells the stories of twelve modern apostles who lived the gospel mission and unsettles what we think we know about Christianity's role in American politics.

*People Get Ready* presents a diverse cast of twentieth-century "saints" who bore witness to their faith with unapologetic advocacy for the marginalized. From novelists to musicians to scientists, they rose to the challenges of their times. You may purchase the book from your favorite retailer.

To receive the Meeting ID and passcode, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/stiuccbookclub>

**All are welcome!**



# A SPRING CONCERT

featuring

**· STRIKE THE ROCK ·**

directed by Mark Kasprzak

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road in West Seneca, 14224, will present a free Spring Concert on Sunday, May 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The concert will highlight St. Peter's musical group "Strike the Rock" under the direction of Mark Kasprzak, 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](http://www.st-petersucc.org).



## CHICKEN BARBEQUE

**First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main St., Angola  
14006**

Includes 1/2 chicken, buttered spuds,  
baked beans, roll & brownie

**Saturday, May 20, 2023**

11:30am – 4:30pm/or until sold out  
\$13.00

Eat in or Take-out

Enter on N. Main St. and Exit on High St.

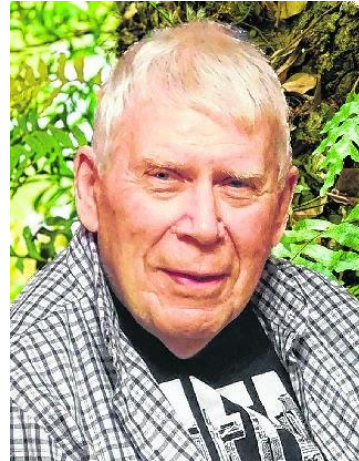
**Pre-sale Tickets call 716-549-2115**

Prepared by Toni & Tony



## LENTEN SERVICE

St. Peter's United Church of Christ,  
1475 Orchard Park Road in West Seneca, 14224,  
will host a Community Lenten Service through the  
West Seneca Community of Churches on Wed.,  
March 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary.  
Each Wednesday evening during Lent, an  
ecumenical worship service is held at one of  
the various member churches throughout the  
West Seneca community. Everyone is welcome to join  
the service of worship and music in observance of the  
Lenten season. 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](http://www.st-petersucc.org).



## In Memory of Rev. Kenneth H. Kolbe June 2, 1932 – January 26, 2023

The Rev. Kenneth Kolbe, Pastor Emeritus of Faith UCC, Williamsville, NY, entered into eternal life the morning of January 26, 2023, while in residence at the Brothers of Mercy Facility, Clarence, NY. He was an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ for 65 years.

Born in Buffalo, New York, he was the only child of Henry and Ester Kolbe. Following graduation from Buffalo State College, he entered the Eden Theological Seminary and was ordained to the Ministry in 1958. Called to Pastor at that time at St. Paul's, Shawnee, in North Tonawanda, NY, he served there until called to Faith Williamsville in 1968. He retired from active ministry in 1997 after 29 years of service at Faith UCC, and upon completion of the church's new sanctuary.

Ken was married to Audrey Kolbe for 63 years until her passing in June of 2022. They are survived by two children: Carolyn (Greg) Gessell and Kevin (Linda) Kolbe, two grandchildren, Jessica (Vincent) Camilleri and Sean (Bauj) Gessell, and two great grandchildren, Averi and Lilly.

Rev. Kolbe will be remembered for his significant contributions to the life of the Faith Community, including the building of a new sanctuary, the introduction of theater productions and art into innovative worship experiences, and the creation of art work which graced the worship space, among many others. He was viewed by many not only as an excellent and dedicated pastor, but also as a friend to many in the congregation.

The family will be providing a memorial service in honor of Rev. Kolbe later in the year.



**Church & Ministry Meetings –**

2nd Monday of each month, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm  
Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224.  
Members & guests are notified directly of any changes.

**New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC)**

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

Send newsletter items to:

[inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com)

*In the Vineyard*, published four times a year, invites you to send us your comments and opinions, expressions of faith and announcements of events. 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.

Please have submissions for the upcoming Summer issue in by May 14, 2023.

**The “In the Vineyard”  
Editorial Board welcomes any  
meditations or devotions that  
tie into the church year for  
our newsletter’s front page.**

**(Word count of 400-475  
words, please.)**

**Please submit your piece to**

[inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com)

**Thank you in advance!**