



Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

**We Are...**

Wednesday, May 18, 2022 – 4 days after the white supremacist attack at Tops on Jefferson Ave. in Buffalo, New York

She had never seen her coworker so solemn, withdrawn and introspective. He was *always* joking/teasing/kidding around. She asked him what was going on.

“We are being hunted because of the color of our skin.”

If you have not heard or thought it before, take that in. Contemplate, meditate on that sentence. Repeat it several times. Emphasize different words each time. We are... being hunted... because of... the color... of... our... skin. Let it move into your heart and mind, your soul. If you are not a person of color, keep repeating it until you can truly feel what it means to someone who is. Be horrified and disgusted at its truth and meaning. Come to understand it at the very foundation of your selfhood. Smell the fear that grips you as your ability to *live as an independent person* is slowly paralyzed.

“**We** are being hunted because of the color of our skin.”

“We are being **hunted** because of the color of our skin.”

“We are being hunted **because** of the color of our skin.”

“We are being hunted because of the **color** of our skin.”

“We are being hunted because of the color **of** our skin.”

“We are being hunted because of the color of **our** skin.”

“We are being hunted because of the color of our **skin**.”

Enraged, scream it with hot angry tears in your voice.

**“WE ARE BEING HUNTED  
BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF  
OUR SKIN!”**

Until you no longer have any voice left, because:

“*We are being hunted because of the color of our skin.*”

OK. Take whatever time and resources you need to return to whatever/wherever you were before you started reading this ... and let us remember who **WE** are in the broadest, most complete sense. The **WE** no misinformed scared teenager can have any but the most meaningless power over. He and his ilk may kill our bodies, but **WE** are stronger than that flesh he wants to destroy because **WE**, the entire undivided

human race in our glorious multi-colored diversity, are Children of the Mighty Creator of All That Is, and our Brother is Jesus Christ who emerged after three days in the tomb, unstoppable; and with him we are co-heirs to all of God's Realm. All of us, even misinformed scared teenagers with assault weapons or bombs or whatever other false gods to which they cling, are part of God's Glorious Creation with our true parts to play as we continue to help it on its groaning way to fruition/completion.

So let us gather all of our siblings, no matter how far they/we have strayed from the path set before us ... gather us all in the shelter of God's Wings and be healed by God's indestructible LOVE. Then we will be able to say, "**WE ARE. WE ARE!** **We Are All God's Agents of Healing Love and Don't You Forget It!**

Sing that at the top of your lungs until you're hoarse:

**We Are All God's Agents of Healing Love!**

**We Are All God's Agents of Healing Love!**

With broad smiles on our faces and tears of joy streaming down:

**We Are All God's Agents of Healing Love!**

And so, we abandon fear and walk in God's path of shalom: peace and harmony; even into the valley of the shadow of death, especially when it is in our city, our neighborhood, our shopping center. And God's

Love will shine through us and the evil whose diseased blossoms have erupted in the scared and misinformed among us will not thrive nor have power over us. They may hunt us for whatever reason, but **We Are All God's Agents of Healing Love and No One Will Be Able To Overcome or Forget That!**

Thanks be to God, Amen!

Alfred C. Plant

May 19, 2022

*Copyright © 2022 Alfred C. Plant*



## **Prayer After the Gun Tragedy in Buffalo, NY**

**By Rev. Maren Tirabassi, UCC minister, author of 21 books, and poet of Portsmouth, NH**

**God have mercy on those weeping  
For beloved ones who died today  
In the Tops supermarket.**

**God have mercy on those injured in body  
And bless those who care for them.**

**God have mercy on those injured in mind  
Because they were there  
And because they will remember  
Their fear twenty years from now,  
Or because they need to go somewhere  
Anywhere,  
Tomorrow to buy groceries  
So that their families can eat,  
Or because they feed their families  
By stocking produce, being a cashier,  
Or returning carts, or filling shelves.**

**God have mercy on every Black person  
In this country targeted today  
By a white supremacist  
In military grade helmet and body armor**

**With a Bushmaster XM-15 E2S  
Sporter semi-automatic rifle,  
A Mossberg 500 pump-action shotgun,  
A Savage Arms Axis XP bolt-action rifle.**

**God have mercy on pastors preaching,  
and planning funerals,  
churches praying and bringing food,  
grief counselors making themselves  
available for all who need to talk  
and school counselors responding  
to the fears of teenagers  
and kindergarten nightmares,**

**local government, law enforcement,  
social services preparing  
to do whatever is needed,**

**for neighbors being neighbors,  
and all the rest of us  
taking the means of such death away. Amen.**



## **WNYACIC Prayer Lists: June-August 2022**

### **June Prayer List**

St. John's UCC, Buffalo. Elaine Utech, pastor  
Trinity UCC, Gowanda. Jess Kowalski, pastor  
First Congregational UCC, Jamestown  
(worshipping at Pilgrim Memorial UCC).  
Supply pastors  
St. Paul's UCC, Wendelville, N. Tonawanda.  
Rev. Ann Quinn, pastor  
Department of Community Ministries  
Chautauqua Association of Disciples of Christ  
Chautauqua UCC Society  
Global Ministries - prayers for Haiti and Ukraine

### **July Prayer List**

Phoenix UCC, Amherst. Marcia Tolman, pastor  
Riverside-Salem UCC/DOC, Grand Island.  
Rev. Catherine Rieley-Goddard, pastor  
First Congregational UCC, Niagara Falls.  
supply pastors  
Church of the Nativity UCC, Town of Tonawanda.  
Rev. Ruth Snyder, pastor;  
Rev. Dan Schifeling, pastor emeritus  
East Aurora Christian Church (DOC).  
Rev. Jan Mahle, pastor;  
Rev. amos acree, pastor emeritus  
Department of Local Church Ministries  
VOICE Buffalo  
Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center  
Global Ministries - prayers for Sri Lanka

### **August Prayer List**

St. James UCC, Hamburg.

Rev. Paul Werner, pastor

Ebenezer UCC, West Seneca.

Rev. Gary Gossel, pastor;

Krista Ulrich, Minister of Visitation & Pastoral  
Care, and Director of Faith Formation

United Baptist-Christian Church (DOC), Lewiston.

Vince Eisaman, pastor

New Light Christian Church (DOC – Karen Ministry),

Buffalo. Rev. Nadine Schrodt, pastor

Northeast Region, Disciples of Christ;

Rev. Thaddeus Allen, Regional Minister,

Northeastern Region

Christian Women’s Fellowship (DOC)

Western Area Nominating Committee

Global Ministries - prayers for Venezuela

\*\* Please note from the Winter issue of *In the Vineyard*, Debora Cullen has retired as the Director of Christian Education at Amherst Community Church. The new Director of Christian Education and Community Engagement is Carissa Gigliotti. Welcome Carissa!

*from Rev. Lynn Morgan, Treasurer, WNYACIC*  
**Western Area Treasurer’s Report**

Throughout the pandemic, Covenantal Share giving held steady. This was a testament to the determination of our congregations to keep doing ministry despite the challenges we faced. This spring we have been returning to things we have missed for a couple years. We have celebrated Easter together! We have had our first in-person Area meeting in almost three years. We are sharing meals and coffee hour and forgetting where we put our mask.

As we return to some of these familiar routines, it is important that we also continue our Covenantal Share giving. Giving levels are down about 25% this year so far. Things are always a little slow in the early part of the year but, if possible, it would be helpful if churches could make some contributions

during the spring and summer. Covenantal Share giving is the most important financial support that the Area has; without it, we could not continue our work.

Although our income is down a bit this year, we are still in solid financial shape. We have enough cash on hand to meet all our obligations and fund our ministries and missions. Our current operating deficit is a bit more than \$2000, which is not too worrisome. If our giving levels return to normal, we should finish the year in the black and repay some of our rainy-day funds from which we had to borrow in 2020. As always, the generosity and commitment of our churches is deeply appreciated.

*By Jeff Mason, Finance/Endowment Committee*

### **ENDOWMENT REPORT**

Our Endowment accounts had mixed results in the first quarter of 2022. As of March 31, 2022, we had \$38,590.70 in the American Funds (down from \$39,297.71 at the end of December); \$388,550.13 in the United Church Funds Account 009 (down from \$441,894.78 in December); and \$33,393.60 in the United Church Funds Account 010 (up from \$32,437.93 in December).

Part of the decrease in the United Church Funds Account 009 was due to the withdrawal of \$24,740 on February 14. That amount was transferred to the Western Area’s checking account, to be disbursed in accordance with the 2022 budget that was adopted at the annual meeting in November. The remaining decrease of \$28,604.65 was due to a decline in the value of the fund, which was typical of what happened in the financial markets in March.

The total value of our Endowment on March 31 was \$460,534.43, which was a decrease of \$53,095.99 from the December 31 total.



**IN MEMORIAM**  
**Rev. Kay E. Woike**

Rev. Kay E. Woike, nee Reinhart, (January 13, 1946 – April 18, 2022) passed into eternal life, at home, with family by her side. They have been grateful for the prayers, meals, and cards that have been sent.

Kay was born in Temple, Texas, grew up in suburban Detroit, then moved to Sylvania in suburban Toledo as a teen where she graduated from high school. She attended DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana where she met Glenn Woike whom she married in 1965. Together they attended Yale Divinity School. During those years, they traveled to Naromoru, Kenya where they served for two years as interns with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Kay worked at the Secondary School teaching English and Science courses as well as providing support and encouragement to the female students. Kay's care and compassion for the global community grew there.

After graduation, Kay and Glenn moved to central NY where Kay was called to serve as pastor of Fayette Federated Church and Varick United Methodist Church in Fayette, NY from 1972-1975. She was ordained by the Oneida Association of the NY Conference UCC on October 29, 1972.

The family moved to WNY in 1975. Kay began working part-time overseeing Christian Education at Church of the Nativity in Town of Tonawanda (1976-78), became full-time Associate Pastor (1978-1983) and then Co-pastor with Rev. Dan Schifeling for 29 years until her retirement in 2007. In addition to spending more time with family, particularly her grandchildren, during retirement Kay served as Interim Pastor at Faith UCC, Boston, NY and St. Stephens-Bethlehem, Amherst, NY. In 2011, Kay was honored with the designation of Pastor Emerita for her years of service at Nativity; there, she continued to be an active and beloved member. Her husband, Glenn, passed into eternal life in 2012.

In addition to serving churches, Kay served on various committees of the Western NY Area Churches in Covenant and NY Conference. Most recently, she served on NY Conference's Global Commission and was the liaison with Global Ministries, the Mission Partner sending body of the UCC/DoC. Kay had a strong heart for refugees and encouraged Nativity to settle over 15 refugee families including, most recently, families from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan. Throughout her years, she was also involved in hunger-related projects.

She is survived by her daughters, Liz Woike-Ganga (Martial) and Adrienne Woike (Matthew Thomas), grandchildren Jaden Ganga, Aisha Ganga, and Leo Thomas; a sister, Susan Reinhart; brothers, Charles and Fred Reinhart; nieces and a nephew. Memorials may be sent to Justice for Migrant Families where Kay was an active volunteer or Hospice, Buffalo.



from Rev. Gary Ferner

## Churches in Transition

Pilgrim Memorial/First Congregational Church  
Jamestown

Covenant UCC Gasport

New Covenant UCC Buffalo

Prayers for these faith communities would be appreciated!



***On Pentecost Sunday,  
June 5th, during worship  
at 10am, Pilgrim - St.  
Luke's UCC (335  
Richmond Ave, Buffalo,  
1422) will confer Rev. Dr.  
M. Bruce McKay the  
honor of Pastor  
Emeritus. There will be a  
reception following. All  
are welcome!***



## Remember (a Poem) By Alfred C. Plant

*Written by Al for his some-day memorial service.*

Remember. Remember your first breath when you burst from your Creator-Mother into this life.

Remember. Remember the breath that is sustaining you at this moment, that is propelling you into whatever moments Creator has aimed you toward.

Remember. Remember the final breath you have taken as you return to Creator's eternal embrace and purpose.

Whatever you might do/are doing/have done - let it be in Creator's name, for Creator's purposes, to Creator's glory; so that all Creation may grow further into its intended shape and dimension.

Thus your breathing - united with like breathing/LOVE - will be Remembered.



### **BW's Chicken BBQ to Benefit Plymouth Crossroads**

A BW's Chicken BBQ to benefit Plymouth Crossroads will be held on Thursday, June 30 from 3-6pm. The event will be held at Ebenezer United Church of Christ, 630 Main Street in West Seneca. The cost of each dinner will be \$14, and will include 1/2 chicken, potato salad, chef salad, roll and butter. It will be take-out only. Presale tickets may be purchased online at

<https://www.universe.com/events/chicken-bbq-tickets-6J7FR0> through June 29.

Plymouth Crossroads is a not-for-profit organization which provides non-residential supports for runaway and homeless youth, in an atmosphere supporting their dignity, respect, and self-sufficiency. Further information at [www.plymouthcrossroads.org](http://www.plymouthcrossroads.org) or 716-393-3906.



### **Support for Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center**

Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center provides rich Christian camping experiences for kids and adults. Go to [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com) for information about our programs.

We ask that you consider supporting our ministry in these challenging times. **Financial donations,**

**estate bequests and attendance at our programs are greatly appreciated!** For those of you who use Amazon, consider making Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center your Amazon Smile recipient. Dunkirk will then receive a small donation from Amazon.

#### **Here's how to shop AmazonSmile:**

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials.
3. Choose a charitable organization to receive donations or search for the charity of your choice.
4. Select Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center.

**Master's**  
**Chicken BBQ**

**Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**12:00-5:00 pm** (or until sold out)  
**St. Matthew's United Church of Christ\***



**Drive Thru Only**

Includes 1/2 Chicken  
salt potatoes  
coleslaw  
roll and butter

\$13 per meal (cash)

**\*5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY 14075**  
[www.stmattsucc.org](http://www.stmattsucc.org) 716-649-1532 [office@stmattsucc.org](mailto:office@stmattsucc.org)

Proceeds will go towards the deductible of our vandalism insurance claim.



### DCC 100th Anniversary Community Picnic

Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon - 6 pm

Food Concessions ~ Swimming ~ Bounce Houses  
Bingo ~ Raffles ~ Games and more!

DCC tent with memorabilia, Dunkirk History Camp  
Store items and FREE Cake!

Volunteer of the Year and Lifetime Camper Awards  
State & Local Representatives to honor DCC.

Bring your lawn chairs and spend the day!

\*\*\*\*\*



Craft Fair & Flea Market  
In Memory of Ron & Carol Bieler  
Saturday, June 18, 8 am-5 pm  
Rain or Shine

Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center  
3602 E. Lake Rd., Dunkirk, 14048

Restrooms and food concessions available.

Wendel's Chicken BBQ Dinner:

11 am – sold out

Dinner includes: ½ chicken, macaroni salad,  
baked beans, roll, dessert

\$13 day of event

Pre-sale \$11 – call Anne 716-366-1900 or email  
[exec.director@dunkirkcc.com](mailto:exec.director@dunkirkcc.com) for pre-sale.

### YEA! Camp!!!

*This letter was written to Kenilworth UCC by an  
appreciative Dunkirk Camper.*

Dear Church family:

I loved camp; it was so fun! There were so many things I liked about it. I loved my counselors and swimming was really fun. I took a swim test so I could go into the deep end, and I passed! We did many crafts like painting tiles. We also did sponge paint on a canvas with tape in the shape of a cross. I also played live human hungry hungry, hippo. It was a little spooky, but it was really fun and my team won.

My experience at camp was awesome! On one of the last days of camp, it flooded and there was a big storm. We still had to get lunch so we drove golf carts to the cafeteria so we could eat lunch. Then we drove back, and the counselors got our blankets and pillows so we could watch a movie.

I also really enjoyed helping all the smaller kids. I also found \$5 and donated it to the camp. Then lastly, on one of the last days, there was a party for the older kids. I went out for a walk with one of my counselors and she stopped by the party. I asked if I could go in, and they said, I could go in for 20 minutes. It was so fun!! I can't wait to go back!

Sincerely, Addabell Reichle







The Western Area Youth is going on a Mission Trip to Boston, MA from July 11-17 and all youth from Western Area churches are invited to attend!

However, you must register by May 10th. To register, fill out the form on this page: <https://www.zionuccton.com/way/>

The cost of the trip is \$300 per person, however, there are scholarships available to those who need it.

Any questions, email [Rev. Elizabeth Duffy](mailto:Rev.ElizabethDuffy) or [Pastor Krista Ulrich](mailto:PastorKristaUlrich).

### Free!!! Community Picnic

**Wednesday, Aug. 3, 5:30–7:00pm**

Faith United Church of Christ  
1300 Maple Road,  
corner of Hopkins/Maple,  
Williamsville, 14221

*Hot Dogs~ Drinks~ sides~  
desserts ~provided*

**All welcome! Bring a Friend! Hope  
to see you here!**

*No preachin'...Just eatin'!*

For more info, please contact us:  
716-689-9274

Faith U.C.C.  
1300 Maple Road, Williamsville

*Wendel's*



**Drive-thru Chicken Barbecue**

**Saturday June 4, 2022**

**4pm until gone**

**\$14.00**

Includes half chicken, two sides & a dessert

## Transitional Conference Minister Announced



Dear New York Conference Members and Friends,

With great joy the Board of Directors of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ announces the selection of the Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams as our Transitional Conference Minister!

After a national search, much deliberation, discernment, considering excellent candidates, two outstanding interviews, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Transitional Conference Minister (TCM) Search Committee voted unanimously to present Rev. Williams at a special meeting of the Board of Directors (BOD) for consideration and affirmation as our Transitional Conference Minister (TCM). This morning, the BOD met and affirmed the work of the TCM Search Committee with another unanimous vote of support. We then shared with Rev. Williams some of our hopes and dreams for the New York Conference; she did the same. We are on our way!

Rev. Williams will be visiting each Association to receive *your* input, listen to *your* hopes and dreams, hear *your* voice, get to know *you*. We recognize that this is NOT a done deal; it is a two-way call and two-year time of discernment for both Rev. Williams and the Conference. (See descriptions below.) During this next phase of

our journey, we will *all* engage in this Spirit-led discernment process.

In this post-Christian era of declining church membership and pandemic chaos, we are ensuring a smooth Conference Minister transition with a leader who already knows and loves us and who is eager to lead us as, united in Christ's love, we work toward a just world for all. The traditions practiced in the United Church of Christ affirm the active presence of God's Spirit in this time; we ask that you trust the work of the TCM Search Committee and the Holy Spirit. We ask that you meet Rev. Williams as she visits your Association and to share with her your hopes and dreams for the Conference.

"United in Spirit, and inspired by God's grace, we move forward **boldly** to welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all."

Loving,  
Dona Roll, UCCNY Conference Moderator

Your elected Board of Directors, each of whom welcomes your ideas and questions:  
Judy Van Kennen, *assistant moderator*; Barbara Wright, *secretary*; Charlaine Apsel, *treasurer*; Deborah Dee Brayton, *Metro*; JJ Flag, *Black River-St. Lawrence*; Jane Lytle, *Western*; Valerie Meyer, *Genesee Valley*; Hafidha Saadiqah, *Hudson-Mohawk*; John Sampson, *Essex*; Kelly Sprinkle, *Oneida*; Damaris Whittaker, *Reformed*; Janet Wright, *Suffolk*; John Zollweg, *Susquehanna* and Susan Gibson, *ex officio Personnel Committee*.

### TRANSITIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTER (TCM)

The goal of a Transitional Conference Minister is to work toward the conference's declared purpose for a specific season; often the minister's skills match the conference's declared goals. A TCM may be selected by the governing board, rather than elected by vote of the Conference. The typical term is 18-24 months.

In discernment with the governing board and Rev. Lee Albertson, Conference Minister Search Coordinator and Council of Conference Ministers'

Support for the UCC, a search committee may be utilized. The purpose and the term must clearly be named in the scope of the work and in the Contract/Covenant document, with a mechanism for assessment at the end of the term. Said document specifies at that time whether the TCM may be considered for the Settled position at the end of the term or at any such time as is mutually agreed upon by the TCM and the BOD.

If the TCM is not Called for the Settled position, the TCM is expected to part from staff professionally and to support the Conference's Call of a different Minister.

*Note: The UCCNY BOD has determined that our TCM **may** be considered for the Settled position at the end of the term or at any such time as is mutually agreed upon by the TCM and the BOD.*

## SETTLED CONFERENCE MINISTER

With the Conference Profile and scope of work completed, a Conference governing board forms a search committee with the authority to carry out a search for the best person to fill the position over time. The search committee meets with Rev. Lee Albertson to go through the process of Calling a Settled Conference Minister. The search committee then begins reviewing profiles and interviewing candidates, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit selects the top candidate who agrees to be considered for Call. The search committee presents this person to the governing board and the governing board presents this person to the Conference membership for vote at a special or regular meeting of the Conference delegates, clergy and lay.

NOTE: If an internal candidate wishes to be considered for the position - that is, someone who is on staff already as an Associate Conference Minister, or someone who has held the role of Designated Term/Transitional CM - that person is to be considered first by the search committee. If the decision is to not call this person, the search committee then widens the search to all other potential candidates, and the governing board plans an honorable good-bye with the current staff person.

*from Pat Burgstahler, Kenmore UCC*

## We're Back to Being Busy!

May brought two all-church events to Kenmore UCC. We shared a great Chili-Soup Cook-off which happens each year (minus 2020). Winning the coveted red ladle (why red????) is on every entrant's mind. Everyone who attends is part of the judging after enjoying several wonderful samples. That same day, we had a Vera Bradley used purse/bag giveaway. Free-will donations were added to other money raised during Lent, to help the people of Ukraine. Also in May, we held our annual plant sale fundraiser.

In June we will be having a movie night. Until then, the choice of movie is a secret. All we are telling is that it is an award-winning, black and white classic movie that few people have ever seen but won't want to miss. On June 25, we will have our Meat Raffle. Read all about it elsewhere in the Vineyard.

July will bring our annual garden walk where a few members of the congregation open their yards to everyone to enjoy. In progressive dinner fashion, we enjoy refreshments at each stop and then a dinner picnic at the last home.

We are still working out details for a trip to Greycliff and possibly a wine tour. All of these activities are meant to bring the members of the congregation together on a social basis, having fun and enjoying each other, not just on Sunday morning.



*Setting up for the plant sale at KUCC.*

from Angie Staniszewski, Kenilworth UCC

## Need for More Collaborative Church Events

I am writing this after returning from a wonderful Spring Spiritual Growth Retreat held by Church of the Nativity. It was part of their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and they invited the members of other north town churches to attend. The title of the retreat was “Carrying Christ into a Divided World,” and was led by Rev. Dr. Susan Strouse, Pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Burlingame, CA, and author of the book “The INTRAFaith Conversation: How Do Christians Talk Among Ourselves About INTERfaith Matters.”

While the retreat was excellent, and the subject matter very important, that is not why I am writing this article. Several of us at the retreat came to the conclusion that our churches need to do more of these collaborative events. There are several benefits, in no particular order.

It helps to have larger groups of people participating in these discussions than only the few people each church may draw. Multiple churches can afford to bring in professional, subject matter experts, that one church cannot afford. It is really beneficial to gather with, learn from, and hatch ideas with groups from other churches. Even Bible Studies or Book Studies led by local Pastors will help share the expertise of the local Pastors. Much as we want, our Pastors cannot be experts in all things that we want, let alone all things that exist.

I understand the logistical problem with doing a retreat for the entire Western Area; so, I propose more collaborative retreats, Bible Studies, Book Studies, Film Studies, etc. amongst churches “close” in geography. And, to solve the problem of figuring

out exactly what is “close in geography,” let’s just extend more invitations to the wider church, and let people decide for themselves how far they are willing to travel.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Payne Avenue Christian Church  
1459 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, 14120  
Is Having a Drive-Through  
Chiavetta’s Chicken Dinner from  
Noon to 4pm on Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**Tickets price will be \$13.00.  
Dinners will include 1/2 chicken,  
roll and butter, macaroni salad  
and coleslaw!  
Arrive early before they are sold  
out!  
Questions? Call  
Debra at 716-990-3942 or the  
Church Office 716-260-1217.**



## A Personal View by Dr Lito Gutierrez, Medical Advisor for NY/HELP



Here she is, Maria Mirtila Garcia Amaya, known to us as just Mirtila. I had met her in our first trip to La Laguna in 2008. This picture was taken in 2010; the older woman is Elena Cabrera, a neighbor and patient at the clinic.

When I first met Mirtila, she was wearing her blue nurse's uniform, impeccably starched and ironed. She was proud of that appearance and the image of NY/HELP Honduras in the mountains of Yoro.

Recent events prompted me to commit this to text. Things have not been easy for the project for the last few years. Dr. Gordon Comstock's passing was a severe blow. The people who initiated the project had aged and the frequency and depth of the visits had to comply with the changes dictated by the new circumstances. And what circumstances they have been, with the pandemic limiting international travel and the more recent worldwide upheaval resulting in inflation and reduction on philanthropic efforts. The cost of diagnosing and treating diseases has gone up for us here in WNY and just as much for the residents of Yoro.

Unable to send medical missions, we decided to try hiring local medical providers and paying their salaries with NY/HELP funds. A physician and the equivalent of a Nurse Practitioner were hired. The physician option proved to be more expensive and less satisfactory. The NP is working well, offering two sessions per month on average; his name is Joel

Mencia. He is happy working in La Laguna and Mirtila and the patients are happy with him. Joel climbs the precarious mountain road riding his motorcycle. NY/HELP has provided medications to the tribe for many years; four times a year money had been transferred to Mirtila. She would use those dollars to fill up the shelves of the pharmacy in the clinic; she was always fastidious in making sure that this particular element of the effort was well covered.

On March 7, 2022, Mirtila contacted me with concerns about our transfer of money to purchase medications. It was due in February, and it had not arrived. The delay was due to our own local cash flow issues as well as slow international funds



transfers. On March 9, 2022, we learned that the cost of medication purchase for the period was 29,980 Lempiras (a bit over \$1200). On March 10, I reported

to her that the draft had been sent. It was clear at the time that the money sent would not cover for all the medication needs for the period. My text to her reflected on how the world economy was affected and things were not looking as getting better in a short time. We had considerable difficulties with that whole transaction. Money Gram, the service we use, made a mistake that necessitated repeating the whole process. They made a mistake in transmitting an identification number I sent to Mirtila. The poor woman had to travel to Yoro, not a walk to the corner store, to find out at the bank that "nothing" had arrived. On March 16, I got these pictures showing the shelves of the clinic fully stocked with medication. There was no explanation as to how Mirtila had managed to achieve the goal since she had not received any money yet. The last attempt at submitting money was made and communicated to Mirtila on March 25, 2022.

On March 29, I received from Mirtila copies of imaging reports on an elderly woman who was diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas. The prognosis was bleak. It turned out that the woman was Mirtila’s mother, who was once the midwife for the entire village. The local physicians advised that attempts at treatment would be futile. It surely looked that way to me. Isabel Amaya was discharged shortly after that and passed away at home on the evening of April 9, 2022.

On April 7, we had been able to resend the money and we were notified that it had been collected in a Yoro bank. I have no way of explaining how Mirtila was able to purchase the medications to stock the clinic as shown in the pictures. She had to either purchase them herself with cash or credit or was given credit by the pharmacist. I tend to believe the last option as unlikely, but NY/HELP has purchased a lot of medications over the years, and I cannot discount that possibility.

I have expressed to you my personal opinion that Mirtila is the best representative that NY/HELP has in the Mataderos tribe. I am in awe of someone like her, quietly delivering for the needs of the members of the tribe, assuming responsibilities and taking initiatives when the odds appear insurmountable and under the worst of circumstances related to personal loss. Please, encourage the supporters of this effort to consider this story when making their philanthropic decisions.

*Fondly, Dr. Lito,  
Medical Advisor for NY/HELP Honduras*

Donations gratefully accepted at:  
NY/HELP, c/o Arcade UCC, PO Box 95, Arcade NY 14009. Make checks payable to NY/HELP.

\*\* Dr Lito, and his wife Dr Liz Zausmer, are this year's recipients of the Dr. Gordon Comstock Award given by the Commission on the Global Church. Ginger Comstock had the honor of

giving this award to these fine doctors who visited Honduras and the clinic in La Laguna during the years of 2008-2010. When Dr. Lito's back would not tolerate the conditions there any longer, he became the communicator/translator and now the medical advisor for NY/HELP.

The award presentation is to be part of the NY Conference Annual Meeting on the second weekend in June at Silver Bay.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Trinity UCC is Cooking for Their Community**

Trinity United Church of Christ, 30 Erie Avenue, Gowanda, NY 14070 will be hosting a free monthly community dinner through the summer. All meals will be served from 4-6pm or until gone.

- Meals:
- Sat., June 11- Pulled pork sandwich, pasta salad, applesauce, bread and cookies
- Sat., July 9- Hot dogs with bun, baked beans, chips, pickle and cookies
- Sat., August 13- Sloppy joe, salt potatoes, fruit cup, bread and cookies

Drive-up or walk-up on Park Street. Parking available on Erie Avenue.

Free-will donations are appreciated but not necessary.

*In the Vineyard* asks the question:  
**"How has the church changed you over the years?"**

**From Ginger Comstock, Arcade UCC**

When our family first moved to Arcade more than 40 years ago in the summer of 1980, we had not been regular church attendees. However, with two children and living in a small town, we thought it was time for us to find a church. There were several churches within walking distance, so we decided we'd start with the one closest to us and then try the others one at a time until we found one that fit us.

That didn't last long. The first church we walked into, the Arcade United Church of Christ was so warm and welcoming, and the message was also positive and welcoming that we literally felt like we had "come home." We found friendship, love, and compassion. We, like many others we have heard from, found there is a certain "spirit" that can be felt just by walking into the sanctuary. We have been there ever since.

But that's really only part of the story. That was the first change – our actually attending church every Sunday on a regular basis. We started attending in the Fall and joined the church in January 1981. Our younger daughter was baptized there. Our older daughter found that her new-found friend from school attended also, and her mother started a Youth Choir, drawing in many of the kids.

Over the years my Gordon was on the Board of Trustees, the Building Committee, even before we officially had one! I had terms on the Diaconate, was active in the Women's Fellowship, was on a Search Committee twice, was a delegate to the Western Area and also the Synod. We were both very active in the life of the church.

The biggest change perhaps was when Gordon, followed by the rest of the family, became involved in the mission program sponsored by the NY Conference, NY/HELP Honduras, in 1989. Ever since he had been in the Peace Corps in Ghana, he had been searching for something like this, though he was very busy with his medical practice. Gordon

made yearly trips to Honduras from 1989 until 2017 and was the medical advisor. I made three or four trips. Both of our daughters made trips as well, our youngest when she was 12 and then again at 15. The Honduras mission and wanting to be of help to those who need help the most, has been high on our list since NY/HELP first started. I like to think it has helped to make me a better person, one who tries to understand and have empathy for those in different circumstances and from different cultures, to be willing to walk with them and listen to them and let them know we care, even if not fluent in the language.

**From Lois Vidaver, Kenilworth UCC**

Soon after my husband Mike retired from 33 years of active UCC ministry, in March of 2001, we chose Kenilworth UCC as our retirement church.

There were many new things to enjoy. Rather than Mike being up in the chancel on Sunday mornings, he was sitting beside me in the pew. What's not to like? He had a wonderful singing voice, and there I was, standing next to him singing my heart out, enjoying every note.

For the first time, we were asked to lead a weekly Bible Study together; we couldn't think of a better way to spend Tuesday mornings.

Through the years, Kenilworth has evolved. Embracing its slogan, "Because of who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here," new parishioners bring along the talents and energy that continue to enrich the congregation. Our decision turned out to be a blessed one.

Though Mike passed on last December, he and I had agreed, many times, "We found the perfect church for our retirement years."

Someone was looking out for us.



From Rev. Jan Mahle, East Aurora Christian Church

## Holiness in Brokenness

I remember a particular youth Sunday. During communion, one of the youths offered these words of institution: “And Jesus took the bread blessed it and broke it. And gave it to the disciples and said, ‘this is my body broken for you. Take eat.’ And then he took the cup and in like manner, he blessed it and broke it.” Then the youth stopped and finally added, “do this in remembrance of me.” When I tell this story, most of the time there is a giggle or smile. But this Holy Week, the cup which was broken was restored as I remembered the story of Jesus’ last supper, his passion, his resurrection, and his healing presence. Let me explain.

I had read of a Japanese process of restoring broken pottery called Kintsugi. The process of restoration included the use of gold dust and glue to put the object back together again. The object was even more beautiful than the original. Isn’t that a captivating image of what Christ does with us? Binding up our wounds, healing the sin sick soul, making us into a new creation.

I thought of the brokenness experienced in grief, illness, cessation of the normal, loneliness over the last couple of years. How could I help increase the understanding of holiness in brokenness? With the help of a couple of pastors (Revs. Tim and Pat Bancroft and Rev. Ann Tillman), we created an experience for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday focusing on a ceramic cup. Each participant painted a ceramic cup, then used the cup to receive the wine/juice offered on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday, we heard a choral presentation of the Passion during which we broke our cup. In the muslin bag which held the broken cup pieces, we sat Shiva with Mary in a small chapel at the Episcopal Church. On Holy Saturday, we discussed our feelings/actions regarding the process

and then engaged in the restoration of the cup. For some, putting the cup back together again was easy, for others quite frustrating. There were so many parallels regarding healing in our own lives. Here are some comments from the process:

- Some pieces no longer fit,
- It takes so much time,
- It is no longer the cup, it is a new creation,
- The gold lines of repair remind me that healing/faith/wholeness/holiness comes from the journey not the destination,
- This was a powerful experience.

A few weeks later, I was a presenter for the UCCNY Women’s Spring Zoom Retreat. The theme was “On the Mend”. I adapted this kintsugi experience to a piece of paper and another Japanese art form, origami. If you are interested in this “hands on” metaphor of Christ’s healing, please contact me for more information, [jmahle54@gmail.com](mailto:jmahle54@gmail.com).

**Kenmore United Church of Christ**  
**MEAT RAFFLE**

**Saturday** **Doors Open at 6:00**  
**June 25, 2022** **First Spin at 7:00**

**\$10 PER TICKET**  
 INCLUDES BEER, WINE, & POP

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MADONNA HALL**  
 755 ERIE AVE  
 NORTH TONAWANDA, 14120

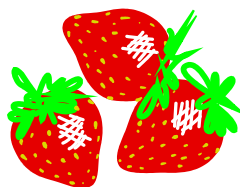
**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE

**To Purchase Tickets**  
 CALL THE CHURCH AT (716) 875-1725 OR EMAIL [KENMOREUCC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:KENMOREUCC@GMAIL.COM)  
 TABLES CAN BE RESERVED FOR UP TO 18 PEOPLE

**BASKET RAFFLE AND 50/50**

**Remember to Bring**  
 FOOD FOR YOUR TABLE  
 COOLER FOR YOUR WINNINGS  
 DOLLAR BILLS FOR THE RAFFLE ROUNDS





### 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Social

First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main Street  
Angola, NY 14006

**Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> 11am-8pm**

**Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 11am-8pm**

Hot dogs, Hamburgers,  
Cheeseburgers, Grilled Cheese,  
Italian Sausage, French Fries,  
Sundaes, Milkshakes, Cones & Strawberry  
Shortcake, Pop, Water & Coffee  
*(menu subject to change)*

**NEW!** Children’s Pedal Tractor Pull  
Ages 6-8 years old  
4:00-6:00pm  
Please contact Church for Details:  
716-549-2115

Entertainment from 6-8pm each day.  
Please Bring Your Lawn Chair.

\*\*\*\*\*

**from Rev. Dr. Vincent Harding, former professor of  
Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, a co-worker of  
Dr. King and the one who ordained Pastor Nancy  
Rosas 11 years ago**

*We are all citizens of a country that does not yet  
exist,  
a just country, a compassionate country,  
a forgiving country, a multi-racial country,  
a joyful country that cares about its children and  
about its elders,  
that cares about what the earth needs.  
I am, you are, a citizen of a country that does not yet  
exist,  
and that badly needs to exist.”*



### Vacation Bible School 2022 "Food Truck Party"

July 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>  
8:45 am- 11:30am  
**Free:** for all children  
beginning at 3 years old.

\*Games \*Snacks \*Crafts \*Stories \*Music

Mark your calendar and join us at:  
First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main St. Angola  
All Community Children Are Invited!!!  
Call 716-549-2115 to Register.

\*\*\*\*\*

**from Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the  
Episcopal Church, (who grew up in the Jefferson  
Ave. neighborhood of Buffalo), from his book, Love  
is the Way**

*We need good and kind and decent people to rise  
up and stand up for that which is loving, that which  
is kind, that which is compassionate, and that which  
is just, merciful, and humane. Let no one be  
deceived: Kindness is not weakness any more than  
love is a whimsical sentiment.*

*Love is powerful, transformative, free, and  
freeing to all. Dr. King was right: “We must discover  
the power of love, the power, the redemptive power  
of love. And when we discover that, we will be able  
to make of this old world a new world. Love is the  
only way.”*

from Angie Staniszewski, Kenilworth United Church of Christ

## General Synod 33

If people who attended Synod never talk about it, did it happen? I attended the first ever virtual Synod of the United Church of Christ as a visitor. I was not a delegate. Of course, there are several pros and cons of a virtual Synod, but the biggest pro is that Virtual Synod was better than No Synod. It was definitely not immersive. Sitting in front of a computer by yourself is definitely not the same as eating with strangers, perusing exhibits, and discovering unique merchandise; all of which lead to spontaneous interactions with new acquaintances. And there is no substitute for being physically surrounded by thousands of worshippers and spiritual music.

However, not having to travel did make it easier and cheaper for more people to attend. And the ability to type comments that all could see, allowed more voices to be “heard.” Normal business was conducted (not without drama). The workshops were pre-recorded and available for several weeks; so, I was able to attend many more workshops than an “in-person” Synod. I am glad to have participated in this historic event.

It is still not too late for all churches to benefit from Synod. You can find many things just by fishing around the UCC website, <https://www.ucc.org>. Here are some helpful direct links to things that may be of interest:

<https://www.generalsynod.org/final-resolution-as-adopted-by-general-synod-33/> to see all of the resolutions

<https://www.ucc.org/synod33-worship/> to get links to the many parts of the worship services and where you can download the videos for your use. The UCC has paid the performers to allow all churches to enjoy and use these fabulous resources.

<https://frontline-faith-teachable.com/courses> is a new learning link of the UCC. All of the Synod workshops are available for purchase, individually or as a group; as well as other courses. I highly recommend “Uncovering Racism/Unleashing Repair,” by Joy DeGruy, PhD. She was the speaker for the Valerie Russell “lunch,” and she was well worth the price of admission.

I would be happy to speak in person to any congregation that would like to hear more about Synod. I sincerely hope many congregations take advantage of the resources on the web.



## INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW PASTOR

We invite you to celebrate the installation of



**The Reverend Paul Thomas Werner**  
as Pastor and Teacher  
on Sunday, August 7, at 3:30 PM.



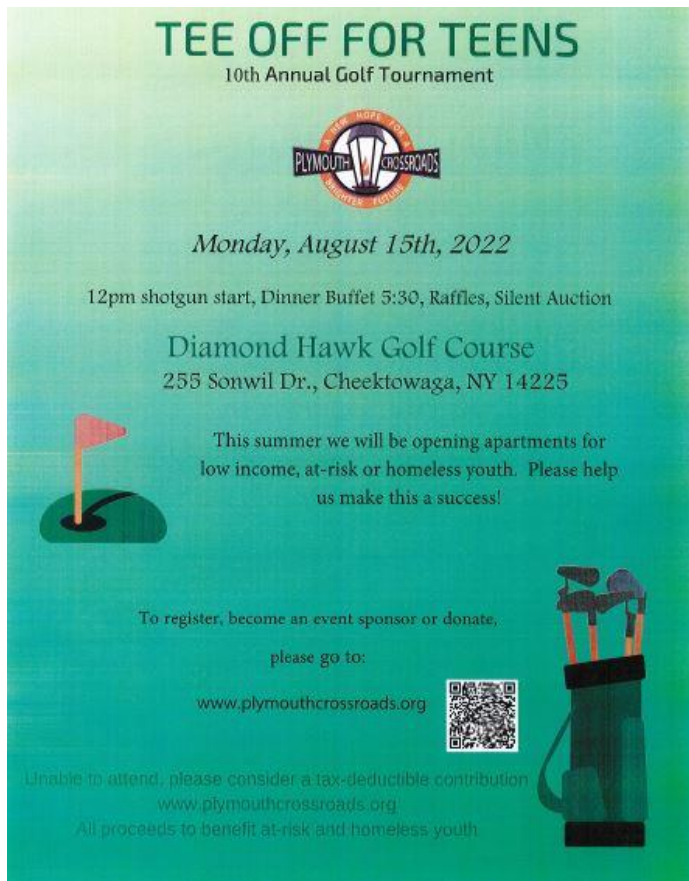
Clergy are invited to robe and process, gathering at 3:00 PM.  
The liturgical color is red.

A Reception of Celebration will follow in the Assembly Hall.


**St. James United Church of Christ**  
76 Main St., Hamburg, NY 14075



RSVP to [stjamesuccinstallation@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesuccinstallation@gmail.com) or 716-649-6171 by July 20, 2022.



**TEE OFF FOR TEENS**  
10th Annual Golf Tournament




*Monday, August 15th, 2022*

12pm shotgun start, Dinner Buffet 5:30, Raffles, Silent Auction

**Diamond Hawk Golf Course**  
255 Sonwil Dr., Cheektowaga, NY 14225

This summer we will be opening apartments for low income, at-risk or homeless youth. Please help us make this a success!

To register, become an event sponsor or donate, please go to:  
[www.plymouthcrossroads.org](http://www.plymouthcrossroads.org)



Unable to attend, please consider a tax-deductible contribution  
[www.plymouthcrossroads.org](http://www.plymouthcrossroads.org)  
All proceeds to benefit at-risk and homeless youth

Plymouth Crossroads is a not-for-profit organization which provides non-residential support for runaway and homeless youth, in an atmosphere supporting their dignity, respect, and self-sufficiency. Their purpose is to empower at-risk youth, by providing them, with crisis support, outreach and referral services, while helping them to gain and develop skills to transition into independence. This summer, Plymouth plans to open apartments for low income, at-risk or homeless youth. Please help make this goal a success! Further information at [www.plymouthcrossroads.org](http://www.plymouthcrossroads.org) or 716-393-3906.

### Plymouth Crossroads 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tee Off for Teens Golf Tournament Returns

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Tee Off for Teens Golf Tournament to benefit Plymouth Crossroads returns after the COVID-hiatus. The event will take place on Monday, August 15, 2022 at Diamond Hawk Golf Course, 255 Sonwil Dr., Cheektowaga, NY 14225. Format is an 18 hole, four person scramble. Registration costs \$125 per person or \$500 per foursome before June 15, and \$140 per person or \$560 per foursome after June 15. Golf only tickets may be purchased for \$90 each and dinner-only tickets may be purchased for \$40 each. Sponsorships are available. Check-in begins at 11 am with a noon shotgun start. Buffet dinner and awards ceremony is at 5:30 pm. Event also includes raffles and silent auction. To register, become an event sponsor or donate, visit <https://events.golfstatus.com/event/55a4df1e-060a-4057-8108-d40661fa85a9/details/registration-details>.

## Join us for a "Wonder-full"



### Faith Formation Retreat

for Pastors, Sunday School Teachers,  
Youth Pastors and Youth Leaders

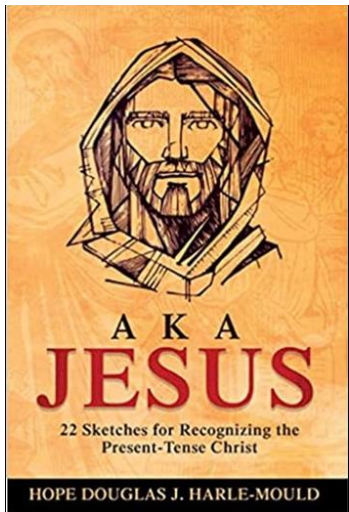
**August 5-6-7, 2022**

**at Dunkirk Conference Center**

Register for all or part online at [DunkirkCC.com](http://DunkirkCC.com)  
or by phone @ 716-366-1900



*"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." – 2 Corinthians 9:8*



## AKA Jesus: 23 Sketches for Recognizing the Present-Tense Christ

By Hope Douglas Harle-Mould

My new book has finally just been published by CSS Publishing and is available on Amazon and other distributors.\* I am so thrilled. It's been a long journey to get it published. – Hope Harle-Mould

Congratulations, Pastor Hope on your new book!

### \*How to get your copy of AKA Jesus:

- I have copies in hand for sale: 716-868-5533, [hopeharlemould@gmail.com](mailto:hopeharlemould@gmail.com). Cost: \$26.95, paperback (discounts available)
- [Talking Leaves Books](#) in Buffalo, 951 Elmwood (right next to the C.S. Lewis titles!).
- Online through [Barnes & Noble](#) (search my name, or if searching the title, you must type in the periods in "A.K.A. Jesus")
- Online at [Thriftbooks](#) for no shipping cost (search my name)
- Order directly from [CSS Publishing](#) (800-537-1030)
- Of course it's available online at [Amazon](#), but unfortunately only if you click its direct link: [https://www.amazon.com/dp/0788030167/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_awdo\\_navT\\_a\\_2TK866YMSWA2X128KKJF](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0788030167/ref=cm_sw_r_awdo_navT_a_2TK866YMSWA2X128KKJF)



## Statement of Network of Religious Communities Executive Committee

Network News as of Friday May 20, 2022

*The Network of Religious Communities joins together with hundreds of faith communities as we publicly denounce the domestic terrorism and racial hatred that shook our city on Saturday, May 14. We are angered by and grieve the senseless loss of life. We are committed to the belief that every human of every diversity is deserving of dignity. We recognize that many of us come from traditions that have historically participated in racial injustice and sometimes that history is recent. We accept responsibility to learn about this history and work to restore justice.*

*As a body of multiple faiths, we feel that our response to this heinous act must be multifaceted. It can include prayer, and acts of service. It may also include more than simply offering silent and private "thoughts and prayers." We are committed to responsive and responsible action. Just as Aaron, Ruth, Pearl, Katherine, Heyward, Celestine, Roberta, Margus, Andre, and Geraldine were not theoretically human, so we refuse to be theoretically humane. We encourage you to join us in individual and collective action that seeks to eradicate attitudes of supremacy and systems that perpetuate it, and to establish a united, vibrant community that looks out for the spiritual and material well-being of all.*



### Have You Seen the WNY Area Churches in Covenant Facebook Page?

When you are scrolling around Facebook, be sure to check out the WNY Area Churches in Covenant page! Stay up-to-date on upcoming events, links for registrations to various meetings, live-streamed services and much more! Simply click the link below to go directly to the Facebook page now! Then “like” the page to receive notifications in the future!

<https://www.facebook.com/WNYACIC>

**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!**



### 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

**In the Vineyard** is published quarterly by the Western New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC).

#### Editorial Board

amos acree

Rev. Hope Harle-Mould

Editorial Assistant - Lois Vidaver

Editor - Shannon King

### Distribution – Michelle Kemp

5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg 14075

716-649-1532

E-mail - [wny.area@gmail.com](mailto:wny.area@gmail.com)

Visit the WNYACIC website:

<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 Fall issue in by August 14, 2022.



