



**Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York**

**Fourteen Devotions by Rev. Hope Harle-Mould Were Featured in the July-Sept. 2025 Issue of *These Days Magazine***

Each of these devotions reflects on the lectionary readings during the days prior to the Sunday they are scheduled. Below are two selections.

***Go Ahead...Scare Them!***  
***Parable of the Shrewd Steward***  
***(Luke 16:1-13)***

In the 1993 movie *Dave*, an ordinary, naïve man—who looks strikingly like the sitting President—is bamboozled into impersonating the President by the power-hungry White House Chief of Staff. When Dave finally realizes this man’s avarice and his threat to our democracy, Dave publicly exposes him. But not before using some tricks-of-the-trade to accomplish some good: expanded job creation as well as services for homeless children—projects dear to the First Lady’s heart!

We may not be crafty politicians, but we have one deployable lever of power: volunteer time. We can unleash our gift of time, attention and helping-hand caring into our community to make a difference for forgotten children of God.

Power-wielders keep trying to blindfold us to our true potency to catalyze change. Why? They’re threatened by our goodness! So go ahead. Scare them!

Give! Serve! Care! Dare! In the “name” of—meaning “in the power of”—Christ, who incarnated for us ***Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.***

***God, help us overcome darkness with humor, audacity, and instruments of light. Amen.***

***Meet Me at the Neighbor!***

***“We will...practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals” (Amos 8:5b-6)***

Through the prophet Amos, God calls us to care for those exploited by the powerful; Dr. Gordon and Ginger Comstock listened. From Arcade, NY, they started traveling to Honduras twice a year—for 30 years! Trip by trip they built the first medical clinic in the Yoro Mountains. In partnership with the indigenous Mataderos tribe of La Laguna—and reaching 12 villages—they constructed four schools, started two treadle-sewing-machine classes, supported a furniture-making school, hired a year-round nurse, built latrines, helped bring in water lines, and brought medical miracles to many.

I had the honor of joining *NY/HELP Honduras* on one mission trip with my 14-year-old daughter Jessie—her first time without electricity or cellphone. The warmth, welcome and joy of the people was contagious. Together, despite language barriers, we put roofs on homes, painted schools, installed stoves, bought 100 Honduran-dressed dolls for re-sale, hosted soccer tournaments, and taught the kids American card games!

Please pray for La Laguna—not “needy people” but friends, teaching us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

***God, may I trust in your ways as fully as my Honduran friends do when they pray. Amen.***

Rev. Hope Harle-Mould is the new pastor of Payne Avenue Christian Church (DoC), North Tonawanda. If your church does not receive *These Days* you may contact Hope to receive a copy:

[hopeharlemould@gmail.com](mailto:hopeharlemould@gmail.com) or (716) 868-5533.

"These Days" is published by the Presbyterian Publishing House for the UCC, the United Church of Canada, as well as the Presbyterian Church USA.



**From Rev. Hope Schwartz, Pastor, Epiphany United Church of Christ**



### **The Church of the BIG Tent**

One of the messiest and most miraculous characteristics of the UCC is its identity as a united and uniting church which has earned us the name of **the Church of the BIG Tent**. One of the most meaningful moments of my time as a delegate at General Synod 2025 was the opportunity to participate in calling the UCC to continue to be a big tent church. To be a big tent church, we must continue to make more room for others, we must continue to build a bigger table, and we must continue to add more chairs for all to join us.

As a delegate, I was granted voice and vote on the work placed before the delegation at General Synod. And in this work, we were presented with two prudential resolutions that reflected the opportunity to make our tent bigger as a church. Our tent would become bigger if we voted yes to establish partnerships with the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland and the Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico. None of these churches identify as UCC but instead seek to maintain their own identity while establishing a partnership of full communion with the UCC. Towards this end, full communion would make it so that the churches would allow and acknowledge the ministry of the partner churches in communion, pastoral credentials, and more. It may seem this would not be a difficult decision to make

as a church that is known as the church of the big tent. But there was some discussion about the challenges presented in the establishment of these partnerships . . . particularly of potential partnership with the Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico.

Why? Because those gathered for synod found themselves caught up in focusing upon what divided us instead of what united us. What was it that the two churches differed upon? It was on the affirmation of LGBTQIA+ persons in the church. Now, y'all know how important this is to me as a justice issue and theological commitment. But should this position be the dividing line for who is welcome into our big tent church?

I don't think so. You might be surprised and wondering why I would not consider it a line that marks who is in and who is out of the big tent of the UCC. Let me tell you why, Church! It is because of my belief that nothing is impossible for God because anything is possible with God!! Because the UCC is a united and uniting church, I am hopeful that by being in relationship with others from different faith traditions and denominations that we become our best selves when we are together, we grow more together, and we do more together!

Let us be **the Church of the Big Tent** that makes room for all to come together in unity.

Let us be **the Church of the Big Tent** where everyone is welcome, no matter who they are or where they have been or where they are going on life's journey.

Let us be **the Church of the Big Tent** where we believe with all of our hearts and all of our souls and all of our minds that nothing is impossible for God because all things are possible with God! Thanks be to God. Amen.

*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



**From Pastor Elizabeth Duffy, Zion UCC and the Leaders of WAY**

**WAY Mission Trip  
July 2025**



On July 7th, 44 youth and adults from Western Area Youth (WAY) gathered in minivans and 12 passenger vans to visit my hometown, Sunderland, MA, for our annual mission trip.

Sunderland is a small town in Western Mass, just outside of the Berkshires. We spent the week at the historic First Congregational Church in Sunderland, planted near the Connecticut River in 1836.

The youth split up for different work sites each day. During the week, they painted multiple classrooms at Sunderland Elementary, helped the Sunderland Library, painted the lattice and porch at the Congregational Church, cleared debris on the Mt. Toby Trail to the Fire Tower, assisted with a community meal, and held a Saturday VBS for the local kids. The Pastor of First Congregational, Rev. Randy Calvo, was surprised by how hard the youth worked all week. He remembers attending youth retreats as a kid, but never a work trip.



The 44 youth and adults worked extremely hard all week, and they had fun too! They played kickball and visited waterfalls. They visited the Butterfly Conservatory, Yankee Candle Village, Look Park, and Northampton on their day off. They took a drive to Chapel Falls in Ashfield, MA where the kids and adults slid down the waterfalls on a natural slide. After an hour there, they didn't want to leave, and I laughed and told them this is what growing up in the 90s was like! One of them had also never been baptized, so he asked to be baptized in the pool below one of the waterfalls, which led to many of the youth and adults wanting their baptisms reaffirmed in full-emersion.



We also walked and drove up Mt. Sugarloaf, which is directly across the Connecticut River from the Church. The view down from Mt. Sugarloaf captures a picturesque view of rural Massachusetts, looking directly at the Congregational Church below.

Every evening ended with worship, and some of our youth and young adults surprised us by wanting to lead the services. To say they did a wonderful job would be an understatement. Their faith shined through them as they led the evening services.

Our week ended with Sunday Worship at First Congregational Church. In place of a sermon, Pastor Randy asked one of our youth and one of our leaders to speak about the week, and they did a wonderful job. The members of the church were thrilled to see the church full of young people, and the joyful chatter in the town continued after our departure.

It's safe to say that Western Area Youth blessed my hometown, through service, joy, and faithfulness. Everyone returned home safely, and the only sadness they had was that they would need to wait an entire year before the next trip!

Thank you to all who support WAY financially and prayerfully. We are truly blessed to have strong youth ministry available to all our Western Area Churches. If you have any questions, please reach out to Rev. Krista Ulrich or Rev. Elizabeth Duffy.



***From Shannon King, In the Vineyard Editor,  
on behalf of Arcade United Church of Christ***



**Free School Supply and Backpack Giveaway at Arcade UCC**

For the fourth year in a row, Arcade UCC provided a free school supply giveaway for Pioneer Middle and High School students. While the elementary schools within the district provide the needed supplies for their students, families of middle and high school students are given the opportunity on a first-come, first-serve basis to gather their school supplies at Arcade UCC.

The Arcade Salvation Army generously supplied the backpacks for this giveaway again this year and members of the church spent a few hours filling those backpacks with the school supplies provided by the church and generous donations. In all, 165 backpacks were filled and handed out to families in the Pioneer community.

This outreach program has had great success over the past four years and is met with sincere appreciation from area families.

***Check out this video taken during the WAY  
Summer Mission trip!***

**<https://wixsite.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212&id=6d6718fe69&e=30fd7d8457>**

**From Rev. Hope Schwartz, Pastor, Epiphany  
United Church of Christ**



**My First Protest**

Ever since the beginning of my ministry as a pastor, it has been important to me to celebrate my “firsts” in ministry. It was out of the call of God to “make some good trouble” in a sermon that paved the way for me to be able to attend my first protest! Because it was my first protest ever, I had no idea what to expect . . . and neither did a few others. Thank God, it wasn’t just me that was a newbie on the frontlines of a local protest.

My first protest taught me a few things that seem important to share with all of you as a pastor:

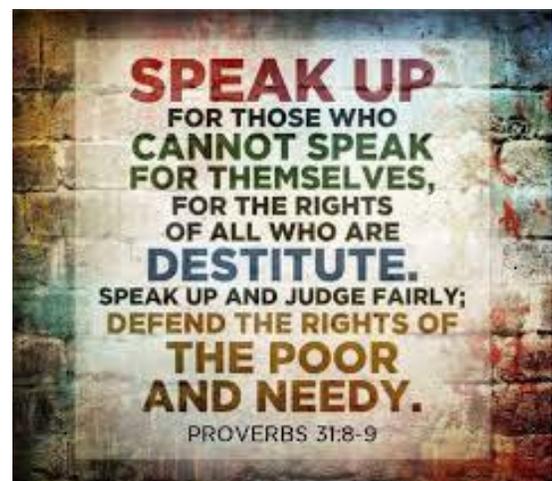
**Protest is Biblical** – In the Bible, protest is all about responding to injustices within our world. It is about speaking truth to “the powers that be” within the world and calling them to work for justice. All throughout the Bible, God calls for us to work for justice in our world. Check out these passages from the Bible that help us understand the biblical call to protest injustice, aid the powerless, and do justice (Proverbs 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:24; Isaiah 58:6-7; Micah 6:8; Ecclesiastes 4:1).

**Protest is Community Voice** – Protest is nothing new, Church. Protesting injustice was and still is part of the DNA of this nation. Spilling the tea in the harbor, the Boston Tea Party itself was a colonial protest against the unjust policies of Great Britain. And protesting injustice has continued to be the voice of the community ever since. Over the

last few months, millions have gathered in the streets in protest. This is our community voice!

**Protest is Moral** – Taking to the streets, protest is about the moral compass of the nation. Integral to the protest scene are signs and posters with messages upon them. Some of the most meaningful and moral messages from the protest were: Love Builds Bridges; Stop Normalizing Hate; Hate Doesn’t Make America Great; Protect Veterans; Protect Our Planet; Defend Democracy; Hands Off of SS, Medicaid, Women’s Bodies, etc. These signs and posters invite the nation to realign its moral compass and invite us all to do the same too.

Protest is and has been a faithful response of resistance to injustice in our world. But Church, protesting in the streets as a public demonstration is not the only way to protest. Whenever we pray together, we are protesting! Whenever we hear a sermon and put it into practice, we are protesting! Whenever we feed the hungry, we are protesting! Protesting is how we live out our faith in this world, Church. Protest is everything we do towards manifesting the will of God to be done . . . on earth as it is in Heaven. If you are interested in learning about more opportunities to protest as an act of faith, please do not hesitate to connect with me!



## New Clergy Feature



Rev. Dr. Kandace Brooks with co-pastor, Rev. Dr. Rick Danielson.

### Meet Rev. Dr. Kandace Brooks

Rev. Dr. Kandace Brooks is an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church. She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Performance from the University of Georgia, a Master of Divinity from Asbury Seminary, and a PhD in Homiletics from the London School of Theology. Prior to entering ministry, Kandace was a Professor of Music at the University of Florida and was an active solo and chamber musician. Her pastoral work in the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church includes 23 years of ministry ranging from new church starts to large established congregations in Gainesville, Ormond Beach and Tallahassee. Additionally, she served on the faculty/staff at Asbury Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL, teaching Liturgical Theology and Homiletics. As part of her ministry, Kandace served on District and Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry and was active in worship planning for Annual Conferences.

Kandace returned ‘home’ to the Buffalo area three years ago, after she retired from the Florida Conference. She has taught World Religions at Villa Maria College and served several pastoral transition

appointments in Western New York. She is currently co-pastoring the congregation of Amherst Community Church along with Rev. Dr. Rick Danielson.

Her interests include hiking, kayaking and gardening and during the colder months she spends her time working with glass - ranging from mosaics to fused and stained-glass construction. Kandace has one daughter, Kailee, who lives in Los Angeles.

\*\*\*\*\*

*From Carissa Gigliotti, Office Manager, Church of the Nativity, Photos by Bill Schlegel*

### Rev. Dr. Karen Borchert Installed at Church of the Nativity UCC, Town of Tonawanda



On Sunday, June 22, Church of the Nativity formally celebrated the installation of its new settled pastor, Rev. Dr. Karen Borchert, who began her ministry on Palm Sunday. Despite the heat, many clergy members from the Western Area donned their robes and red stoles and came out to support Karen, along with members of the congregation and a group of her family and friends.

After a welcome from our Senior Deacon, Neil Lange, and greetings from the Association brought by WNYACIC moderator Dona Roll, Dr. Mark Borchert led a heartfelt prayer in honor of



his wife. Since Karen has a passion for ministry with children, and youth, she had requested they be involved in her service. Youth Ministry Coordinator, Leigh Lee, worked with the younger Sunday School children to lead the congregation in singing “This Is the Day” and the Youth Group performed “Who Am I” by Casting Crowns (photo). All three of Nativity’s musical groups—Chancel Choir, English Handbell



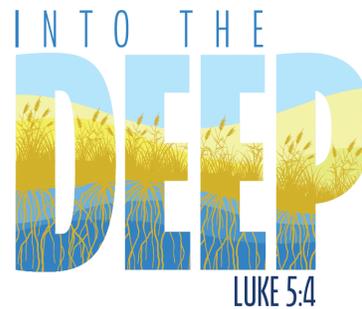
Choir, and Praise Team—also shared beautiful pieces that set the joyful tone of the day.

Rev. Elizabeth Duffy from Zion UCC preached an inspiring word based on 1 Corinthians 1:1-13, which was read by Rev. Krista Ulrich. Pastor Duffy encouraged the congregation to love their pastor and for her to love them, not in a superficial way and not only when things are easy, but deeply and especially in the hard times.

After Dona Roll conducted the formalities of the installation service itself (photo w/ Pastor Karen),



everyone celebrated with a delicious spread of picnic food and strawberry shortcake prepared and served by Nativity’s Hospitality Club. It was a meaningful, uplifting day for the church, and we are excited for Karen to continue her ministry with us for many years to come!



General Synod

July 2025

As many gathered for [General Synod](#) in Kansas City from July 11-15, the United Church of Christ National Setting prepared special options for people to tune into parts of Synod’s work and worship from near and far.

A livestream broadcasted the plenary sessions, [keynote speaker Rev. Jennifer Butler](#), and worship gatherings of General Synod.

Click here to view the broadcast:

<https://www.ucc.org/gs-livestream/>

“While much of our focus in planning General Synod goes toward creating the best possible in-person gathering, we also want to invite those unable to come to Kansas City to be attuned to the work of this broader body and joined together in worship,” said General Synod Administrator and UCC Chief of Staff, Rev. Joshua Baird.

Many elements of General Synod were unable to be livestreamed, including workshops, special events, and fellowship times.

General Synod held three worship services, including a community worship service [featuring General Minister and President Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as preacher](#). People from the surrounding communities were invited to attend this service in-person at no cost.

### **New Emergency Resolutions Submitted for General Synod**

Five new resolutions were added to the slate that came before delegates at General Synod 35 in Kansas City. They addressed pressing current events around immigration, humanitarian funding, and genocide in Palestine.

Learn more about the emergency resolutions here:

[https://www.ucc.org/emergency-resolutions-for-synod-consideration-address-immigration-humanitarian-funding-genocide-in-palestine/?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=united-church-of-christ&utm\\_content=489f7726-b6cc-41dc-9616-657905c037de&utm\\_campaign=social-media](https://www.ucc.org/emergency-resolutions-for-synod-consideration-address-immigration-humanitarian-funding-genocide-in-palestine/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_term=united-church-of-christ&utm_content=489f7726-b6cc-41dc-9616-657905c037de&utm_campaign=social-media)



*The General Minister and President of United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson (left) with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Conference Minister, NY Conference UCC*



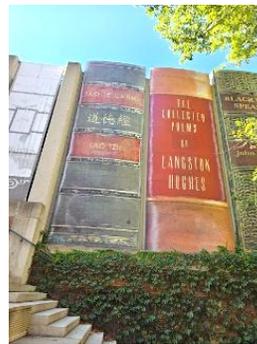
### **From Ginger Comstock, Arcade UCC**

#### **35<sup>th</sup> UCC General Synod**

Attending the UCC General Synod for me, whether as a delegate or a guest, is always a combination of reconnecting with friends I have made along the way and meeting new people who become friends. The community feeling is very much present throughout the entire time.

The Synod in Kansas City was five days of a whirlwind of plenary sessions, workshops, wonderful worship with great music, as well as times to visit the many exhibits to buy t-shirts, books and other things.

Part of the business of the synod was nearly a dozen resolutions that the delegates became familiar with, discussed, publicly spoke for and against, and finally voted on. As a guest, I could attend the discussion on whichever resolution I chose, where I could gather information and perhaps voice an opinion even though I could not vote.



Each day we explored different restaurants and had some great BBQ, which Kansas City is famous for, as well as many others.

On our way to our hotel, we drove by the Kansas City Central Library where the exterior of the parking garage is clad with a Community Bookshelf.

There was also time for a little fun.

I plan to continue to go to future synods as long as I am able.



**An Important Invitation  
from Rev. Dr. Marsha  
Williams and Your  
Conference Staff  
Happening on  
Wednesday, September  
17th at 6:00 pm**

You are invited to an important Conference-wide Zoom meeting with Heather Kimmel, UCC Legal Counsel. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

On **Wed., September 17th at 6:00 pm**, we will be offering a special opportunity to join a Zoom session with UCC Legal Counsel Heather Kimmel on Governance for Local Churches.

We have made the Zoom session available to ALL leaders of our churches, including clergy and lay people. **Who should attend?** Pastors, Treasurers, Board Members, Deacons, Trustees, basically all those in leadership positions in your church.

**Why is this so important?** The presentation will cover both governance and corporate basics for UCC local churches. Topics will include: corporate and governing basics for all UCC local churches; business organization and tax exemption;

standings for our pastors and churches, as well as the fiduciary duties we have at all levels of church. In addition, it will also cover some common challenges that churches experience in governance.

Pastors and church admins, please share this information with your lay leaders. Registration for the meeting is required.

Register in advance for this meeting by clicking the link here: [\*\*Register here\*\*](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Registration will be available up until the meeting begins.

Questions? Please reach out to Rev. Dr. Marsha. See you on the 17th!

**Galatians 6:9**

*"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*



# NY/HELP News



## NY/HELP Honduras Work Trip – August 2025

At the beginning of August, NY/HELPers traveled to the mountains of Honduras to spend a week in the village of La Laguna.



Here's a photo of el grupo. Rigo, Anna, **Reina Castro**, **Mirtila Garcia**, Aracely, Mirtila's sister, Judy, Judy's new best friend (we'll have to get her name when all are stateside), **Jen Muttillio**, and **Drew Toner**!

While there, they painted the outside of the clinic building, which had not been painted in a number of years. Reina, the Honduran coordinator, and Rigo, the group's translator, helped with the painting as well.



*Drew w/Cousin Anna & Grandma Judy*

*Reina*



The kids especially enjoy it when people from NY/HELP visit. They like the games, bubbles, kites, and having books read to them. They are often at the windows looking in and grinning when the group is eating. They seem so happy to please.



*Judy with bubbles*



*Boy flying a kite*



*Anna with bubbles*

Entertaining the children...creating memories of a lifetime!



*Jen reading to girls*

From Ginger Comstock:  
The children always seem to be happy, unless they are at the clinic because they are sick. They love interacting with our group. They love it if we have books for them, and especially if we read the books to them. They are basically like kids anywhere!

From Jen Muttillio, Judy Toner’s daughter/Anna’s Mom:

"Mom had many conversations about their needs and how we can help. Made it out of the mountains yesterday (Tuesday). ... We painted the clinic, entertained the children, and visited two schools, La Laguna and Los Mataderos."

Ginger:

Their houses are relatively simple, one or two rooms with hopefully a stove made of Adobe and a stove pipe to take the smoke out. The roofing material (lamina) has to be transported up the dirt road at the bottom of the mountain.

Jen:

"Donations provided a roof for a man named Ivan. Here are pictures of his present home, the roofing material, and the area that will become his new home. He made progress on his new place while we were in La Laguna."



Ivan’s present home,



roofing material,



making progress on his new home.



Do YOU want to help?

We’re thrilled to announce an online fundraiser for NYHELP/Honduras through Pampered Chef! Our goal is to raise \$1,417.00, which will help cover one month’s salaries, medical supplies, and contribute to purchasing school supplies. Here’s the great part: once we reach \$650.00 in sales, Pampered Chef will donate 30% directly to NYHELP, and Dona will add another 10%! That means a total of 40% back to NYHELP! For instance, if we hit \$5,000 in sales, NYHELP will receive \$2,000—goal accomplished! Plus, you’ll get to enjoy new, high-quality products that make meal prep easier and more enjoyable!

Here’s how you can help the wonderful people of Honduras:

1. Join our Facebook event page if you’re a Facebook user:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2003003373440363>

2. If you’re not on Facebook, check out our NYHELP/Honduras Pop-up Shop here:

<https://table.pamperedchef.com/party/2290408dve>

3. Spread the word! Invite your friends by forwarding this message or giving them a call.

**Deadline to qualify for the Pampered Chef giveback to NY/HELP is Thursday, September 4.**

If you have any questions, please reach out! Text Dona at (716) 676-2573, send her an email at [drroll@yahoo.com](mailto:drroll@yahoo.com), or send her a Facebook message here: <https://m.me/donarae.roll>.



*“...encouraging independent lifestyles...”*

*A program of UCHS, Inc.*

## United Church Manor News

Thanks to your past generosity, our *Baskets & Brunch* fundraiser not only raised vital funds but lifted the spirits of our residents in ways we could never fully capture in words. Because of donors like you, our seniors at United Church Manor have enjoyed safe and reliable transportation to stores, moments of joy through social events, and welcoming shared spaces that truly feel like home.

This year, we’re doing things a little differently. While we’re taking a break from *Baskets & Brunch*, our commitment to our residents remains stronger than ever. To help us continue this important work we are doing a **direct sponsorship campaign**. Your contribution will directly support the annual fundraising event that provides our residents with transportation to local grocery and retail stores, social activities which significantly reduces isolation and loneliness and making homelike esthetic improvements to the community areas.

Here is what past fundraising has helped us provide:

- A peaceful fountain and garden area, that provides an area for quiet moments and reflection
- A beautiful gazebo and grill, where we now host summer cookouts and residents can barbecue together
- Building events such as ice cream socials and holiday celebrations, that ease loneliness and bring people together
- Community computers with internet access, helping residents stay in touch with loved ones and the world

A donation of \$55.00 provides one hour of reliable transportation to vital shopping centers that keep residents independent and connected to the community. However, every single donation makes a difference, no matter what the amount.

Please make your check payable to “United Church Manor” and mail it to the following address:

**United Church Manor  
50 North Ave  
West Seneca, NY 14224**

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to know more about how your donation directly supports our mission (716) 668-5804. We are deeply grateful to you, and everything your support has made possible.



*Vic, from Buffalo Transportation, provides rides for the United Church Manor’s tenants two times a month.*



*United Church Manor’s annual Christmas party which every tenant can attend free of charge.*



The fountain at United Church Manor with residents enjoying each other's company.

(Please note that United Church Manor is a 501 C3 non-profit, 22-2321997. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.)

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You are cordially invited to attend  
the **Installation Service** of

Rev. Miranda Hammer  
as Associate Pastor of  
**Ebenezer United Church of Christ**  
630 Main Street, West Seneca NY

on  
**Sunday, October 26, 2025**  
at 3:00 pm

Clergy are invited to process and wear red stoles.

RSVP by October 18, 2025 to  
[crista@ebenezerucc.church](mailto:crista@ebenezerucc.church) or  
call 716-674-4566

The service will be followed by a reception.

**EBENEZER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**ECCLESIASTICAL  
COUNCIL  
FOR KALEE MIELKE**

*Sunday, September 7, 2025*  
3:00pm  
Reception to follow

LOCATION:  
ZION UCC  
15 KOENIG CIR.  
TONAWANDA, NY 14150

[Link to Kalee's Ordination Paper](#)



**Church & Ministry Committee Update:  
Continuing Education Scholarship Guidelines**

The Church & Ministry Committee recently updated the Continuing Education Scholarship Guidelines. The document is now called, "Scholarship & Ministry Preparedness Policy." These changes will open up available funds to more people.

[https://mcusercontent.com/793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212/files/fb749bb0-b522-8cba-e527-38d7f415c041/Continuing Education Scholarship and Support Policy 2025.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212/files/fb749bb0-b522-8cba-e527-38d7f415c041/Continuing_Education_Scholarship_and_Support_Policy_2025.pdf)

### Kenmore UCC Volunteers at The Chautauqua Institute



Five members of Kenmore United Church of Christ visited UCC Headquarters at The Chautauqua Institute on August 5<sup>th</sup> to serve refreshments for the Open House/Social Hour. About forty people from all over the grounds stopped and enjoyed the wonderful assortment of goodies on offer. This is the second year in a row that we have participated in this activity which happens each Tuesday during the Chautauqua season. It is a great way to serve the denomination and to enjoy the beauty of the Institute. We highly recommend others to try it. Contact Kenmore UCC to get more details.



### Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams to Preach at Arcade United Church of Christ

Arcade UCC is excited to welcome Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams on Sunday, September 7 to their worship service! Rev. Dr. Williams will be preaching at the 9:30 am service with a small reception to follow. All are welcome! Arcade United Church of Christ, Congregational, 297 Main St., Arcade, NY 14009.



### DUNKIRK CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER

[www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com)



Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center was voted Best of the Best Summer Camp in Chautauqua County for the second year in a row. Come experience why!

### UPCOMING YOUTH CAMPS

Can't wait until next summer to get back to camp? No problem! Registration is now open for fall weekend camps at [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com)



### Star Wars Weekend Camp

September 12 - 14, 2025  
Grades 3–9

The path to becoming a Jedi is a tough one that every Padawan must complete. Learn to use the Force while working together to complete a series of Jedi trials in an attempt to complete your ultimate goal and locate Yoda. Join us for fun-filled weekend of Star Wars inspired games and activities. Directed by Mike Hanes, Scott Benaglio, and Allison Aungst.

**Fall Outdoor Adventure Weekend  
September 19 - 21, 2025  
Grades 3-11**

If you love the great outdoors, then this “mini-adventure-camp” is for you. Join us for a fun-filled weekend as we explore all 110 acres of the Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center. Activities to include:

- \* Games/Sports/Crafts \* Geocaching
- \* Hiking/Exploring \* Campfires \* Tent Camping
- \* Lunch prepared over an open fire ...and MUCH, MUCH MORE!!! Directed by Mike Hanes, Scott Benaglio, and Allison Aungst.



**Harry Potter  
Weekend  
Camp  
October 10-12,  
2025  
Grades 3–9**

Join us for a fun-filled weekend of Harry Potter inspired games and activities including playing Quidditch, making your own custom magic wand, battle Dementors, Potions Class (a camper favorite!), making Harry Potter inspired beach sculptures, and MUCH, MUCH MORE!!! Directed by Mike Hanes, Scott Benaglio, and Allison Aungst.

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 at 716-366-1900.



**UPCOMING ADULT CAMPS**

*Women's Wellness & Mindfulness*

**RADICAL REDISCOVERY**

Sept. 26–28, 2025  
at Dunkirk  
Conference Center

Enjoy spiritual practices including meditation, yoga, and mindfulness

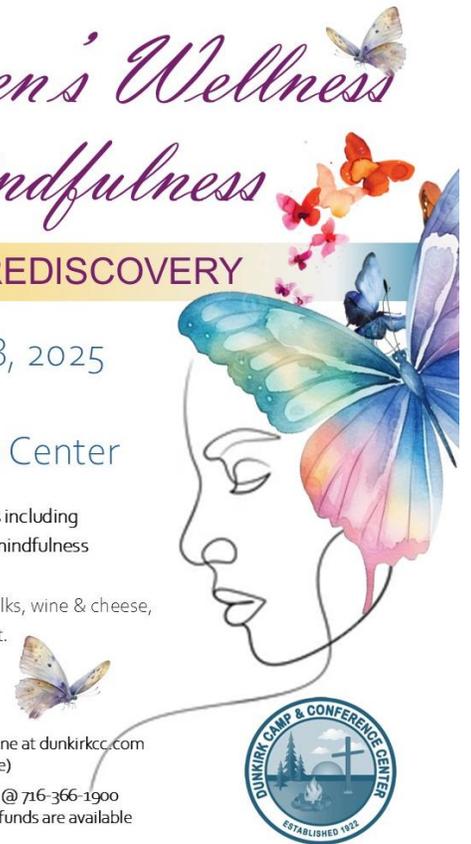
Participate in beach walks, wine & cheese, bonfires...or simply rest.

Registration fee: \$125.00



Register online at [dunkirkcc.com](http://dunkirkcc.com) (use QR code)

or by phone @ 716-366-1900  
Scholarship funds are available



**Women's Wellness & Mindfulness  
Weekend  
September 26 – 28, 2025**

This weekend will offer you the opportunity to participate in spiritual practices, including Yoga, meditation and mindfulness. You will hear from knowledgeable speakers, engage in rich conversation, all while enjoying this beautiful outdoor setting on the shores of Lake Erie.

Directed by Heather Kraemer & Krista Ulrich.

**Scrapbook Weekend  
November 7-9, 2025**



Have a box of photos that need to be shown off? Are your baby photos still in their envelopes? Then it is time to come to Dunkirk to get them in order! If you are an avid scrapper or new at this, you are welcome to join us for some fun! We not only make photo pages, we share fun, food, and fellowship at our scrapbook retreat!

Directed by Jennifer Vacanti.

**UPCOMING EVENTS AT DCC**



**Halloween Happening  
at DCC  
Saturday, October 18th**

We invite you to our annual community-wide Halloween event. Enjoy \* Trick-or-Treating at our cabins \* Haunted House \* Dance Party \* Costume Contest \* Food \* and More!

If you are interested in sponsoring a cabin, donating candy, or volunteering for this event, please contact Anne @ 716-366-1900.



**DCC Fall Work  
Saturday  
Saturday, October  
25th**

We need your help with cleaning buildings, cabins and closing the grounds for the off-season. Please let us know if you are planning to come!



**SAFE DRIVER ACADEMY**

**Saturday  
September 27, 2025**

**9:00 am to 3:00 pm**

Contact the Church Office at  
716-674-1233 before Sept. 20 to enroll

**ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, will hold a Safe Driver Academy fun defensive driving class in the church's fellowship hall. The class includes a half-hour lunch break, as well as shorter breaks during the morning and afternoon sessions. Cost is based on class size - \$44 for a class of 20-29 students, or \$39 for a class of 30 or more students.

Safe Driver Academy is the top-rated defensive driving class in NY State, whose certified and DMV-approved instructors present the Improv Aware Traffic School, New York's only approved humor-based course.

- Completion Certificates issued within 2-3 weeks
- 10% discount on auto & motorcycle insurance premiums for 3 years
- Up to a four point reduction of any DMV Violation Points accrued within 18 months preceding class



**Neighbors  
in Need  
Resources**

**2025 Suggested Offering Date: October 5th**

The Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

While many of our churches collect the offering on part of World Communion Sunday, contributions to this offering can be collected on any Sunday during the calendar year. We thank you for your support and generosity.

To donate online, simply click the link below:  
<https://support.ucc.org/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/neighbors-in-need/neighbors-in-need-donation>



**Faith**  
UNITED CHURCH of Christ  
8651 Boston, NY 14025

**Opening for Part-Time Music Director**

Have keyboard & music director skills?

Come and enhance the worship life of our congregation through the leading of music during regular worship services, special services and church events.


[https://www.faithunitedchurchucc.com/  
info@faithunitedchurchucc.com](https://www.faithunitedchurchucc.com/info@faithunitedchurchucc.com)

**Fall Fest at Arcade UCC!**

**297 Main St., Arcade, NY 14009**

Chowder, Basket Raffle, and all the usuals!

This year's Fall Fest will happen on  
Saturday, October 11, 2025.

Doors open: 11 am/ Ticket Drawing begins: 3 pm.

**(Ticket Booths will close at 2:15 this year.)**

Reverse Bingo begins at 2:30.

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:**

**BUFFALO BILLS BASKET RAFFLE!**



Basket includes a Josh Allen Jersey along with other Bills' items: hats, artwork, plush fleece blanket and more!

Tickets will be available at Fall Fest for \$10.00 each.

**Credit cards will be accepted for most items!**

Fall Fest benefits Arcade UCC's General Fund.



Homemade quilt raffle: tickets \$2 each/\$10 for 6.  
Raffle held the day of Fall Fest – you don't need to be present to win! Proceeds from the quilt raffle go to the Women's Fellowship Scholarship Fund.

Stay tuned for more details on the Arcade UCC Facebook page!



## Veteran Hero Boxes Honoring Our Heroes

Each November, we honor the service and sacrifice of our senior Veterans by recognizing them with a HERO Box. In 2024, we proudly delivered HERO Boxes to 150 Veterans, including 11 WWII Veterans and four Purple Heart recipients. Each HERO Box is filled with patriotic gifts, specific to Branch of Service and Campaign. We are always humbled and inspired by the stories shared with us each year and how meaningful it is for our Veterans to be remembered.

### Help Us Celebrate in 2025

We are seeking Veterans age 65 and older for our 2025 Veterans' Week program, with special consideration for those who served in WWII and Korea. Veterans 65 and older may be nominated or apply themselves. Visit [www.seniorwishes.org](http://www.seniorwishes.org) for applications.



Senior Wishes enriches the lives of eligible seniors (age 65+) by granting meaningful wishes, honoring Centenarians and Veterans, and providing holidays gifts to isolated seniors in Western New York.

For more information on the Senior Wishes program, visit [www.seniorwishes.org](http://www.seniorwishes.org)

## Hero Boxes 2025 Sponsorship Proposal

**Help us honor senior veterans for their service! HERO Boxes filled with patriotic items will be delivered Veteran's Week.**

### Medal of Honor HERO Sponsor - \$2,500 - Exclusive

**Recognition as presenting sponsor for all HERO Boxes distributed to Veterans**

- Patriotic Pen or Lapel Pin (with your Company Logo) placed in all HERO Boxes
- Logo on all materials, media & group collaborations (Box brochure & newsletter)
- Logo prominent on inside box cover
- Option to attend and speak at a Group Recognition Event
- At least 10 social media posts

### Silver HERO Sponsor - \$1,000

**Sponsorship of all HERO Boxes distributed to Veterans**

- Logo prominent on inside of all box covers
- Logo in box brochure and newsletter
- At least 5 social media posts

### Bronze HERO Sponsor - \$500

**Sponsorship of Group Recognition Events**

- Signage at Group Recognition Events (Senior Centers, Apartments & Veteran Groups)
- Logo in box brochure and newsletter
- At least 3 social media posts

### Star & Stripes HERO Supporter - \$175

**Sponsor an individual HERO Box**

- Name on inside box cover as sponsor of box
- At least 1 social media post
- Name listed in box brochure & newsletter

**To nominate a Veteran Hero or apply, visit [www.seniorwishes.org](http://www.seniorwishes.org) before Friday, October 3, 2025.**

**Hero Boxes Sponsorship deadline is Friday, October 10, 2025.**

As a young soldier returning home from war, I was not thanked, and I was treated poorly. While I was proud of my military service, others did not share the same sentiments. Initiatives like this help me and my brothers/sisters in arms to heal and get our 'welcome home'. Thank you for being part of my healing journey. - Dan Q, Vietnam Veteran.



Senior Wishes/UCHS is 501(c)3 non-profit, 16-1157086  
 For more information email us at: [creitebach@seniorwishes.org](mailto:creitebach@seniorwishes.org) or Visit [www.Seniorwishes.org](http://www.Seniorwishes.org) for more details.

Kenmore United Church of Christ  
 Presents their annual  
**MEAT raffle!**

Saturday sept. 20th ★ Doors open 6pm First spin 7pm ★ Beer & pop included

Basket raffle - 50/50 - door prizes - and more!

Knights of Columbus  
 755 Erie Ave., North Tonawanda 14120

Presale tickets: **\$13**  
 Tickets will be \$15 at the door

For information & tickets, call the church at: **716-875-1725**  
 or email: [kenmoreucc@gmail.com](mailto:kenmoreucc@gmail.com)

Meat by Pelicano's

**Win a Josh Allen Framed Autographed Jersey**  
 to benefit **SENIORWISHES®**  
*It's never too late to have a wish come true.*

Drawing to be held Thursday, September 4, 2025

Raffle Tickets  
 1 for \$10  
 3 for \$25  
 8 for \$50

Purchase tickets at [seniorwishes.org](http://seniorwishes.org) or scan here:

Must be 18 years or older to participate.

Senior Wishes  
 716.508.2121

**TRUNK OR TREAT**

**IN OUR PARKING LOT**

**Sat., Oct 25**

**2 pm – 4 pm**

**Ebenezer United Church of Christ**  
**630 Main Street, West Seneca**

**St. Paul's UCC Annual Sauerkraut Supper**

11 Washington Street Attica  
14011  
Election day - November 4th  
Eat in or Take Out  
Dinners begin at 4:30 pm  
Questions call 585-591-2705



The West Seneca Town Band will be in concert at Rally Day on Sun., September 7<sup>th</sup> at noon at Ebenezer United Church of Christ, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224. Worship will be at 10 am followed by a church picnic and the band concert. All will be outside (weather permitting).

**On the Lighter Side 😊**

What did Jonah's family say when he told them about what happened before reaching Nineveh?

"Hmm, sounds fishy."

<https://parade.com/1196835/kelsey/elzer/christian-jokes/>

First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main St. Angola, NY 14006  
**Annual Fall Bazaar**  
Saturday, October 25th, 2025



Booths Open 10:00am to 4:00pm  
Dining Room 11:00am to 3:00pm

Come and see our booths!

- THEME BASKETS
- CRAFT VENDORS
- FARMER'S MARKET
- BAKED GOODS
- RADA KNIVES
- BECKER'S BISTRO



**We're looking for a Religious Education Director**  
**PART-TIME:**  
**4-5 HOURS PER WEEK / \$20 PER HOUR**

**St. James UCC is a progressive and inclusive congregation in Hamburg.**

Please reach out to Rev. Paul Werner at 716-649-6171 for more info.



[hamburgucc.org](http://hamburgucc.org)

Ebenezer United Church of Christ  
616 Main Street, West Seneca NY

# Rummage Sale

**Fri., Sept. 26 & Sat. Sept. 27**  
**8 am – 3 pm**



**BAKED GOODS SALE on Friday**

**Bag Sale on Saturday at 1:30**

A suggested offering of \$1.00 will be collected as "admission" to the sale. Proceeds are used to support our youth missions.

Please note....TV's & old electronics will NOT be accepted



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9**  
**DOORS OPEN @ 12PM, GAME STARTS @ 1PM**



**PRESENTS A**  
**BILLS VIEWING PARTY**  
**FUNDRAISING EVENT**

@ ISMAILIA SHRINERS - 1600 SOUTHWESTERN BLVD, BUFFALO, NY 14224

- ALL PROCEEDS GO TO BENEFIT PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS
- \$40 DONATION FOR A TICKET (INCLUDES 2 DRINK TICKETS & FOOD. FOOD INCLUDES ASSORTED APPETIZER BARS, FULL LUNCH OPTIONS, & DESSERT, & MUCH MORE!)
- BASKET RAFFLE & PRIZE DRAWINGS
- SCAN QR CODE FOR TICKETS, CALL 716 - 393 - 3906, OR VISIT [WWW.PLYMOUTHCROSSROADS.ORG](http://WWW.PLYMOUTHCROSSROADS.ORG)
- PURCHASE TICKETS BY 11/01/25



ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# MEAT RAFFLE

**Friday, October 3, 2025**  
1475 ORCHARD PARK RD, WEST SENECA

Doors Open at 6:30 pm - First Spin at 7:00 pm

**Tickets \$10 each**

Table of 8 for \$72 (pre-sale/purchased in advance)

Ticket includes admission and a beverage.

Additional beverages can be purchased.

Bring your own snacks & coolers for your winnings.



**50/50 RAFFLES**

Tickets available now call 716-674-1233

for more info visit: [www.st-petersucc.org](http://www.st-petersucc.org)

Meat supplied by Camillo's Sloan Meat Market



**JR. WAY FARM DAY!**

at Pastor Josh Bower's Farm...  
**GOOD VIBES FARM OF ELLICOTTVILLE**  
**SEPTEMBER 20, 2025**

Fun Activities! Healthy Snacks from the Garden!  
Lunch! Visit to Animal Farm Next Door!

**BUS LEAVES FROM EBENEZER UCC**  
(630 Main St. West Seneca, NY 14224)  
**AT 9AM AND RETURNS AT 4PM**

**4 YEARS OLD TO GRADE 6**

REGISTER AT [WWW.ZIONUCCTON.COM/JRWAY](http://WWW.ZIONUCCTON.COM/JRWAY)



**From Rev. Lynn Morgan,  
Treasurer, WNYACIC**

## Western Area Treasurer's Report

As usual, in the summer, spending tends to exceed the pace of income from Covenant Share giving. If you can, it would be helpful to make your Covenant Share payment earlier in the fall than waiting until the year end.

Special thanks to the Good Shepherd Community of Faith, whose giving to ministry in the Western Area continues even though the congregation has formally dissolved. Since the closure of the church, the congregation has given almost \$65,000 to the Area which will continue to support mission and ministry in WNY for years to come.

In September, each church will receive a letter that will report their giving to date for 2025 as well as each church's Covenantal Share for 2026 (based on reported membership in the 2025 Yearbook). Each church will be asked to give \$8 per member. The Per Capita support to the NY Conference UCC is \$2.50 per member (which we receive in the Association and pass on to the Conference).

At the end of 2025, I will be ending my term as Treasurer. If you or someone you know is able and willing to undertake the bookkeeping for the Area, please reach out to me or to our Moderator, Dona Roll. I have found it to be a meaningful way to minister to the church and I think that will be true for my successor as well. Please prayerfully consider whether God is leading you to this area of service.

**From Jeff Mason,  
Finance/Endowment Committee**

## Endowment News

All of the investments in the endowment increased in value between the end of March and the end of June. The value of the Osaic Funds on June 30 was \$50,870.94, an increase of \$2,290.82 since March 31. The value of the United Church Funds account ending in 09 on June 30 was \$649,677.86, an increase of \$39,484.85 since March 31. The value of the UF Funds account ending in 10 was \$78,714.79, an increase of \$4,739.15.

The total of all investments on June 30 was \$779,263.59, an increase of \$46,514.82.

The Finance Committee will be meeting in September to work on the proposed 2026 Western Area budget that will be presented at the annual meeting later this fall. Our committee will be meeting without our friend Carl Bauer, who passed away on May 31. Carl was a longtime member of the Church of the Nativity and had served on the Finance Committee for over five years.

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## Updated pulpit supply list for Western Area:

<https://wixsite.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212&id=575eae5b67&e=30c8f7013f>

**Updated WNYACIC Directory:**

<https://wixsite.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=793bc9720d9c19db01d5d1212&id=95877dfddf&e=30c8f7013f>



### **WNYACIC Prayer Lists September - November 2025**

#### **September Prayer List**

- St. Stephen's UCC, East Amherst.  
Ned Holderby, Pastor
- St. Matthew's UCC, Hamburg.  
Rev. Kayti Dean, Pastor
- St. Paul's UCC (Shawnee), N. Tonawanda.  
Rev. Ronald Lord, Pastor;  
Bonnie Kane & Rebecca Pittler,  
Christian Education
- Grove Street Christian Church, Tonawanda.  
Rev. Kenneth Keenan, Pastor
- Western Area Support Staff.  
Michelle Kemp, Office Admin.
- Budget & Finance Committee.
- Commission on Ministry – Christian Church  
(DOC).
- In the Vineyard* Editorial Board.  
Shannon King, Editor

#### **October Prayer List**

- St. Peter's UCC, N. Tonawanda.  
Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lawrence, Pastor
- Zion UCC, Tonawanda.  
Rev. Elizabeth Duffy, Pastor
- New York Conference Ministers and  
Support Staff.
- Pulpit Supply Ministers.
- Western Area Youth (WAY).
- Climate Justice.

#### **November Prayer List**

- First Congregational UCC, Angola.  
Jennifer Mazur, Pastor
- Salem UCC, Tonawanda.  
Rev. Pat Ludwig, Interim  
Rev. Alice McDermott, Pastor Emerita
- Faith UCC, Williamsville.  
Tina Bacon, Pastor
- New Light Christian Church  
Rev. Nadine Schrodt, Pastor
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
General Office [US & Canada]  
Rev. Teresa (Terrie) Hord Owens,  
General Minister and President  
Northeastern Region  
Rev. Thaddeus Allen, Regional Minister  
Rev. Jan Mahle, Moderator
- Plymouth Crossroads.
- SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence.



**Daylight Saving Time 2025 ends on Sunday, November 2 at 2 AM. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour and get an extra hour of sleep before church!**



#### **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* asks the question:

***Are you in favor of secular music in church? Why or why not?***

***From Retired Rev. Henrietta Colvin, UCC, OMP (Ordained Ministerial Partner)***

“Good idea to expand the choice of music in the church. If secular music is used, time should be taken to examine the genre of the music and its history. Music should reflect the political, social and cultural leaning of the church.”

***From Rev. Gary Burdick, Pastor Emeritus Faith UCC Boston, NY***

“If a secular song is tasteful and makes a good point that really connects with the sermon, I am in favor of a secular song in worship. In fact, I have used a few secular songs on rare occasion myself.”

*We thank all of you for your feedback and replies to our queries each quarter and encourage anyone who would like to submit a response to do so! We love to hear from you! Please send them to [inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com). Thank you!*



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!



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

***In the Vineyard*, Editorial Board**

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Ginger Comstock

Rev. Ted Brelsford

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

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[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 winter issue in by November 14, 2025.\*\*\***