

Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

***In the Vineyard* asks the question: "As a churchperson, what do you hope for above all else as 2021 unfolds?"**

From Ralph Anderson

For 2021 I hope folks ease up, learn to once again laugh at themselves, and for once and for all solve the great mystery posited by Stan Freberg back in the 1960's as to how Contadina Tomato Paste manages to "put eight great tomatoes in each little bitty can."

From Betty J. Lamb

To feel safe enough to re-enter church services and activities which includes singing in choir!! Have been Zooming Sunday School and church services which has been an incredible support through this difficult time!

From Arlene Brandon, St. Paul's UCC, Attica

For 99% of the population to get vaccinated so we can control the COVID spread and a return to singing in church.

From Krista Ulrich, Ebenezer UCC

As 2021 unfolds, I hope (and pray) that we remember. That we remember the church is the people not the place. Remember that the leadership of our churches are capable of "out of the box" thinking that we couldn't even imagine. Remember silent Sunday School hallways and never take for granted the sound of laughing, loud children ever again. I would hope that we remember that the body and blood of Christ doesn't need to be presented in ornate vessels with light

streaming through stained glass windows...that a cracker and a glass of juice waiting on our kitchen table as we watch church on our laptop, is a holy symbol of salvation. And I hope we remember Jesus' commandment to love one another, and that when we do, we love with a gratitude of remembrance for these difficult days when extending love and being loved was a gift given to us by an everlasting God.

From Gary Burdick

There are two things I really want in 2021: A summer full of camps at the Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center and to be able to sing in our churches.

From Rev. amos acree

Over the past few weeks, I have been daily, praying for several things, often several times a day. I pray that I will become a more caring person and have less anger at what is going on around me, even within my own family. I also pray that our nation and our leaders will become more caring for ALL of God's creation, and less divisive, so that it can find its way back to God's ways. I occasionally also ask that our churches will find more effective ways to help our communities to flourish. Since we are people of faith, it should be our faith that guides our decisions about life/death, sustainability, climate change, whatever it is that is important as people of faith.

In more practical experiences, I hope to be back in face-to-face contact with our communities of faith. Zoom has been a blessing and will continue to be so for a while. But appropriate touching and handshakes and hugs are vital to our well-being. Blessings...

"As a churchperson, what do you hope for above all else as 2021 unfolds?" continued...

From Rev. Cheri Farr Keipper

1) Health and Hope: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we all have a heightened sense of how our health affects every other area of our lives whether personal, relational, spiritual, social, educational, economical, or political. When health fails, we experience a loss of hope for our well-being, as well as for the future well-being of the world. St. Paul's vision of "hope" for the Christian is based on "invisibility." "Who hopes for what s/he sees?" So much about the pandemic from its origin to its spread around the globe has been literally unseeable and unknown. The mystery of it engenders fear. As believers, we are exhorted to be patient as scientists and medical experts explain, try to harness our healthy response, and to actually "roll-out" a vaccine. Certainly, one of the priority goals for the New Year is to ensure that all people everywhere receive the vaccination. Also, since the vaccine does not prevent the virus itself, we still need to continue practicing social distancing and mask wearing, and hand washing. This strain of flu will be with us forever as are other flues. God created us and gave us our bodies as well as our spirit to care for. How important it is to practice good health care through physical exercise, nutrition, and spiritual exercise. For me personally, walking every day the weather allows has been a Godsend. Fresh air and tuning into the natural beauties all around have helped me battle the limitations of not being able to be with family and friends. Finding ways to connect with others via Zoom, Facebook, text and phone has also helped brighten the days. God does give us "gifts" every day, if we are open, to remind us that no matter how discouraging things seem to be, Emmanuel cares.

For example, on one of my winter walks, I happened to stop at a crossroads to watch for traffic, and to my amazement, a brilliant scarlet cardinal was perched on a nearby tree branch only two feet

from me! What a wonderful blessing! Another goal: be open to the gentle cheer that God brings our way.

2) Changes in Church Life: As believers, we all know the simple Biblical adage, "wherever two or three are gathered, there I am also." Yet, for the past year, the church has not been able to "gather" as usual. Christ's vision for the "ecclesia" was never meant to be "going solo" or growing in isolation. We the church act "in remembrance" and we share the good news by being commissioned to go forth "two by two." Although churches have been forced to quickly become tech savvy in order to provide basic worship and spiritual studies, are we being "the church?" Perhaps, because I did not grow up in the computer generation, I find virtual worship terribly lacking. My spirit needs the nurture of those incredible moments of elation and inspiration through music and prayer and small group study that only can be found in in-depth sharing, and the real feel of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many churches have become creative in their outreach to folks, shut-in or shut-out, through snail mail and phone calls, and delivery of food or incidentals. Using "eye power" while wearing a mask has become a true relay of feelings. A third goal is for churches to continue being creative to bring the gospel even closer to those who find themselves growing discouraged, who are vested in the power of faith to provide sound spiritual health.

3) Power of the Arts: Increasingly, if one watches television, celebrities, artists, musicians, singers have been airing free concerts from their homes and other venues. These inspiring events have given smiles, hope, and a sense of unity that speak to the hearts of people everywhere. We all need a way to fight against the anxiety brought on by deep divisions in our country and globally, as well as the rise of violence and destruction of our cities, and the hope for justice with peace. The church can contribute to the fundamentals of loving, kindness and peace with a focus on the arts, (not a new idea) a marvelous language to draw people together across boundaries. St. Paul teaches us that all gifts from God are meant for the building up of the common good. (I Cor. 14: 26) A fourth goal can be a deeper development of the gifts of the laity toward sharing the arts, whether online or in-person.

4) Persevering with prayer: Sometimes prayer is underrated. However, prayer is the one power we all possess. No matter whether we attend church services online or in person (when that finally happens), prayer is our constant companion. While we worship from home, set aside quiet time for personal meditation, study, and solitude with God. Not only does prayer strengthen us in our inner being, it also has the power to reach around the planet. It does not matter that we do not see the results of prayer. It only matters that we do it. Prayer will help preserve our sanity, our well-being, our rootedness in Christ, and the wellspring of all that is good and loving. Put on some inspirational music, light a candle, and enter a humble and receptive posture. A fifth goal for the church goer is to revisit that ancient practice of prayer and keep on keeping on! How appropriate during the season of Lent.



**Prayer Lists: March - May 2021
WNYACIC**

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

April Prayer List

Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC, Buffalo
Rev. Nancy Rosas, pastor
St. John's UCC, Eden
Rev. Dr. James Reidling, pastor
Lockport UCC
Harriett Tubman Christian Church, Buffalo
Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center
Coalition for Economic Justice
Western New York Peace Center

May Prayer List

Faith UCC, Boston
Ted Brelsford, transitional pastor
Rev. Gary Burdick, Pastor Emeritus
Covenant UCC, Gasport
Rev. John Tipton, pastor
Friedens UCC, North Tonawanda
Rev. Thomas Hardy, pastor
St. John's UCC, Strykersville
Jess Kacalski, pastor
Church & Ministry Committee (UCC)
Network of Religious Communities

**New York Conference New Mailing
Address**

As of February 15th the U.S. Postal address for the New York Conference changed (again). The NEW address is:

**P.O. Box 487
Syracuse, New York 13219**

Mail sent to the current address (P.O. Box 551, Dewitt) will be forwarded to the new address for one year. Anything sent to the address of the Amistad Center (5575 Thompson Road) will no longer be forwarded. Please make this change in all your files.

Western Area Treasurer's Report

We all know how unusual last year was for our places of work, for school and homelife and for church. All of our Area churches faced new challenges in 2020, including financial challenges. Despite those challenges, the churches of Western Area were very faithful and generous in their giving. 85% of budgeted Covenantal Share income was received, which is higher than our statistical average participation. We also managed to spend less than our budgeted expenditures. The result is that the Area finished the year with a budget surplus of just over \$1,500. We used up our "rainy day funds" last year to maintain cash flow, but we are hopeful to return some or all of those funds to savings in the year ahead. Thanks to all the churches who were faithful givers to the ministries of the Area. 34 UCC and Disciples churches paid 100% or more of their Covenantal Share last year. This is worth celebrating.

Shortly we will be distributing interest income from our Endowment Fund. This year, the total income from the Endowment Fund is \$22,307. This income is crucially important in funding the ministries of the Western Area. 30% of the income is made available for use by the Department of Community Ministry to provide grant money to local ministry initiatives. 30% supports the outdoor ministry of Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center and 30% funds the work of Plymouth Crossroads. 2.5% of the Endowment will be disbursed to the United Church Home Society to help fund their Senior Wishes program. Of the remaining 7.5%, \$1,000 will go to the Center for Christian Growth to offset a decrease in budgeted support. The remainder will be used for general budget expenses.

Although the pandemic is not yet over, and there is never a time without challenges, we look forward to another year of ministry together. Thank you for your faithful financial support of our shared ministry in the Western Area.

UCC NATIONAL CHURCH DIRECTORY INFORMATION NEEDED

It is that time of year when all churches are asked to submit their church data from 2020 for the UCC National Directory.

ACCESSING THE DATA HUB
Access information as well as *video tutorials* are available

[CLICK HERE](#)

LOG IN INFORMATION

Your **username** is the number **46** followed by your **church ID#**. (ex: 461018)

If you do not know your church ID# then please contact Sue Frost at confclerk@uccny.org.

The Data Hub will be available until March 3, 2021 at midnight.

THANKS!

Keeping in Touch and Staying Safe

Your conference staff is available to you on Wednesdays for Virtual Office Hours from 11am – 12 pm at <https://zoom.us/j/422208515>

We are here to listen, to have you bounce ideas off of us, to ask for specific resources, to pray and perhaps even to laugh together. All are invited.

per project, per church. A church may request up to two grants per calendar year.

Community Ministry Grants Available

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

Grants made in 2020 include: Rainie's Foster Closet at St. Peter's UCC, N. Tonawanda, providing clothing and other items for foster children; St. Stephen's Bethlehem's work with Plymouth Crossroads; and Pilgrim-St. Luke's Sanctuary Ministry, providing support and assistance to refugees newly arrived in Buffalo. Examples of past grants include New Covenant UCC's "Moms Inspiring Moms Resource Ministry," and Faith UCC Williamsville's Lenten "Free Lunch on Fridays" program.

Our goal is to support, encourage, and provide kickstart-funding to churches in responding to the needs of their community. If you have an idea for outreach in your community in response to the pandemic or anything else, feel free to contact us and we will be glad to help you explore and develop a fundable plan. We received only three applications in 2020 and are eager to receive more in 2021.

Any member congregation in good standing with the WNYACIC is eligible to apply.

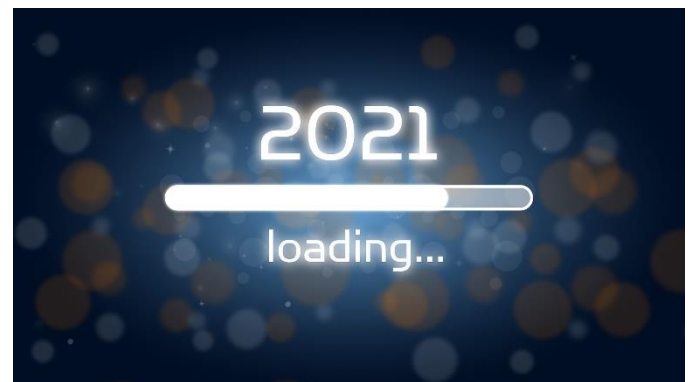
A grant can be requested for a maximum of \$1500 and can be renewed for a maximum of three years

A written application must be submitted including:

- contact person information (name, address, phone, email)
- statement of goals and purpose
- staffing for project (volunteer and/or paid)
- process, procedure, and timeline
- budget statement with breakdown of expenses

Inquiries and requests for more information should be directed to Ted Brelsford (tb.opcc@verizon.net, 716-667-2906) or Hope Harle Mould (hopeharlemould@gmail.com, 716-868-5533).

Applications should be sent to Hope Harle Mould (hopeharlemould@gmail.com or 44 Allegany Ave., Kenmore NY 14217).



Webinar From Practical Resources for Churches

As many churches seek to serve both an online and an in-person audience simultaneously, we want to create an online experience that meets the needs of both groups. How can livestream worship be more than just a window into the sanctuary? How can in-person worship recognize and welcome the online congregation?

Thursday, March 18

1:00-2:00 PM

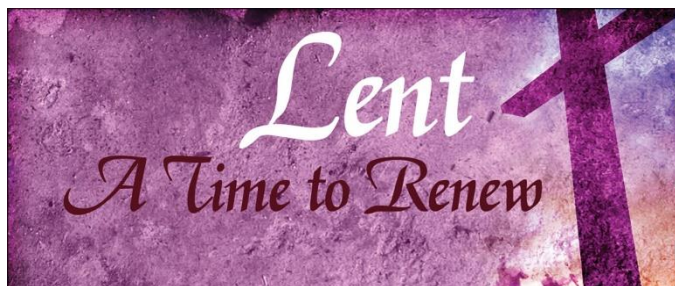
Leader -Jim Keat

To register, click the link below:

[Hybrid Worship: How to be engaging online AND in person](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hm1t61tTRJGH22UUOmV3Jq)

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hm1t61tTRJGH22UUOmV3Jq

Rev. Jim Keat is the Associate Minister of Digital Strategy & Online Engagement at The Riverside Church in New York City and the Director of Online Learning at the Center for Progressive Renewal. He is a divergent thinker, an ideation specialist, and an aspiring minimalist. In his spare time, Jim enjoys solving a Rubik's cube, going on a long run, or playing with his cats, Whitman and Wendell. To find out more about Jim go to <http://www.JimKeat.com> or follow him on Twitter at @IdeasDoneDaily



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 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.
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.

from Jeff Mason, Finance Committee



ENDOWMENT REPORT

Our Endowment accounts are updated quarterly. Due to the onset of the pandemic, our total value on March 31, 2020 suffered a large decline. Fortunately, the three quarterly statements after that showed steady recovery, and we have now fully recovered from the March downturn.

As of December 31, 2020, we had \$31,291.07 in the American Funds (up from \$28,384.05 in September); \$28,080.39 in the United Church Funds General (up from \$27,248.08); and \$428,681.72 in the United Church Funds Endowment (up from \$390,532.24).

The total value of our Endowment on December 31 was \$488,053.18, which was an increase of \$41,888.81 over the September 30 total. The September 30 number was significant, because the Finance Committee and the Area Council use five percent of this number to determine the annual disbursements that are made shortly after the beginning of the next calendar year.

Based on the September 30 total, we recently transferred \$22,307.00 from the United Church Funds Endowment to the Western Area checking account. As reported in the last issue of *In the Vineyard*, this amount will be used in accordance with our by-laws and the 2021 budget that was passed at the virtual annual meeting in November.

WNYACIC Has a New Facebook Page

For those with Facebook, please be sure to follow WNYACIC on their new Facebook page! Here is the link for quick and easy access:

www.facebook.com/WNYACIC

from Rev. Gary Ferner

Churches in Transition

- Epiphany UCC, Clarence Center: Hope Schwartz, Designated Pastor
- New Covenant UCC, Buffalo: Rev. Rachelle Sat'chell Robinson
- Lockport UCC
- Pilgrim Memorial/1st Congregational UCC Jamestown
- St. James UCC, Hamburg
- Trinity UCC, Gowanda

Fast & Feast for Lent

Author unknown

- Fast from criticism, and feast on praise;
- Fast from self pity, and feast on joy;
- Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace;
- Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;
- Fast from jealousy, and feast on love;
- Fast from pride, and feast on humility;
- Fast from selfishness, and feast on service;
- Fast from fear; and feast on faith.





Random Acts of Kindness

Random Acts of Kindness week was February 14-20. However, an act of kindness can make a huge impact in someone's life any day of the year!

One idea that was shared on the Random Acts of Kindness website was to create a kindness jar.

Kindness Jar

Start with an empty jar & decorate it however you'd like. Every time you witness an act of kindness, write it down and place the memory in the jar. Collect memories, observations and unexpected surprises of kindness throughout the week.

On the last day of your chosen time period, empty the jar and reflect back on the kindness you experienced, witnessed, or perhaps performed yourself.

Keep the jar going and continue to Explore the Good throughout 2021 and help Make Kindness the Norm.

Below, you will find more information regarding this movement. Please consider joining the movement and help to make kindness the norm!

Please visit: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/> for more information.

We are upholding this annual tradition of celebrating kindness because we know everyone can use more kindness in their lives. Scientific evidence shows us the positive effects of doing kind acts for others as well as receiving or even witnessing kindness. Even the smallest act of kindness can change a life. In 2021, we encourage everyone to Explore the Good and Make Kindness the Norm.

Stories come to us on a daily basis. They are beautiful and heartwarming, but mostly they give us hope. We hear of seemingly insignificant moments where a stranger helps another stranger and impacts the rest of their life with a small gesture. When we tune into kindness happening around us, the day seems a little bit brighter. The week seems a little more manageable.

These stories are nothing new or unique. They are YOUR stories. They are OUR stories. Help us Make Kindness the Norm by spreading it in the simplest ways.

A Special Virtual General Synod 33

July 11-18, 2021

Registration opens April 13.

Click here for a message from General Synod Leaders

<http://www.generalsynod.org/welcome-message/>



NEW DATES
New York State Mandatory Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

In March of 2019 Practical Resources for Churches began offering web-based training for church leaders and employees that uses church language.

We offer this training for both employees and church leadership eight times during the year. People can watch with a group or by themselves.

These webinars are free to members of the following subscribing judicatories:

Metro NY ELCA Synod - New York UCC Conference, Northeast Region Christian Church Disciples of Christ Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse - Presbytery Of Long Island, Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley - Presbytery of Western New York.

Employees Mandatory Annual Training will be interactive and include:

- An explanation of sexual harassment
- Church-based case studies of unlawful sexual harassment
- Information concerning employees' rights

- Information addressing conduct by church leadership and the responsibilities of the church's leadership
- Information on the documents the church must have in place
- Information concerning the federal and state statutory provisions concerning sexual harassment

Certificates will be provided for those in attendance.

To register, click the date below. For people watching as a group, only one registration is needed and a list of the people attending can be emailed to charlaine@prcli.org

March 3, 2021, 3:00-4:30pm

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HX8zQ8IIQqaQP-YrKIJ4ag

March 23, 2021, 7-8:30pm

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mPMYTjiOTuGuzlAerVY48g

April 12, 2021, 10:00-11:30am

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4SWAVgYYQDy3rxv18nskaw

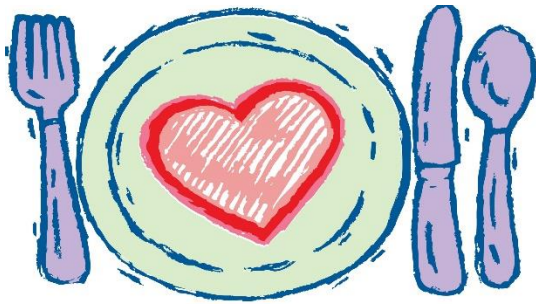
May 3, 2021, 3-4:30pm

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_v29jiJvXSE6bUfQbWZM0PA

Any follow-up questions, call 631-486-4350 or email charlaine@prcli.org
ASK US, WE CAN HELP!

Annual fee for churches not affiliated with a member judicatory is \$75.00. Judicatories can take a membership that will cover all of their churches.

from Michele Harrington, Development and Outreach
Manager, Plymouth Crossroads



COMMUNITY DINNER

Free Community Meals
Trinity United Church of Christ
30 Erie Avenue
Gowanda, NY 14070

March 13, April 10, May 8

COVID rules apply. Meal may be canceled if
restrictions are in place.

Take out only. Drive up and follow the signs on East
Main Street. Wear a mask. Free-will donations
accepted, but not necessary.

If you can't or don't drive, you can walk up. Please
wear a mask and bring a bag to carry home your
dinner.

from Rev. Elizabeth Duffy, WNYACIC Moderator

In Memoriam – Bob Lutot, Western Area Council Member

It is with a heavy heart that I let you know that
Western Area Council member, Bob Lutot, passed
away, Friday, February 5, 2021.

Please hold Bob's family and the people of
Cleveland Heights Christian Church where he was a
member, in your prayers. Bob was such a sweet
man and a joy to get to know these last few years.
He will truly be missed until we see him again in
the Kingdom of God.

REMEMBER US? PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS



We have changed a bit....COVID has hit a lot of
people and organizations. Unfortunately, Plymouth
Crossroads was also a victim. We lost a substantial
amount of funding from grants and fundraisers.
With very heavy hearts, we were forced
to close our home at 5522 Broadway. Thanks to
Ebenezer UCC, Plymouth is now located at 630
Main Street inside of the church, in West Seneca.
We are still servicing homeless youth on an
outreach basis. Plymouth Crossroads staff,
together with the United Church Home Board, is
diligently working towards opening back up for
residential services, once again. Please keep the
youth in your prayers.

We are still in need of donations. Please go to our
website to donate via Paypal:

www.plymouthcrossroads.org

Any questions, please call 716-393-3906.



**The St. Matthew's UCC
Family of Faith
Mourns the Loss of Their Sister,
Dr. Mildred J. Fischle**

Our sister in Christ, Mildred Fischle, went home to be with the Lord today, February 5, 2021. Millie shared the gift of music in long service to churches in the Western Area playing organ, directing choirs and bell choirs. She spent many years as the organist and choir director of St. Matthew's. Millie's professional life was centered in early childhood education. Millie was a pioneer in her field, earning her doctoral degree in education from Ball State University at a time when this was a rare achievement for women. She served as Professor of Education at the State University of New York College at Buffalo for 30 years, passing on her passion for education to generations of teachers. Her spirit of independence and adventure never abandoned her, and she brought vitality and joy wherever she went. No doubt, as we give thanks to God for sharing her with us, Millie would urge us to "make a joyful noise to the Lord."

Funeral arrangements will be published as they are known.

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
 praise him in his mighty firmament!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
 praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound;
 praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
 praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals;
 praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!
(Psalm 150 - a favorite of Millie's)

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that your servant Mildred, being raised with Christ, may know the strength of his presence, and rejoice in his eternal glory; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Did You Know?

**By receiving "In the Vineyard"
electronically, you are now able to
easily click on links/email addresses
within the newsletter which will take
you directly to the information you
need!**

**New Covenant UCC Welcomes New
Pastor**

New Covenant UCC is delighted to announce that God has answered their prayers for a new pastor. Please join them as they welcome the Reverend Rachele Sat'chell Robinson and her husband Kevin to their church family. Rev. Robinson comes to them with many years of ministerial experience.





NY/HELP volunteers don't know at this point, when they might be able to travel to Honduras to

continue their work in-person to help the people in the mountains. The usual road used to reach the village of La Laguna, was made impassable by the aftermath of Tropical Storm Eta and Hurricane Iota. So, in December and January, the medical personnel were not able to reach the village.

In spite of COVID-19 and hurricanes, work is going forward on building the new middle school, which will house a satellite clinic as well.



One of the two new medical people NY/HELP has hired to join Mirtila at the clinic several times each month. In light of the new personnel, we need to do more fundraising to be able to fund the program. We are looking for a volunteer fundraising coordinator.

Donations to NY/HELP Honduras

are always gratefully accepted. If you want your donation to go towards one of our specific projects, please put that in the memo section of your check. Below is a list, along with the monthly costs for each one.

Salary for a nurse in La Laguna is \$400/month.

Student scholarships cost \$60 per semester.

Medical personnel costs \$435/month.

Medicines for the clinic cost \$150/month.

Material for a fuel-efficient stove costs \$45.

Material for a latrine costs \$65.

A new roof costs \$170.

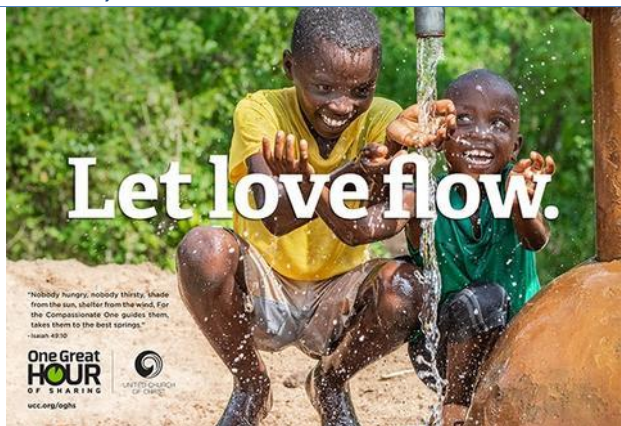
School Supplies (The Judy Project) costs \$150/month.

New Middle School costs \$3500 per classroom.

New sewing machine costs \$200.

Checks can be made out to **NY/HELP Honduras** and sent to: **NY/HELP** c/o Arcade United Church of Christ, ATTN: Ginger Comstock, PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009. You will receive an acknowledgement of your gift.





Water is life. Water is love. Let love flow.

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ

involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women’s empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable.

This year, 100% of your gift will be directed to the [Water Well project](#), sponsored by the UCC in Mozambique.

[Make a secure online gift today.](#) The suggested offering date is March 14, 2021. However, gifts, or additional gifts may be given to the offering at any time.

[Stretch your donation dollars](#) through a Matching Gift Program. Check with your employer or

volunteer organization to see if you are eligible. [Find out more.](#)

[Stay Updated](#) with the latest in UCC Disaster, Refugee and Sustainable Development Ministries, read current stories on our website or visit our Facebook page: [One Great Hour of Sharing UCC.](#)

IN MEMORIAM – REV. DAVID HUELS

Rev. David Huels passed into new life on December 30, 2020, due to COVID-19. Dave was a retired UCC pastor who served several congregations in WNY and Florida. He was an active member of Church of the Nativity United Church of Christ as is some of his family.

Beloved husband of the late Ellen Stevens Huels; father of Karen (Bob) Billingsley, Norma Hess, Duane (Theresa Golan) Huels; Nannette (Jim) Keller and Sharon (Triple) Cooper; also survived by ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. A private Celebration of Life Service was held under the direction of the Carlton A. Ullrich Funeral Home. Gifts in Rev. Huel's memory made to [Brothers of Mercy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center](#) or Church of the Nativity United Church of Christ (1530 Colvin Boulevard, Tonawanda 14223) are appreciated.

Dave was ordained September 22, 1968 and served many churches: St. Paul’s Wendelville UCC (3 years), Eggertsville UCC (22 years), Cambria UCC (6 yrs.). Moved to Florida: Served First Congregational UCC in Fort Pierce, Florida (during winters for 2 years); Road Runner Christian Fellowship. Fort Pierce, FL (8 years).

The Western New York Area Churches in Covenant send our condolences to the family of Rev. David Huels.

from Jeff Mason, Church Historian, Arcade UCC

IN MEMORIAM—

REV. CHARLES W. HOBBS SR.

The Western Area lost one of its longest-serving pastors on December 11, 2020, when the Rev. Charles W. Hobbs, Sr. passed from this life following a short illness. He had moved from his longtime home in North Tonawanda to Melbourne, Florida several years ago to be closer to his family. Rev. Hobbs, who was better known as Pastor Hobbs or Charlie or Hobbsie, grew up in Lynn, Massachusetts, where he was born on Easter Sunday in 1926.

He became aware of his call to Christian ministry while serving as a gunner's mate with the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific during World War II. He was ordained by the Disciples of Christ on December 12, 1948. He served his home church in Lynn for several years while earning his bachelor's degree from the Gordon College of Theology and Missions and his Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School.

Pastor Hobbs served as pastor of the Hoosick Street Church of Christ in Troy from 1955 to 1959, when he moved to Western New York to begin a seven-year pastorate at the Community Christian Church in North Tonawanda. He was the North Tonawanda city clerk from 1966 to 1969 while also serving as supply pastor at the Woodlawn Church of Christ in Blasdell. After receiving his commercial driver's license, he compiled a safety record of nearly a million miles as a tractor-trailer driver from 1970 to 1985. He referred to this part of his career as a "dual-role ministry." One role was pastoring to countless people he met while on the road as a professional driver. After receiving dual standing in the United Church of Christ in 1972, his second role was as the pastor and teacher at St. Paul's UCC in Pendleton until 1985.

After leaving St. Paul's, he was the supply pastor at Calvin Hungarian Church in North Tonawanda, and then as interim pastor at Fort Washington Christian

Church in Fort Washington, Maryland until 1988. He returned to Western New York to serve St. John's UCC in Strykersville in 1988 and 1989, followed by the first of his two interim pastorates at Arcade UCC from 1990 to 1991. At the conclusion of this time, the congregation bestowed the Pastor Emeritus title on Pastor Charlie. In the resume he wrote for his 50th ordination anniversary in 1998, he wrote, "I was momentarily speechless." For anyone who ever met Pastor Charlie, the word "speechless" was rarely used to describe him. He continued, "Forever pleased with the award. Thank you, Lord."

After leaving Arcade for the first time, he served Kenilworth UCC in 1991-92 and Eggertsville UCC in 1992-93 before returning to Arcade as interim in 1994 and 1995. He went on to serve at Emmanuel UCC in Orchard Park in 1996-97, the Winger UCC Disciples Church in Winger, Ontario in 1998, and for ten years at the Forest Avenue Christian Church in Buffalo until his final retirement in 2010.

The Forest Avenue church was sold following Pastor Hobbs' retirement. Prior to the sale, the congregation voted to give the church bell to their pastor so he could fulfill his dream of refurbishing it as a "Bell of Remembrance," as a reminder of the importance of liberty, faith and freedom. He paid to have the bell removed from the bell tower and brought to his home on Ruie Road in North Tonawanda. He refurbished the bell and constructed a stand for it in his back yard. The 86-year-old pastor and the bell were featured in an article in the Buffalo News in 2012.

Many of Charlie's friends in the Western Area and in the North Tonawanda community attended his 90th birthday open house in 2016, shortly before he moved to Florida. Those who attended were able to view his detailed records of his thousands of worship services, along with sermon titles and Scripture readings.

After Charlie's passing, his daughter, Lynda Hauser, wrote that he will be remembered for "his fierce hugs, caring heart and boisterous laughter."

These qualities, plus his heartfelt messages and prayers, endeared him to many congregations in the Western Area. Following his passing, a small memorial service was held in Melbourne. Pastor Hobbs' children hope to have a memorial service for their father next summer at his beloved tree farm near Rushford (Allegany County). The address where Pastor Hobbs was living with his family is 2680 Croton Road, Apt. 223, Melbourne, FL 32935.



The Arcade UCC, established in 1813, is the oldest congregation in the Western Area. At the church's Bicentennial banquet in 2013, Rev. Robert Dievendorf, left, was joined by three of the church's previous interim pastors. From left: the late Rev. Carl Marks, Rev. Dr. James Fishbaugh, and the late Rev. Charles Hobbs.



Church & Ministry Meetings –

2nd Monday of each month

9:30 am to 2:00 pm

When back to in-person meetings, they will be at Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224. Members & guests are notified directly of any changes.

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In the Vineyard, published four times a year, invites you to send us your comments and opinions, expressions of faith and announcements of events. We welcome information regarding the health and welfare of our clergy and others in the Western Area. Please write us when you know of a birth or celebration, a serious illness or a death in our church family – please include your name and telephone number.

Please have submissions for the upcoming Summer issue in by May 16, 2021.

