

*Open to God's Spirit,
we reach out in Love to the World
and invite All to journey with us*

An Open and Affirming Congregation

The VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport
United Church of Christ

APRIL 2025

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Holy Week

Palm Sunday – April 13, 11:00 am

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday. Our morning worship will center on the theme of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, which leads to the passion story of the Christ.

Maundy Thursday – April 17, 6:00 pm

Our journey through Holy Week continues with Maundy Thursday. This moving service centers on the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. As they did on that evening, we will share Holy Communion together. Epiphany UCC will join us.

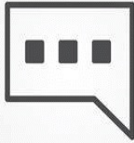
Good Friday – April 18, 6:00 pm

We will join with Epiphany UCC, at Epiphany, for this Good Friday service to remember the day of the Christ's crucifixion.

Easter Sunday – April 20, 11:00 am

The events of Holy Week culminate in the glorious resurrection celebration of Easter Sunday. Our service will include the sharing of Holy Communion.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS



From Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, we are encouraged to reflect upon our whole lives. Affirmed in our humanity, we are reminded that from dust and love we come and to dust and love we will return. Our lives are fleeting, as reflected in the question that I hear most often as people tell me their life stories “where has the time gone?”

As a former chaplain in Hospice, one of the spiritual interventions used often was life review. As an invitation for the patients to review their lives, life review was an opportunity to remember – the highs and the lows, the good and the bad, and the ups and the downs moments – and reflect upon what legacy or last words the patients had for their loved ones.

On Good Friday, we will be invited to reflect upon the last words of Jesus – his legacy, his lessons, and his love for others. Just like us, Jesus had a legacy he wanted to leave and last words for our spiritual ancestors and for us:

Forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

Today you will be with me in paradise.

Woman, behold your son!

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I thirst.

It is finished!

Into your hands I commit my spirit!

Church, what legacy or last words do you want to leave for your loved ones and your church? Living in the shadow of Good Friday, we are invited to spend some time thinking about what we would want our last words to be to our loved ones too. What lessons might you want to make sure your loved ones knew before you made the transition from this life into life everlasting? What last words would you want your loved ones to hear spoken aloud to them? What legacy do you want to leave behind of a life well lived?

Let us live out our legacy today. Whenever we find ourselves wondering “where has the time gone” it is an opportunity to remember the moments and milestones of our lives and reflect on what we want to leave behind as our legacy. Let us leave behind a legacy like Jesus today, tomorrow, and all the days to come. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope

IT IS FINISHED!





Order Your Easter Memorials

We still have some plants available for Easter Memorials. Plants will decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, and memorials will be printed in the bulletin. You may take your plants home after the service. If you would like to order one or more plants, please be in touch with Cyndy no later than April 13. Let us know what plant(s) you want and how you would like your memorial worded in the bulletin.

Available Plants are:

Easter Lilies - \$18.00 ea.

Mums - \$15.00 ea. (assorted colors)

Tulips - \$12.00 ea. (assorted colors)

WE MAKE IT OFFICIAL!

On March 16, after the morning worship service, we held a congregational meeting. The main purpose was to vote on the question of . . .

*Calling Rev. Hope Schwartz
to be our Settled, Permanent Pastor.*

**We are happy to report that
the vote was unanimous!**

Just as a reminder, Pastor Hope was hired as a Designated pastor, for a term of one year, beginning on April 1, 2024. After sharing this year together, everyone agrees that we want her to stay on with us - and she wants to stay. So now it's official, she is our Called Pastor, and there will be an installation celebration coming up on May 4. (see next page)

In addition to the vote, we took the opportunity to share ideas about our worship life here at Lockport UCC. Together, we discussed the worship service, music, and more. There were some very good comments and suggestions that we will be considering and implementing in the next few weeks.

*Many Thanks to everyone for all the great input.
This is what congregational governing looks like!*

THE VINEYARD

A publication of The Lockport
United Church of Christ
80 Main St. - Suite H
Lockport, New York
(716) 433-2545

*The Vineyard is published
ten times a year to keep
members and friends
informed about
programs of the church
and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome
**Deadline for Next Issue:
April 20, 2025**



Good news!! It is time for us to celebrate the covenant made amongst Lockport UCC and Epiphany UCC and the WNYACIC in the ministry of the church to which we are all called. On May 4, 2025, we will be celebrating all these covenantal relationships through a Dual Installation Service at Epiphany UCC.

As a ministry first for me, installation as the pastor of Epiphany UCC and Lockport UCC is a reaffirmation of the ministerial partnership God has called us into together. Because this is a dual installation, this service will be a celebration of the yoked ministry of these two churches through the sharing of a pastor (that's me!) and the covenantal relationship of the wider church. In this way, the service will involve the participation of members of both churches and the wider church.

**YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS SERVICE, CHURCH
SAVE THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR!!**

*Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope*

HOW TO REACH US

Our Website - lockportucc.com

Church Office

80 Main St. - Suite H

716-433-2545

lockportunited@roadrunner.com

Mailing Address

PO Box 427

Lockport, NY 14095

Help Us Keep In Touch

E-mails are a great way for us to get in touch with members when there is a need – snow cancellations, a meeting change, etc. If we don't have yours, please take a moment to send an e-mail note to Cyndy, then we'll have yours on file when we need to be in touch quickly.

If you are Hospitalized or in need of Pastoral Care

please contact Pastor Hope
or the Church Office



LIKE US on facebook
~ and Please ~
SHARE our Posts

It will help us reach
a wider audience!



PALM SUNDAY FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

On Palm Sunday, April 13, we will be accepting donations of non-perishable food items. All food collected will be donated to local food pantries to help make Easter dinner a little brighter for folks in need.

† BIBLE STUDY AT LUCC †

Tuesday Morning Group

Our Tuesday group continues to meet each week at 10:00 am. This is a casual lay-led group, and newcomers are always welcome. The group explores the lectionary scripture readings for each week. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

Thursday Bible Study

Our Disciple group meets on Thursdays at 5:30 until 7:00 pm. This is also a casual lay-led group who welcomes newcomers at any time.

In April, we will be continuing our series entitled “The Difficult Words of Jesus.” We will explore some of Jesus’s most perplexing teachings, how to interpret them, and what they mean for us today. If you would like to join us, please let Cyndy know so that we can prepare study materials for you.

COMMUNITY DINNER FOR APRIL

Our fabulous crew of cooks and servers, led by Edna, will be serving up another delicious meal for the local community on **April 23**. As always, the meals will be available free, served as take out only, from 5 to 5:30 PM, at First Presbyterian Church. The menu this time will be: Pasta with Italian Meat Sauce, Baby Carrots, Celery & Ranch Dip, Italian Bread, and Cupcake for dessert.

WEEKLY VINE

In the Weekly Vine, we share the full sermon from that week, some highlights from our service, and also any prayer concerns or news that comes up. **If we don’t have your e-mail, you will not receive it unless you contact us.**

If you would like to receive the Weekly Vine, just contact Cyndy and provide your e-mail address. If you are receiving it and would rather not, let Cyndy know that, too.

OUR CHURCH CEMETERY

Plots in St. Peter’s Cemetery are available for \$800 each. If you would like to purchase plots, just call Dan Holler and he will be happy to help you with that.



I found Church. And it was not in a church building. It was at a Community Action Meeting where people gathered in a small storefront to discuss what to do in response to the unethical and inhumane legislation of the current administration. This was Church – people whose love for others compelled them to take action in the face of violence, injustice, and oppression.

Looking around at all gathered, I saw a mosaic and microcosm of the community around us. Present at this meeting were parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, politicians, veterans, nurses, union representatives, small business owners, engineers, electricians, social workers, religious leaders, and community activists. This group was made up of people from all political sides – Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and more. Some were employed, some were retired, and some were fired due to the recent slate of cuts mandated by the federal government.

What might draw people – from all different walks of life, all different ages and abilities, all different races and ethnicities, all different sexual orientations and gender identities, all different socioeconomic statuses, all different faith backgrounds, all different professions, all different political positions, and all different backgrounds – together? It is OUR WHY. What drew us all together was OUR WHY, all the reasons that led us to come together.

Invited to share **OUR WHY** with one another, each person present had an opportunity to speak. Overcome by emotion, each person present shared their reasons for coming to the meeting:

our children, our loved ones, our neighbors, and the most vulnerable among us;

to take back our democracy, not allow what has happened to become the norm,
to uphold the Constitution;

to be part of the movement, simply cannot sit idly by anymore, to make the world
a better place, to walk in the ways of Jesus.

It was OUR WHYs that drew us all together at the Community Action Meeting. As an alternative representation of the church, we knew OUR WHY for the work we were to do together at the Community Action Meeting. But as a Church (Lockport UCC), do we know OUR WHY? Why has God drawn us together? Why do we do what we do as a church? Why does God have us in this place at this time?

Church – what is OUR WHY? It is what motivates all that we do together. It is what we are called to do together. It is what draws us together in mission and ministry. If we are to do effective ministry in our communities, we must know our why. It is the lens through which we make decisions, through which we determine ministry objectives, through which we allocate and distribute resources. It is the lens through which we do everything!

What is OUR WHY? Let us share OUR WHY with one another today, tomorrow, and all the days to come!

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope

WELCOME NEW LITURGISTS!

Last month we asked if anyone would like to add their talents to our already terrific list of liturgists.

Kathleen Hendricks and **Christine Derby-Cuadrado** stepped up to volunteer, and we are happy to now add them to our rotation of Sunday lay readers. Thank you!

There's always room for more, so if you would like to be a lay reader too, just let Cyndy know.



4 Edna Stubbs
13 Tammy Dodge
25 Tom Zuercher

*If we don't have your birthday, please give it to Cyndy.
We want to include everyone in the birthday wishes!*

Happy Easter! TO OUR SHUT-IN MEMBERS

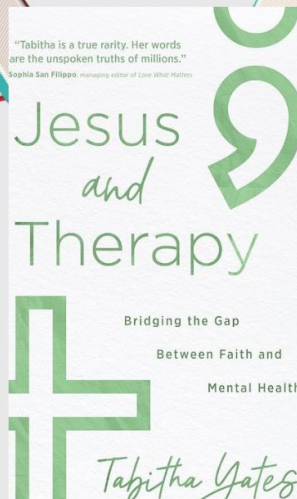
Lucinda Hohle
Absolut Care - 4540 Lincoln Dr.
Gasport, NY 14067

Linda Layer and **Kevin O'Connor**
Mt. View Assisted Living
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Lockport, NY 14094

David Payne
Lockport Rehab & Health Care Center
909 Lincoln Avenue - Lockport, NY 14094

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN
THE MENTAL HEALTH
STRUGGLE! JOIN US! BEGINS
MARCH 24**

**WHAT: BOOK STUDY
WHEN: MONDAYS, 530PM
WHERE: LOCKPORT UCC
(80 MAIN STREET, SUITE H,
LOCKPORT)**



NEW BOOK STUDY

Pastor Hope will be leading a new book study on Mondays at 5:30 PM. The book is "Jesus and Therapy - Bridging the Gap Between Faith and Mental Health" by Tabitha Yates. The series began on March 24, but it is not too late to join.

If you're interested, please speak to Pastor Hope.

GENERAL FUND
FINANCIAL SUMMARY
February 17 thru March 20

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	2,943.00
Mortgage Income	2,611.44
Total Expenses	11,456.56

(The expenses include an unusual expense of 5,792 for utilities at both locations, which will not be the norm)

If you have questions about our finances, please contact me. I am always happy to speak with you.

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer



**EASTER OFFERING
FOR LOCKPORT UCC**

Your Easter gift to the church supports the many important ministries of Lockport UCC. We know that you have many choices available to share your money with those in need. We appreciate that you include your church in that giving.

Thank You!

There are special offering envelopes available in the church narthex, or you may just mail your gift to the church.



NAME THAT TUNE

Are you ever sitting in our church service and a song is played that you *really* like, and you think “I’d *love* to hear that again sometime!” Well, we’d like to offer you a chance to tell us about it.

We will have some slips on the entrance table for you to do just that. On the slip, you can write the name of a song from worship that day to let us know:

“I’D LOVE TO HEAR THIS SONG AGAIN”

Now, we’re not saying you need to be giving feedback on every song we play, or every week – but just when a song especially makes a hit with you.

If you feel moved to tell us about a particular song on any particular Sunday, just jot it down on the slip and drop it in the collection plate. We’ll be listening!

(We want to thank John Hendricks, who made this suggestion at our recent congregational meeting!)



MAKING PALM CROSSES

On **Saturday, April 12** at 10:00 am, Nancy Sy will be leading a group to make Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday.

If you can help, speak to Nancy, or just show up that day!

Please bring scissors.

LOOKING AHEAD

Some Dates to Note

May 8 - Pastor Hope's Installation

We will not hold a worship service here at Lockport UCC that morning. Everyone is invited to attend the dual installation service, 3:00 pm at Epiphany UCC.

June 29 - No Service

On this weekend, the downtown Lockport craft show will be held. We are cancelling service that morning because, due to the vendor and visitor parking, our folks will probably be unable to park anywhere around the church.

August 3 - Worship in the Park

On this Sunday we will hold our annual worship and picnic in the park. We will again be at the Veteran's Park in Gasport.

MEDICAL DEBT RELIEF

Our ongoing mission to alleviate medical debt for those who struggle to get out from under the weight of major medical bills continues. The agency we work with is able to pay off debt for those in need at the rate of \$100 for every \$1 donated. There is a collection box on the entrance table – just giving some loose change can add up to a lot of good done!

We want to say a big **THANKS** to Sue Cruickshank who collects our plastic bottles, returns them for the deposit, and donates the money to this Medical Debt fund. This is a great addition to the Debt mission!

OTHER GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

We can still accept and pass on gifts to these funds also if you wish to make a donation. (All checks should be payable to Lockport UCC)

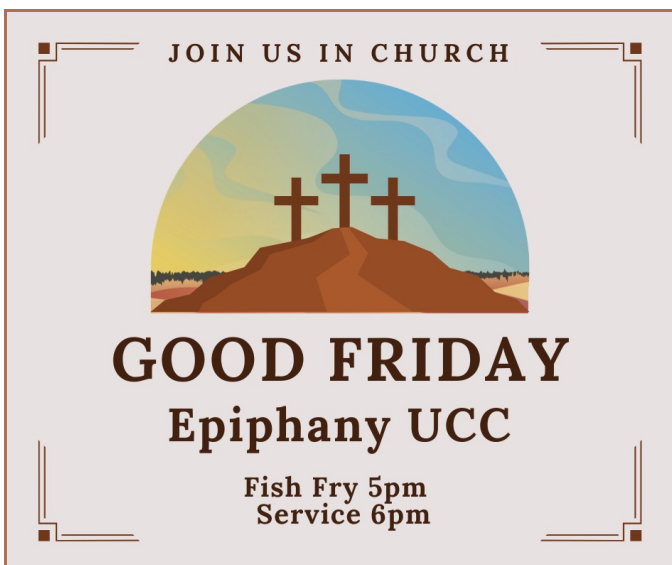
RELIEF FOR UKRAINE

REFUGEE CRISIS RESPONSE FUND

TEA PARTY!

Every Sunday, we share some fellowship time after worship with coffee and cookies, or some other sweet treat. Recently, Linda VanderWeide donated a lovely electric pot to boil water – so now we can also have TEA with our fellowship time. THANK YOU Linda!

If you are a tea lover, we thought it might be fun to share our favorite brands and flavors, so we can all have a chance to try a new tea on Sundays. If you are a tea drinker, please consider bringing in a small box of your favorite. We will then put out a variety basket so we can all try a different tea each week!





The Church in Action

United Church of Christ Corner

ucc.org

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES

From the birth of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s to the local ministries of churches throughout the country today, the United Church of Christ has been making a profound difference in caring for God's creation through the Creation Justice Church program, Earth Day resources, the Pollinator newsletter, Creation Justice Webinars, and the work of the UCC Council for Climate Justice.

Did You Know . . .

UCC ministers coined the phrase “environmental racism” and played a leading role in giving birth to the environmental justice movement in the 1980s. During a six week campaign of civil disobedience in 1982, a movement was born that made national headlines and introduced the world to the issue of environmental racism.

Did You Know . . .

The UCC has published groundbreaking environmental justice reports. In 1987, the UCC's Commission for Racial Justice published the first report to comprehensively demonstrate environmental racism across the nation with its report *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. A 20th anniversary report took that research further in demonstrating that when facilities were clustered together in an area the likelihood of racial and economic disparities increased. In 2020, a report entitled “Breath to the People: Sacred Air and Toxic Pollution” added another dimension of research by focusing on the children who live near polluting facilities and are particularly vulnerable to toxic emissions.

Did You Know . . .

The UCC has often led the way in taking denominational stands on major environmental issues. In 2013, the UCC was the first denomination to pass a resolution calling for divestment from fossil fuel companies. In 2019, the UCC was the first Christian denomination to endorse the Green New Deal. In 2021, the UCC became the first mainline Protestant denomination to publicly affirm and proclaim that nature has rights.

Did You Know . . .

The UCC is building a powerful environmental network that stays connected through a blog and e-newsletter called *The Pollinator*. The *Pollinator* is a digital platform of the UCC for the sharing of ideas and inspiration, so that we might become more fruitful in the pursuit of environmental justice. Its focus is the building of a faith-filled and faith-rooted movement for the care of creation.

Did You Know . . .

UCC churches are deepening and expanding their commitment to the environment by becoming Creation Justice Churches. Whether it is taking on climate change or addressing the lead poisoning of children, environmental justice ministries could not have a higher purpose or calling than they do now. Congregations can join the movement and become a Creation Justice Church.

Blog & Newsletter available at ucc.org





This Womxn's History Month: Christians Unite for Reproductive Rights!



In 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled that a pregnant person's right to an abortion is protected under the Constitution. For nearly 50 years, women had the choice to make decisions about their own bodies. But the reversal of this landmark decision in 2022 has paved the way for dangerous attacks on reproductive freedom.

States that ban and criminalize abortion have higher rates of maternal and infant deaths and increased economic insecurity. Pregnancy-related deaths are rising as doctors are afraid of having their license to practice revoked and being jailed for saving lives. For example, in Texas, where abortion is entirely banned and criminalized, rates of sepsis – a life-threatening condition – have risen by more than 50% for lost pregnancies that occurred in the second trimester. Historically economically marginalized populations including Black communities, people of color, and low-income communities have particularly diminished access to reproductive healthcare, placing them in greater harm.

And reproductive access continues to be under attack, including by President Trump. The Hyde Amendment, which first went into effect in 1977, was recently re-instated by President Trump as an executive order. It prohibits the use of federal funds for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or the pregnant person's life being in danger. However, even when an abortion is deemed medically necessary to save a person's life, this amendment has failed to protect pregnant people.

This patchwork of state and administrative attacks on reproductive freedoms has now morphed into a mosaic of partisan initiatives spanning access to contraceptives, emergency medical care, and even in vitro fertilization, raising broader questions about women's bodily autonomy in 2025. The movement in favor of abortion bans has fundamentally broadened its scope and threatens all people's human rights.

The Women's Health Protection Act would safeguard access to abortion and the full range of reproductive healthcare. This includes protections from political or religious interference and protections from state and federal legislation that impose medically unnecessary regulations on access to abortion services including medication, mandatory waiting periods, or full abortion bans. Urge your members of Congress to re-introduce and pass the Women's Health Protection Act today to stop the rollback of reproductive rights!

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS
OR OTHER ISSUES, YOU CAN . . .

TAKE ACTION

Contacting your Representative and Senators in Washington CAN make a difference. Send a letter or email, or make a phone call to let them know your feelings on this issue. And don't forget your representatives at the State level. Laws and policies in the States can make a difference, too.

The UCC has an easy-to-use letter template on their website that you can use if you like, to contact your US Representative and Senators. Find it here:

<https://www.votervoice.net/JAWM/Campaigns/123254/Respond>