



The VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport
United Church of Christ

*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

FEBRUARY 2025



Epiphany The Season of Light

In February, our worship continues to celebrate the Season of Epiphany. The season began with the day of Epiphany on January 6th (12 days after Christmas), and continues until we reach the Season of Lent, which this year begins on March 5th with Ash Wednesday.

The theme of the Epiphany season is the spread of the Good News of Christ from its source in the Jewish community to all nations on earth. This is a season to explore the mission of the church in the world. The liturgical color is green, which symbolizes growth.

Worship Themes for February

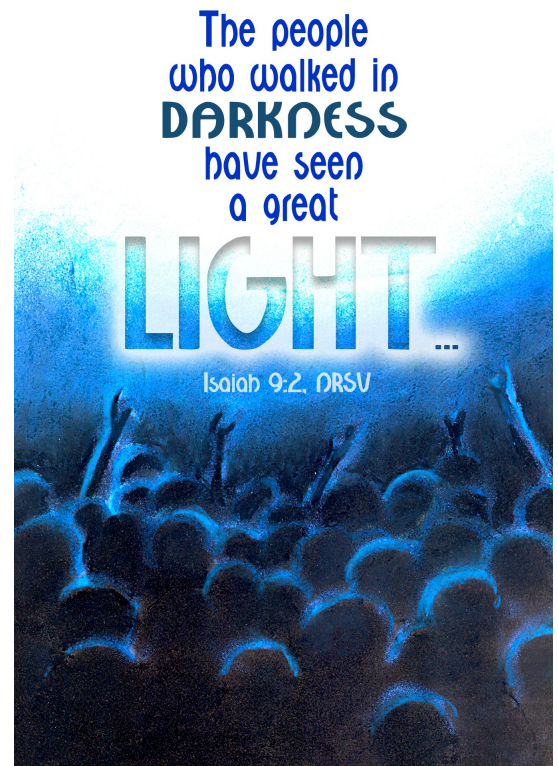
Pastor Hope has planned these themes for our worship services this month:

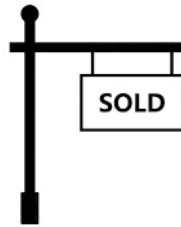
Feb. 2 – Read Across America Day
Scripture: Proverbs 2:1-10
Sermon: “To Ban or Not to Ban”
With Holy Communion

Feb. 9 – Installation Sunday
Scriptures: 1 Peter 4:7-11 and John 7:1-9
Sermon: “Best Kept Secret”

Feb. 16 – Racial Justice Sunday
Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-29 and Galatians 3:26-29
Sermon: “Othered”

Feb. 23 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
Scriptures: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and John 15:9-17
Sermon: “You’ve Got a Friend in Me”





Closing on 98 East Ave

As I write this, we just handed the keys to our old church building over to the new owner. (Wednesday, Jan. 29)

It has been a long road to get to this point. A little over two years ago we listed the building on the market. Most of you know the story by now. We had two buyers along the way. One couldn't get their funding; the other just plain backed out at the last minute. Each time meant a new start, but the third time's the charm - we found a serious buyer.

Revolution Elite Wrestling will be taking over the building and creating a sports complex for Lockport kids. Among the renovation plans, is to create a basketball half court in the sanctuary - imagine that! Several other uses for the spaces in the building are also in the plans.

The terms of the sale include a large down payment from Revolution, and then we will hold a mortgage for them for three years, after which the balance of the loan is due. During the three years, we will be receiving mortgage payments.

Some of us have a long family history in that old church building, and it's bittersweet to see that come to an end. But this is not really new – our church ancestors made big moves like this before us.

This move will enable us to continue our ministry, mission, and fellowship as a congregation, and marks a fresh beginning for Lockport United Church of Christ!

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.



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:
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HOW TO REACH US

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LIKE US on facebook
~ and Please ~
SHARE our Posts

It will help us reach
a wider audience!

Monthly Dinners Have Resumed

After taking a break in November and December, our Free Community Dinners resumed in January. After her period of recuperation from a broken ankle, we were happy to have Edna Stubbs back in the kitchen!



Edna and her faithful crew will hold our next dinner on **February 26**. They will be serving another fabulous meal as take out only, from 5 to 5:30 PM, at First Presbyterian Church.



Tuesday Morning Group

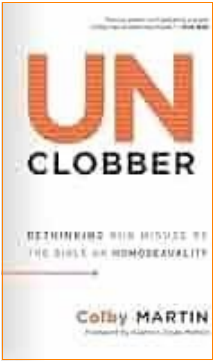
Our Tuesday group continues to meet each week at 10:00 am. This is a casual lay-led group, and newcomers are always welcome. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

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.

After a break for the holidays, we have now resumed regular weekly sessions. We are currently exploring a series entitled "Mysteries of the Messiah" which explores the connections between the events in Jesus' life and ministry with the prophecies and stories of the Old Testament.

If you would like to join us, please let Cyndy know so that we can prepare study materials for you.



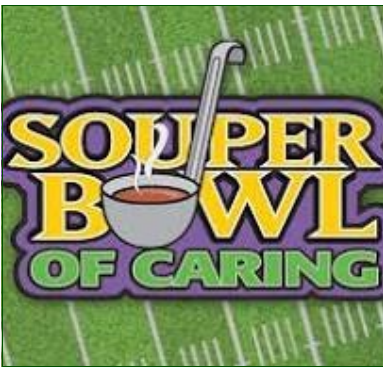
Book Study Continues at Lockport UCC

“Unclobber”
Rethinking our Misuse of
the Bible on Homosexuality
by Colby Martin

Mondays at 5:30 PM
led by Pastor Hope

This book study got off to a bit of a rocky start, with postponements due to weather and holiday scheduling issues. But it's back on, with a regular schedule, and will be continuing over the next few weeks.

Speak to Pastor Hope if you would like to join the discussion



Tackle Hunger February 9

On SUPER Bowl Sunday, we will be accepting your donations of money for the SOUPER Bowl.

The SOUPER Bowl is a national campaign to collect donations for food pantries and other programs to alleviate hunger.

All money collected by our church will stay in our community and go directly to a local food pantry.

RIP Medical Debt Relief

Please don't forget our ongoing mission to help alleviate medical debt for people who are living with the burden of crushing debt from medical bills.

Your donation goes a long way. This organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated!

In 2024 we contributed \$320.15, which equates to about \$32,000 worth of debt paid off for people who are living with this type of debt burden. Since we started this mission in 2020, we have contributed \$1,888.18 – mostly through small donations to our “little box” at the church. This means we have helped to pay off \$188,800 worth of debt. WOW !!!

Church Devotional Project

Don't forget to send in your devotional for our church devotional project. If you took a “name” for God, or if you still need to choose one, please send in your submission as soon as possible. We would like to assemble our booklet sometime in the spring. (You can email your devotional to Cyndy)

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.

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.



- 6 Scott Mietlowski
- 9 Makenna Hoste
- 11 Dianna Allen



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Linda Layer
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Church "Sunshine" Person

Did you know that we have a Sunshine Person? This person serves by sending cards on behalf of the church when someone is ill, lost a loved one, is facing a difficult situation, or has something to celebrate.

Linda Layer has been our Sunshine Person for the last couple of years. If you received a card from the church for any reason, it was probably Linda who sent it. Due to some health problems, Linda has decided to pass this job on to someone else. We **Thank Her** most sincerely for the wonderful job she has done, and the time she has spent to perform this invaluable service for the church!

In light of Linda's retirement from the job, I had planned to ask in this newsletter for someone to volunteer to fill this position. But before I could even ask, **Nancy Sy** stepped forward and volunteered to take it over. Many thanks to Nancy for her willingness to serve the church on our behalf!

Installation Sunday

On January 19, at our annual congregational meeting, church officers were elected to serve for 2025.

On **February 9**, our worship service will include the installation of these officers.



Here is a list of our Church Officers for 2025:

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Suzanne Wilson
 TREASURER: Cyndy Corrieri
 HISTORIAN: Bobbi Gritzmacher

CHURCH COUNCIL

Sam Corrieri
 Bobbi Gritzmacher
 Suzanne Wilson
 John Wright
 Tom Zuercher

PARISH PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Suzanne Wilson
 John Wright

The following is an article by Rev. Barbara Toll from an issue of the New York Conference UCC Happenings. Rev. Toll is an Associate Conference Minister in the New York Conference UCC.

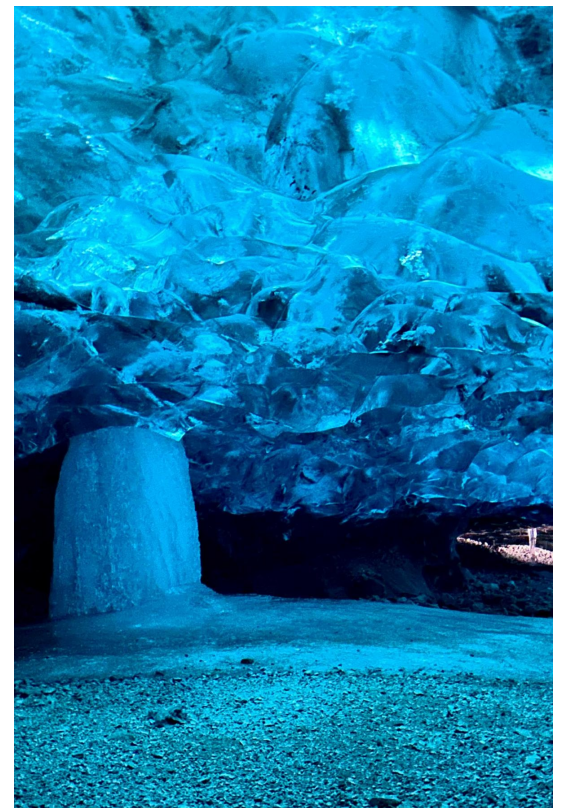
My Thoughts by Rev. Barbara Toll

Anyone who knows me knows that I am not a fan of winter even though I have lived in the Northeast my entire life. Yes, I used to enjoy ice skating and building snow forts when I was a child, but I really do not enjoy being cold as an adult. My poor dog gets far fewer walks in the winter. I tell myself it is for his own good that we do not go out, but it is really about me. So I was really hesitant when my son asked a couple years ago if we could go to Iceland in January. Like REALLY hesitant!

I must be a fool because I agreed and started two years of planning. (I love planning!) We went to Iceland at the start of January when they only have five hours of daylight each day, and I am so glad that I stepped out of my comfort zone and went on this trip. We got to see and experience things that you can only see and experience in winter. We saw the Aurora on three different nights. We hiked in ice caves. I photographed frozen waterfalls and went SCUBA diving between the continents. Ok, that last one can be done year-round.

There is immeasurable beauty in God's creation, and so much of it is often unseen by most of us. This leaves me convinced that God poured all that creative energy into this earth for the sheer joy of doing so. I'll leave you with one example. I learned that ice caves on the glaciers are new each year. They collapse in the Spring, and a new one is carved out of the ice by water over the summer months. When that water freezes elsewhere in the winter, a new ice cave is born. So year after year God does a new creative work, in my opinion, just for the joy of it.

I want to share the photos below with you. They are of an ice cave on the Vatnajökull glacier that simply took my breath away. I hope whatever image you ponder of God creating this cave brings you joy as well.





*General Fund
Financial Summary*
November 25 thru January 26

Income from Pledges & Offerings	6,180.88
Grant for Dinners	2,500.00
Total Income	8,680.88
From Investments	10,000.00
Total Expenses	16,142.99

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



✧ The *JOY*
of *GIVING* ✧

This year's Christmas Mission projects were generously supported by our congregation. Our members have big hearts. ***Thank you to everyone who donated!***



We collected a LOT of hats, mittens, and gloves in a variety of sizes, and some were homemade. There was also quite a variety of toys, for all ages.

These all went to the **YWCA's Domestic Violence Program**. The staff was impressed with how much we collected, and VERY appreciative. They asked us to relay their heartfelt THANKS!



We collected for the Food Pantry in November and December. Your donations went to **Sister Helen's** pantry. All of it was put to good use to help families dealing with food scarcity at Thanksgiving and Christmas.



Our poinsettias were once again purchased from the local **Mental Health Association**, who do an annual fund-raising sale. Your plant purchases did double-good by beautifying our sanctuary and supporting this local organization that does so much for our community.



Thank you also to everyone who made a Christmas donation to our church.

It is much appreciated!



The Church in Action

United Church of Christ Corner

ucc.org

Have you ever considered attending the meetings of the larger UCC church and representing Lockport UCC?

There are 3 types of meetings that take place: on the National level, State level, and local level. The National and State meetings are coming up this summer. Our local area holds 3 or 4 meetings a year. If you would be interested in attending any of these, please speak to Pastor Hope for more information.

General Synod

July 11-15 in Kansas City, MO

Theme: Into the Deep - Luke 5:4

Every two years, General Synod brings together members of the United Church of Christ for inspirational worship, fellowship with friends (old and new), and public witness including through engagement with the business of the church.

In July, we are excited to welcome thousands from across the country for General Synod 35 in Kansas City, Missouri. Together, we will discern resolutions of witness, church structure, and function. We will celebrate our faith. And we will join in spirit-filled worship each day.

New York Conference Annual Meeting

June 5-7 in Albany, NY

*Theme: Woven Together: Ties that Bind
Ecclesiastes 4:12(c)*

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Shari Prestemon,
Assoc Conference Minister for
Wider Church Ministries, UCC

Worship, Fellowship & Church Business

People's Prayers
for Peace



The United Church of Christ has an online project to allow people to share prayers for peace. They call it People's Prayers for Peace.

*Do not worry about anything,
but in everything by prayer and
supplication with thanksgiving let your
requests be made known to God.*

- Phil. 4:6-7

Wars and conflicts continue to escalate around the world. Injustices and inequalities manifest as racism, discrimination, gender-based violence, economic disparities, and other issues. As a communal response to uplift these sorrows and support our neighbors near and far, General Minister and President, the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson calls the church to a season of prayer. Prayer undergirds our witness, ministry, and advocacy as we work for peace and a just world for all.

This is an open invitation to anyone who feels called to offer a prayer to end violence in any manifestation, and to bring about peace. New prayers are published on this page daily.

If you would like to submit a prayer there is an easy to use form on the website to do that. You can also read the prayers submitted by others. This is the site to do either:

[https://www.ucc.org/
peoples-prayers-for-peace/](https://www.ucc.org/peoples-prayers-for-peace/)