



The VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport
United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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

JULY – AUGUST 2024



Church Building Sale Update

After more than a year on the market, we are now able to announce that our church building has been sold! We have a signed contract, which both attorneys have approved, and now we can begin the work of preparing to close on the property.

The offer is a full price (\$299,000) cash offer, so there is no financing to be approved from the buyer. The buyers are a couple from Indiana who say that they plan to renovate part of the church to create a residence for themselves.

There are legal matters to be taken care of, of course. We must commission a search and survey of the property, which should take a month or so. We also have to petition the New York State Supreme Court for permission to sell the property, which is required by law for a non-profit organization. We don't have an exact date, but we expect to close sometime in late July or early August.



In the meantime, we will be searching for a new church home. Our goal is to find a building or space to lease, at least initially, where we can continue to worship, meet, study, and minister to the community – in short, continue all the aspects of our ministry, just from a different location.

While there is certainly a feeling of sadness to be leaving this building where so much of our church history has occurred, this is also an exciting time for us to make a fresh start and continue our long history of ministry to our members, the community of Lockport, and the world.

When we get closer to the time for moving, we will be holding a special service to de-commission the building and celebrate the ministry that has been done here. Watch for details about that. We will keep you updated in the Weekly Vine and through Sunday announcements.

A Message from Pastor Hope

The MORE we share, the MORE we have!

“Can you make that shareable?” For those of us who are not on social media, you need to know that this is a frequent question found in the comment section on social media. Because of the quality of the content or the meaning behind the message or the purpose of the post, you may have asked this question yourself on a social media post. I know I have! Content is “shareable” with others. Sharing a post or a picture is normal on social media! Sharing is a means by which we can expand the reach of content far and wide!

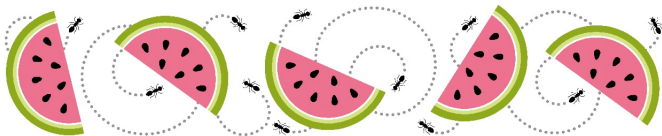
A post becomes viral when the content is shared so often that it reaches far and wide at a rapid pace. It turns out that social media has something to teach us as the church . . . the power and possibilities of sharing with others.

Both Lockport UCC and Epiphany UCC have chosen to see for themselves whether or not it is true that “the more we share, the more we have.” Y’all have embarked upon the journey of sharing a pastor . . . and that is no small thing. Sharing a pastor requires a willingness to be flexible in scheduling events, a willingness to build relationships across congregations, and a willingness to partner together to do more in ministry, to expand our reach far and wide, and to make a bigger difference in the world.

Together, we will discover all the power and possibilities of sharing in ministry: sharing a pastor, sharing ideas, sharing successes, sharing failures, sharing gifts, and sharing passions. Church, let us share together and live out the truth that “the more we share, the more we have!”



Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope



Worship and Picnic in the Park

August 4 - 11:00 AM

On August 4, we will move our morning service outdoors. We will gather for worship at the Veterans Park in Royalton at our normal time of 11:00 AM. We have a shelter reserved, so we will meet rain or shine. There is parking and rest rooms close to the shelter.

Following the service, we will share a picnic lunch. We will have hot dogs and hamburgers, salads, and dessert. Everything will be provided, so no need to bring anything - just come and enjoy!

Directions to Royalton Veterans Park

- Take **Route 31** east from Lockport.
- At the “V” where you see Crosby’s store, (shortly before the elementary school), go **Left** onto **Telegraph Road**.
- The park is about half a mile, on your **Right**.
- Turn in through the chain link fence gate.
- You can’t miss our shelter – there’s only one.



Celebrating

UCC Firsts

Growing up, my parents always celebrated the many milestones of “firsts” of my siblings and I: our first word, our first steps, our first tooth, our first haircut, our first day of school, our first birthday, our first imaginary friend, our first communion, and many many many more! It is meaningful and memorable to celebrate “firsts” in life, in church, and in the world.

Because of this, the UCC loves to celebrate “firsts” in ministry. It was the United Church of Christ that was **the first** historically white denomination to ordain an African-American (1785), **the first** to ordain a woman (1853), **the first** to ordain an openly gay man (1972), and **the first** Christian church to affirm the right of same-gender couples to marry (2005). But wait . . . there is more!! This year (2023-2024) was a year of “firsts” for the denomination!!

It is quite historic to be able to be present and participate in the making of milestones in the church. In 2023, I had the privilege of attending General Synod, and I had the privilege and pleasure to be part of the election of **the first** woman of African descent called to serve as the General Minister and President of the UCC (2023). But wait . . . there is more! At the UCCNY Annual Meeting (2024), I had the privilege and pleasure to be part of the installation of Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, who is **the first** black woman to serve as our NY Conference Minister!

But wait . . . there is more! In 2024, two local churches had the opportunity to make a ministry “first” possible for me. It was all of you at Epiphany UCC and Lockport UCC that decided to share a pastor together! But wait . . . there is more! With Lockport and Epiphany, I was able to celebrate more firsts: my first foot/handwashing, my first Maundy Thursday service, my first prayer vigil, my first pride festival, and my first church wide devotional project!

Let us continue to celebrate “firsts” in ministry together at Epiphany UCC and Lockport UCC. But wait . . . there is more!! With God’s help, we can make many more “ministry first milestones” together!! Thanks be to God. Amen!

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope

*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
98 East Avenue
Lockport, New York 14094
(716) 433-2545

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

Submissions Welcome
**Deadline for Next Issue:
August 18, 2024**

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

Our complete newsletter and lots of other information is available on our website at:

lockportucc.com

RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER

VIA E-MAIL

If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail, just send your e-mail address to Cyndy. It's a quick and easy way to get your newsletter, and it will save the church money.



Like us on
facebook

HOW TO REACH US

Church Office

98 East Ave. 433-2545

lockportunited@roadrunner.com

If you are Hospitalized or in need of Pastoral Care
please contact Pastor Hope
or the Church Office

Happy Summer!

To Our Shut-in Members

Lucinda Hohle - Jean Boots

Absolut Care - 4540 Lincoln Dr.
Gasport, NY 14067

Linda Layer - 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



Happy Birthday!



- 3 Mike Derby-Cuadrado
- 4 Richard Dodge III
- 8 Tina Pike
- 8 Sam Corrieri
- 10 Daunt Stenzel
- 17 Barbara Carlson
- 30 Barbara Stein
- 31 Margaret Stenzel

- 3 Easton Rongo
- 5 Ashley Zuercher
- 6 Bryan Gritmacher
- 7 David Payne
- 7 Linda Rongo
- 14 Charles Roberts
- 20 Sue Cruickshank
- 22 Daniel Holler
- 23 Cyndy Corrieri
- 31 Luca Pelligrina



Happy Anniversary!

- July 30, 2005 – Scott & Rebecca Mietlowski
- Aug. 8, 1981 – James & Linda Rongo
- Aug. 18, 1962 – George & Susan Cruickshank
- Aug. 27, 1977 – Larry & Karen Henn



Bowling Party

On Saturday, July 27, we are planning a Bowling Party – just for fun! We are inviting the folks from Epiphany UCC to join us – because more folks, more fun!! Whether you're a good bowler, a terrible bowler, or just haven't bowled

in years, you're invited – remember, it's just for fun!

We will meet at Allie Brandt's on Lincoln Ave. at 4:00 pm, for bowling and pizza supper. The cost will be \$15.00 per person. This includes 2 games of bowling, pizza and pop. If you prefer not to bowl, you're welcome to come cheer on the bowlers and have pizza with us. The cost for that will be \$7.00 per person.

We will need to know how many alleys to reserve, so we are asking folks to sign up for bowling and/or supper. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex on Sundays, or contact Cyndy to let us know you're coming. So please plan to join us for this fun fellowship event!



Tuesday Morning Group

Our **Tuesday group** will continue to meet over the summer at 10:00 am in the Mayflower Room. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

Thursday Bible Study

Our **Disciple group** will be taking a break for the summer. We will resume classes in the Fall.



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.

Community Dinners

We will NOT be serving a community dinner in July.

August, as well as future dinners, are yet to be determined, depending on our situation. We will be thinking about ways we may be able to continue to offer these free dinners from our new church home.



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.



Summer
Sermon Series

In July, Pastor Hope will present a sermon series on Animals of the Bible.

- 7/7 - Dog
- 7/14 - Deer
- 7/21 - Horse
- 7/28 - Donkey

Should be interesting!



**General Fund
Financial Summary**
May 27 thru June 23

Income from Pledges & Offerings	2,795.00
Other Income	50.00
Total Income	2,845.00
Total Expenses	3,890.83

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

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer

A Summer Prayer

May you breathe in the beauty of summer with it's power of transformation. May this beauty permeate all that feels un-beautiful in you.

May the God of summer give us beauty.

May you seek and find spaces of repose during these summer months. May these moments refresh and restore the tired place within you.

May the God of summer give us rest.

May you be open to times of celebration and recreation that are so much a part of summer. May you find happiness in these times of play and leisure.

May the God of summer give us joy.

May your eyes see the wonders of summer's colors. May these colors delight you and entice you into contemplation and joy.

May the God of summer give us inner light.

May you feel the energy of summer rains penetrating thirsty gardens, golf courses, lawns, and farmlands. May your inner self be refreshed, restored, and renewed as well.

May the God of summer give us what we need for healing.

May you savor the fresh produce that comes to your table and enjoy the fruits of summer's bounty.

May the God of summer give us a sense of satisfaction in the work of our hands.

May you find shelter when the stormy skies of summer threaten your safety.

May the God of summer give us shelter when inner storms threaten our peace of mind and heart.

May you enjoy the unexpected and find surprises of beauty and happiness as you travel the roads on summer adventures.

May the God of summer lead us to amazing discoveries as we travel the inner roads of our soul as well.



Glitter Blessings Lockport Pride 2024

It has been said “you’ll never look in the eyes of someone God does not love.” Looking into the eyes of a little boy named **Michael**, a deeper awareness of this truth fell upon me, as I blessed him with glitter and said the words:

***“You are a beloved child of God.
God loves you just as you are.”***

It was **Michael** who was the first person I had the privilege and pleasure to bless with glitter at the 1st Annual Lockport Pride. Others came to our booth to be blessed with glitter and hear the words that they never had heard before: “You are a beloved child of God. God loves you, just as you are!” All who stopped at our booth were offered the blessing of affirmation with or without glitter. **Michael. Colby. Bev. Rayne. Ash.** And so many others left Lockport Pride knowing without a doubt that God loves them.

Ours was one of the most frequented booths, as we were the **only church present** at Lockport Pride. **Our presence** at Lockport Pride stirred curiosity among all who stopped at our booth. **Our presence** was not expected. **Our presence** was a surprise. **Our presence** was positive. **Our presence** was appreciated. **Our presence** was welcome. **Our presence** was a sign of divine love and affirmation.

Over **100+** rainbow-colored bags filled with information about our church, a bunch of pride swag, pride flags, and much needed hand-fans were given away to all who stopped at our booth. Uncountable glitter blessings were offered, as many persons were yearning to hear the words of affirmation that God loves them.

Our impact on the community of Lockport is incalculable. But know this: lives were changed, love was shared, blessings poured out in abundance. Because of this, I am full of thanksgiving for all of you.

Thank you -
For Being ONA
For Our 1st Pride Event
For the Financial Support
For the Training
For the Prayers
For the Volunteers

Together, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus who shared God’s love to all people – no exceptions. As your pastor, I am full of pride for all of you and your witness to God’s unconditional love for all people.

*Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope*



Last summer, I shared this poem in our newsletter. I came across it again, and it seemed so appropriate for our situation at this moment, as we prepare to move from our church building to a new space for worship and ministry. We are taking a leap of faith, and this poem reminds us to be courageous, have faith, and trust that God will guide us into this new phase of life for Lockport UCC.

Crossing Over A Prayer for Transitions

*Crossing over into the unknown,
crossing over from a secure land,
to one whose roads we have never walked.*

*Companion and Guide,
you are our transition coach.*

*You say to us, "Cross over the bridge.
Go ahead, come on over.
It's sturdy enough.*

*Don't look down, though,
or you might get terrified
and never walk across.*

*Don't look back too long,
or you will lose courage
and want to stay right where you are.*

*Hang on. Keep going.
That's what bridges are for,
to get you to the other side.
Trust me to protect you."*

*For all of us in transition
who have bridges to cross,
bless us, God of the journey,
gift us with the desire to go ahead.*

*Help us to trust
that the bridge
will be strong
and the risk
will be worth it.*

- Joyce Rupp



Little Food Pantry

Please continue your generous support of our little food pantry in the front yard of the church. The need is great, and thanks to you, we are doing a lot to help needy families in our own community.

Little Library

Our little library is also very popular. Please refrain from bringing any adult books at the present time because we have a large supply on hand. We continue to need children's books, however, so if you have an opportunity to donate those, they would be most appreciated.



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.

This organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated.

Change and small donations are welcome, so please keep adding to our little collection box in the narthex.

There is still plenty of time to participate in our church devotional project. Just select a God-name that inspires you. There are name suggestions on cards in the narthex at church, but if you can't get to church, or have a different one in mind that's okay. If you do not live in the area, we'd still love to have you participate - just email your devotional to Cyndy or mail it to the church. We are re-printing here all the details and the example from last month's newsletter.

A God of Many Names Devotional

If we were to go on a little journey through the Bible, we would discover that there is not just one name for God. In the Bible, God has MANY names!! God is described as a Parent, Midwife, Judge, Teacher, Lord, Guide, Friend – to name a few! In the Bible, the names for God are all verbs. This means that all the names of God describe something that God DOES in our world. We can know God by what God has DONE, is DOING, and will DO in the future.

Because we all experience God in different ways, we might connect with God more as a Helper than as a Potter, or more as Savior than as a Caretaker, or more as Liberator than as Physician. You might already have a special name for God – a name that helps you connect with God, a name you use in your prayer, or a name that deepens your understanding with God. Each week in worship, we use a different name for God based on the scripture that day. Together, we have learned about God Our Advocate, God Our Friend, and the Out of the Box God. But as you can imagine, there are many more names for God that can draw us into deeper understanding and relationship with God.

As one way (of many) to grow spiritually as a church, God has led me to dream up writing a devotional together, as an out of the box way to grow together as a church. Let's write a devotional together!! In this devotional, you each would choose a name for God that means a lot to you or that matters to you or that makes it possible for you to know God better – and write a brief devotional article about it. And after we collect the articles from our members, we will put them all together in a devotional book to read together as a church. In this way, we will be able to get to know one another better and get to know God better too! On Sunday, there will be a bunch of index cards with a name for God on it. You are invited to choose one of the index cards with a name on it. And you will write your devotional article on that name.

If you are interested in being a part of this church-wide project, please see below for some guidelines for the devotional article:

- ✍ Length: 200-300 words (not including scripture reference)
- ✍ Include a bible verse that uses/describes your chosen name for God
- ✍ Include a reflection on the scripture and name of God
- ✍ Include a simple prayer

It seems important to share an example of a devotional article that I had written in the past so that you can get a better understanding of what a devotional article can be like. This devotional example (found on the following page) is about the “journeys” in the bible and what they teach us about God.

Please let Pastor Hope know if you are interested in this church-wide project!! It is a way to share our faith and our stories with one another!! Thanks be to God. Amen!

We would like to have all of the devotional articles collected by the end of August, so we can assemble them and create our devotional book. So think about what name you would like to choose and start writing your devotional article. (When complete, it would be very helpful if you can submit your devotional to Cyndy via email if possible – but hard copies are OK, too.)

A God of Many Names Devotional – Example

Re-HOME **GENESIS 12:1-5**

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.

REFLECTION

As one of the first sojourn stories in the Bible, the calling of God to Abram and Sarai to GO from their home to a new HOME in the land of Canaan reminds us that sometimes we are called to travel to a new destination to call home throughout our lives. For Abram and Sarai, the re-homing experience was full of possibility and promise, for God established a covenant with them to make them a nation of blessing to the world. In our travels, oftentimes we find that many different places can FEEL like home to us. When we talk about these places, we call them our HOME AWAY FROM HOME. At these homes away from home, we feel safe, comforted, and an overwhelming sense of belonging in this place. Do you have a place that you feel to be your home away from home? Take some time and reflect upon how you feel in your home away from home, whenever you visit it.

PRAYER

Home-making God, you have created the cosmos as your dwelling place, your home. Because you are a homemaking God, you have blessed us with a HOME on earth. We thank you for our HOME and our HOMES AWAY FROM HOME, and yet we recognize that there are many in our midst who do not have a home or a home away from home. Together, we pray for an end to homelessness in our world. We are called to action and commit to acts of compassion, advocacy and policy making, and collaborating with community organizations that provides support to unhoused persons in our world. Amen.