



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

OCTOBER 2024



Settling In

We have been worshipping in our new church (80 Main St., Suite H) since the first of September, and it's beginning to feel like home. It is definitely a change – a lot smaller than our old, very large building – but it's bright and comfortable for our congregation. The sanctuary brings us closer to one another, and to the pastor in her pulpit. The little kitchen area is really pleasant for our coffee & cookie & conversation time after worship.

In these first few weeks we have been identifying issues that need to be addressed. For example, with the large front windows looking out onto Main Street, passing cars reflecting the sun can give you a “stab” in the eye – so we put up some light-filtering curtains and this seems to have solved the problem.

There are still some things in process, to be sure. We are waiting for our outdoor signs to be installed, so the community will be sure to know we are there. We are using a makeshift sound system at the moment, and looking forward to having the new system installed soon for better sound in our worship services. Offices and the children's area are still being set up, and there are some blank walls that need to be filled up. All of these things will be addressed in time, as we continue to make the space our own!



Building Sale Update

As we told you last month, our buyer backed out on us – but a new one quickly surfaced! This hitch caused a delay, but the paperwork is progressing for this new contract. Our attorney has approved the terms, and is working on preparing everything necessary for closing on the sale. We expect that will happen sometime in October.

We had a clean-up day on September 14 at the old church building, to clean it up before passing it over to the new owner. **MANY THANKS** to everyone who came out to help that day!



*All Saints
Remembrance
Service
and
Dedication
of Our
New Church*

Sunday, November 3

November 3rd will be a historic day in the life of Lockport UCC! Our morning worship will include a special service of dedication for our new church. We are expecting some special guests for the occasion, and hope that all of our members and friends will be there to help us celebrate!

Since this is All Saints Sunday, we will also be celebrating our Service of Remembrance. This annual service is a time to remember those members we have lost in the past year. You are also welcome to submit any other names of loved ones or friends you would like to remember. All names submitted will be read in worship, and you are invited to light a candle for the altar in their memory.

If you would like to **submit names** for this service, please do so by **October 27**. You may put your list of names in the collection plate, or you may send them to Cyndy by phone, text or email.

As we light the candles and gaze upon their glow, we will remember the powerful communion we have with the saints – those who have blazed the trail before us – those whom we have loved and followed – now lost to this world, but always in our hearts.



*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:
October 20, 2024**

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

If you are Hospitalized or in need of Pastoral Care

please contact Pastor Hope
or the Church Office



Like us
on
facebook

RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL

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.



Church, there is someone I would like you to meet. Let me introduce you all to Anonymous. Anonymous has been attending our church for some time now, but you might not have known it because they are not on the membership list, they do not have any contact information, and whenever you try to find them no one will tell you where they had gone.

Although Anonymous refuses to offer any contact information to make a connection with our church, they are quite chatty in church, offering comments and conversation about what they like and what they don't like. Anonymous talks to a lot of people, but never seems to want to talk to the pastor (that's me). In fact, it seems like Anonymous wants to talk to everyone . . . but me!

Anonymous is given a voice in church whenever these words are spoken: **Someone said. People are saying. A lot of people are upset.** And because the name or identity of the person(s) are kept hidden, it makes it difficult to respond to the cares and concerns of Anonymous. Without knowing their name, Anonymous might feel unheard because there is no way to respond to them. As your pastor and theirs, it breaks my heart not being able to talk to Anonymous about what is bothering them, what is upsetting them, and what is hurting them.

**It matters to me what is bothering Anonymous.
It matters to me what is upsetting Anonymous.
It matters to me what is hurting Anonymous.**

If you care about Anonymous too, will you be brave enough to share their identity whenever they come to you with a care or a concern? If you care about Anonymous too, you will share their identity with those who can offer the support needed so that they can be heard, they can be helped, and they can be healed. If you care about Anonymous too, let us love them by hearing them, helping them, and healing them!

*Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope*



Pet Blessing

Saturday, October 12
2:00 pm



Bring your pet to be blessed!

Whatever form your best friend is – fur, feathers, scales, or other – you are welcome to bring them to the church for a special blessing. If bringing them in person is not an option, feel free to bring a photo, collar, or other representation to receive their blessing by proxy.

We will also be accepting donations of money or pet food for a local pet rescue group.



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 each Thursday at 5:30 until 7:00 pm. This is also a casual lay-led group who welcomes newcomers at any time.

In October, we will continue our “Context” series that examines selected scripture passages, placing them in context within the Bible and exploring their relevance for today. (We will not meet on Halloween, October 31.)

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

*This is how everyone will know that you
are my disciples, when you love each other.”*

- John 13:35 (Common English Bible)



Pastor Hope's Ordination

Pastor Hope's ordination service is set to take place on October 6, 3:00 pm, at St. James UCC in Hamburg, NY. There will be a reception following the service.

If you would like to attend, but did not make a reservation, please speak to Pastor Hope.

*We share our best wishes
to Pastor Hope on this
very special day for her!*



***** PLEASE NOTE *****

We will NOT have
a worship service
at our church on the
morning of October 6.



Q&A: Can Pastors be Political?

It is an opportune time to ask and answer this question, as the election season draws near in this country. With the influx and flood of politically oriented social media, news programs, and public discourse, it is important to know what to expect and what not to expect from your pastor. Because pastors are just like everyone else, we do have opinions about politics . . . and about our favorite drink at Starbucks and so much more! Just like all of you, your pastor has opinions, preferences, and thoughts about a lot of things! Pastors are people, and God likes it that way.

It has been said that pastors must “remain neutral” and “cannot talk about politics in church.” This is false. Yes, you read that correctly. Let me share with you why. Jesus calls us to “love God . . . and **love our neighbors as ourselves.**” Politics matter because it impacts what happens in our lives and in the lives of our neighbors. Loving our neighbors means speaking up for them, pursuing peace, and working towards the greatest good of all people. This means that followers of Jesus must care about how the laws, policies, and agendas of elected officials impact our neighbors . . . not just how it might benefit or impact me, myself, and I. Because of this, your pastor cannot be neutral about how politics impact those in our churches, those in our communities, and those in our world.

But your pastor (that’s me) must be “**non-partisan**” within the teaching, preaching, and ministry of the church. This means that I cannot be “**partisan**” by advancing the agenda of any political party through the election of candidates. But to be “**political**” is to be involved and interested in the governance of the nation. Because of this, I cannot and will not tell you:

- **how to vote** . . . but I will encourage you to exercise your right to vote as citizens and use your voice in how the nation is governed
- **who to vote for** . . . but I will encourage you to vote for the candidate(s) that best advocates for “loving our neighbor as ourselves” in policy making and in decision-making
- **what party to align with** . . . but I will encourage you to align yourselves with God’s kingdom as reflected in the teaching and ministry of Jesus

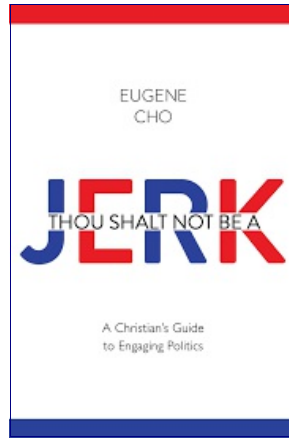
Church, we must care about politics because it affects all our lives! It is my prayer for us that as this election season dawns among us that: we will **be courageous** in our conversations about what matters to us and what matters to God, we will **be respectful** of others’ opinions, and we will **be responsible** in exercising our right to vote for whatever candidate(s) makes it possible for us to **love our neighbors as ourselves** today, tomorrow, and all the days to come. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope*

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!



Book Study Continues at Epiphany UCC

*“Though Shalt Not Be a Jerk”
A Christian's Guide
to Engaging Politics
by Eugene Cho*

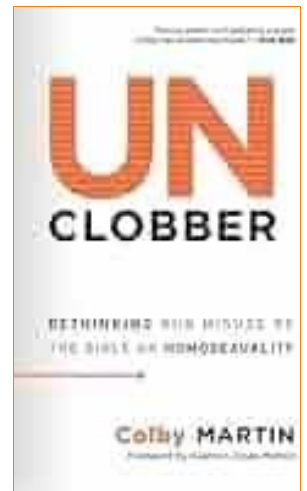
Tuesdays at 6:30 PM
thru October 29
led by Pastor Hope



Coming Up! Book Study at Lockport UCC

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

Tuesdays at 6:30 PM
November 12 thru December 17
led by Pastor Hope



*If you'd like to join either of these book study groups,
or need more information, please speak to Pastor Hope*

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.

Happy Fall!

To Our Shut-in Members

Lucinda Hohle

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



CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday, October 20

CWS CROP uses the money collected to alleviate hunger here and throughout the world, with 25% of the donations being used right here in our local community.

This will be the 44th walk in Lockport, and Lockport UCC has been involved since it's very beginning, with our former pastor John Ellis organizing the first walk. We hope that you will help us continue this tradition by making a donation.

I don't have all the details yet, but if you would like to walk for LUCC, please let Cyndy know and we'll get you more information when it's available.

*We will be
accepting contributions
throughout the month
of October.*

There are offering envelopes for this purpose in the narthex, or you may simply mail your donation to the church. Please note that it's for CROP and make checks payable to Lockport UCC.



- 10 Laurel Klino
- 12 Cali Rae Haseley
- 14 Gary Budde
- 27 Cheryl Reid
- 28 Nicolino Pellegrino

10-28-72
James & Elaine Babcock



Community Dinner for October

Our Free Community Dinners continue on the 4th Wednesday of each month, now being prepared and served from First Presbyterian Church.

This month's dinner will be on October 23, served as take-out only from 5 to 5:30 pm.

Edna will be needing help in the morning to prepare the food, and again at 4:00 to package and serve the take-out meals. If you can help out, please let Edna know.

Membership Class



Wanna Join the Church?

Pastor Hope will be holding a class for anyone interested in becoming a member of Lockport UCC.

The class will be held after the morning worship service on **October 20**. Anyone interested, or needing more information, please speak to Pastor Hope.



Welcoming Our New Members

On **October 27**, our morning worship service will include the reception of new members. Please be with us to welcome these folks to our church family!



Trick or Treat on Main Street

Friday, October 25 ~ 5 to 7 pm

We will be participating in this year's "Trick or Treat on Main Street" and we need treats for 500+ kids. We are asking our members and friends to donate a bag or two of "fun size" candy bars. We would like to have the candy collected by **October 13** to allow time to prepare the bags for handing out.



Anyone who would like to attend the event is welcome. Please consider coming in costume to get into the spirit!



General Fund Financial Summary

August 19 thru September 22

Income from Pledges & Offerings	2,410.01
Other Income	82.00
Total Income	2,492.01
Withdrawn From Investments	5,000.00
Total Expenses	9,755.22

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

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer



Learning How to Make Lemonade

Some of the most profound words of wisdom offered to me in my life are: “when life gives you lemons . . . make lemonade!” Growing up, I never had the opportunity to practice my lemonade-making skills by putting up a lemonade stand at home. This was not a problem until I was offered lemon after lemon after lemon in ministry. And when the number of lemons became a bit overwhelming, I needed to learn what to do with all of them. It was then that God offered me the spiritual practice of making lemonade out of the lemons that show up in church.

In the church, lemons come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes the lemons come in the form of not-so-nice facial expressions or not-so-kind comments or raised voices or being ignored by those who call our church home. Because we cannot always prevent lemons from showing up in church, we need to learn what to do with them so that we can use it for good.

Transforming lemons into lemonade is a way for us to manage the impact of the lemons in church. If you have been given lemons in church, try making lemonade!! To do this in church requires us to take the lemon and transform it by finding the positive in the negative, finding the good in the bad, and finding the constructive in the nonconstructive.

By doing this, God makes the impossible possible through transformation. By making lemonade, we take something that is sour and transform it into something sweet, we take something that is bad and transform it into something good, and we take something challenging and transform it into something that changes the world. With God, I am making lemonade in ministry. Lots of it. And it tastes SO GOOD! When church gives us lemons, let us make lemonade. With God’s help, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen!

Abundant Blessings
Pastor Hope

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 so we can assemble our booklet. (You can email your devotional to Cyndy)





Special Offering of the UCC

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two-thirds of this offering is used to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

Through this offering we express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching our neighbors with justice and compassion. This allows us to speak prophetically to those in power and to advocate for a society where all people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. In the spirit of Christ, we seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering. We do this through direct service as well as advocacy.

Here are just a couple of examples of the many NIN funded projects:

STEAM PROGRAMS – During the summer of 2023, an average of 172 children participated daily in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) programs in and around Missouri’s Ferguson-Florissant School District. The programs, created by Unleashing Potential, a St. Louis-based organization, providing educational opportunities to children in underserved communities, were made possible through grants from the United Church of Christ’s Neighbors in Need offering.

“It is so important for these children to be encouraged to explore and to believe that they could be scientists or engineers. Neighbors in Need has been a big blessing to us and the children.”

HOPE STATION – Sometimes a church sets out to help its neighbors in need. Then those needs change — and the church adapts. Such was the case with Shadow Rock United Church of Christ and the needs of immigrants. In 2018, the Phoenix church received a \$10,000 UCC Neighbors in Need grant for a project on the Arizona-Mexico border. Hope Station Nogales, to be built on the Mexican side, would offer hospitality to people being deported from the United States. Then, in 2019, U.S. detention centers released thousands of asylum seekers from Mexico and Honduras into Arizona. Many came to Phoenix, three hours north of the border. For Shadow Rock, it was natural to step up and help. The congregation has a history of immigration work, including giving sanctuary to people threatened with deportation.

“The needs were urgent and immediate,” said Shadow Rock’s senior minister, the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, of the influx of immigrants. “We’re grateful for Neighbors in Need. And we’re grateful for the flexibility of national leadership in responding to these constantly changing needs.”

We will be accepting gifts to NIN throughout the month of October. If you would like to make a donation, just place it in the offering plate on any Sunday, or mail it to the church. Be sure to note that it is for NIN, and make checks payable to Lockport UCC.

UCC Message on Hurricane Helene

The impact of Hurricane Helene is widespread and devastating, as more than 100 people have been confirmed dead, over 2 million people are without power, and damages are estimated to be over \$140 billion. We know of two UCC congregations on Florida's Gulf Coast whose church buildings suffered significant flood damage, and another building that experienced structural damage from high winds.

The United Church of Christ has a long history of supporting communities as they recover from disaster well after their plight fades from the headlines. As we continue to pray for and respond to those who have experienced unimaginable loss this past week, please consider a gift to the Hurricane Helene Recovery Appeal.

Your gifts matter. This is something you can do to help alleviate suffering, rebuild homes, and restore communities. Your gifts will make a difference to those who are struggling during these difficult times and enable needed assistance as we stand with impacted communities in the years ahead.

If you would like to make a donation for Helene relief, just place it in the offering plate on any Sunday, or mail it to the church. Be sure to note that it is for HELENE, and make checks payable to Lockport UCC.

*And I am sure that God who began **the good work within you** will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task **within you** is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.*
(Phil. 1:6)



**Two-thirds of a book written.
Putting together 231 pieces of a 300-piece puzzle.
Composing three verses of a five-verse song.
Remodeling a room.**

Church.

Me.

You.

What do all these things have in common? All these things are examples of **"works in progress."** A work in progress is a task, a project, goal, or an action that requires multiple steps to complete it, requires time to complete it, and requires a commitment to complete it. Works in progress are endeavors that can span from a single day to a year or more until it is finished.

The church is a work in progress filled with works in progress – people, programs, and plans. Whether it is the work of remodeling or the work of creating confirmation curriculum or the work of growing in our faith, God is committed to seeing it through. In Philippians 1:6, Pastor Paul offers reassurance to the earliest churches and offers the same reassurance to our church too! He says this – "I am confident of one thing that the One who began a good work in you will continue until it is finished."

Church, this is GOOD NEWS! God is not done with me or you or the church. God is not done with us yet!! God will work on it and work on it and work on it – until it is all complete in Christ. And so should we! God has started some works in progress among us, such as growing our presence as a church in a new location, building our social media presence, making our new worship space feel like "home", and writing our own church devotional (don't forget to send in your articles!). All of these are works in progress that God has invited us to do together. With God's help, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Pastor Hope



The Church in Action

United Church of Christ Corner

ucc.org

As part of the UCC we are members of an inclusive and diverse community of Christians connected by faith, called to build a just world for all. To help our members be more aware and informed about the work of the UCC, in each issue of the newsletter we share news about the projects, initiatives, positions, and missions of the UCC.

The UCC Mission Statement:

“We welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.”

OFFICE OF PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

In Washington D.C. the UCC’s Office of Public Policy & Advocacy offers leadership for social action concerns in the UCC and provides resources to the national, conference and local churches. They work to identify, analyze and forecast emerging social issues and legislation which call for the attention of the denomination. The Office engages with UCC advocates across the country through a wide variety of campaigns.

Each day, the D.C. team works to follow a multitude of issues and legislation, from racial justice to healthcare, voting rights to environmental justice, poverty to peace.

<https://www.ucc.org/office-of-public-policy-and-advocacy-in-washington-d-c/>

On the website you can learn about the issues they work on, the UCC’s witness on those issues, and ways you can get involved. You can join the Justice and Peace Action Network to receive their newsletter and emails with action alerts which show you how to take action and make your voice heard on issues of the day.



OUR FAITH OUR VOTE CAMPAIGN

The United Church of Christ’s Our Faith Our Vote Campaign is their ongoing commitment to equip you with the tools for nonpartisan faithful engagement in our democratic process. The campaign is made up of three main components; voter registration, issue education, and voter empowerment.

The 2024 Our Faith Our Vote campaign asks the church to answer the call of 1 John 3:18 to “let us not love with words or speech, but in action and in truth,” by “voting with love.” Vote with love for creation, for our neighbors both here and abroad, for a just peace, for repair and reconciliation of the brokenness of our nation. And encourage your family, friends, and community to do the same.

<https://www.ucc.org/our-faith-our-vote/>

On the website you can check your registration status, find important dates for elections in your area, learn about candidates, and find the polling location nearest you. There are weekly blog postings on critical issues facing the world today. You can find tools to advocate for the issues you care about, be more informed on the issues at stake, and ensure that each person’s voice is heard and their sacred right to vote is protected.