



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

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UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

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REFLECTION



Time's Five R's

"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should." Psalm 90:12 (Living Bible). A few years ago, the keynote speaker at a health ministry conference spoke about time's 5 R's. He advised ways to intentionally spend time.

1. **Relationships Time**: How we spend time with God; family; children; peers, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. These relationships are important in our lives. 2. **Requirement or Responsibility Time**: the times we are required to work and do activities in our homes.

How do we make this time meaningful and fulfilling? 3. **Rejoicing Time:** time we devote to worship, praise, and singing. In addition to attending a weekly communal gathering hour, what do we devote each week for personal time to express gratitude? 4. **Redemption Time:** time for using our given talents and gifts; time for doing God’s work (we have been “commissioned”). Where do we volunteer our time to serve others? 5. **Recreation Time:** time for relaxing, rebuilding, re-creating, renewing, refreshing, and rest. It is essential to find time for these activities. How do we gift ourselves with time for self-care?

His key points may stimulate us to question: How much time do we currently devoted to each of these aspects? Where are adjustments, intentional re-ordering, re-allocations needed? How will the precious gift of each day be filled?

TIMELY HEALTH TIP



We are less than 70 days away from the 2024 Presidential Election. Here are some tips to assure your vote counts:

1. Check Your Voter Registration Status to assure it is current and accurate.
2. Check when early voting begins in your state. This can help arrange your voting day in your daily schedule.
3. Know how to do Mail-In or Absentee Voting. Some states will be mailing a mail-in ballot to every registered voter; in other states you will have to request a mail-in ballot.
4. Pay attention to deadlines for submitting mail-in ballots (postmark deadlines and last receipt date possible) for counting your vote. Know where you can put your ballot in a drop-off box.

Find other Voting information at the UCC [Our Faith Our Vote: Blog](#)

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS



LONELINESS: The silent epidemic of loneliness is spreading and has serious health risks. Loneliness is not confined to those who live alone. In the [Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#), Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, the current Surgeon General of the United States discusses the mortality impact of being socially disconnected (loneliness). The CDC's [Social Connection section](#) describes the health effects and risk factors of social isolation and loneliness for individuals and groups. Faith communities may use a variety of approaches to reduce loneliness. Small group gatherings, discussion sessions, and physical activities can promote health and reduce social isolation. Another approach is Visitation Ministries. On-line message boards like [Caring Bridge](#) and [Meal Train](#) can create communities of caring and connection. Prayer ministries can provide scripture passages, shared prayers, and blessings. **(See announcement about the Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation later in this issue).** The National Institute on Aging has [Tips for Staying Connected](#). These may help your group discuss and develop approaches to help others stay in regular contact and spend time with extended family, friends, and neighbors. Social connections and participation in community events matter. Strong, secure attachments are protective and a good foundation for health and wellness.

NATIONAL HEALTH AWARENESS TOPICS

For September:

September is National Preparedness Month. The 2024 Hurricane season continues until November 30th. [The Red Cross](#) offers information about how to prepare before a hurricane, what to do during the storm, and how to stay safe after a hurricane. The Red Cross offers an [Emergency Preparedness Checklist](#). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a one-page flyer with helpful [Tips for Hurricane Preparedness](#). Heavy rains

and flooding caused flooding disasters in several states in August. Helpful U.S. government web-based resources on flooding safety include [homeland security](#) and [weather service](#).

National Suicide Prevention Month. Many helpful resources were shared in the August 2024 issue of *Mind, Body, Spirit: Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness*.

National Recovery Month. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides a [Recovery Month Toolkit](#) that illustrates what SAMHSA is doing to support people in recovery and how to share this information with your audiences. The UCC [Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Ministries](#) calls people to the work of resisting stigma, eradicating systemic violence and racism, and working to build communities of care.

For October:

Domestic Violence Awareness Month: October is the time for victim advocates, allied professionals, survivors of abuse, their loved ones, and surrounding communities to come together to mourn the lives lost to domestic violence and connect with others working to create change. The [National Resource Center on Domestic Violence](#) and the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) (NCTSN) websites provides comprehensive information. The [UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit](#) Section 3 has an Exemplar, *The Clothesline Project – The Reality of Domestic Violence*, that offers an example of a community’s efforts to make the issue more visible. You may want to read about it and then consider a similar program in your community.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: The [American Cancer Society](#) dedicates the month of October to raising awareness about the benefits of finding and treating breast cancer early. Information can also be found at National [Breast Cancer](#) Foundation website.

October is Health Literacy Month: Low health literacy may contribute to medication errors, lower rates of compliance to treatment, ineffective management of chronic health conditions, unnecessary emergency room visits, increased hospital readmissions, and higher morbidity and mortality. The [Always Use Teach Back! Training toolkit](#) is a way to explain health information clearly and ask the person (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides an extensive listing of [health literacy resources](#). The National Institute of Health provides [Clear Communication](#) resource pages.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR WELLNESS MINISTRIES

STARTING SOON! The *Orientation of Wellness Ministries Volunteers Series* in the UCC begins September 3rd. Registration was very brisk; the first session quickly filled. A repeat of this series will be scheduled for early 2025. More information about the series repeat will be published in a future issue of this newsletter.

NEW RESOURCE! *UCC Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation*. Are you visiting a person or writing a note on behalf of the church? Aren't sure what to say to this person? This handbook furnishes information to guide you in each encounter and provides scripture passages, prayers, and blessings you can easily use. This handbook is now available through the UCC Resources. A new 9-minute video, *UCC Wellness Ministries Resources*, is now posted on the [UCC Wellness Ministries webpage](#). It discusses the available Wellness Ministries resources: the Toolkit, webinars, educational programs, the monthly newsletter, *Mind, Body, Spirit; Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness*, and the Handbook for Visitation.

UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

Our next monthly meeting is **Thursday, September 12th, 2:00 – 3:30 pm ET**. We invite you to join in conversation with colleagues from across the UCC. To learn more, contact uccwellnessministrieschair@gmail.com

WELLNESS MINISTRIES-RELATED WEBINARS AND CONFERENCES

UCC Gender and Sexuality Justice Ministries is providing **All God's Families: Holding a Candle in Dark Corners**. This new 5-week webinar series on **Mondays from September 30 to October 28, 3:30-4:30 ET** explores how families need our ministry and support when they grow and grieve through PAIL (pregnancy and infant loss), (In)Fertility and IVF, Fostering and Adopting, self-care and mental health needs during times of family growth and loss, advocacy and public policy concerns. [Registration](#) is open for the full series. Questions? Contact Dr. Sherry Warren, Minister for Women's and Gender Justice, at warrens@ucc.org

New! Nurture the Soul, Faith INFO Webinars: Alyson Breisch and Peggy Matteson of the UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team will present two on-line webinars. The first session, on **Thursday, October. 10th, 3:30 to 4:30 PM ET**, discusses *Discovering Wellness Ministries in your Congregation*. The second webinar, on Thursday, October. 17th, 3:30 to 4:30 PM ET, will share examples of *Wellness Ministries Intergenerational Holiday Happenings*. Mark your calendars now and watch this newsletter and UCC news for registration information.

KEEP CONNECTED & SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER



We are a community of mutually supportive leaders for the many aspects of Wellness Ministries.

Debbie Ringen has set up and added beneficial information to our new [UCC Wellness Ministries Facebook page](#). Also visit our [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

An invitation from the Editors: Have a question about health and wellness ministries? Do you have an innovative way you've provided wellness ministries? Let us hear from you. Contact us at wellnessministries@ucc.org



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