



# 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*

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APRIL – MAY 2023

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*Palm Sunday* – April 2 - 10:30 am

Holy week begins with Palm Sunday. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which leads to the passion story of the Christ.

*Maundy Thursday* – April 6 - 6:30 pm

This moving worship service centers on the Last Supper with Jesus and his disciples. As they did on that evening, we will share Holy Communion together.



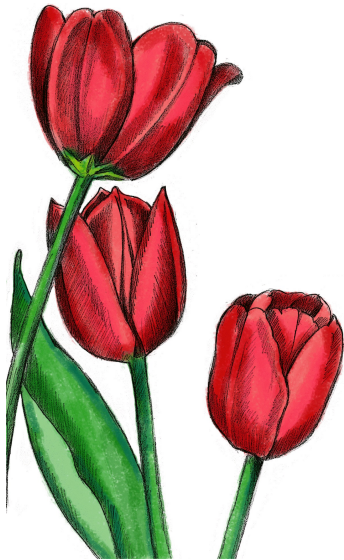
*Easter Sunday* – April 9 - 10:30 am



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

*Easter Sunday Breakfast*  
9:30 to 10:15 am

Before the morning worship service on Easter Sunday, we will offer a Breakfast Buffet. Edna will be cooking up some special dishes, so you know it will be good! We will be serving from 9:30 to 10:15 am, so join us for a delicious Easter breakfast.



## Order Your Easter Memorial Plants

Please help us decorate the sanctuary for Easter Sunday by ordering one or more plants for the altar. They can be placed in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special someone in your life. Memorials will be printed in the Easter bulletin. You may take your plants home after the Easter morning worship service.

**Please order ASAP.** You may place your order in the offering plate by April 2, or contact Cyndy by April 7 by phone, e-mail, or text. Include the number and type of plant(s) you would like, and the dedication that you would like to appear in the bulletin. (Checks should be payable to Lockport UCC.)

### Available Plants

**Easter Lilies** - \$15.00 ea.

**Mums** - \$15.00 ea. (assorted colors)

**Tulips** - \$12.00 ea. (assorted colors)



### Palm Sunday

### Food Pantry Collection

On Palm Sunday, April 2, we will be accepting donations of non-perishable food items. All food collected will be donated to a local food pantry to help make someone's Easter dinner a little brighter.



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 you including 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. (Checks should be payable to Lockport UCC.)

## 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 bi-monthly to keep members and friends informed about programs of the church and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome  
**Deadline for Next Issue:  
May 21, 2023**

# *From Pastor Rick*

*Hi Everyone,*

I'm excited that Easter is just two weeks away as I write this, and I look forward to celebrating this most-important-Sunday-of-the-year with my church family at Lockport UCC! Now that we are past Daylight Savings and the official start of spring, we can look forward to warmer, brighter days ahead. How great it is to know that we are Easter People. Our faith is rooted in the hope of resurrection and the certainty that life is abundant and eternal.



We are continuing our conversations about the future of our church, and I want to invite you to a special forum following worship on Sunday, April 23. I will be leading a discussion about major, recent trends in the Christian Church as a whole and mainline Protestantism in particular. If we determine that our witness and ministry should continue in Lockport, it is important for us to understand these shifts as we plan for the future.

I have recently been in conversation with our church Council regarding my continued service as pastor. I've expressed a willingness to continue beyond the initial two-year term of service. Considering the size of our congregation and our financial limitations, I have recommended reducing my hours from 1/3 time to 1/4 time, beginning July 1. The Council, which is responsible for hiring and firing non-permanent clergy, has agreed that this is a reasonable plan. The primary difference is that I will not be in Lockport as often during the week. I will continue to prepare services and preach on 38 Sundays out of the church year and to provide pastoral care in hospitals and at other times as able. As always, please let me know if there is a hospitalization, a change in health, or a need for pastoral care. I'm grateful to be able to serve our congregation, and I rely on information from you so I can do so.

Please see the schedule of worship for April and May included in this newsletter. Holy week begins with Palm Sunday and includes a special worship service with Communion on Maundy Thursday. I look forward to seeing you in the weeks ahead!

*Peace and blessings,*

*Pastor Rick*



## 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

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

## Worship Themes for April and May

*Here are the Worship Themes  
Pastor Rick has planned  
for Upcoming Services*



### **April 2 – Palm Sunday**

Text: Matthew 27:32-37, 45-50

Sermon: The way of the Cross

### **April 6 – Maundy Thursday – 6:30pm with Communion**

Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Sermon: Telling, Hearing, Remembering

### **April 9 – Easter Sunday with Communion**

Text: John 20:1-18

Sermon: Morning People

### **April 16 – Second Sunday of Easter**

Text: John 20:19-31

Sermon: Believing is Seeing

### **April 23 – Third Sunday of Easter**

Text: Luke 24:13-25

Sermon: Walking with Jesus

### **April 30 – Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Text: John 10:1-10

Sermon: The Good Shepherd

### **May 7 – Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Text: 2 Peter 2:2-10

Sermon: Living Stones

### **May 14 – Sixth Sunday of Easter / Mother's Day**

Text: John 14:15-21

Sermon: The Advocate

### **May 21 – Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Theme to Be Announced

### **May 28 – Pentecost Sunday**

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Sermon: Many Gifts, One Spirit





**Lucinda Hohle**  
Absolut Center  
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

## 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.



## Upcoming Community Dinners

We continue to offer our free monthly dinners to assist those in our community who struggle with food insecurity.

The dinners are served on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, between 5:00 and 6:00 PM, and available as take-out only.

Our next dinner dates are planned for **April 26** and **May 24**. If you can help prepare or serve meals, or make deserts please contact Edna to volunteer.

## 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, however, 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.



### *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.

### *Relief for Ukraine*

The situation in Ukraine remains dire. If you wish to contribute to relief efforts there, donations are still accepted at any time.



### *April Birthdays*

- 4 Edna Stubbs
- 13 Tammy Dodge
- 19 Nolan Dodge
- 23 David Mullaney

### *May Birthdays*

- 3 Susan Hagenbach
- 3 Don Henning
- 5 Elaine Babcock
- 6 Audrey Woolson
- 8 Beth Granchelli
- 18 Laura Liebovitch
- 18 Linda VanderWeide
- 25 Kim Rongo
- 25 Tom Zuercher
- 27 Ashley Pike
- 31 Lucinda Hohle



*Happy*  
**ANNIVERSARY**

April 20, 1985  
Debra & David Mullaney

### *Strengthen the Church UCC Offering*

Each day, visions and dreams are created in the hearts of many in the United Church of Christ. Through the Strengthen the Church offering, they can become a reality. As God calls our congregations to be "church" in new ways, your gift will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Because of this offering, many more will hear the good news that "God is still speaking." Strengthen The Church (STC) is a special mission offering to re-imagine and build the future of the UCC.

*We will be accepting donations to the Strengthen the Church offering throughout May. There will be offering envelopes in the narthex at church, or just mail your gift to the church. Please make checks payable to Lockport UCC.*



## General Fund Summary

January 23 thru March 25

In the interest of keeping the congregation informed, the Church Council has opted to publish a thumbnail sketch of our church finances in each newsletter.

Income from Pledges & Offerings	3,845.00
Other Income	112.00
Total Income	3,957.00
Withdrawn from Investments	10,000.00
Total Expenses	11,971.43

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

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer



**May 28**



*May 14th*

## Bible Study Groups

### *Tuesday Morning Group*

Our Tuesday group meets at 10:00 am in the Mayflower Room. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.



### *Disciple Discussion Group*

Our Disciple group also meets weekly, on Thursday evenings, 5:30 to 7:00 pm, in the Chapel. If you'd like to join us, please let Cyndy know so we can have study materials prepared for you.

*The following is an article from the Conference Minister of the Minnesota Conference of the U.C.C.*

## Faithfulness & Vitality in Small Places by Rev. Shari Prestemon

On a cold and snowy January morning, I drove cautiously on a rollercoaster gravel road toward St. John's UCC in New Albin, Iowa, our one Conference congregation that sits outside the state of Minnesota. Eventually the road leveled and I could see the church off in the distance, its steeple rising into a wintry gray sky. Aside from a farm directly across the road, there was little else around this rural church, but signs of life at the church were soon obvious as members began arriving for worship.



Inside the sanctuary, I discovered a genuinely friendly congregation. The part-time pastor, Paul Burgess, was stationed at the door to welcome people, and members chatted enthusiastically with me before the service. Multiple generations of family sat in the pews, a 91-year-old man who was baptized at St. John's sitting a few pews ahead of his son, three generations of another family active in the music program. The choir wore formal robes and youth read scripture. Announcements included community events and details about the next Sunday's youth group activity.

Afterward, several women gathered around me to tell me about their beloved church and its history, and one of the teenagers told me about the church's surprisingly large and active youth group. Before they rushed off to the Sunday School classes, they invited me to come back in May for their annual Chicken BBQ event.

All in all, there were about 30 people in worship at St. John's that morning. A small, healthy, vital congregation, there on a lonely gravel road in farm country of northeast Iowa.

That same Sunday another small congregation gathered for worship in Buffalo, Minnesota. United Faith Community has no church building; the congregation of typically less than 10 people gathers in a meeting room of a local business and shares their worship live on Facebook. Founded just a few years ago, United Faith Community offers a distinctively progressive witness of faith in a community they describe as conservative. Their invitation states: "Come and experience what a truly welcoming and inclusive faith community is like. No pretenses, no judgment, no requirements. Just sharing God's love with all." They are served by Ole Olson, a part-time pastor licensed for authorized ministry by the Minnesota Conference UCC, and lay members take an extremely active role, helping to lead worship, Bible studies, and community outreach on a rotating basis. Around Buffalo, they're known as "that church": that church that always lifts a public voice when a community tragedy or injustice has taken place, that church that welcomes everybody, that church that has a reputation for service and outreach. This faith community is among the smallest in our Conference, and yet I would hasten to describe it as vital and faithful.

In the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, 71% of our 120 congregations have an average of 50 or fewer people in worship on any given Sunday. According to data recently shared by the UCC's national offices, that figure is just slightly higher than what is true in the whole of the United Church of Christ. The same trend is clear in many other denominations. More and more, "micro churches" are the norm. The pandemic experience and its impact on church life everywhere has accelerated this reality.

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## Faithfulness & Vitality in Small Places continued

For small churches, there are a host of special challenges and questions. How can they afford a pastor? If they have a building, how does its upkeep overwhelm the budget and prevent the kind of ministry the congregation desires? At what point do even the most dedicated members burn out from the constant leadership they must provide to keep the church going? Is a long-term sustainable future possible?

In the Minnesota Conference and across the United Church of Christ, the need to reimagine what it looks like to “be Church” is abundantly clear. We have to prayerfully discern how God is doing a new thing among us. We have to wonder how God might be calling us to let go of what we’ve always known for the sake of a new church and forms of ministry that are aching to emerge. We have to rethink a whole lot of things: pastoral leadership, what it looks like and how it’s formed; church buildings; membership; ecumenical partnerships.

To be honest, there are a lot more questions than answers. No one has absolute clarity about what’s ahead for the Church or what we need to do in the meantime to nurture a faithful, hopeful future. But I think of the two churches I’ve described here, and many more like them across the Minnesota Conference and beyond, and I know this much:

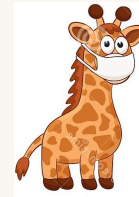
**Faithfulness and vitality  
come in many shapes and sizes.**

**God is revealed whenever and wherever  
we make space for goodness, justice,  
and unfailing love to flourish.**

**And the Holy Spirit is actively working  
out among us what we cannot yet see.**



I invite your prayers for all our small churches, and for our medium and large churches, too. Each congregation – no matter its size or location — is a blessing in this community of the Minnesota Conference UCC, and each has precious gifts and wisdom to share. For all of you, I am grateful.



## *Updated Covid Policy for Worship*

The Church Council has been monitoring the Covid situation right along, and reviewing our policies at each of their meetings.

Restrictions for worship have largely been dropped, the Council does ask for some minimal considerations on the part of our members.

- ◆ Masks will no longer be required in worship. However, we care about your health and encourage anyone who wishes to wear a mask to feel free to do so.
- ◆ We continue to ask that you **NOT come to worship** if you, or anyone in your household, have any cold or flu type symptoms, have had any recent possible exposure to Covid, have traveled recently, or have any other reason to think that you could possibly put others at risk.
- ◆ **If you test positive for Covid** after attending worship or other meeting at church, please notify the church immediately.

*Thank you for helping  
us keep everyone safe  
by observing these  
minimal guidelines*