



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*

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2023

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls on **February 22** this year. We will observe the day with a worship service in the Sanctuary at **6:30 pm.** (Note the time change)



Lenten services will then continue each Sunday leading up to Holy Week, the first week of April, with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter.

The Echo of Ashes by Joyce Rupp

*“Remember you are dust
and to dust you shall return.”*

*The large brown bowl
rests on a purple cloth,
it's roundness holding ashes,
freshly burned and ready for wearing.*

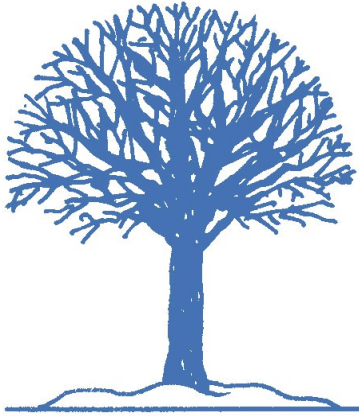
*Blackened thumbs
press the ancient sign
upon the waiting foreheads.*

*I hear the message repeated
until it haunts and hunts me down:
remember, remember, remember
you are dust, dust, only dust;
someday only dust will remain.*

*The echo of the Lent-stained ashes
speaks the truth of my humanity:
the humbleness of my beginning,
the simplicity of my departure.*

*A few wise words
echoing through Ash Wednesday
urge me to deeper things:
renewed dedication,
constant compassion,
and mindful awareness.*

*I leave marveling
at how simple and sublime
is this envelope of the soul,
which one day returns
to dust, dust, only dust.*



From Pastor Rick

Hello and happy February! If you are keeping track of the winter, as I am, it is reasonable or at least a statement of faith to say that we will have reached the mid-point of the season by the time you read this newsletter. I'm writing in mid-January, and after a VERY snowy start to the winter, I'm already more than ready for spring! I'm sure that many feel the same. This newsletter covers the months of February and March, and that in itself is a sign of hope that spring is on its way!

Christmas was different for many of us this year, wasn't it? In Buffalo, where I live, we were snowbound for several days. It was certainly disappointing to have to cancel the Christmas Eve service. It was not good timing for a bona fide blizzard! One of my favorite memories of the holiday season, though, will undoubtedly be gathering for worship on New Year's Day 2023 and going through the entire Christmas Candlelight service that we couldn't hold on December 24. It was a blessing to share that service with you and to start the New Year with "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World!"

In December, our congregation made the decision to list our building for sale. The vote was unanimous by those who attended the congregational meeting called for that purpose. We do not know whether the building will sell quickly or sit on the market for a long time. In the meantime, though, it is important for us to continue our conversations and be prayerful about the future of our congregation. We all know the adage that "the church is not a building; the church is a people." Times like this prove the truth of that saying. I'm awed by the faith of our congregation and am honored to share in ministry with you during this time of transition.

As always, I want to remind you that I am available to provide pastoral care. Please be sure to let me know if there is a hospitalization or if I can provide encouragement and prayer through a visit or phone call. Thank you!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Rick





*Here is a list of
Worship Themes
Pastor Rick has
planned for
Upcoming Services*

February 5 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Text: Matthew 5:13-20
Sermon: Salt and Light

February 12 – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Text: Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Sermon: Choices

February 19 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Sermon: Planting and Watering

February 22 – Ash Wednesday

Service in the sanctuary, 6:30 pm

February 26 – First Sunday in Lent

Text: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Sermon: Good and Evil

March 5 – Second Sunday in Lent

Theme to Be Announced

March 12 – Third Sunday in Lent

Theme to Be Announced

March 19 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Text: John 9:1-9
Sermon: Blind Spots

March 26 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Text: John 11:1-4, 11-15, 17-25, 32-44
Sermon: When Jesus Wept

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

Pastor

Rev. Rick Danielson

Secretary/Treasurer

Cyndy Corrieri

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

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

Submissions Welcome
**Deadline for Next Issue:
March 19, 2023**



Upcoming Community Dinners

Edna and her crew of helpers are continuing to serve our free monthly dinners to assist those in our community who struggle with food insecurity.

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

Our next dinner dates are planned for **February 22** and **March 22**. If you can help prepare or serve meals, or make deserts please contact Edna to volunteer.

Tackle Hunger February 12

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.

Souper Bowl Sunday



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.





Thank you so much, members and friends of Lockport UCC, for the Christmas greetings and thoughtful gifts! Leroy and I are deeply grateful for all of them. The generous gift from the congregation of a wine basket and a wind chime, presented

during worship on December 18, was a big surprise! I'm grateful for each of you and look forward to serving and worshipping with you in the New Year ahead!

Peace! Pastor Rick

General Fund Summary

November 28 thru January 22

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	8,367.00
Other Income	425.00
Total Income	8,792.00
Total Expenses	13,577.52

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



On December 4, the congregation voted to place our church building on the market to sell. The church has now been listed with Hunt Commercial Real Estate and the sign is up.

If you would like to see our church listing, with pictures, you can visit this website:

<https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/98-East-Ave-Lockport-NY/27424298/>



Blessings to Our Shut-in Members

Linda Layer

Mt. View Assisted Living
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Room 408A
Lockport, NY 14094

David Payne

Lockport Rehab &
Health Care Center
909 Lincoln Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094

Lucinda Hohle

Absolut Center
4540 Lincoln Dr.
Gasport, NY 14067

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.

**In 2022 we collected
a total of \$423.39.
That brings us to over
\$1,142 since we started.**

This organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated. So do the math – this means we have done an amazing amount of good since starting this mission project!

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



February Birthdays

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

March Birthdays

- 1 Patricia Hall
- 4 Remington Mietlowski
- 9 Ken Klino
- 11 Beth Holler
- 13 Marlene Westcott
- 30 Jill Driskel



Happy Anniversary

March 1, 1975
Beth & John Granchelli

March 20, 1976
Cheryl & Tom Reid



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

Disciple has resumed gatherings, after taking a short break for the holidays.

We meet 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.



This year's Christmas Giving projects were well supported by our congregation. There were generous donations to all our holiday mission projects.

We may be small in numbers, but our members have big hearts. Thank you to everyone who donated!

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

These all went to the YWCA's Domestic Violence Program. Women with children that come into the program often have fled their household with next to nothing. Your gifts allow the program to give them warm hats & mittens, and be sure the little ones get a Christmas present.

The YWCA staff were VERY appreciative of the donations, and impressed with how much we donated this year. They asked us to relay their heartfelt THANKS!



We collected for the Food Pantry in November and December. Your donations were divided each time between a local pantry and some used in our own little pantry out front. All of it was put to good use to help families dealing with food scarcity.



Our poinsettias were 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.



Signs of Spring are right around the corner!

One sign is the start of Daylight Savings Time, which will be on **March 12** this year.

So, before you go to bed on March 11, be sure to move your clocks **ahead** one hour.



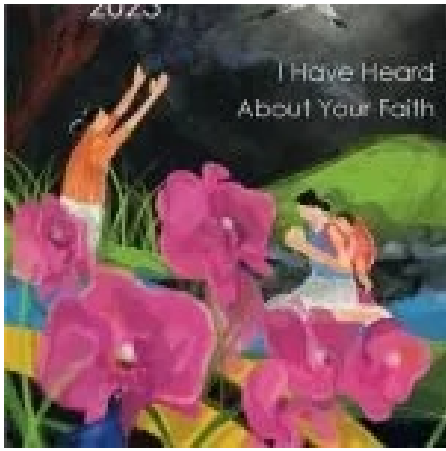
Updated Covid Policy for Worship

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*



World Day of Prayer March 3

This year's theme for World Day of Prayer is "I Have Heard About Your Faith" based on Ephesians 1:15-19, Paul's letter sent to a faith community to express gratitude for living out their love and faith.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women of the United States and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission at home and in other parts of the world.

Women had a strong sense of identification with the needs of women and children and searched for ways to provide support.

Despite strong resistance from all-male mission boards, beginning in 1861 women founded many women's boards for foreign and home missions where they could work directly with other women and children.

<https://wdp-usa.org>



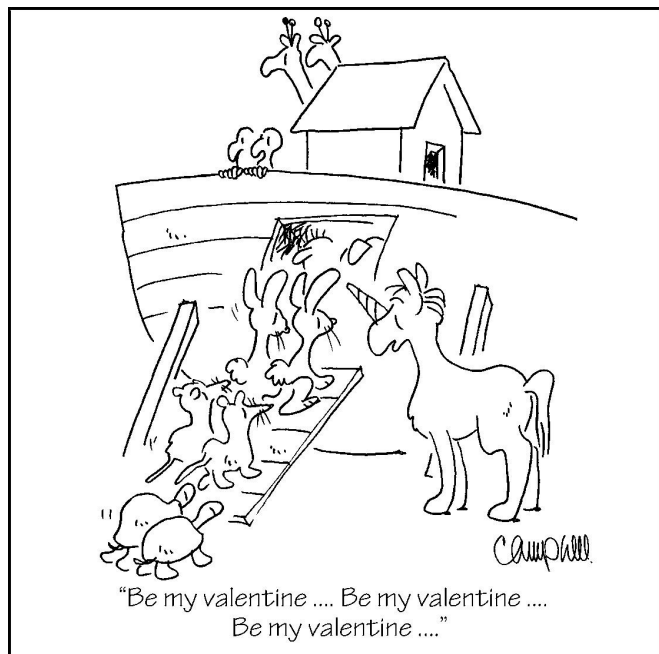
It's Time to Share . . .

. . . is the theme for this year's One Great Hour of Sharing special offering of the United Church of Christ.

Your donations to OGHS involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

*We will be accepting your donations to One Great Hour of Sharing throughout the month of March. You may place your gift in the offering plate on any Sunday, or you may mail it to the church. Please note that it is for OGHS and make checks payable to **Lockport UCC**.*



The following is an article by Rev. Gary Ferner from an issue of the New York Conference UCC Happenings. In it, he speaks about small churches and references a song written by Rev. Richard Scheffler. You may, or may not know, that Rev. Scheffler once served as the pastor of St. Peter's UCC.

My Thoughts by Rev. Gary Ferner (12-28-2022)

Rev. Gail Muckey, the pastor at St. Luke's UCC in Auburn, NY, wrote on the occasion of Rev. Richard Scheffler's passing that he served there as an Interim Pastor from 2004 to 2006. While serving, Dick wrote a song for the church. Gail asked if we might find a way to include the song in our Happenings.

Ever since I received a copy of the song, I've been thinking about the lyrics. Whether because I serve two smallish congregations as a yoked pastor, or because I am in contact with churches of all sizes with varying degrees of resources, this song touched me. It has a simple wisdom about it that transcends some of the worries and anxieties churches often feel when they compare themselves to other churches. This song serves as a reminder that any church, regardless of size, can be powerful when serving the Kingdom of God.

My favorite line is from the last verse, where Dick writes: 'When we're part of the church, when to Christ we belong, in even our weakness we're strong.'

As we turn the corner on another year affected by COVID, by the war in Ukraine, by systemic racism and by a deeply divided political environment, my hope is that the practical theology and heart-felt wisdom in Dick's lyrics can help us get a good start on 2023.

Much Peace, and Many Blessings to each of you in the New Year.

Small Can Be Beautiful For St. Luke's UCC, Auburn, NY By Rev. Richard Scheffler, July 2006

From seeds that are tiny can mighty trees grow.
And small bits of yeast leaven all of the dough.
And the work of the Spirit, though hidden and slow,
Will grow to the Kingdom of God.

Refrain:

*Small can be beautiful.
Small can be wonderful.
Small can be powerful when it's serving the Kingdom of God.
Some churches are huge and some churches are small.
Some churches have wealth; some have little at all.
But it's not the size or money, it's heeding Christ's call,
That's loved in the Kingdom of God.*

No church is too tiny to join in the throng
That serves God through worship and good works and song.
When we're part of the Church, when to Christ we belong,
In even our weakness we're strong.

