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Come, Holy Spirit

On **June 8**, we will celebrate the "Birth" of the church, which is the Day of Pentecost.

Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were together in Jerusalem.

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting." – Acts 2:1-2

These folks were "all together in one place" because they had gathered to celebrate *Shavuot* or the "Feast of Weeks." This Jewish festival is a time of harvest and celebrates the giving of the Torah to Moses.

This day took on a new meaning for these followers of Jesus, who were to become the First Christians, and for us as their descendants, who celebrate again the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives!





"Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

This wisdom from Helen Keller reminds us that we are better together, our impact is greater together, and we can make a bigger difference together. Growing up, I learned all about teamwork by playing on different sports teams, such as volleyball, track and field, and cross country. Upon joining the team, I was embraced as a member of the team. Although I was never a star athlete, as a team member my participation and presence mattered. The success of our team depended upon the whole team working together. In this way, it is easy to understand the truth that "there is no I in team" and that we cannot be a team without one another. This means that every member of the team matters, each member of the team is valuable, and each member of the team makes a difference.

Within the bible, the church is described as a team, as a community with many members who work together. Being the church requires us to work together to make a difference. Just like sports teams, we are putting our hands and hearts together to live into our mission. We cannot do this alone and we are living proof that there is "no I in team." Without each and every one of us, we would not be able to do what God has called us to do. On this Lockport UCC Team, YOU matter, YOU are valuable, and YOU make a difference. Never minimize how much YOU MATTER. Never forget how VALUABLE YOU are. Never underestimate THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE in our church. We are all in this together! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Abundant Blessings, 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.

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:

June 22, 2025



Dianna Allen passed on to her eternal rest on May 9

We express our deepest condolences to Dianna's Family. We will continue to hold this family in our prayers.

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 ~ and Please ~ SHARE our Posts

It will help us reach a wider audience!



Constant Blessings and Prayers

FOR OUR SHUT-IN MEMBERS

Lucinda Hohle

Absolut Care - 4540 Lincoln Dr. Gasport, NY 14067

Linda Layer and 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

COMMUNITY DINNER IS MOVING

Our next Community Dinner will be on **June 25**, but it will be in a new location. Starting in June, Edna and her crew will be joining forces with Emmanuel UMC. Folks from both churches will be helping to prepare and serve delicious free meals for the local community. The meals will be available as take out only from 5 to 5:30 PM, but now served at Emmanuel UMC Church. Together we will continue to alleviate some of the food scarcity for needy folks in our own community!

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.



"Listen, my children, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding."
- Proverbs 4:1

Father's Day ~~ June 15th

Happy Father's Day to all of the Dads, Grandfathers, and men who have been father figures in our lives.



"I know that I will live to see the Lord's goodness in this present life. Trust in the Lord. Have faith, do not despair. Trust in the Lord"

(Psalm 27:13-14)

Oftentimes, it is said that "good things happen when you least expect it!" In my own life, all the best things that ever happened to me happened when I least expected it. One of my closest friends became my friend when I least expected it. Becoming a Christian happened when I least expected it. Becoming the pastor of Epiphany happened when I least expected it! Lots of good things in my life happened when I least expected it.

Our scripture is full of stories about our spiritual ancestors who experienced good things when they least expected it. **Sarah and Abraham** experienced the good thing of childbearing when they least expected it (Gen. 18). In the wilderness, the **Israelites** received the good thing of provision from God in manna and quail (Ex. 16). **Joseph** experienced the good thing of freedom when he least expected it in his imprisonment (Gen. 50). **David** experienced the good thing of victory when he least expected it in battling Goliath (1 Sam. 17). **Mary and Joseph** experienced the good thing of giving birth to the Savior of the World (Matt. 1). The **earliest disciples** and **followers of Jesus** experienced good things when they least expected it in his death and resurrection (John 20).

Good things have happened and are happening at church too, even when we least expect it. Can you see the good things happening all around us? Can you feel the good things happening? Will you believe that good things are happening? Indeed, good things are happening here at Lockport UCC. If you don't believe me, see for yourself!

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope

GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL SUMMARY April 29 thru May 25

Income from
Pledges & Offerings 2,494.00

Mortgage Income 2,611.44

Total Expenses 1,931.24



12 Al Gritzmacher

13 Skylar Hoste

24 James Babcock

24 Nancy Sy

26 Bobbi Gritzmacher

Happy Birthday!



(Details Coming Soon)

July 16 - Game Night at Church Pizza, Snacks & Goodies ... Group Game everyone can play ... and just FUN!

August 3 - Worship in the Park On this Sunday we will hold our annual worship and picnic in the park. We will again be at the Veteran's Park in Gasport.



Celebrating Our Open and Affirming Covenant

In June the United Church of Christ celebrates Open and Affirming Sunday, and Lockport UCC celebrates the eighth anniversary of becoming an ONA congregation.

On June 18, 2017 our congregation voted to become an ONA church and approved the Covenant you see here. We then submitted our application to the Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC, which was approved on July 13, 2017.

Lockport United Church of Christ Open and Affirming Covenant

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

(Lockport United Church of Christ Mission Statement)

Organized in 2002 through the consolidation of two local United Church of Christ congregations, Lockport United Church of Christ has had a continuing history of involvement in social issues dating to the abolition of slavery in the first half of the nineteenth century. We honor our ancestors' legacy, and seek to carry on their work with the work we do today.

We strive to be a fully hospitable church that welcomes people of every race, gender, age, ethnicity, social status, family structure, mental or physical health status, and most importantly, those who have often been excluded from faith communities. In declaring ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Church, we particularly welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions into the full life and fellowship of the church, including membership, sacraments, leadership and employment by the congregation.

We do so in response to the declaration of our Savior Jesus Christ who, when asked which was the greatest commandment of all, answered "The first is ... 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater that these." (Mark 12:30-31 NRSV)

We embrace our denomination's promise: "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here" at Lockport United Church of Christ.

Offering for UCC Open and Affirming Coalition

The Open and Affirming Coalition is an independent non-profit. Although they work closely with the UCC's national ministries, they receive no regular funding from Our Church's Wider Mission. The national ONA program is funded by contributions.



As an ONA church, we would like to show our support for the coalition, as well as our gratitude for the assistance we received during our Open and Affirming process. Our donations will also help insure that the assistance will be there for other churches seeking to become ONA congregations.

Throughout June, we will be accepting your donations to the ONA Coalition. If you would like to contribute, just drop your donation in the collection plate on any Sunday, or mail your gift to the church. Please note that it is for "ONA", and make checks payable to Lockport UCC.



We all had such a good time getting together for our Christmas Dinner in December, so we thought why not do it again for Summer.

On **June 26, 6:00 pm**, we will be doing just that! We've chosen to try The Brookside, on Lockport-Olcott Road in Newfane. They have a varied, casual menu, with modest prices (most \$15-20).

We need to have our reservation in by **June 15**, so if you'd like to join us (and we hope everyone will!) please sign up by then, either on the sheet at church or by contacting Cyndy.



June 29 No Worship Service

On this weekend, the downtown Lockport craft show will be held. We are cancelling service that morning because, due to the vendor and visitor parking, our folks will probably be unable to park anywhere around the church.

Tuesday Bible Study Group is Moving

Our Tuesday Bible Study group is moving from morning to afternoon. They will now be meeting at 1:00 PM, and will



continue to meet through the summer. The group explores the lectionary scripture readings for each week. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

Disciple Group Breaks for Summer

Our Disciple group, which meets on Thursdays at 5:30 until 7:00 pm, will be taking a break for the summer. We are finishing our series entitled "Bible Stories for Grown-Ups," and will then take the rest of the summer off. We will resume in September. If you are interested in more information about the group, please speak to Cyndy. We'd love to have you join us this Fall!

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.

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.



My First Protest

Ever since the beginning of my ministry as a pastor, it has been important to me to celebrate my "firsts" in ministry. It was out of the call of God to "make some good trouble" in a sermon that paved the way for me to be able to attend my first protest! Because it was my first protest ever, I had no idea what to expect . . . and neither did a few others. Thank God, it wasn't just me that was a newbie on the front lines of a local protest.

My first protest taught me a few things that seem important to share with all of you as your pastor:

PROTEST IS BIBLICAL – In the Bible, protest is all about responding to injustices within our world. It is about speaking truth to "the powers that be" within the world and calling them to work for justice. All throughout the Bible, God calls for us to work for justice in our world. Check out these passages from the Bible that help us understand the biblical call to protest injustice, aid the powerless, and do justice (Proverbs 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:24; Isaiah 58:6-7; Micah 6:8; Ecclesiastes 4:1).

PROTEST IS COMMUNITY VOICE – Protest is nothing new, Church. Protesting injustice was and still is part of the DNA of this nation. Spilling the tea in the harbor, the Boston Tea Party itself was a colonial protest against the unjust policies of Great Britain. And protesting injustice has continued to be the voice of the community ever since. Over the last few months, millions have gathered in the streets in protest. This is our community voice!

PROTEST IS MORAL – Taking to the streets, protest is about the moral compass of the nation. Integral to the protest scene are signs and posters with messages upon them. Some of the most meaningful and moral messages from the protest were: Love Builds Bridges; Stop Normalizing Hate; Hate Doesn't Make America Great; Protect Veterans; Protect Our Planet; Defend Democracy; Hands Off of SS, Medicaid, Women's Bodies, etc. These signs and posters invite the nation to realign its moral compass and invite us all to do the same too.

Protest is and has been a faithful response of resistance to injustice in our world. But Church, protesting in the streets as a public demonstration is not the only way to protest. Whenever we pray together, we are protesting! Whenever we hear a sermon and put it into practice, we are protesting! Whenever we feed the hungry, we are protesting! Protesting is how we live out our faith in this world, Church. Protest is everything we do towards manifesting the will of God to be done . . . on earth as it is in Heaven. If you are interested in learning about more opportunities to protest as an act of faith, please do not hesitate to connect with me!



MISSION MOMENT FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Dansalan College has served for more than six decades in Marawi City and Lanao del Sur, in Southern Philippines. Marawi City is the only Muslim City in the Philippines. The Maranao Muslims are the main inhabitants, along with a few Christians. At a time when discrimination against the Maranao Muslims was very strong (early 1940s), Dansalan College launched programs and projects to bring them into the Philippine body politic.

Quality education was prioritized to address the high illiteracy rate in the area. Other programs and projects included adult literacy; community extension service in agriculture, arts, and crafts; development research; community sanitation; primary health care and others. The programs contributed to the development of a core of successful professionals, many of whom are now active community leaders.

In addition, the school promoted friendly and harmonious relationships between Muslims and Christians. School officials, church leaders, civic leaders, government officials, and other influencers participated in its interfaith activities through conferences, seminars, dialogues, and research.

The school's success in implementing its programs and projects would not have been possible without the generous and faithful financial and moral support from the Global Ministries (United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ). For this, Dansalan College is indeed grateful.

In May 2017, the Marawi war occurred. Dansalan College was burned down by rebels and reduced to rubble and ashes. Seven teachers and administrators were held hostage by the rebels. Forty-two were trapped for 12 days; more than 10 others for a day. The last hostage was released after 5 months. And by God's grace, no life was lost among the more than 80 Dansalan College employees.

The school had to move to Iligan City, about 30 kilometers north of Marawi City. Global Ministries helps sustain the school operation in Iligan City by supporting its projects. Currently, it provides funds for implementing the Regenerative Agriculture and Landscaping Project. This Project promotes organic farming, mini forest development of hardwood and fruit trees, environmental care, cash crops, livestock raising, and flower gardening. It also serves as a learning station for students, employees, and the community.

Furthermore, Global Ministries has helped equip the school to serve as a center for different church activities, community activities, and other regional and national organizations and agencies. With improved facilities and a spacious campus, the school became a favorite venue for camping, Family Day celebrations, Training Seminars of Restorative Justice, and regular meetings of the Multi-Sectoral Validation Group, which processes conflict incident data gathered from the conflict areas.

We are inspired to do our task to share the Love of God with others, with the hope that peace may reign in the world.



Love the Least of These: Protect Children, the Sick, and the Poor



The American Dream is built on the idea that each person would be able to meet their essential human needs as well as their wildest dreams of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. To enact a dream, one cannot be caught in a cycle of survival wherein they are looking for their next meal, housing or worrying about keeping themselves and their loved ones healthy.

Yet Congress is on the brink of passing a bill which would force millions of people to choose between a doctor's visit and a full meal—all while increasing the national debt by \$4 trillion, giving tax cuts to billionaires, and funding increased detention and deportation of our immigrant neighbors.

As Christians, we will not allow the budget to be "balanced" on the backs of low-income communities. This budget reconciliation bill, if passed, would cause 10.1 million people to lose Medicaid coverage, and 4 million children to go hungry without SNAP benefits. It would also exclude over 2 million U.S. citizen children from the child tax credit because one of their parents is not a U.S. citizen, punishing children for their parents' immigration status. Additionally, this bill would increase spending on the detention and deportation of our immigrant neighbors by over 40% while allowing the wealthy to skirt taxes on inherited investments and corporations to deduct even more in taxes.

By supporting this bill, our elected officials are allowing more children to go hungry, more sick people to die, and more of our sacred neighbors to lose their homes. The only ones who will benefit from this bill are those who have more than enough.

As the Senate prepares to vote on this legislation as daily costs continue to rise, tell Congress to vote NO on this budget reconciliation bill!

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS OR OTHER ISSUES, YOU CAN . . .

TAKE ACTION

Contacting your Representative and Senators in Washington CAN make a difference. Send a letter or email, or make a phone call to let them know your feelings on this issue.

The UCC has an easy-to-use letter template on their website that you can use if you like, to contact your US Representative and Senators. Find it here:

https://www.votervoice.net/JAWM/Campaigns/126848/Respond