



# THE VINEYARD

MARCH 2026

LOCKPORT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Lent, Holy Week, Easter

In the lectionary readings of the Church, the Season of Lent begins in horror and despair. The prophet Joel says,

*Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near!* (Joel 2:1)

The coming of the Sovereign One should be good news, but this time the people will tremble. The moment is unprecedented. But as Joel continues, there is a word of hope and promise:

*Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
Return to the LORD your God, for God is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,  
and relenting from punishment.* (Joel 2:12-13)

Repentance from the heart, still leads to redemption. God's grace waits in eager hope and expectation. The season of Lent invites Christians to return to God, individually and collectively.

Holy Week reminds us that the hope and promise is soon to rise again. We journey to the deceptive high of Palm Sunday to the transition of Maundy Thursday to the dueling triumph and despair of Good Friday. Each date is a marker of transition, and we should not rush past. Pausing for reflection at each of these Holy Week destinations allows us to remember and prepare for the Light that comes out of the darkness as the tomb bursts open on Easter Sunday!





Holy Week Worship Schedule

Order Your Easter Memorials

Food Pantry Collection

*Worship Walks on the Water*

Bible Study at LUCC

Neighborhood Dinner

*'Round the Table Church*

Help for the Unhoused

*Compassion Not Cruelty*

OGHS – Love Offering

The Church in Action  
*Still Speaking Writers Group*

Action Alert  
*All of God's Children  
Deserve Food and Healthcare*

## Our Mission Statement

*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



## 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



## THE VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ

*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:**

**March 22, 2026**



## *Worship Schedule for March and Holy Week*

March 1, 8, 15 & 22 – Lenten Worship  
11:00 am services

March 29 – Palm Sunday Worship  
11:00 am service

April 2 – Maundy Thursday Worship  
6:00 pm service

April 3 – Good Friday Worship  
at Epiphany UCC

April 5 – Easter Sunday Worship  
11:00 am service

## *Decorating for Easter*

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.

You may place your order in the offering plate by **March 22**, or contact Cyndy 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***

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

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



## *Sharing Food with Our Neighbors*

On Palm Sunday, **March 29**, we will be accepting donations of non-perishable food items. All food collected will be donated to local food pantries to help make Easter dinner a little brighter for folks in need.



## *Weekly Vine*

In the Weekly Vine, we share the full sermon from that week, as well as 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.

*Living Psalms Series* – Throughout Lent, we will be sharing a weekly artistic interpretation of one of the Psalms in the Weekly Vine.

## *Worship Walks on the Water*

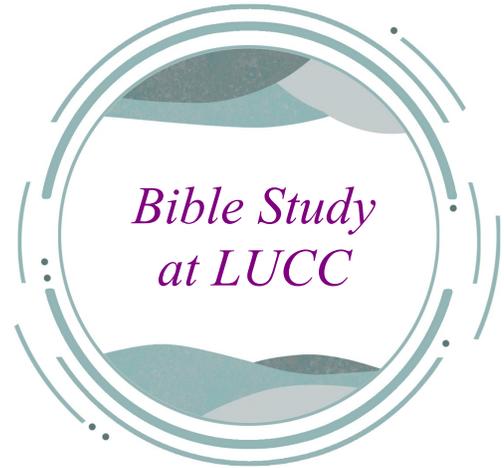
God shows up in the world around us. God shows up in the wind and in the dirt and in the grass and in the waters and in the animals around us. If you want to find God in the world around you, Pastor Hope would like to invite you to join her in a weekly worship walk on the canal.

Worship Walks is an exploratory worship experience where we become attuned to the ways in which God shows up in the world around us. Because this is an outdoor opportunity, we will be subject to unpredictable weather. But we will walk together, if it is safe for us to do so (not in thunderstorms or extreme heat or extreme cold)!

Together we will walk and talk, pray and play, and be on the lookout for God to show up all around us. Worship Walks on the Water (3Ws) will take place on **Wednesdays** from **10-11:30am** at a casual conversational pace **beginning in April 2026**. We will begin at **Wide Waters** and walk wherever God leads us.

Our first Worship Walk on the Water will take place on **April 1, 2026**. And no, it is not a joke! But it is my second anniversary as your pastor!! Join me at the waters!

*Abundant Blessings,  
Pastor Hope*



### *Tuesday Study Group*

Our Tuesday Bible Study group meets each week at **1:00 pm**. They are a lay-led group that discusses the lectionary scripture readings for the week. Please see Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

### *Disciple Discussion Group*

The Disciple Group meets on **Thursdays, 5:30 to 7:00 pm**. We are starting a new 6-week series for Lent, called "The Final Days." In this series, we compare the Passion stories in the four gospels.

New folks are most welcome any time! If you'd like to join us, please let Cyndy Corrieri know in advance so that we can have study materials prepared for you.

### *Bible 101 Class*

Pastor Hope leads a Bible 101 class **Twice a month on Sundays**, following the morning worship service. This is a basics of the Bible course for anyone who is new to the Bible or wants a refresher. If you are interested in joining, please see Pastor Hope to get homework/study materials.

## *Meals for Our Neighbors*

Many of our neighbors experience food insecurity these days. That's why we offer a monthly free dinner for the community.

Our next Neighborhood Dinner will be on **March 25**. It will be served 5:00 to 5:30 pm at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and is now available as take-out or eat-in.

We hear that meatloaf will be on the menu this time, but we don't have all the details yet. We do know that Edna will be needing helpers to prepare and serve. If you would like to volunteer to help out just speak to Edna.



**Happy  
St. Patrick's Day  
Everyone!**

## *Best Wishes to 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



9 Ken Klino  
11 Beth Holler  
13 Marlene Westcott  
30 Jill Driskel



## *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.

## *'Round the Table Church* Sunday, March 15

Our morning worship on March 15 will take on a little different look. Pastor Hope will be leading a 'Round the Table service. She explains it further in the article below.

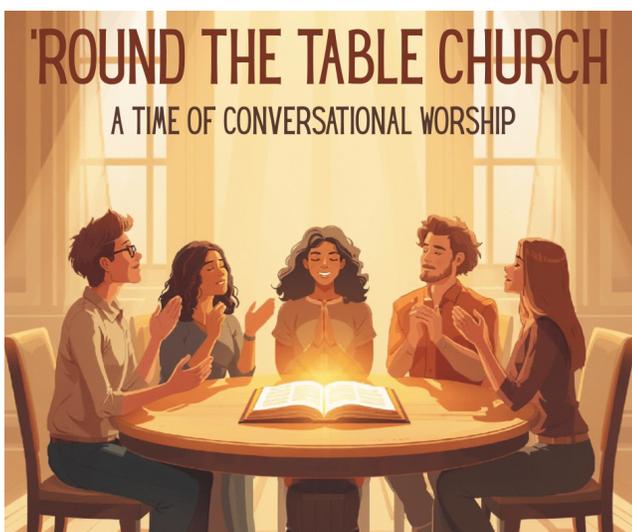
### *Talk to Me, Church!*

I want to hear more from y'all in worship. A lot of times it feels like I am doing all the talking in worship. But I have good news! There is a tradition within the church called Call and Response. This is a tradition that was born in the Black Church where the people and pastor engaged in a conversational style of worship. In the spirit of the call and response tradition, I would like to offer an alternative kind of worship service where we will be more conversational together in worship.

It is called: **'ROUND THE TABLE CHURCH!!**

'Round The Table Church is an informal worship experience around tables. In this way, there will still be song and scripture and a sermonette, but there will also be guided reflection and conversation. 'Round The Table Church will take place once a quarter (4x/a year). It is my hope that this new worship experience can draw us closer to one another and to God.

*Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope*



## *Help for Lockport's Unhoused Neighbors*



People find themselves homeless for a variety of reasons, and we are reminded that, under the right circumstances, this could happen to any one of us. **Families with young children are especially concerning.**

The newly-formed City of Lockport Homeless Alliance is trying to do something to help these folks. This is a grass roots, common-sense effort to tackle the problem by providing needed items, connecting people with organizations and services, and also reaching out with a human touch to let people know someone cares.

We at Lockport UCC can be part of this effort. We would like to start by collecting needed items for these folks. These are items the Alliance tells us they need:

- Walmart Gift Cards
- Winter essentials, such as coats, hats, gloves, and boots (these can be new or gently used)
- Socks and Underwear
- Blankets and Sleeping Bags
- Bottled Water
- Individually packaged snack bars and cookies

***If you prefer to make a Cash Donation, we will turn your gift into Walmart cards.***

*Together we can make a difference  
for Lockport's homeless!*



## General Fund Financial Summary January 19 thru February 22

|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Income from Pledges & Offerings | 2,114.00 |
| Mortgage Payments               | 5,222.88 |
| Other Income                    | 50.00    |
| Total Income                    | 7,386.88 |
| Total Expenses                  | 7,427.22 |

*An article from the  
Spring issue of the  
Western Area UCC  
newsletter – written by  
our own Pastor Hope  
on behalf of  
Compassion Not  
Cruelty*



*“Christ has no body but yours  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours  
Yours are the eyes  
with which he looks compassion on this world  
Yours are the feet  
with which he walks to do good  
Yours are the hands  
with which he blesses all the world  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet  
yours are the eyes, you are his body  
Christ has no body now but yours”*

This wisdom from St. Teresa of Avila paints a picture of what Christ looks like in our world. Christ looks like you and me and all of us doing what Jesus would do. We are the body of Christ. Ours are the hands and the feet and the eyes of Jesus in this world. We are called to use our hands and our feet and our eyes to show forth compassion to others, especially to the marginalized.

A yearning to do something about the cruelty all around us was stirred within the hearts of a small group of clergy in our churches. The who and the what and the how and the why of responding to the cruelty around us was and is found in Jesus of Nazareth. Evidenced in his life and ministry, Jesus offers us the antidote to cruelty: compassion. It was Jesus who practiced and preached compassion throughout his earthly ministry. As followers of Jesus, we are being sent into the world to do what he did.

This call has been transformed into a movement in our local churches and beyond! Compassion Not Cruelty is the movement that was born in response to the cruelty around us. Founded upon Jesus, ours is a call that transcends

denominational distinctions, political divisions, theological differences. Because of this, others have heard the call to compassion too!

This movement is growing and growing and growing all across WNY and the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. So far, nine congregations in four denominations have joined the movement. And this, y'all, is just the beginning!

If you find yourself wondering what you can do in response to the cruelty all around us, I have some good news for you! You can join the movement too! Yours can be the hands and the feet and the eyes through which Christ's compassion can reach into this world. You can be a blessing to the world here and there and everywhere you go because Christ has no body but yours.

Let us be the hands and the feet and the heart of Jesus today, tomorrow, and all the days to come. And it was so!

***Our Mission*** – Compassion Not Cruelty is a growing movement of organized Christians committed to modeling and mobilizing the compassion Jesus of Nazareth practiced and taught. Our community seeks to be a living example of Christ's love in action.

***Our Values*** – We value compassion by affirming the dignity of every human being, treating everyone with decency, and honoring our nation's democratic principles, institutions and the rule of law. Recognizing our shared humanity, we are grounded in the nonviolent power of Christ's love as we work for the common good. In a nation where government policy promotes Christian nationalism, cruelty, violence, hatred and massive wealth for a few, our movement stands as a counterforce – grounded in compassion, justice, and inclusion.

***For more information and upcoming events:***

Website: [CompassionNotCruelty.org](http://CompassionNotCruelty.org)  
Email: [info@CompassionNotCruelty.org](mailto:info@CompassionNotCruelty.org)  
Facebook: [CompassionNotCrueltyNY](https://www.facebook.com/CompassionNotCrueltyNY)  
Instagram: [CompassionNotCrueltyNY](https://www.instagram.com/CompassionNotCrueltyNY)



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment.

By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. Thank you for your gifts!

*Throughout March we will be accepting your donations to OGHS. There are special offering envelopes at the church, or just mail us your gift. Checks should be payable to Lockport UCC.*



### *Easter Offering for Lockport UCC*

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 that you include 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.

### *New Envelopes for Sunday Offerings*

You may notice a new addition to our entrance table at the church. Next to the offering plate, there is a stack of offering envelopes – dollar-bill size, with green ivy decorating them. These are available to use for your gifts to the church at any worship service – should you like to use them.

*Tithe & Offering*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Offering \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed



## The Church in Action

United Church of Christ Corner

ucc.org

### *Still Speaking Writers Group*

Among the many things the UCC is involved with is the Still Speaking Writers Group. God Is Still Speaking: The Writers' Group provides an impactful ministry through writing, with resources including the Daily Devotional, annual Advent/Lenten devotionals, and other materials developed for congregations. Print resources from the Writers' Group are available for purchase. In addition to the Writers' Group members, many volunteer writers contribute to these resources.

The Daily Devotional is published online every day. You can subscribe (for free) and have these devotionals sent to your inbox each day.

<https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>

*Below is an example of the Daily Devotionals you will receive, this one from March 3, 2026.*

### Find a Level Place

by Joanna D'Agostino

*Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.*

– Luke 6:17 (NRSV)

My family has a pop-up camper, which we use as a place for sabbath and adventure. Pop-up campers require a fair amount of care, but we love ours.

One of the cardinal rules for camper setup is that everything must be level before the roof can be raised. If it isn't on level ground, or supported by leveling blocks, it takes much more effort and

force to turn the crank, and essential parts risk breaking or wearing down under unsustainable pressure.

The leveling process makes me think of how often we open up on uneven ground, taking on tasks and pursuing goals before finding firm balance and support. Doing it this way takes much more effort and places unsustainable pressure on our minds and bodies, and we might even risk breaking down altogether.

Lent invites us to find level ground by taking the time to look inward, recalibrate, check the plumbline, and open up again with steady clarity.

I'm reminded of the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Luke, which Jesus shared from a level place. It's unlike Matthew's account of the same sermon, given up on the mountain, alone with the disciples. In Luke, Jesus put himself among the people – all different kinds of people – and together they found healing and empowerment as a gathered community with their feet on solid ground.

They didn't stay there, of course, and neither can we. The world has never been made up of level places. While camping, we hike through ravines and roll down hills; wade in streams and climb mountains. We seek adventure and face obstacles, knowing we have a level place and a firm foundation to return to for balance and rest.

### *Prayer*

Holy One, help us to find level ground, so we can continue to serve you in every adventure and every obstacle. Amen.



# All of God's Children Deserve Food and Healthcare



No one living in the wealthiest country should have to choose between a doctor's visit and a meal. Yet our national budget forces this choice onto families by prioritizing military spending at the direct expense of accessible healthcare and food security.

This week, focus turns to the federal budget. As people of faith, we know the budget is a moral document. During the State of the Union on February 24th the president made clear his budget proposals would prioritize military spending and immigration enforcement over programs serving Americans who are hungry and sick. This is unacceptable.

What we do for the most vulnerable people, we do for Christ. People should never have to choose between a full meal and a prescription, groceries or a doctor's visit, rent or a medical procedure. Food, housing, and healthcare are human rights, entitled to all God's people.

The One Big Brutal Bill devastated millions of families. This terrible legislation cut SNAP for 3.2 million people and Medicaid for 12 million people. This year, it is estimated that 7.3 million people will lose their ACA healthcare due to the expiration of the ACA tax credits, with an estimated 4.8 million becoming uninsured due to skyrocketing premiums. That's 22.5 million people losing their healthcare and/or food assistance.

These vital government programs save lives. With these cuts, tens of thousands could die. It is false to claim that the United States does not have an abundance of resources to overcome poverty. We cannot allow this false narrative to perpetuate and deepen income and wealth inequality.

Demand that Congress fully restore SNAP and Medicaid funding and reinstate the ACA tax credits before it is too late!

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*If you would like to keep up with all of the Action Alerts from the UCC's  
Justice & Peace Action Network (JPANet) you can go to:*

**<https://www.ucc.org/action-center/>**

There you can read them all, or sign up to receive the weekly Action Alerts and monthly newsletter in your email. There is also an easy to use form that you can use to contact your elected representatives.