



THE VINEYARD

MAY 2026

LOCKPORT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Prayer Challenge

When we sit down to pray, most of us probably start with the same familiar address to God . . . *Gracious God* . . . *Loving God* . . . etc. But have you ever intentionally taken the time to really define Who or What GOD is for you? What does that word, “GOD,” really mean to you, in all its various forms?

You may have heard of creative writing class assignments in which students are asked to come up with one hundred different ways to say a certain word. For example, what are 100 different ways of saying “said”? At first glance, it may seem a daunting task, but with a little thought a list is fairly easy to compile.

Why not do the same here. Take some time in a quiet space, with paper and pen, and really meditate on your definition of GOD. Write down one hundred words that you could use to say or describe “GOD.” You may want to start with the ones that are already comfortable and familiar to you. But then, go deeper and think about what other words you could use for GOD that would also be meaningful to you.

The image of God encompasses a broad terrain that cannot be limited by any single perspective. It is a personal and individual concept, different for each of us. To create your list of 100 words, look within your own heart, and search for those that truly express your soul-definition of GOD.

Then comes the second part of the challenge . . .

For the next 100 days, when you come to your time of prayer, use a different word from your list. As you pray, concentrate on the aspects of that particular word, and make it the focus of your prayer for that day. You may want to go further and keep a 100-day journal, in which you can share the thoughts, feelings, and images that came to mind each day as you focused on that word’s particular facet of GOD.

It’s an experiment . . . a tool to explore, widen, and deepen your faith.
Why not give it a try? You just might uncover a new way to look at GOD!

(If you choose to try the Prayer Challenge, I would love to know what your experience was like. If you are comfortable sharing, please let me know if you found it meaningful. Perhaps you’d be willing to share your list of words to be published in the newsletter, anonymously, and they might inspire others! - Cyndy)



Summer Fellowship
Dinner Out

Neighborhood Free Dinner

The Coming of the Spirit
Pentecost Sunday

Raw Tools
Forging Peace ♡ Disarming Hearts

Worship Walks on the Water

Roadmap of Our Journey
Just Peace Update

Know Justice - Know Peace

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Sent Forth in Love

Who Knew?

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Looking Ahead

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:

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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:

May 24, 2026

Summer Fellowship Dinner

We are planning an evening out for fellowship and dinner this summer. It will be on **Wednesday June 10, 5:00pm**, at the Willowbrook Restaurant on Lake Ave.

We need to have our reservation in by **May 31**, so if you'd like to join us (and we hope everyone will !!) please sign up by then, either on the reservation sheet at the church or by contacting Cyndy.



Feed My Sheep

Jesus gave this charge to his disciples. We make an effort to follow his call to serve by alleviating some of the food insecurity in our community with our free monthly dinner.

Our next Neighborhood Dinner will be on **May 27**. It will be served 5:00 to 6:00 pm at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and is now available as take-out or eat-in.

The menu will include BBQ Chicken, Baked Beans, Cornbread, and Cookies for dessert. Edna will be needing helpers to prepare and serve, so if you can volunteer to help please speak to Edna.

Mother's Day

May 10th



Happy Mother's Day to all of the Mothers, Grandmothers, and women who have been nurturing figures in our lives.



The Coming of the Holy Spirit

"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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."

- Acts 2:1-4

On **May 24** we will celebrate **Pentecost Sunday** in our morning worship service. Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. Sometimes known as the "Birthday of the Church," it marks the moment the church began its public ministry of sharing the gospel.



So join us for worship on Pentecost – and if you want to get in the spirit of receiving the Spirit, wear something red!

RAWTOOLS, INC



**FORGING PEACE
DISARMING HEARTS**

Do you know how many sacraments exist? Is it two? Is it seven? What if I told you there are infinite sacraments? To me, a sacrament is a vehicle through which we can encounter and experience the amazing grace of God. Of course, this takes place in communion and in baptism and in marriage and in last rites and so on and so on. But for me, sacraments are not limited to a mere two or seven. Sacraments can be found everywhere, y'all.

And I found one at a demonstration from Raw Tools at the Western NY Area Churches in Covenant Spring Meeting. Raw Tools is a ministry that transforms guns into garden tools. Born from the tragedy of the Sandy Hook school shooting, Raw Tools works collaboratively with local law enforcement to obtain surrendered guns from violent crimes, from victims of gun violence, and from those taking their lives with a gun. And like the prophetic vision from Isaiah, these weapons are beaten into plowshares (garden tools). Using the techniques of blacksmithing, the guns are cut into pieces, heated up to the melting point, so that they can be reshaped and refashioned into a new creation. Y'all these surrendered guns are transformed into garden tools. With shocking statistics that inform us that there are more guns than people in this country, this ministry seems more important than ever before.

The demonstration became a sacrament to me when what was used for harm was transformed into something that heals, what was used for death was transformed into something that brings forth life, and what was used for violence was transformed into something that promotes nonviolence. The names of those lost to gun violence were remembered aloud as the gun metal was struck by the hammer. What once had the power to take a life was rendered powerless of the potential to be used for violence. As the hammer struck the metal piece, it was a declaration of life over death. In that way, this was holy work where God's presence was evident.

Church, the power of transformation lies at the heart of the sacraments, where ordinary things become extraordinary through the amazing grace of God. That is what Raw Tools does. If you want to experience this sacrament, you can! Raw Tools will come and do a demonstration at your church too!

*Abundant Blessings,
Rev. Hope Schwartz*





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** in Lockport and walk wherever God leads us.

Our first Worship Walk on the Water was on April 22 (pics below!) and will continue to meet each Wednesday. Join me at the waters!

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope



Best Wishes to these folks celebrating Birthdays in May

- 3 Susan Hagenbach
- 3 Don Henning
- 5 Elaine Babcock
- 18 Linda VanderWeide
- 31 Lucinda Hohle



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.

Happy Anniversary to
Mike & Christine Derby-Cuadrado 5-31-1997



Our Just Peace Church process is getting underway. The committee continues to meet and make plans for our journey.

To get us all thinking about the scriptural basis for this process, they are creating prayer calendars each month. Each day of the month has a short scripture reading about Peace. Calendars for May are available on the entrance table at church. If you can't pick one up in person, and would like to follow along, just contact Cyndy and we'll send you one.

On Sunday, April 26 we unveiled our "Road Map to Just Peace". We blessed it in worship, then hung it up after church. (see pic below) On our road map, the little bus will move along as we move along in our process – a visual reminder of where we are on this journey!

Happy Spring 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



"No justice! No Peace!

No justice! No Peace!

No justice! No Peace!"



This was the first chant I learned. It was at a Black Lives Matter rally. This chant highlights the relationship between justice and peace. Yet to some of us, this chant might illicit images of violence in the streets. But Church, if we can move beyond those images, we can learn something from this chant.

Peace is only possible where justice is present. Justice is all about making things right so that peace can come to pass. In many ways, without justice there can be no peace. Who can experience peace when:

Some go hungry because there is not enough food on the table to feed the whole family after losing SNAP benefits.

Some are afraid to leave their homes out of fear of being detained and deported and disappeared even though they have the right documentation.

Some cannot feel safe in school because of the ongoing gun violence.

Some can no longer afford medical care or medicine, even in emergencies.

Some must work two or three jobs just to afford the rent.

And this list doesn't come close to the struggles faced by our friends and families and neighbors in this age of cruelty. It is not possible to have peace amid all the unjust suffering all around us. Peace comes from the presence of justice which alleviates the suffering caused by institutionalized injustice.

Take a second look at the image at the top of this article. It offers a different way to think about this chant. The original words, no justice, no peace are found within the words:

Know Justice
Know Peace

This means that we will know peace only when we know justice. Let us be people who seek peace by pursuing justice for all. With God's help, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

*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**. Through May we will be finishing a 6-week series – “Voices of Resistance” – exploring how the music, songs, and poetry in scriptures proclaim God’s justice and love.

Then in June, we will begin a 3-month break for the summer. The class will resume in September with new topics to discuss.

New folks are 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.

General Fund Financial Summary March 23 thru April 26

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	2,757.00
Mortgage Payments	5,222.88
From Investments	5,000.00
Other Income	31.00
Total Income	13,010.88
Total Expenses	13,111.06

UCC Special Offering



Strengthen the Church

Sent Forth in Love

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

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

WHO KNEW ?

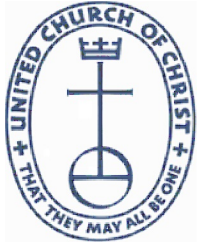
Have you ever found yourself surprised by God? It happens to me . . . a lot! God surprises me all the time by putting me in the right place at the right time to meet the right people doing the right things for the right reasons. It happened when I found myself preaching a sermon about getting into good trouble and being encouraged to connect with Jim Schultz, a world-renown community organizer and activist.

It turns out that God does this sort of thing a lot!! Who knew?! One of our own congregation members has creative gifts and graces that are just what is needed for creating visuals for our Just Peace Journey! A friend of mine has the gift of asset mapping to put people in the right places to serve others! A colleague of mine is gifted with musical abilities to help lead a congregation in song.

Y'all, who knew? God is always surprising me. Let us always be open to being surprised by God. The question "who knew" is an invitation to open ourselves to all the ways in which God could surprise us. Whenever God surprises us, the window of possibilities opens wider and wider and wider in our minds. Let us not limit what God can do. If we remain open, God will always be surprising us! Let our testimony be: who knew? Who knew that God could do that? Who knew that God would do that? Who knew what God had planned? Only God did! And that is the best news ever!

*Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope*





Hidden History of the United Church of Christ

Our church here in Lockport is part of the Protestant denomination, the United Church of Christ - but how much do you know about the UCC? Let's look at some more UCC history.

Getting Together

Excerpted from "A History of the United Church of Christ" by Margaret Rowland Post

In 1931, the Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches merged to form the Congregational Christian Churches. This new body combined the Puritan-rooted Congregationalists with the American frontier-based Christian Church, both favoring congregational governance.

Then in 1934, the Evangelical and Reformed Church (E&R) was formed by the merger of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America. The merger united two denominations with German Reformed and Lutheran roots in America

These two denominations were led toward an ecumenical relationship, and in 1937 a study group of St. Louis E&R and Congregational Christian clergy, felt among the participants a sense of "family." They acted on the discovery with a 1938 telegram to the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches, "What about a rapprochement between our communions looking forward to union?"

The affirmative response from the executive secretary of the General Council, was followed by four years of private conversations, resulting in a public proposal in 1942. Endorsed by the councils of both denominations, this led to ten drafts of a Basis of Union between 1943 and 1949. The final draft was approved by the E&R General Synod in 1949.

Approval by the Congregational Christians took seven more years. Some local churches brought a legal injunction, challenging the right of the General Council to participate in a union of the whole church with another. After a long legal process, the court ruled against those who tried to block the union. Some 100,000 members, unable to accept the union, joined The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches or The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

On June 25, 1957 in Cleveland Ohio, the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 23 years old, passionate in its committed to "liberty of conscience inherent in the Gospel," and the Congregational Christian Churches, 26 years old, a fellowship of biblical people under a mutual covenant for responsible freedom in Christ, joined together as the United Church of Christ.

The new church embodied the essence of both parents, a complement of freedom with order, of the English and European Reformations with the American Awakenings, of separatism with 20th-century ecumenism, of presbyterian with congregational polities, of neoorthodox with liberal theologies. Two million members joined hands.

A message was sent to the churches from the Uniting General Synod. The message stated in part, that the union was possible because the "two companies of Christians hold the same basic belief: that Christ and Christ alone is the head of the Church ... From him we derive the understanding of God."

And so they had become "One", ready to serve together in faith.

To Be Continued . . .

Interestingly, Lockport UCC is like a microcosm of the larger UCC church merger process. Our predecessor communities were also from different roots. St. Peter's UCC came from an E&R tradition, while Plymouth UCC was from a Congregational tradition. In 2002, we came together to form Lockport UCC!

Looking Ahead



ROUND TABLE CHURCH


A TIME OF CONVERSATIONAL WORSHIP
MARCH 15. JUNE 21. OCTOBER 18.

CAMPFIRE CHURCH 2026
Campfire Church is returning for its FOURTH summer season! All are welcome to come find church around the campfire.



Epiphany UCC
@ 7pm;
Rain or Shine!

June 3. June 17.
July 1. July 15. July 29
August 12. August 26.




CHURCH

AT

THE TRANSIT DRIVE IN

CINEMA
JUNE 5
JULY 17
AUGUST 14

LET US GO TO THE DRIVE-IN TOGETHER CHURCH!! MOVIE CHOICE WILL BE DETERMINED CLOSER TO THE DATE.



what's coming up



INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE

A SUMMER SERMON SERIES
JUNE. JULY. AUGUST.

