THE VINEYARD

NOVEMBER 2026

LOCKPORT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Thankful as Chimpanzees?

I Love Zoos. Especially watching the apes how they play, groom each other and interact. I find the chimpanzees most endearing, perhaps because DNA based research says that they are our closest living biological relatives.

Frans De Waal, a Primatologist at Yerkes Primate Research Center, in Atlanta, Georgia, tells a story involving chimpanzees that may be one of the best illustrations of thankfulness I've ever heard. This actual event illustrates that chimpanzees just might be capable of feeling and communicating gratitude. This is what happened:

Two chimps had been shut out of their shelter one night by mistake during a cold rain storm. They were standing dejected, water streaming down their shivering bodies, when one of their caretakers chanced to pass. Upon opening the door for the two chimps, instead of scampering in without more ado, each of them delayed entering the warm shelter, long enough to throw its arms around his benefactor in a frenzy of satisfaction. Chimpanzees, it was noted, are not normally in the habit of hugging their caretakers for no reason.



November is a time we focus on Giving Thanks. We are reminded of the blessings in our lives, which take many forms – everything from our friends and loved ones, to having enough to eat and a place to live, to sharing the love of God with others.

Let us give thanks? Absolutely if it means the profound sharing of love and joy! The chimpanzees show us how simple it can be to share that thankfulness with others!



A Day to Be Thankful
- Food Pantry Collection
- Congregational Meeting

November is Stewardship Month

Free Dinner Date Changes

Fall Bible Studies

Advent Begins
- Hanging of the Greens
- Poinsettia Orders
- Fellowship Dinner

Voter Turnout

Sunshine Person Needed

Help for the Unhoused

Walking With Geese

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

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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

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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:
November 22, 2026



Annual Stewardship Drive

Letters and pledge cards for our 2027 stewardship drive will soon go out in the mail. We ask our members and friends to consider lending their support the life and work of our church.

When your stewardship letter arrives, please think about what the church means for you, as well as the many ministries of our church, and how many lives are touched by our continuing presence in the community.

Once you've made your decision, please return your pledge card on or before November 22. *THANK YOU!*

THERE OUR HEARTS WILL BE

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also..."
- Matthew 6:21

A Day to Give Thanks

November 22

On Sunday, November 22 our morning worship will focus on giving thanks to God for the abundant blessings in our lives. Here are some ways we will do that . . . .

Food Pantry Collection

Many of our neighbors are experiencing food insecurity, and Thanksgiving will be difficult for them to make that big meal that we are all accustomed to. To share our blessings, we will be collecting your donations of non-perishable food. These will be taken to a local food pantry in time to make their holiday meal brighter.

(If you prefer to make a cash donation, that's okay, too.)



Stewardship Sunday

We will also be dedicating our pledges for 2027 in worship that morning. This is another way to show your thanks to God, and share your blessings with others through the work of this church.

(Please have your pledge cards returned on or before this Sunday.)

Congregational Meeting

Immediately following our worship service on November 22, we will remain in the sanctuary for a congregational meeting. The Church Council will present the 2027 budget, respond to any questions, and ask for a vote to approve the budget.

Neighborhood Free Dinner Date Changes for November and December

To distance a bit from the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we will be moving the next two dinners to Tuesdays. **November 24 and December 22** will be the dates. They are served from 5:00 to 6:00 pm at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and available as take-out or eat-in.

We will be making Chili for both dinners, and Edna will surely be needing helpers to prepare gallons of it, so if you can lend a hand please let her know.

Happy Thanksgiving to our Shut-in Members



Lucinda Hohle
Absolut Care
4540 Lincoln Dr.
Gasport, NY 14067

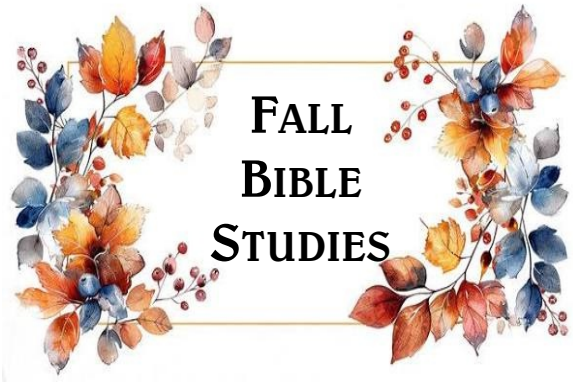
Linda Layer and **Kevin O'Connor**
Mt. View Assisted Living
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Lockport, NY 14094

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

Worship Walks on the Water

Our Worship Walks will continue, as long as the weather permits, on **Wednesdays, 10-11:30am**, starting at Wide Waters.

(see Pastor Hope if you have any questions)



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 each **Thursday from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.** We are currently exploring a 4-week study for Advent, *The Unicorn at the Manger*. After that, we will be taking a break for the holidays, during December and resume in January.

We would be happy to welcome any interested folks to the group. If you would like to join us, please let Cyndy know so that we can have study materials ready for you.

Bible 101 Class

Pastor Hope leads a Bible 101 class about **Twice a month on Sundays** at 12noon. 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.

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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.

Looking Ahead to Advent & Christmas

Advent Begins

November 29

The Season of Advent begins in November, and on that First Sunday we will be trimming the sanctuary Christmas Tree. Mark your calendar and plan to be with us for this joyous service!

Christmas Fellowship Dinner

December 11

In December we will gather for a festive Christmas dinner together at **5:30 pm.** We will be meeting at The Brook Restaurant, at the Willowbrook Golf Course, 4200 Lake Avenue.

We will be able to order off the menu. Since it is a Friday, they offer a fish fry special that night.

We will need to make a reservation, so please sign up on the sheet at church, or contact Cyndy by phone, email, or text.



Order Your Poinsettia Plants

The Poinsettias that grace our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas Eve are also a lovely way to remember our loved ones who have passed on, or to celebrate the blessings and joys in our lives!

Plants will be available for purchase again this year. We need to have our order in by **November 15**, so we would like to have as many of your requests as possible by then, so we have a better idea of how many to order.

There will be order forms at the church, or you may just contact Cyndy by phone, email, or text.

The color choices are
Red, White, or Pink

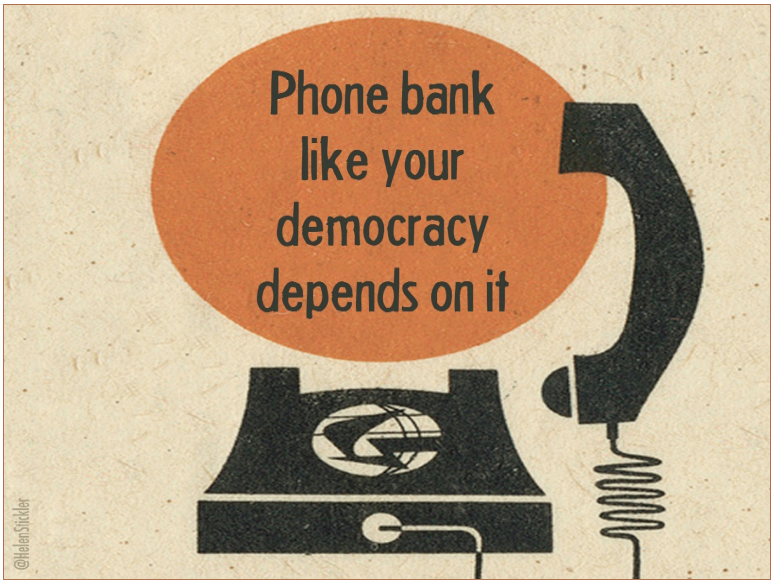
6.5" pot - $15.00 each
8" pot - $25.00 each

Memorials will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. After that service, you may take your plant home.

Supporting Mental Health

Your purchase of a poinsettia plant has an added benefit for our community. The Mental Health Association in Niagara County sells plants each year as a major fund-raiser for their organization. We order our plants from them, therefore your purchase not only helps the church, it helps to support the important work that MHA does right here in our city and county.

Voter Turnout



Being part of Stand Up Lockport has been a lifechanging experience for me and many others. As a newbie political activist, I have learned a lot and am still learning all about the path of political activism. As someone who was disinterested in politics in my younger years, I have learned just how important it is to vote and to be involved in local government and to be informed about political decisions that are affecting our communities.

As an active member of Stand Up Lockport, I have journeyed alongside those who felt the call to political candidacy. I have learned about town council meetings, town hall meetings, campaigning, GOTV (Getting Out the Vote), canvassing, midterms, and phone banking as Stand Up Lockport offered support to those called to political leadership. It has been an immense journey of learning and this is just the beginning!

In support of the political campaigns of Stand Up Lockport, I went and worked the phonebank. It was “a first” for me, and I do love to celebrate my firsts. Phone banking is an opportunity to encourage voter turnout. Myself and others gathered to call voters to remind them of the upcoming election and to encourage them make a plan to get out and vote.

Speaking to voters and encouraging voter turnout was oddly inspiring and satisfying. Although there were some who hung up on us, some were rude, some who were annoyed, most of the conversations I had left me with a growing sense of community. Voting is not a solitary activity; it is a communal activity! At the voting booth, we all let our voices be heard as we build a future together for the common good of all.

Learning that others in our community had or were making plans to get out and vote filled me with hope, Church. I am hopeful for this upcoming election. Knowing that voters are turning out to vote means that more voices will be heard! Let’s be heard, y’all! Vote today!

Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope



Remember to VOTE

Tuesday, November 3



Church "Sunshine" Person

Did you know that we have a Sunshine Person? This person serves our church community by sending cards on behalf of the church when someone is ill, lost a loved one, is facing a difficult situation, or has something to celebrate.

Nancy Sy has been our Sunshine Person for the last couple of years. If you received a card from the church for any reason, it was probably Nancy who sent it. We **Thank Her** most sincerely for the wonderful job she has done, and the time she has spent to perform this invaluable service for the church!

Nancy has decided it is time to pass this task on to someone else. Might you be the one who is willing to serve our church family in this way? If so, please let Cyndy know and we'll get you started!

General Fund Financial Summary

September 21 thru October 18

Income from Pledges & Offerings	3,089.00
Mortgage Payments	5,222.00
Other Income	55.00
Total Income	8,366.00
Total Expenses	8,966.84

November Birthdays

13 Larry Henn

If you don't see your birthday listed in the newsletter, it means that it is not in our church records. Please give it to Cyndy so we can include you in the future.

Help for Lockport's Unhoused Neighbors

Winter is a particularly difficult season for our 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 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 are part of this effort, by collecting items for these folks. With winter coming, cold weather items will be needed. 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 (new only, please)
- 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.

There is a collection box for items at the church, and also offering envelopes for cash donations.

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

Walking with Geese



Over the last few months, members of Lockport UCC joined me for Worship Walks on the Water. Together, we walked a couple miles nearly every Wednesday along the Erie Canal in Lockport. What began as a simple opportunity to get outside and exercise together offered unexpected blessings. One of those unexpected blessings was walking with the geese.

Upon return from their migration, the geese showed up in large numbers on the canal. A bunch of geese is called a gaggle, and this gaggle grew and grew and grew in number and size. In what seemed like no time at all, we were joined on our walk by baby gosling. Lots of baby gosling! The picture above was taken on one of our walks together. Week after week after week, we watched the gosling grow and grow and grow. What began as little gosling grew into full grown geese in just a few months.

From the gaggle of geese, we learned what it means to walk together as a church. On our walks, there was never a time when we saw any geese or gosling apart from the gaggle. Geese in a gaggle go everywhere together. Whether walking across the street, swimming in the canal, or flying in migration, the geese go together. This teaches us how important it is to go together as a church. Jesus taught this too, for he sent his disciples out two by two. And on his ministry travels, Jesus was almost always with a group of twelve or more disciples. Jesus did not go it alone, instead he and his followers went together in ministry.

Because the geese are always together, we witnessed the ways in which the geese in the gaggle looked out for one another. The geese protected the others, walking alongside one another, and waiting for the others to cross the path. The geese in the gaggle lived out the call to be "one another's keeper." As a church, we are invited to be one another's keeper too.

Geese leave a mark wherever they go. No matter where we walked along the canal, we were always dodging the marks (yup, I do mean all their poop) left by the geese as they spent their time on the canal. Y'all we are called to leave a mark in our community. A mark that is lasting and lifegiving to our community. As a church, what type of mark do we want to leave in our community? Of course, I do not suggest that we leave the same kind of mark as the gaggle of geese, but perhaps we can leave our mark too. A mark of compassion, goodness, and justice all around us. A mark of good trouble and holy disruption of the status quo. A mark of good news here and there and everywhere.

Church, let us learn from the geese in our lives. Gaggles of geese show us what it means to be the church. Let us be like the geese, Church. With God's help, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope