THE VINEYARD

OCTOBER 2026

LOCKPORT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Lessons From the Geese

As we enter the season of Autumn, we'll be seeing lots of changes in the nature around us. One thing we'll notice, is the flocks of geese, flying in their "V" formation, honking loudly, and heading for warmer places to spend the winter. We might be able to learn something from those flocks of geese.



As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the one behind it. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% to the range possible for a bird flying alone.

People who share a common direction and a sense of communication can get where they're going more quickly and easily because they're traveling on each other's energy.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.



If we have as much sense as geese, we'll stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go, and we'll be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to them.



When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies point position.

People, like geese, depend on each other.

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

We need to make sure our "honking" from behind is encouraging.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or is shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it's able to fly again or dies, then they launch out on their own, join another formation, or catch up with the flock.



If we learn this lesson from the geese, we'll stand by each other in difficult times as well as good.



Halloween Party!

New Member Class

All Saints
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Vote With Love

Take Action
Reject the SAVE Act

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:
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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:
October 18, 2026



Join Our Halloween Party

Friday, October 30 – 5 to 7 PM

Halloween is a fun time for folks of all ages! This year, we will again participate in the Trick or Treat on Main Street event, handing out candy bags to the kids coming to our church door.

At the same time, we will have a Halloween Party for our church folks. There will be pizza and wings to enjoy, and we hope everyone will come celebrate with us!

Costumes are optional. It adds to the fun if we dress up for the party, but if you prefer not to, please come anyway. Either way, it will be an evening of Halloween fun and fellowship!

(*We are also gratefully accepting donations of money to offset the cost of the candy bags – we expect about 1,000 kids, so we need a lot of candy bags!*)



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)



Pastor Hope Offers New Member Class

On **October 25**, Pastor Hope will hold a New Member class. If you are interested in becoming a member of Lockport UCC, please speak to Pastor Hope about it.

New Member Service

On **November 1**, our morning worship will include a service to welcome our new members.



Service of Remembrance

Sunday, November 1

Our annual All Saints service is a time to remember those members, friends, and loved ones who have passed on before us.

Names will be read in worship, as we light candles on the altar, and recall how each one brought a touch of God's light into our lives, our church, and our world.

You are invited to submit names of any loved ones or friends you would like to remember. Please submit your list of names by **October 25.** You may place it in the collection plate or send them to Cyndy by phone, text or email.

Round Table Church
Conversational Worship
Sunday, October 18

Our next Round Table Church will be on October 18, replacing our normal morning worship service that day. (You may remember the others in March and June.)

'Round The Table Church is an informal "circle" worship. In this way, there will still be song and scripture and a sermonette, but there will also be guided reflection and discussion. Pastor Hope will be leading the conversation.



Neighborhood Free Dinner for October

We will hold our next Free Dinner on **October 28.** They are served from 5:00 to 6:00 pm at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and available as take-out or eat-in.

The menu has not been determined yet, but will certainly be delicious as always. Edna will be needing helpers to prepare and serve, so if you can volunteer to help please speak to Edna.



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.** Disciple typically does a variety of multi-week series on various topics throughout the year. We are currently working on a six-week series entitled *The Bible With and Without Jesus*.

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.



CROP Hunger Walks are community-based events created to support the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

The Crop Project began in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia. The first CROP Walks took place in 1969 and 1970. Since then, CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in hundreds of communities, large and small, raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty.

Lockport's 46th Crop Hunger Walk

The CROP Walk in Lockport started in 1980, and Lockport UCC has been participating since it began – in fact it was Rev. John Ellis, pastor of this church at the time, that began the walk in Lockport! The CROP walk supports hunger programs here in our community, with **25% donated to local organizations**, and the rest used worldwide.

This year's CROP Walk for Hunger will be on **Sunday, October 25**. The walk begins at First Presbyterian Church, at 12:45pm.

Whether you want to participate in the walk or not, please consider a donation to this important ministry to alleviate hunger. We will be accepting donations at any time through **November 15.** There are offering envelopes at church, or just mail your gift to the church. Please make checks payable to **Lockport UCC**.

Happy Halloween 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



Birthdays

10 Laurel Klino
12 Cali Rae Haseley
14 Gary Budde
28 Nicolino Pellegrino

Anniversaries

10-28-72 – James & Elaine Babcock

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.

Ministry Moments



Parking cars at the Labor Day Fair Fundraiser at Epiphany UCC taught me something about ministry that was a bit unexpected, and I wanted to share it with all of you. This year, I had the opportunity to park cars on Friday, during the late-night shift (8-11pm). On this night, there is always a fireworks display and after five years of ministry at Epiphany, I finally got to see them. I do not normally volunteer for the late-night shift.

As I watched the beautiful display of fireworks, I was reminded that ministry is not always fireworks. By this I mean, ministry is made up of more ordinary moments than extraordinary moments. Y'all, it's true! Most of the time, ministry happens in the ordinary moments of life, like sending a card or a check-in text or greeting visitors into the church or sitting beside the hospital bed of a congregation member before and after a procedure or putting together the bulletin or making the coffee. This means that ministry is not always extraordinary, like a miraculous healing or a generous donation to the church or increased attendance or a group of new members or success in every ministerial endeavor.

Sometimes ministry is:

staying when all you want to do is leave
drawing near when all you want to do is pull away
reaching out when all you want to do is run away
remaining faithful in the good and the bad times

Because ministry is not always extraordinary (like fireworks), it can be tempting to search out the extraordinary. We might want to seek out the extraordinary in other places, other churches, other ministries or other experiences. But Church, ministry is faithful steadiness in the ordinary and extraordinary, in the calm and the chaos, in the conflict and the compromise, and in the miracle and the mundane.

Fireworks in ministry is exciting to post on our social media and to write about in the newsletter and to share with colleagues. But the thing that matters most to me (and I think to God) is remaining faithful in the ordinary, in the day to day and the week to week and the year to year. Let us give God thanks for the ordinary moments of ministry together. With God's help, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope







Neighbors In Need

Special Mission Offering

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

Two-thirds of the NIN offering supports ministries of justice in the UCC, including the UCC Office of Public Policy & Advocacy in Washington D.C. NIN grants additionally fund the work of local UCC congregations and partners in direct service and advocacy.

One-third supports the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM) of the UCC. There are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban congregation supported through CAIM.

We will be accepting gifts to NIN throughout the month of October. There will be special offering envelopes at the church. If you would like to make a donation, just place it in the offering plate on any Sunday, or mail it to the church. Please make checks payable to Lockport UCC.



Our Faith Our Vote Campaign

The United Church of Christ's Our Faith Our Vote Campaign is their ongoing commitment to equip you with the tools for nonpartisan faithful engagement in our democratic process.

By "voting with love" you can vote for creation, for our neighbors both here and abroad, for a just peace, for repair and reconciliation of the brokenness of our nation.

https://www.ucc.org/our-faith-our-vote/

On the website you can check your registration status, find dates for elections in your area, learn about candidates, find the polling location nearest you, and other information tools.

General Fund Financial Summary

August 24 thru

Income from Pledges & Offerings	2,972.00
Total Expenses	6,326.32

Musings from the Flock

Last month, we printed the first installment of what, we were hoping, would be a new column where we could all share our thoughts. So far, there has been no response, but we're still hoping folks might like to share.

We invite you to write up a few paragraphs sharing your thoughts for this new Column – about whatever may be on your mind, any topic you choose, and send it to Cyndy. We will share it in a future newsletter.

Struggles of a Female Pastor



"You're not a real pastor."

These were words said to me and about me on social media a few weeks ago. It all began with a post on Facebook. A request was made in Lockportians, a group created on Facebook for the community of Lockport. The request was asking for a pastor or a priest or a deacon to speak words of comfort and love at a celebration of life service scheduled to be held in two days. The woman whose life was to be celebrated was Catholic, but not an active member of any local church. Names were listed in the comment section, but no one offered to help this family.

Except me. In my comment I stated that I was a pastor in Lockport and would be willing to come and say a few words for this grieving family. A service that was to be held in two days' time. And the grieving husband told me he would be reaching out to me and thanked me for being willing to help. That is . . . until someone posted these words to me: "you're not a real pastor."

Yup, it's true. This man is what is known as a "keyboard warrior" who uses online platforms to bully others, usually under the guise of anonymity. Yet, I knew this person, and he was unashamed to spread his hate filled words online for everyone to see. Church not only is this an example of cyberbullying, but it is also a reflection of the danger and damnation that comes from bad theology and bad interpretations of scripture.

The conversation did not end with that one comment but continued with "your church is pro-sin and spreads a blasphemous false gospel. Jesus would reject you." This man chose to use an online post that was simply requesting help by and for a grieving family as his personal soapbox for spewing his hate-filled theology. I told him to save his damnation for someone else and to stop using this post as his personal soapbox.

This might surprise y'all, but I am not the only female pastor who has had these harmful words hurled at them because of being female and because of teaching and preaching a gospel of love and liberation, which was the very core of Jesus' own teaching. It literally happens all the time. This devaluing, dismissal, and defamation of women in the church is still happening in 2026!

This is why I love the United Church of Christ. Our denomination values, affirms, and celebrates the ministry of women in the church. No matter how much hate comes my way, it can never undo my call into ministry, it can never undo my ordination in the UCC, and it can never undo the ministry in the churches that I am serving now and in the future. Some might say, I am not a real pastor. But, y'all God says I am! The UCC says I am! My ordination says I am! My churches say I am! Not everyone agrees with it. Not everyone likes it. Not everyone's theology supports it. But this is who I am and what I am called to do.



The good news is this: no hate-filled keyboard warrior is going to change that anytime soon, Church! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Abundant Blessings,
Pastor Hope



The 2026 midterm elections are just weeks away. As Americans prepare to make their voices heard, we must protect access to the ballot box.

That is why we are calling on Congress to reject H.R.22, the SAVE Act. This voter-suppression measure is a solution in search of a problem: Noncitizen voting in federal elections is already illegal and exceedingly rare. Yet the bill would require Americans to produce documentary proof of citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate, to register or update their registration.

Millions of eligible citizens lack ready access to these documents. The bill would disproportionately burden married people whose names have changed, older adults, low-income and rural voters, people with disabilities, naturalized and tribal citizens, students, and unhoused people. It could also disrupt registration by mail or online, automatic and same-day registration, and community voter registration drives.

The United Church of Christ believes that every person possesses God-given dignity and every eligible citizen deserves free and fair access to the ballot. Through Our Faith, Our Vote, the UCC equips its members to participate in democracy as faithful Christian disciples and witnesses for justice. Excluding qualified voters, especially those from marginalized communities, contradicts these values.

Congress MUST protect voting rights. Tell your lawmakers to vote NO on the SAVE Act.

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.ucc.org/action-center/

~ Compassion Not Cruelty Events ~



