



United Church of Christ
MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK™

DEC. 2020 | VOL.1

The Journey

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
UCC MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

News from UCC Mental Health Network's Annual Board of Directors Meeting

Saludos!

The UCC Mental Health Network is excited to announce that at our recent Board of Directors meeting, we set forth the following goals for the coming year:

- Creation of a quarterly newsletter
- Development of videos, discussion guides, and other digital materials, covering the connection between racism, discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals, and mental health injustice. This initiative is funded through a generous 2020 UCC Genesis Grant
- Becoming and Open and Affirming ministry.

As we embark on the forthcoming year, the MHN Board asks you to hold us in prayer as we work with faith communities worldwide to create *A Just World for All*. To join us in becoming WISE with regards to mental health, substance use disorders, and other brain disorders, please reach out to us at wise@mhn-ucc.org.

Paz y bendiciones,

Jon Gilbert Martinez, M.Div.,
MHN Board Vice-Chair

Inside this Edition

Coping with the
Holidays
pg 2

Resources for Help
pg 3

Board Transitions
pg 4

WISE Church Updates
pg 5



Holiday Coping During the Pandemic

**by Jan Remer-Osborn, PhD, MDiv.
Neuropsychologist, Ordained UCC Minister**

Getting through the holidays can be difficult. Many crave the "perfect" holiday portrayed on television that never seems to happen. Increased stress with more demands on our time can overwhelm us. We are especially challenged this year with worry about our health and the likelihood that celebrations will have to be altered or cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is still possible to enjoy this holiday season, more than you thought, by taking steps to minimize the emotional distress that often appears this time of year. The following steps may be helpful:

- Avoid putting pressure on yourself by planning ahead.
- Accept that there is only so much you can do, but that you and your loved ones can still have a meaningful time.
- Take steps to insure your health. Eat nutritious meals and avoid junk food. Moderate your use of alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine.
- Nurture yourself by taking the time to do things that you enjoy and that relax you.
- Breathe deeply, get some physical exercise, and focus on the positive blessings in your life.
- Dropping off meals, or using phone calls, Facetime or Zoom to keep in touch can help us miss less the face-to-face get-togethers.

This year, more than usual, there may be an empty place at the table and the pain of grief may overtake the joy. Remember to honor those you have lost and think of how they would want you to celebrate their life. The dread of holidays is frequently worse than the day itself. Do something different to celebrate, changing up your tradition to create new memories by volunteering, donating to a children's hospital, or bringing food to the homebound. When we reach beyond our own circumstance, we can brighten our spirits doing something for others.

If emotional distress is persistent, seek support from a friend, pastor, doctor or therapist. We are here on earth to help one another. Today it can be you that needs help, tomorrow it could be me who needs to seek guidance to weather difficult times.

Take care and have a blessed holiday season.

Resources for Help



The following is a partial list of resources with trained professionals available to assist in a moment of crisis:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273 TALK (8255)

Linea Nacional De Prevencion Lifeline Del Suicidio - 1-888-628-9454

If you are hard of hearing, you can chat with a Lifeline counselor 24/7:

For TTY Users, use your preferred relay service or dial 711, then 1-800-273-8255

If you are a Veteran or service member with hearing loss, or any person concerned about someone who is, there are several ways to contact the Veterans Crisis Line:

Text with a Veterans Crisis Line responder-send a text message to 838255

Crisis Text Line-text NAMI to 741-741

National Domestic Violence Hotline-Call 800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Sexual Assault Hotline-Call 800-656-HOPE (4673)

UCC MHN Board Transitions



Averyn Payne, Ph.D.



Kyle Ingram, MSW

The UCC MHN Board kicked off our annual meeting by celebrating the many gifts that two of our departing members shared with us the last few years. The outgoing members are Rev. Dr. Rachel Keefe, who served as our vice-chair, and Rev. Hannah Campbell Gustafson, who served as our treasurer. Though they have left their official positions, they will not travel far from their work with the UCC MHN, as they will continue to be mental health advocates.

At the same meeting we welcomed our two newest board members:

Averyn Payne, PhD., began their first year in Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School in fall 2020, the same time they joined the Board. Averyn is curious about the ways faith communities can be places of transformation and radical welcoming to those with mental health challenges.

Kyle Ingram, MSW, brings more than 7 years of experience working in public policy at the intersection of disability, social justice, and economic inequality. He also served on the WISE team for the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ. Kyle lives in central Indiana with his wife.



United Church of Christ
MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK™

www.mhn-ucc.org/donate



Together
we give.

SAVE THE DATE
Dec 1, 2020

GIVING
TUESDAY



UCC Mental Health Network

Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

WISE Church Check In

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ, the eighth church to become W.I.S.E., recently completed a yearlong program title *Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old*. Although initially planned as in person presentations, the church successfully transitioned to Zoom to finish the programming. Experts in various fields were invited to discuss various aspects of aging gracefully, including what to expect from our bodies as we age, brain health, and aging and mental health. This series was so successful that plans are underway to continue it in 2021.



WISE Churches Update

We are pleased to announce that the following churches voted to become WISE in 2020.

First Congregational UCC, Indianapolis, IN

Desert Palm UCC, Tempe, AZ

Grant Fork UCC, Highland, IL

First Plymouth Congregational UCC, Englewood, CO

Lynnhurst UCC, Louisville, KY

For more information on becoming W.I.S.E., please visit the UCC Mental Health Network website @ www.mhn-ucc.org, or reach out to us at wise@mhn-ucc.org.