



MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness



UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

March 2023, Volume 8, Issue 3

REFLECTION:

A stroll outdoors finds spring bulbs pushing through the ground (or already in full bloom). Trees are budding leaves, daffodils are nodding, and the spring peepers are chirping at morning's dawn and dusk. We too are changing in this new season. As we enter the season of Lent, may it be a time of discovery, exploration, reflection, and balance.



A TIMELY HEALTH TIP

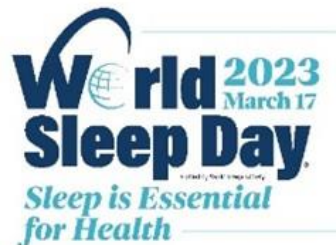
Pollen season 2023 has begun! The "leaf out" process has started earlier this spring due to a warming climate. This has resulted in plants producing higher levels of carbon dioxide which results in plants producing more pollen. A variety of trees - oaks, cedar, pines, and elms - contribute to pollen counts. Higher levels of pollen may correlate with worsening allergy and asthma symptoms. The American Lung Association offers tips for [managing Spring Allergies and Asthma](#).

WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS

Sleep is Essential

On Sunday, March 12, 2023, at 2:00 AM we will change our clocks and "spring forward" one hour! The resulting loss of one hour's sleep is a good time to talk about the importance of sleep. The American Heart Association (AHA) [published an online study](#) October 19, 2022 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* assessing sleep in relation to cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk. Sleep duration of 7 hours or more but less than 9 hours nightly was considered "ideal" by this study. Based on the results, AHA now considers sleep duration an "essential component for ideal heart and brain health" and has added sleep duration to its checklist called [Life's Essential 8](#).

[World Sleep Day](#) reports that sleep is Essential for Health. This organization is issuing a global call to action to promote sleep health awareness activities on and around Friday, March 17, 2023. This initiative, hosted by the World Sleep Society (WSS), offers research, podcasts, other resources, and a [toolkit](#) to raise awareness of the impact of sleep on overall health.



LINKS TO THIS MONTH'S NATIONAL HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS

Follow these links to find information you can use for worship bulletin inserts, bulletin board displays, and newsletter articles.

For March:

- [National Nutrition](#) Month
- [National Developmental Disabilities Awareness](#) Month
- [Multiple Sclerosis Awareness](#) Month

For Those Who Like to Plan Ahead Here Are Some links for April:

- [National Minority Health](#) Month
 - [National Autism Acceptance](#) Month
 - [National Stress Awareness](#) Month
 - [National Child Abuse Prevention](#) Month
 - [National Parkinson's Awareness](#) Month
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NATIONAL UCC TOPICS

UCC Creation Justice webinar: March 1, 2023, 7:00 – 8:30 pm [The Ants and the Grasshopper](#)

UCC General Synod: June 30 – July 4, 2023

[Registration](#) is now open.

Exhibits: As in past Synods, UCC Wellness Ministries will have an exhibit that assists in the understanding and organizing this circle of care within congregations.



UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM

Next Wellness Ministries Leadership Meeting is March 9, 2023. Would you like to raise a question or pass along a recommendation to your UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team? E-mail wellnessministries@ucc.org and make your request.



The **UCC Wellness Ministries Toolkit** is in the final stages of review. It will be posted on the UCC website in the next few weeks. This innovative approach shares resources for developing and sustaining wellness ministries programs in local churches. Section 1 explains why we in the UCC have Wellness Ministries. Section 2 describes how to establish and grow Wellness Ministries. Section 3 offers exemplars that describe programs, the group served, reason for development and implementation, evaluation, next steps for programming, and reliable resources available through weblinks with description of what they offer.



KEEP CONNECTED



Visit our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages: Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

An invitation from the Editors:

- Do you have something you want to share with colleagues?
- Do you have an innovative way you've provided wellness ministries?
- Have a question about health and wellness ministries?

Let us hear about it – you could be featured in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

Contact us at wellnessministries@ucc.org



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