Resources in Support of Sabbath

(This is a dynamic document and a living resource. If you have additional resources to suggest, please be in touch with Alliance of ACMs or Council of Conference Ministers leadership.)

*Oh, feed me this day, Holy Spirit, with*

*the fragrance of the fields and the*

*freshness of the oceans which you have*

*made, and help me to hear and to hold*

*in all dearness those exacting and wonderful*

*words of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying:*

*“Follow me.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

## Worship Resources

UCC [Worship Ways](https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/local-church/worship-resources/worship-ways-2/) and [Sermon Seeds](https://www.ucc.org/what-we-believe/worship/sermon-seeds/) are available for local church use:

Worship Ways provides original liturgies written in English and in Spanish. Sermon Seeds is an exegetical reflection to spark a sermon that lay leaders often use when asked to fill in for their pastor on vacation.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay, UCC Minister for Worship and Theology, suggests reliving your pastor’s “greatest hits!” In other words, you might reuse sermons from the pastor that really resonated with the congregation. That way, it’s still a good message, contextualized for your particular community, and it reinforces the connection between your pastor and the congregation

## Devotionals and Online Retreats

[Sign up for Abolition Advent Reflection Emails](https://jointhemovementucc.org/abolition-advent-calendar/)

For many of us, the word “abolition” might have mostly historical connotations. We think of Abolition as the movement to free enslaved Africans, brought into life with the Emancipation Proclamation. But, if we take seriously Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney’s insight that,”we are still trying to do Church in the midst of enslaving paradigms,” then we also have the opportunity to explore what abolition can mean to us here and now.

[Jan Richardson’s Illuminated Advent Online Retreat](https://www.janrichardson.com/adventretreat)

In a chaotic time, the Illuminated retreat will offer a space of elegant simplicity. Intertwining reflection, art, music, and community, this four-week online retreat provides a distinctive opportunity to journey through Advent and Christmas in contemplation and conversation with others along the way. This online retreat is not about adding one more thing to your holiday schedule. It is about helping you find spaces for reflection that draw you deep into a season that shimmers with mystery and possibility.

## Well-Being Assessment

Rev. Elizabeth Dilley, Minister and Team Leader for the UCC MESA Team, recently shared this [**well-being assessment**](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5df250d9f72ab0329c83a252/t/61818f1af6692455e6c0b1b4/1635880730712/ALCBF+Breathe+workshop+well-being+tool.pdf)**.** Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed of Searching for the Called developed it based on Martin Seligman’s PERMA model (positive emotions, sense of engagement, health of relationships, overarching sense of meaning, and feelings of accomplishment). MESA was given permission to share it broadly. We invite you to take the assessment and consider what steps you might take to increase your well-being. Dilley writes, *We know many of the things that help advance well-being (rest and sabbath, communities of practice, spiritual direction, coaching, therapy, art/music/sports/nature, more rest and sabbath, prayer).* Please let your ACM know if there are ways we can support you in accessing more of those resources.

## Books and Resources

[**Rest as Resistance**](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/tricia-hersey/rest-is-resistance/9780316365536/) **book recommended by Rev. Dr. Chris Davies.**

Excerpt:

*Our collective rest will not be easy. All of culture is collaborating for us not to rest. I understand this deeply. We are sleep-deprived because the systems view us as machines, but bodies are not machines. Our bodies are a site of liberation. We are divine and our rest is divine. There is synergy, interconnectedness, and deep communal healing within our rest movement. I believe rest, sleep, naps, daydreaming, and slowing down can help us all wake up to see the truth of ourselves. Rest is a healing portal to our deepest selves. Rest is care. Rest is radical.*

*We must stand and lay firmly in the space of creating a life filled with rest and radical care, even amid oppression. Rest Is Resistance is our tagline and mantra. Our call. Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy. Both these toxic systems refuse to see the inherent divinity in human beings and have used bodies as a tool for production, evil, and destruction for centuries. Grind culture has made us all human machines, willing and ready to donate our lives to a capitalist system that thrives by placing profits over people. The Rest Is Resistance movement is a connection and a path back to our true nature. We are stripped down to who we really were before the terror of capitalism and white supremacy. We are enough. We are divine.*

*If we are not resting, we will not make it. I need us to make it. We must thrive.* (pp.7-8)

[**Living the Sabbath**](https://www.parable.com/product/9781587431654) **book by Norman Wirzba and Wendell Berry (foreward)**

Excerpt:

*From a scriptural point of view, Sabbath observance is a matter of life and death. …[If we fast forward in Exodus,] we are told that Sabbath observance reflects a covenant between the nation and God, a covenant testifying to God’s creative and refreshing power.[[2]](#footnote-2) …Indeed, Sabbath observance is one of the key practices that will set Israel apart from all other nations.* (p. 30)

In their book, Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle, Drs. Emily and Amelia Nagoski

explain that stress is our bodies’ psychological and neurological reaction to threats. When the

brain activates a stress response, it sets off hormonal and neurological changes that affect our

entire body, in order to help us survive. While this is an effective evolutionary strategy for

dealing with rampaging wild animals, it is much less helpful in dealing with the chronic stressors

of the modern era. Interestingly, their research found that simply removing the stressor is not

enough to solve the problem. (That is, renewal leave alone is important, but not sufficient.) The

body needs to physically process the stress – what the Nagoskis call “completing the stress

cycle” – before it can be fully released. They found that there are 7 ways our bodies process

stress and move back into health: physical activity, breath work, deep connection with friends

and loved ones, belly laughter, crying, affectionate touch, and creative expression.

## Counseling

Individuals enrolled in the UCC Pension Boards Health Care Plan have access to the [Member Assistance Program + Work/Life Program, or MAP+Work/Life](https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/menu-news-sep/latest-news/1038-pbucc-introduces-the-new-map-work-life-benefit), offered through West Health Advocate Solutions. This is a no-cost benefit that provides confidential access to a Licensed Professional Counselor or Work/Life Specialist. Through in-person visits, and unlimited, confidential phone consultations, these specialists can walk members through life’s temporary setbacks.

## Financial Aid

Eligible congregations may apply to the [Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program](https://www.cts.edu/cpe/clergy-renewal/) for grants of up to $50,000 each to support a renewal program for their pastor. Up to $15,000 of the grant may be used for congregational expenses associated with the renewal program. Details and application materials for the 2023 programs are now available.

[Emergency financial assistance](https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/art-ma-landing/i-need-help/296-what-assistance-is-available) may be available through the UCC Pension Boards as one-time grants to assist with unforeseen circumstances that create financial demands. To apply for an Emergency Grant, contact your Conference Minister, or the Director of Ministerial Assistance at the Pension Boards by email at ministerialassistance@pbucc.org or by calling 1.800.642.6543, ext. 2716.

**The Southwest Conference** also may be able to offer financial assistance to our clergy for mental and emotional care on a case by case basis. Contact the Acting Conference Minister.

1. [[i]](https://ctucc-my.sharepoint.com/personal/ogawaty_sneucc_org/Documents/Clergy%20Wellness%20Programs%20SNEUCC/Clergy%20Wellness%20Pastoral%20Letter%205.11.2022.docx#_ednref1) Mary Oliver, “Six Recognitions of the Lord,” *Thirst*,2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Exodus 31:12-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)