

## July 11

**Deuteronomy 32:1-10**  
**Romans 15:14-21**  
**Psalms 119:105-112**

**Jacob, personification of Israel**  
**Sanctified by the Holy Spirit**  
**Your word is a lamp to my feet**

**A** gay teenager visited our online community at i.UCC.org to find an Open and Affirming congregation. The problem: his parents wanted to worship with him in a congregation that welcomes LGBT members, but the nearest open and affirming congregation was an hour's drive from their home. So, for a time, they worshiped and experienced fellowship in the UCC's virtual community.

But i.UCC (pronounced eye-dot-UCC) is designed to support, not replace, our local congregations. A regular i.UCC user who knew the community where the family lived recommended a nearby congregation: it was not officially ONA, but the pastor was sympathetic. After meeting the pastor, the family decided to join. The teen is now active in the church's youth group.

Online community is a creative way to engage seekers—and encourage them to consider membership in a UCC congregation. It's also a place where local church members can meet seekers and join them in real-time daily prayer, lectionary-based Bible study, and opportunities for spiritual growth.

### PRAYER:

*O God of mercy, in Jesus Christ you freed us from sin and death, and by your Holy Spirit you nourish our mortal bodies with life. Plant us now in good soil, that our lives may flower in righteousness and peace. Amen.*

## July 12

**Isaiah 2:1-4**  
**John 12:44-50**  
**Psalms 119:105-112**

**Jacob, collective name of Israel**  
**I have come as light into the world**  
**Your word is a lamp to my feet**

**M**embers of the Huntsville, AL, United Church of Christ Young at Heart group sponsor a program to show young men and women in service to their country that they are not forgotten. We believe they should know how grateful we are for the sacrifice they make to keep our country safe.

We ask the congregation to donate items that we send as small gifts of appreciation to as many soldiers as we can reach. Items are donated by everyone who finds something that might be useful, tasty, or even fun. Sometimes we get requests for specific food or snack items.

We obtained the names of eight service personnel – three in Iraq and five in Afghanistan (three men and two women). As personnel return home, we obtain names of other soldiers to receive our “care packages.” A small group of women meet periodically to pack the items for shipping. Everyone is encouraged to take a package and mail it. This effort for these wonderful men and women is one way we “flower” in righteousness.

### PRAYER:

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## SUNDAY, JULY 6

E I G H T H S U N D A Y A F T E R P E N T E C O S T



## Sacred Rest

**Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67**  
**Psalms 45:10-17**  
**Romans 7:15-25a**  
**Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

**Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah**  
**God has anointed you**  
**The struggle within the self**  
**The yoke of discipleship**

**S**ilver Lake Conference Center, home of the Outdoor Ministries of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, provides several opportunities for individuals and groups to participate

in specialized programs of Christian Education and Spiritual Renewal each year. We invite young people from throughout Connecticut to meet others and to learn from these programs as they develop their faith and build relationships.

It's a place to connect, make deep friendships, feel accepted for who you really are, embrace the outdoors, play, pray, create real community, engage in leadership and service experiences, and take risks; emotionally, spiritually, and physically in a safe place... under the umbrella of Outdoor Ministry.

We invite you to come, be in community with us for a weekend or more. Experience God's grace among the trees, overlooking the lake, beside the cascading stream, or abiding in the garden. Remember how to play, laugh, and sip mugs of hot cocoa beside a warm fire with friends and kindred spirits.

Silver Lake invites you to come and receive sacred rest at their Conference Center: enrich them with your journey, and enjoy this community of spirit!

### PRAYER:

*We give you thanks, O God of compassion, for the salvation you have revealed to the little ones through Christ Jesus, our wisdom and strength. Teach us to take up his gentle yoke and find rest from our burdens and cares. Amen.*

## July 7

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Genesis 27:30-46

Romans 1:18-25

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Esau blessed; Jacob escapes Esau

The guilt of humankind

Song of Love

Unconditional love is a kind of sacred rest that we can experience here on Earth. Unfortunately, not everyone encounters this grace during their lifetime. The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Berkley, CA, through their Racial/Ethnic Roundtable Project, has helped to create the Network on Religious Justice for Asian and Pacific Islander LGBT People. One of the Network's many projects is a documentary and study guide titled, *In God's House: Asian American Lesbian and Gay Families in the Church*. With screenings in the United States, Japan, Taiwan and other locations, the film helps to break the silence around sexuality in Asian American churches through honest, thought-provoking stories from church families. Visit the Network's website at [www.nrj-api-lgbt.org](http://www.nrj-api-lgbt.org) for more information.

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## July 8

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Genesis 29:1-14

Romans 3:1-8

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Jacob meets Rachel

The faithfulness of God

Song of Love

The waters of the Jordan, where John the Baptist anointed Jesus, are not accessible to many who live in the West Bank. Some 215,000 West Bank Palestinians are without a network of running water. Marla Schrader, a resident of the occupied territories for ten years, and Global Ministries missionary serving Palestinian partner Jean Zaru, clerk of the Ramallah Friends Meeting, says that Israel leaves Palestinians with less than 20% of their own water resources, siphoning water away through wells and diagonal drilling. After acquiring the water through these tactics, Mekorot, the Israeli water company, sells the water back to Palestinians at higher prices than what is charged to Israeli citizens. The cost of water becomes a heavy financial burden. When will justice roll like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream?

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## July 9

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Genesis 29:31-35

John 13:1-17

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Birth of Jacob and Leah's children

Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Song of Love

Health Ministry at the United Church of Christ in Huntsville, AL is the promotion of health, healing and wholeness as a mission of the church to its members and the community we serve. The health ministry was initiated by the late Doris Heaman, a founding member and honored nurse who served those in need for many decades here in Huntsville. Our memories of Doris continue to inspire our determination to tend to our congregation's health needs and concerns.

Many of our members have had direct experience with common mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder, major depression, and schizophrenia, either from personal experience or as loving caregivers. The United Church of Huntsville has hosted the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill's Family-to-Family training, with participation from involved members of the congregation. Understanding and embracing of those dealing with these difficult problems is a significant mission of our church. If you are facing such challenges, be assured that you are welcome here.

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## July 10

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Exodus 3:1-6

Romans 2:12-16

Psalms 119:105-112

The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

God judges the secret thoughts

Your word is a lamp to my feet

The St. Paul Food Pantry is an outreach mission of St. Paul Church UCC in Belleville, IL. It is sponsored by the Mission and Community Service Board of St. Paul Church. Pastor Kuether says the Food Pantry is a service by St. Paul United Church of Christ to the neighborhood and to the Belleville community. The Food Pantry is intended as a help to people, but not as a sole means of support. Consequently records are kept of persons who have received food, and assistance to them is limited to one time per month. To learn more about the Food Pantry at St. Paul Church UCC, please visit their website at [www.stpaulucc.org/FoodPantry/Food\\_Pantry.htm](http://www.stpaulucc.org/FoodPantry/Food_Pantry.htm).

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