

**THE OPIOID CRISIS MISSION GROUP**  
**of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ**  
**September, 2017**

**WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE ARE NEEDED**

The Opioid Crisis Mission Group of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) got its start in May, 2017. Its members are drawn from UCC churches around the state. The group formed in response to our state's devastating opioid epidemic. New Hampshire is currently second among all U.S. states in per-capita opioid overdose deaths.

**Why a church-related group?** Most churches in our state include individuals and families touched by opioid addiction. As Christians, we believe we are called to support and sustain our affected church members and neighbors, but most of us are not well-prepared to do so. Few of our clergy or parishioners have been trained to understand addiction and recovery. Further, the social stigma surrounding addiction makes it hard for families to reveal their struggles. Often the church only learns what's been happening when someone dies.

In this crisis, the challenge for every church (as for every other institution in our state) is to overcome stigma and become a source of help and healing. On behalf of the state's 132 UCC churches, the Opioid Mission Group is taking on this challenge.

**What has the Opioid Crisis Mission Group done so far?** At its first meeting in May, 2017, participants decided that the group's short-term goals are educational: to educate ourselves and our own churches about the opioid crisis and responses to it, including sources of treatment and recovery; and to educate the state's other UCC congregations. Through education, we hope to improve the care, healing and hope our churches can offer to members, friends and neighbors. Currently, we are mapping out our educational projects for the coming year.

**Who can join the Opioid Crisis Mission Group?** Any member of a New Hampshire United Church of Christ congregation can join. Currently, clergy and laity from 10 of the state's UCC churches are participating. If you don't belong to a UCC church you can also join if you want to work toward the same goals and are comfortable being part of a UCC mission group.

Membership means attending monthly meetings and actively contributing to the work of the group. The group meets one Saturday morning a month, 10 am-12 noon, at one of the churches our members attend. Members take turns hosting the meetings and providing coffee and snacks.

**For further information** please contact Rev. Susan Grant Rosen, temporary chairperson, at [susangr3@gmail.com](mailto:susangr3@gmail.com); cell 603-203-5306.

The Opioid Crisis Mission Group is one of seven issue-oriented Mission Groups operating under the aegis of the Justice and Witness Ministry of the New Hampshire Conference, UCC. To learn more, please go to <http://www.nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/justice-witness-ministry>.