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The Heartbeat

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“In the Spirit of Christ’s love, the ministry of United Church of Christ Homes is to provide care and service to elders through acts of love and compassion.”

UCC Homes invites you to visit our new website at www.ucc-homes.org or scan the QR Code below and please share with friends!



United Church of Christ Homes

A place to be yourself and celebrate your life



A Message from UCC Homes President and CEO Meredith Schell Fields

At United Church of Christ Homes, we are committed to serving older adults with love and compassion. As a not-for-profit, faith-based organization, we are entrusted with valuable resources—time, talent, and finances—that must be managed with great care. One of the most meaningful ways we live out this responsibility is through employee stewardship.

Employee stewardship is about more than fulfilling job responsibilities. It reflects the understanding that each member of our team is a caretaker of the gifts entrusted to this ministry. Every action, decision, and interaction—whether providing care, preparing a meal, maintaining our grounds, or offering a kind word—contributes to the well-being of our residents and to the strength of our mission.

Just as we ask our employees to serve as good stewards, we are equally committed to investing in them. That means providing opportunities for professional growth, supporting work-life balance, and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration. Central to that commitment is our focus on creating a positive and supportive workplace environment—a place where employees feel valued, encouraged, and equipped to thrive. When our team members are cared for, they in turn can provide the highest level of care and service to our residents.

As CEO, I am deeply grateful for the dedication our employees bring each day. Their commitment transforms work into ministry, reminding us that stewardship is not simply about preserving resources, but also about investing in ways that uplift lives and honor our faith-based driven mission.

Together, through faithful stewardship—of and for our employees—we will continue to create a community where residents and staff alike feel valued, supported, and inspired.

To donate now to UCC Homes, please visit our website at www.ucc-homes.org and click on the Make a Donation button at the bottom of the home page.

Resident Spotlight on Kindred Place at Annville

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

“There’s no place like home,” and Mrs. Dorothy Allison, resident at Kindred Place at Annville, believes that true belonging and comfort are found in family. As Mrs. Allison warmly welcomed me into her lovely apartment, my eyes were drawn to a gallery of family photos -- the focal point of her home.

She shared that she was born into a family led by a mother she describes as a saint. Directing me to a framed photo of her beautiful mother, she began her birth story, “In 1932, my mother delivered me by herself in a home with no electricity and no running water. She was a very special lady who raised six children with very modest means.”

When Mrs. Allison’s older siblings would go off to school, she cried so much that her mother decided to send her to school at just five years old. After completing seventh grade, Mrs. Allison would have been the only eighth grader in the one-room schoolhouse, so the teacher suggested she take an aptitude test. She scored so well that she advanced directly to ninth grade. She entered Jonestown High School at age 12 and graduated at just 16.

It was in those halls that she met her future husband, Alfred “Jack” Allison. He was a year ahead of her in school, but their paths crossed as they both sang in the choir. Their shared love of music continued throughout their marriage, as they often sang duets together at their church. Married in 1952, the Allisons raised three children -- Susan, John, and Sally. Although Susan has since passed, she left behind three precious granddaughters, bringing the total of granddaughters to six. Mrs. Allison also delights in her great-granddaughter, Miya.

Before marriage, Mrs. Allison worked at the Hershey factory, operating a kiss-wrapping machine. She later attended Hershey Junior College and was promoted to an office position with Hershey. After her children began school, Mrs. Allison became a librarian at East Hanover Elementary School, a position she held for 17 years. She treasured her time with the students, describing them as both loving and respectful. Though she does not read as much as she once did, Mrs. Allison still enjoys a good mystery by one of her favorite authors, Mary Higgins Clark.

In addition to finding comfort and joy in her family, Mrs. Allison’s faith has been her steady foundation. A framed quote on her kitchen table reads, “*Nothing can happen today that the Lord and I cannot handle.*” Her faith has carried her through many challenges and bestowed countless blessings throughout her 93 years.

The Allisons moved to Kindred Place after hearing glowing reviews from friends and family who already lived there. Sadly, Mr. Allison passed away in 2023 and is dearly missed, but Mrs. Allison’s faith continues to sustain her. She has made good friends among the residents and participates in many activities and events. In a heartwarming discovery, she learned that one of her fellow residents is her second cousin — found through conversation about their shared Lickdale, PA roots.

Her granddaughter, Amanda, now lives in the home where the Allisons raised their family. Mrs. Allison still goes “home” when she visits her. Like another Dorothy (from Oz), Mrs. Allison even has her own pair of sparkling ruby slippers -- compliments of Amanda who told her that now she can travel to Oz...but can always come home!

For Mrs. Allison, there truly is no place like home – whether surrounded by her loving relatives or her caring Kindred Place family.



Mrs. Dorothy Allison

Volunteer Focus on Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

A love of history was instilled in Mr. Zach Wesley, volunteer at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, from an early age. Growing up in southeastern Kentucky, he relished the stories shared by his grandparents and great-grandfather, especially those connected to the Civil War battlefield in nearby Pulaski County. Faith was also central in his upbringing. His great-grandfather taught Sunday School for more than 60 years. In an interesting blend of history and faith, Zach is a seventh or eighth-generation relative of John Wesley, co-founder of the Methodist movement – a fact he shares with a smile as he admits he is not Methodist himself but attends both Catholic and Episcopalian services.

Always possessing a shared volunteer ethos for as long as he can remember, Zach recalls years spent assisting with Operation Christmas Child and delivering meals to the elderly through his church's outreach ministries. During his high school summers, he volunteered at the local Civil War museum. It came as no surprise when he chose to attend Gettysburg College, majoring in History and Anthropology. While active in Christian campus ministries, Zach also carved out time to participate in reenactments of the American Civil War, WWI, and later a Viking Battle. Wielding a round metal shield and learning how to build a shield wall during the Viking reenactment remains one of his coolest memories.

Seeking to build on his undergraduate studies, Zach moved to the United Kingdom to earn a master's degree in Medieval Studies at the University of York. Living in a flat in York's ancient city center, he was captivated each day by the historic landmarks, some visible for over 2,000 years, along his walk to class. On days when the Archbishop was visiting the York Minster or hosting city events, Zach's usual route would be closed, occasionally making him late to class, but adding to the charm of his experience living in a place steeped in history so different from his life in southeastern Kentucky.

Zach is now an adjunct professor at Harrisburg Area Community College, where he teaches English Composition and World Literature. While he follows the core goals of each course, he delights in introducing students to great works -- from Gilgamesh to Shakespeare. Looking ahead, he aspires to pursue a doctorate in Medieval Studies.

A regular volunteer at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, Zach devoted several months during the summer of 2025 to planning and leading the weekly worship services and Bible Study both at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home and Thornwald Home, during their search for a new chaplain. These months were especially rewarding as he listened to the residents' questions, which often guided his message during worship. Whether his is assisting with baking, transporting residents to musical events, leading Bible Study, or giving talks on the Battle of Gettysburg, Zach most values the conversations he shares with residents and the chance to learn from their life experiences and perspectives on history.

A self-described bookworm, Zach's favorite author is J.R.R. Tolkien, followed closely by C.S. Lewis. Those who know him often describe him as "always dressed up." In homage to his grandfather, who dressed traditionally every day, Zach wears a suit and tie most of the time. He shared that he LOVES extremely spicy foods. A proud moment for Zach was finishing an exceptionally spicy hot vindaloo curry at a well-known Indian restaurant in the U.K., a feat none of his friends could match. The restaurant owner offered the perfect complement, truly a badge of honor, "You can handle the heat!"



Mr. Zach Wesley

Meet a Resident of Kindred Place at Harrisburg

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Over the years, research has shown that music can evoke memories, stir emotions, and foster meaningful connections -- whether through listening, singing, playing an instrument, or dancing. For Mr. & Mrs. Tony (Carol) Dauchess, residents of Kindred Place at Harrisburg, dancing together at his 21st birthday party became the first stop in a long and fulfilling life. In 2025, they joyfully celebrated 60 years!

In a beautiful article they shared with guests at their 60th anniversary party, they wrote that once Mrs. Dauchess said “YES” to their first dance, they have been dancing ever since. Their partnership extends far beyond the dance floor, rooted in a deep love for their family and a strong commitment to community.

They are extremely proud of their son and daughter and their spouses, and their six wonderful grandchildren. Mr. & Mrs. Dauchess supported their children’s dreams and were very involved in the many sports and activities their kids pursued. Today, their grandchildren continue to receive that same unwavering love and support.

Giving back to the community has been a constant throughout their six decades together. Mr. Dauchess, former Operations Controller for the Hershey Company for 33 years, traveled the world as a key problem-solver. Mrs. Dauchess shared her creative gifts as a floral designer at Pealer’s Flowers for 20 years and later worked in the Hershey Company test kitchen. Together, they dedicated their time, talent, and energy into improving life for others. Among many fundraisers, they helped organize a major chicken BBQ sale benefiting the children at the Milton Hershey School. An avid fly fisherman, Mr. Dauchess also volunteered for over 50 years to teach kids in the community how to fish. He continues to write articles and give presentations for local groups and businesses.

The couple has long been active members of the American Legion and Kiwanis Club. Mrs. Dauchess created extensive yearbooks for the Kiwanis – each a yearlong labor of love. Mr. Dauchess received the Legion of Honor award, recognizing his exemplary service to community and humanity. Their volunteerism extended into their church, sports boosters, and scouting programs.

They discovered Kindred Place through their daughter, whose neighbor was a resident and loved living here. Although leaving their home was difficult, the Dauchesses reconnected with people from their past as well as formed many new friendships at Kindred Place. They were most surprised about the fantastic meals served in the dining room. Musical entertainment ranks high on their list of events at Kindred Place in addition to chair exercises, puzzles, Bible study and working in their garden box.



Mr. & Mrs. Dauchess love to provide a festive area for the kids who trick-or-treat at Kindred Place.

True to their warm nature, they make it a point to sit with different residents at each meal. They also sparked a new musical tradition --singing “Hallelujah” with a few fellow music lovers around mealtimes. A conversation with them always includes a kind word, yet another way they express love to others.

Patience, understanding, and a good sense of humor have been key ingredients in their long marriage. As they embrace their special song, “Can’t Help Falling in Love with You” by Elvis Presley, Mr. and Mrs. Dauchess will keep on dancing through life, hand in hand.

Cold Weather Safety

By Tempest Gagnon, Director of Clinical Services and Education

Older adults sometime do not recognize when their body is becoming too cold. Chronic conditions such as Diabetes, Thyroid problems, Parkinson's disease, and Arthritis may contribute to not realizing you are getting too cold. Diabetes may reduce normal blood flow that normally provides warmth. Thyroid issues may affect your ability to maintain a normal body temperature. Both Parkinson's disease and Arthritis can make it harder to layer your clothing to keep warm.

No matter one's age, being aware of cold weather hazards and precautions can be beneficial and could save your life or the life of a loved one.

❄️ **Hypothermia** is when one's body temperature gets too low. Signs of hypothermia include unclear thinking, sleepiness, feeling angry, cold feet and hands, puffy face, pale skin, shivering, and slow or slurred speech. These symptoms can progress to a slow heartbeat, slow breathing, loss of consciousness, and eventually death. Hypothermia can be life threatening so call 911, go inside for a warm drink, wrap up in a blanket or add layers of warm clothing.

❄️ **Frostbite** is injury to one's skin caused by temperatures below freezing. Frostbite can lead to a loss of feeling and color to hands, feet, nose, and ears and those areas may be red or painful. To decrease the risk of frostbite, protect exposed skin prior to going outside by wearing appropriate clothing – hat, scarf, gloves, warm socks, and good shoes or boots. If you experience symptom of frostbite, go inside if able. Notify your physician if symptoms do not resolve or get worse.

❄️ **Falls** are also a winter hazard. Stay inside if weather conditions are poor. If you must go outside, wear non-skid rubber-soled low-heeled footwear.



Following simple but important tips for keeping warm can help one avoid winter weather hazards. Set your thermostat to at least 68 degrees. Temperatures of 60 to 65 degrees can lead to hypothermia in some older adults. Place a rolled towel in front of doors to keep out drafts. Keep window blinds and curtains closed. Layer clothing on cold days and wear socks and slippers. Have throw blankets available. When you go to bed use extra covers and consider wearing a head cover. Eating enough to maintain your weight and limiting alcohol (*as alcohol can make you lose body heat*) also are helpful to stay warm.

Older adults may be more vulnerable to cold weather because certain health conditions can affect body temperature awareness and mobility. Understanding the signs of hypothermia and frostbite, dressing appropriately, and taking precautions to prevent falls can help protect your health and safety during cold winter weather.



United Church of Christ Homes

30 N. 31st Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011



UCC Homes

30 N. 31st Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011
(717) 303-1502
(717) 303-1607 FAX
www.ucc-homes.org

Community Locations

The Lebanon Valley Home
550 East Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-4467

Thornwald Home
442 Walnut Bottom Road
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 249-4118

Ephrata Manor
99 Bethany Road
Ephrata, PA 17522
(717) 738-4940

Kindred Place at Annville
One Kindred Place
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-5572

Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home
1000 West South Street
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 245-2187

Kindred Place at Harrisburg
4700 Oakhurst Blvd.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 657-7900

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