

Weekly Connection

For the Week of June 4, 2017 - June 10, 2017
Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One in the Body of Christ

This past week, many in the Christian Church observed and celebrated the Ascension. The ascension is the departure of Christ from Earth into the presence of God. The well-known narrative in Acts 1 takes place 40 days after the Resurrection. As it is told in the book of Acts, Jesus, in the company of the disciples, is taken up in their sight.



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Pray for...

Prayer list for
June 4 - June 10, 2017
Churches & Pastors

- Belleville Christ UCC, Pastor
Jon (Lisa) Tinge, Supply
Pastor

Once again, Jesus promises the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit by which his mission and ministry will continue and will bring forth the birth of the Church. As Jesus ascends, a cloud hides him from their view, and two men in white appear and ask the disciples "Why do you stand looking into the sky?" These messengers of God not only assure the disciples Jesus has returned to heaven, but they also remind the disciples that their work is just now beginning.

As I have been reflecting on the beauty and meaning of the ascension story, I am reminded of an interview that author and pastor Darrell Johnson once did with the organization "Work of the People" in which he talked about the importance of the ascension.

He begins with sharing an observation his friend Richard Halverson once made. Richard Halverson was a Presbyterian pastor, and at one time, he was the chaplain of the United States Senate. He was known for saying pithy things on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Darrell Johnson said he was inspired by this observation from Halverson,
*"Christianity begins on Palestinian soil as a relationship with a person--with Jesus.
It moves on to Greek soil and it becomes a philosophy.
It moves on to Roman soil and it becomes an institution.
It moves on to British soil and it becomes a culture.
It moves on to American soil and it becomes an enterprise."*

Darrell, in explaining how Halverson's observation made him think differently about the Ascension of Jesus, went on to say this, *"I think that enterprise is getting in the way. We want to turn this into something we can package. Getting some nice neat books and something like that. Get it out to people and that is somehow going to attract the culture. I think we need to go back to Palestinian soil. It's about a person and the relationship with the person. I'm coming up with a new definition for the church. We will never have one good definition of the church, but here is one to try on for our time...'we are ordinary broken human beings gathered around the ascended Jesus to share in his life and to be about his business in the world.'"*

I wonder if we all might be challenged to stop and consider what it was that drew people to Jesus. If you read the Gospels, it seems clear people did not flock to a philosophy, a culture, an institution or an enterprise. In fact, at first they did not even flock to Jesus for his teachings. Sometimes the crowds and even the disciples themselves did not have a clue what Jesus was really teaching. In fact, some people from an ordinary person in the crowd to the prominent religious leader did not like what Jesus was teaching.

Regardless, people flocked to Jesus. What was it about Jesus that drew people in? I believe it was his care and his compassion. Many times in the Gospels, we read of Jesus, being "moved with compassion" towards the multitudes that had gathered to be in his presence or the individuals who came to him seeking wholeness and healing.



I believe Jesus expressed a care and compassion in a way that other people do not. A care, which says, "I am here for you. There is no agenda. I am not trying to prove something." I believe people sensed this in Jesus, that regardless of who they were, Jesus accepted and cared for them. I think people were drawn to Jesus because they sensed he wanted a relationship with them, and they wanted a relationship with him.

- Belleville Concordia UCC,
Rev. Dr. Douglas Anders,
Supply Pastor
Retired Pastor
- Rev. Orrin and Carolyn
Johnson, St. Charles, MO

People with Life Concerns

- Please pray for the family of Helen Land as they mourn her death. She is the grandmother of Rev. Shana (Rev. Todd Bean) Johnson, ISC Designated Conference Minister. A memorial service will be planned at a later date. Cards of condolence may be mailed to Shana and Todd at 429 Broadway Ste 4, Highland, IL 62249.
- Pray for Rev. Dr. Douglas Anders as he continues treatment for ongoing illness. Douglas is currently the Supply Pastor for Belleville Concordia UCC. Cards may be sent to him at 2921 Moniteau, St Louis MO 63121.
- Keep Dorothy Edwards in your prayers as she deals with health issues. Dorothy is a member of the East St. Louis Good Shepherd of Faith and the mother of Pastor Norma Patterson.

The ascension stories of scripture invite us to recall an image of the ascending Christ with extended hands. Hands with scars. Hands that were visible signs of his willingness to extend himself so fully, even dying, for the people that turned against him.

I think we are called to embody the openhandedness of the ascended Jesus. We are called to live out the care and compassion Jesus modeled for us. The truth is just like in Jesus' day; people will not be drawn to a movement, a philosophy, a culture, an institution, or an enterprise. They will be drawn to a relationship-a relationship with those who embody the characteristics of Jesus and to a relationship with Christ himself.

Imagine how differently our churches would look and function if we spent less time talking about buildings, strategies, plans, and programs for growth, and we simply lived into being *"ordinary broken human beings gathered around the ascended Jesus to share in his life and to be about his business."* I, like Darrell Johnson, believe this is what the church is to do and be.
Blessings, Shana

SHARING IN WORSHIP WITH YOU

A Note from Shana: My worship schedule for upcoming weeks:

June 4

Preaching at Grantfork UCC for their 145th Anniversary

June 11

Preaching at Fieldon UCC for their 150th Anniversary

June 25

Preaching at St. Peter UCC, Centralia

July 2

Worshiping with our ISC delegation at General Synod in Baltimore

July 9

Participating in the Service of Farewell for Rev. David Riebeling at St. John UCC, Valmeyer

I am currently planning my worship schedule for October, 2017 and beyond. If I have not been at your church yet, I would love an invitation! Please reach out to me at the office at 618-654-2125 or on my cell phone at 618-882-8247 with some possible dates. You can also send me an email at sjohnson@iscucc.org. I am looking forward to meeting you and sharing in worship with you.

Blessings, Shana **Your OCWM monies at work.**

Additional Information about "DuBois on Broadway" 2.0

During the past few weeks, pertinent information regarding the DuBois Center's fundraiser on May 12 at the Four Points by Sheraton Conference Center in Fairview Heights has been in Weekly Connections. Sponsors listed here are contributors of \$100 or more towards the event's expenses and the "Wonders on Water/WOW" offering.

Those listed on "The Sponsor Board" were included in the program books and displayed in the hall at the event. The "Wow Sponsor Board" was compiled to reflect those donors giving towards the new waterfront equipment that will

excite campers of all ages.

"The Sponsor Board" (for monetary contributions to help cover event expenses)

Silver Level (\$1,000.00 or more): Troy Friedens UCC and Columbia St. Paul UCC

Friend Level (\$100.00 to \$250.00):

Shirley Asmussen	Joan & Daniel Daab	Rev. Lisa & Walt Hart	Janet Heil
Virginia Ilch	Tom & Shirley May	Rev. Carol Shanks	Rev. Paul Schippel
Addieville Zion UCC			

Above Total=\$3,050.00

This generosity helped defray the "DuBois on Broadway" 2.0 expenses of \$3,370.00.

"The WOW Sponsor Board" (for monetary donations to new waterfront equipment)

Friend Level (\$100.00 to \$250.00):

Shirley Asmussen	Norma Borgmann	Andy Berberich	Joan & Daniel Daab
Kenny & Linda Grotenfendt	Roger & Julie Harris	Becky Harrison	Rev. Ivan & Vivian Horn
Bill & Ellen Krohne	Priscilla Self	Dennis & Janet Smith	
Rev. Dr. Don & Nancy Wagner			

Above Total = \$1,600.00

This generosity added two new pieces of waterfront equipment ready for the 2017 camping beginning on June 11. With additional smaller donations, the grand total of the **WOW offering was \$3,324**. *Donations are still being accepted to cover the entire cost of the equipment.*

Expense Breakdown

Here is a break-down cost of the \$50.00 ticket for the event:

\$35.71 per chef-prepared/plated 3-course meal/dessert based upon 252 meals.

\$ 5.82 to cover projector, sound tech, banner, program books, etc.

\$ 5.93 to cover postage for invitations/Thank Yous, and publicity to 900+people/churches

Total cost per attendee = \$47.46 (actual).

We are grateful to ALL the above cash donations to offset the Gala's expenditures plus ALL the ticket buyers, table sponsors, oral and silent auction providers and buyers, 50/50 drawing participants and winners' (almost total returned), WOW donors, volunteers-including musicians, and the additional in-kind donations!! With all of this in consideration, indeed the "DuBois on Broadway" 2.0 was a success and reflective of many DuBois Center supporters! The Outdoor Ministries Team and DuBois on Broadway 2.0 co-chairs express our sincerest **THANKS!** Rick Porter; Norma Borgmann; Rev. Jerry Amiri, Co-Chairs of the "DuBois on Broadway" 2.0



A Ministry of Illinois South Conference
of the United Church of Christ

The '17 FALL FESTIVAL -only 4 months away!!

Believe it or not, the Outdoor Ministries Team has been working on the 41st annual Fall Festival for a while. This traditional fundraiser will be held on Sunday, October 1 from 11 am - 5 pm.

We will continue to offer the established "favorites" in food and programming, but are seeking groups to operate food stands as well as musical performers. Also, VOLUNTEERS are needed in the various areas. Previous crafters will be contacted soon-however, if interested in being considered for a space in the craft area, please contact Susan Fuchs at SusankFuchs@gmail.com.

The one major change is an "Upscale Resale" Shop (each item valued at \$10 or more) in the Fireside Area of Oak Lodge. Those who usually provide Silent Auction baskets, etc. are certainly welcomed to continue donating. However, each donation will be price marked for sale on that day before 4 pm. Due to requests for a larger seating area to accommodate the diners in Oak Lodge, we will set up more tables/chairs for them to eat. The remaining half of the Fireside Area will house the 'Upscale Resale' Shop to attract shoppers looking for the right item(s).

We expect each donated item to be nice, clean, and easily carried. Suggested items for donations in the "Upscale Resale" Shop are: purses, suitcases, jewelry, coats, general décor, lamps, seasonal decorations (including wreaths, small trees), floral bouquets, kitchenware, etc. Donated items may be brought to DuBois Center, or pick-up arrangements may be made by contacting Norma Borgmann any time before September 29.

More information about the various areas will be sent to the 79 ISC churches this summer as well as periodic updates in future editions of the *Weekly Connection*. The Outdoor Ministries Team hopes that you will include the DuBois Center's Fall Festival on your calendars now for Oct 1.

If you have any questions or comments or need info, please feel free to contact Norma Borgmann, Fall Festival Coordinator, at nborgmann1658@charter.net or 618-533-1658 or 618-292-4617.



CHRIST UCC provides TLC

Cabin doors - check! Cabin screens - check! Cabin steps - check! This past week, a work team from Christ UCC in Dupo spent several days at DuBois Center helping prep the grounds and facilities for summer camp. Most of their time was spent in the Rustic Village. They repaired screen windows and doors, built steps, installed fascia and more. In addition, stumps throughout camp were ground into sawdust. Volunteers are the HEART of DuBois Center and mission is the heart of local congregations. This team is a great example of church mission in action. Now a tradition, this group's first work experience at DuBois was in 2014 when they joined with an established team from St. Paul UCC in Belleville. They have been back each spring since, and have also taken on segments of the set-up and tear-down for Fall Festival. Please help us in recognizing this great group of workers and the church's commitment to our shared ministry.

THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

Tomorrow - Wednesday, May 31 - our summer camp program staff arrive for nine days of intensive training covering topics such as health and safety, faith formation, activity leadership, behavior management and so much more! They are coming from local Illinois South Conference churches and from communities of faith around the world - literally. Please keep the leadership team, program staff and site staff in your thoughts and prayers. They have an awesome task in front of them! We also ask that you keep our international staff and their families close to your heart. They have traveled from Australia, England, Poland and South Africa, and will be far from their homes for three months or even longer. Thank you!

2017 Theme

Do It for the Vine
John 15:5-11 *Connecting through Christ*

In the story of the vine and the branches, we learn that we have two responsibilities: staying connected to the vine and bearing fruit. Join us this summer as we discover ways to do both! With daily scriptures to guide us, we will explore the vineyard and ways to



experience God's love as we grow as branches. We'll practice seeing with our hearts, listening for God and reconnecting with Jesus, ourselves and friends at camp. It will be a grand adventure, grounded by deep roots and braced by our strong vine - Jesus Christ. **Your OCWM monies at work.**



WELCOME TEAM
Join Us!
June 11, 25, and/or
July 9, 16, 23

On these five Sundays, scores of UCC campers will arrive at DuBois Center eager and excited to begin

their time at camp. A minimum of 12 volunteers each of these Sundays plus summer staff are needed to make the check-in process run smoothly! Volunteers assist with greetings, parking, the camp store, registration, health screenings, dock duty and people-moving. They arrive by 1:15 pm and are done by 4 pm. Please consider joining our Sunday Welcome Team on one or more check-in days. You are invited to wear a church t-shirt and show your spirit. Even



Don't Delay;
Register Today!

Summer vacation is a great time to get outside, unplug and make new friends face-to-face. Give your kids the gift of joyful, low-tech, faith-filled fun this summer! 2017 Summer Adventures at DuBois Center are filling quickly - some already have waiting lists!

consider bringing a team from your church! Let us know in advance when you can help; contact the DuBois Center office at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

However, there are still lots of great options available, just don't wait too long. Pick up a brochure in your church office, go to www.DuBoisCenter.org or click [here](#) to view the online edition.

DuBois Center is your OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) monies at work. When you or your congregation gives to OCWM, you are directly supporting the work of DuBois, a Camp and Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ. Thank you for your ongoing support of OCWM!



CHHSM News

Council for Health and Human Service Ministries

Job Opportunity: Deaconess Foundation is searching for a Director of Advocacy. The Director of Advocacy stewards strategic communications to advance the foundation's public policy agenda for child well-being. The Director will establish and maintain relationships with targeted constituents, policymakers, researchers and media through personal contact and media platforms. S/he will support the CEO in development and implementation of the organization's leadership strategy and annual communications plans. To learn more about this opportunity including responsibilities, qualifications, and how to apply, visit the Deaconess Foundation [website](#).



The Few but the Mighty

The sky on our Spring Cleaning Day was filled with nothing but rain. However, members and parents from the Belleville West Key Club, the Rev. Mike Southcombe and one of the members from St. John UCC in Wood River, a parent, a staff member and a community member came to save the day. They worked very hard and did a wonderful job. The unfortunate news is that we discovered that our roof is leaking. Hopefully it will be an easy fix.

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...



Job Opportunity: A Coordinator of Christian Education is open at St. Paul UCC in Belleville. The job requires 25 hours/week and pays \$25,000 annually. Benefits are to be determined. The Coordinator of Christian Education helps plan, coordinate and implement Christian education and faith development programs for all ages according to the requirements of the Safe Church policy. Read [more](#). Contact Rev. Robert Koepcke at rkoepcke@stpaulucc.org.

Rainbow Camp Registration is now open. Rainbow Camp is Aug. 12, 2017 at DuBois Center, from 9 am - 7 pm. You can ride a horse, paddle a canoe, take a pontoon ride, make several crafts, shoot some arrows, catch a fish and a lot more, while making a bunch of new friends. The day will wrap up with a bbq dinner on the patio of Oak Lodge overlooking the lake. Rainbow Camp is for everyone in the LGBTQ community and straight allies. Register [online](#) now to get the early bird discount. See the camp [flyer](#) for more information.



Region 2

On Fri, June 2 from 3 pm - 7 pm, St. Paul UCC in Floraville will host an American Red Cross blood drive in honor of a long-time member, Bob Raffety. During his extended illness from August to December 2016, he never complained during the most difficult times. You are invited to join them to donate blood for other patients in need. To schedule an appointment please go to redcrossblood.org

Region 6

St. Peter UCC in Centralia will have a Church Wide Rummage Sale on Saturday, June 3, from 8 am until noon in their Fellowship Hall.

Region 9

Chicken Dinner & Strawberry Festival will be held at Concordia UCC in Belleville (Millstadt) on Sun, June 4 from

VBS - June

June 19 - 23; 6 pm; Dinner at 5 pm - 5:45 pm. Troy Friedens UCC; *Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose.*
June 19 - 23; 6 pm - 8:30 pm; Belleville Concordia UCC; *Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose.*
June 26 - 30; Dupo Christ UCC; *Hero Central - Discover Your Strength in God!*

and enter the Sponsor Code: BobRaffety. Bring a valid photo ID. Snacks and drinks provided.

Region 3

Eden Church in Edwardsville will host a Pastor Resource Day presented by Gift of Voice on Wed, July 19 from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. This forum focuses on personal wellness, community collaboration and making a lasting difference. In addition to the terrific keynote speakers, topics include healthy leadership, suicide prevention, integrated health care, trauma - informed ministry and Christ-centered advocacy. Speakers are Nanette Larson, DMH, and Carlton Speight, SAMHSAC. Cost is \$10. Click [here](#) for registration form.

Region 4

St. John's UCC in Brighton and the Brighton Ministerial Alliance offer a Community Outdoor Pentecost Worship and Picnic at 10 am on Sun, June 4 to be held in the Betsy Ann Park in Brighton, 413 S Main Street. A combined worship service will be followed by a picnic. All are welcome to attend. The organizers will be cooking burgers and hot dogs; others are invited to bring a dish to share if you wish.

Saturday, June 3 St. John's UCC in Brighton will hold a large Rummage sale in conjunction with the city wide garage sale in Brighton. Doors will open at 8 am. Clothes, housewares, kids toys, gadgets, equipment, furniture and more.

Fieldon UCC will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on Sun, June 11. After the Sunday service where Rev. Shana Johnson, Designated Conference Minister will preach, will be a potluck meal.

11 am - 3 pm. Menu includes fried chicken with all the "fixins." Dine-in and carry-outs, call 618-476-3377. Adults \$11; Children 6-12 - \$5.50; Children 5 & Under free. Quilt Raffle Chances \$1 or 6/\$5. Bake sale and craft sale. *Note: Chicken is fried in peanut oil.

VBS - June

June 5 - 9; 9 am - 11:30 am; Fieldon UCC; *I Am a Child of God.*

June 5 - 9; 9 am - 12 pm; Columbia St. Paul UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

June 5 - 9; 8:30 am - 11:30 am; Okawville St. Peter's UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

June 5 - 9; 9 am - 11 am; Highland Evangelical UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

June 5 - 9; 8:30 am - 11:30 am; Valmeyer St. John UCC; *Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose.*

June 5, 12, 19, 26 (all Mondays); 9 am - 11:30 am; St. John UCC, Trenton; *Mighty Fortress: In Jesus, the Victory Is Won!*

June 10; 9 am - 4 pm with Family Carnival from 4 pm - 6 pm; Belleville St. Paul UCC; *Superhero theme.*

June 12 - 16; 9 am - 12 pm; Maestown St. John UCC; *Hero Central - Discover Your Strength in God!*

June 12 - 16; 9 am - 12 pm; Freeburg St. Paul's UCC in cooperation with the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Freeburg; *Hero Central - Discover Your Strength in God!*

June 19 - 23; 8:45 am - 12 pm; Mascoutah St. John UCC; *Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose.*

VBS - July

July 9 - 13; 6 pm - 8 pm; Granite City St. John UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 9 - 11; 6 pm - 9 pm; Midway St. John UCC; *Camp Out VBS.*

July 10 - 14; 9 am - 12 pm; Collinsville St. John Evangelical UCC; Rome: Paul and the Underground Church.

July 17 - 21; 6 pm - 8:20 pm; Red Bud St. Peter UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 17 - 21; 6 pm - 8:30 pm; O'Fallon UCC; *Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose.*

July 17 - 21; 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm; at Centralia St. Peter UCC including 1st Christian Church, 1st Presbyterian Church, 1st United Methodist Church, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Zion UCC, and St. Peter UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 23 - 26; 5:15 pm - 8 pm; at Metropolis St. Rose Catholic Church joint VBS with Metropolis Zion UCC; *Campout, Getting S'more of Jesus.*

July 24 - 27; 6 pm - 8 pm; Wood River St. John UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 24 - 28; 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm; New Athens, St. John UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 24 - 28; 9 am - 11:30 am; New Baden Zion UCC; Rome: Paul and the Underground Church. Lunch at 11:30 am as part of the summer lunch program for kids through St. Louis Food Bank.

July 24 - 28; 6 pm - 8:30 pm; Jerseyville Peace UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*

July 30 - August 3; 6 pm - 8 pm; Carlinville St. Paul UCC; *Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!*