

Weekly Connection

For the Week of December 17, 2017 - December 23, 2017
Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One in the Body of Christ



The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference...

Members of the ISC Property Committee and friends have been giving the Highland Office a face lift. Chair Rev. R.J. Morgan, David Payne, Rich Schrupf and Bob Schrupf began the project yesterday. Here are some pictures of the work in progress. We will keep you posted of progress as it happens. Thanks to all of them for their hard work.



Angels Among Us

I am convinced there was an angel among us as my mom and I sat in a hospital waiting room today. He was a middle-aged African-American named James. I believe he was a messenger from God that brought healing and understanding in a way I never imagined possible.

Mom and I were waiting for someone to let us know all had gone well and we could meet Dad back in the recovery room. Mom was knitting and I was on my computer, but I knew both of us were eavesdropping on the conversation between a man and a couple just a few chairs over. Somehow, they had gotten on the topic of organ donation, and the one man started to tell his story about being a recipient of a kidney donation.

He talked about what an incredible selfless gift it was that a live donor, someone he had never meet, had made such a decision. He then said something that I know caught my Mom's attention. He simply said, "Writing the thank you letter to my donor was the hardest thing I have ever done. I could not imagine what it took someone to make that decision. How do you say thanks to someone who has given you the gift of life? How do you put into words the gratefulness you feel each day because you have been given a second chance?" My mom looked at me and with great resolve she simply said, "I think I need to talk to him." "Yes," I said, "I think you do too."

Several years ago, my sister had read a powerful article about live kidney donors, those persons who decide to donate a kidney to another person while they are still living. For months, the idea of being a live kidney donor kept coming to her mind as something she could do; a way she could be of service to another person in need. Without a shadow of doubt, she felt like this was something God was calling her to do. She began to research and start the process of being tested to see if she could qualify to be a live donor.

Yet, most of us, including me, thought it seemed like an extreme way of being in service. Couldn't she just volunteer more time visiting shut ins? Volunteer more time at the soup kitchen? Teach more writing classes to the underprivileged? Why couldn't she just promote the idea of organ donation without doing it herself? It was not like she wasn't already being generous with her time and her resources. Why did she feel like she needed to do something so drastic? And in the eyes of my

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[St. John's Community Care](#)

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[UCC Campus Ministry](#)

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Pray for...

**Prayer list for
Dec 17 - Dec 23, 2017
Churches & Pastors**

- New Baden Zion UCC
- New Hanover Zoar UCC,
Rev. R.J. (Lisa) Morgan

mom especially, why did my sister feel like she needed to do something that might even be dangerous to her health?

My parents were concerned that she was making a rash decision. Yet, my sister felt like they were not being supportive of her decision. She felt like they were not taking seriously the certainty of the message she believed she was receiving...that this was something she could and should do.

For quite a while it was a topic that she and my parents simply avoided. She did not talk about the tests, the procedures, and the process she was undergoing to prepare to be a donor. Then when she was called by Barnes Hospital in St. Louis to travel from Kansas City one weekend to get ready for donation surgery, she did not even tell my parents she was going. When my parents later found out that she had gone through with being a live kidney donor to someone she had never met, my mom admitted that it was something she did not fully understand.

I believe it was something she did not understand until today. God nudged her to have a conversation with a stranger in a hospital waiting room that was sharing his story about being the recipient of a live kidney donation. She walked over, introduced herself and in turn, he introduced himself to my mom. His name was James.

As my mom shared with James that she had a daughter who had donated a kidney several years ago, he listened. As she told him how she did not understand her daughter's decision, James admitted that he might feel the same way as a father, if it had been one of his children making that decision.

When she confessed that she had not even really wanted to read the thank you letters from the recipient and his family who had received my sister's kidney, James nodded and said he could completely understand how she might have felt.

Then my mom thanked James because he had opened her eyes and had helped her see things from the other side, the side of the recipient of a live organ donation.

As my mom was talking to James, I was texting my sister. My sister asked if I thought Mom might be ready to read some of the thank you letters my sister's kidney recipient and his family had sent. I told my sister I thought my parents were ready to read the letters. She immediately sent me screenshots of some of the letters, which I later shared with my mom and my dad.

The word angel has come into our English language through the Greek word often found in the scriptures-angelos. The original meaning was simply "messenger." Angels were "messengers" of God bringing Good News of hope, healing, and new life. In this season, especially as we retell the stories of the angels in the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, we mistakenly think that messengers of God only appeared long ago as ethereal, musical spirits. Yet, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels unaware."* (Hebrews 13:2)

There are angels still among us if we listen, if we pay attention and if we respond. They are messengers sent to us to remind us of the presence, possibilities and power of God. Today, for my mom and I, there was an angel; a messenger of God, among us and his name was James.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

This is your OCWM monies at work.



The Region 2 Advent Pilgrimage on December 10 was a progressive dinner and an opportunity for members and their friends to experience several churches in Region 2. It began with appetizers at St. John UCC in Maeystown, Pastor Patrick Poole. Salads were served at New Hanover Zoar UCC, Pastor R.J. Morgan. Columbia St. Paul UCC, Pastor Bob Goddard, served the main course. Dupo Christ UCC, Pastor Todd Mushaney, sweetened the event with desserts. At each location, the attendees' passports were stamped.

Retired Pastor

- Rev. Earl Menchhofer and Rev. Pamela Smith, Conyers, Georgia

People with Life Concerns

- Please pray for the family of Gene (Mary) Bergmann as they mourn his death. He was a member of the St. Paul UCC in Columbia and the brother of Shirley Bergmann, ISC Treasurer and Finance Coordinator. Services are pending. Cards may be sent to Shirley at 216 North Briegel, Columbia, IL 62236.

- Pray for Nancy (Rev. Bob) Tripp as she deals with health issues. Rev. Tripp is a retired pastor and they are members of Pana United in Faith Church. Cards may be sent to 9008 E South Cir Dr, Effingham IL 62401.



Imagine It!! A Week's Stay in Williamsburg, Virginia Make a bid! Highest Bidder wins!!!

Date of timeshare: June 29, 2018 - July 6, 2018

Location: Marriott Manor in Williamsburg, Virginia

Accommodations: 1-week (2 bedrooms) timeshare

Silent Bid deadline is January 4, 2018.

This special fundraiser will benefit DuBois Center and the Illinois South Conference's Disaster Relief Fund by the generosity of the Zinns. A certificate will be your proof that you are the timeshare winner.

For more information, contact Norma Borgmann at 618-292-4617 or

nborgmann1658@charter.net. Use this bid [form](#). Cut off the bottom portion, place it in a sealed envelope, and mark the envelope with "Silent Bid". Mail or hand deliver to one of these locations:

DuBois Center, 2651Quarry Rd., DuBois, IL 62831

Illinois South Conference, 1312 Broadway, Highland, IL 62249

Norma Borgmann, #6 Blackberry Run, Centralia, IL 62801

Payment is expected 10 days after notification of winning the auction.

The deadline for silent bids is January 4, 2018.



The Camp and Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ



YEAR-END SUPPORT for Ministry at DuBois Center

At this time of year, we are more mindful of giving thanks - for family, friends, our church community and God at work in our lives. At DuBois Center, we are also thankful for stories, especially ones of connection, challenge and transformation. These stories tell of new-found confidence for first-time campers, deepening parent-child relationships, faith discussions that come alive, individuals transformed into communities, unlikely friendships built on respect, and so much more. Scores of dedicated volunteers, staff members and donors make DuBois Center a place of welcome and hospitality, a place to connect, belong and grow... a place where faith is nurtured and stories are written. With your financial support this work continues. You may have received a letter lifting up "snapshots" of our ministry in the outdoors. If not, click [here](#) to view the letter online. DuBois Center is your ministry, the work of your congregations, the work of the Illinois South Conference. We hope you will consider a tax-deductible year-end gift. You may use our donation site to safely donate [online](#). If you prefer to mail your donation, use this [form](#). With so many demands on your resources, we are truly honored by your gifts of financial support as well as offerings of prayer, time and talent. Thank you.



THANK YOU Christmas Party

The weather was perfect for DuBois Center's annual "Thank You" Christmas Party. Volunteers, donors and staff - who are all essential to the success of DuBois Center - enjoyed good food, uproarious laughter, off-key singing and, of course, THE Christmas Game. This year's "Camp Christmas" theme lent itself to traditional summer camp décor and food, including BBQ pork steaks and a s'mores cake dessert. Did you know that both marshmallows and cauliflower taste great when roasted?! A canoe and the Big Dipper were the backdrop for the ever-popular photo booth. Check out the shots of equestrian and marketing team volunteers, as well as Hickory Lodge renovators and a camp nurse and spouse. Special thanks to Norma Borgmann for the amazing appetizers

(more of a meal), Rachel Kinzinger for the desserts, the Marketing Committee for the very fun decorations and activities, and to everyone who supported DuBois Center in any way in 2017!



RECYCLE your GOLF CART

Plan to replace your golf cart next spring? Current one just taking up space? We may be able to help! DuBois Center is in need of a 4-seat golf cart - gas or electric. Currently,

our nurses use a Gator with two seats to respond to situations and deliver medication. If a camper needs to be transported back to the health center for treatment, there is no room for a third person. Renting a golf cart for the summer is very expensive, so we are exploring other options. You can help with this critical need; donations may be tax-deductible. For more information, contact shirley.director@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

IS YOUR 2018 VACATION REQUEST DUE?

Consider a week (or even a few days) at DuBois Center and join our Summer Camp 2018 team! Wanted: fun, engaging and caring volunteers to serve as nurses, chaplains, cabin counselors, activity specialists and barn helpers. Minimum age is 18 for most positions; young adults and older adults are welcome. Give of your time and talent, make a difference and gain a wonderful sense of satisfaction... and even perhaps a bit of joy! For more information, check out the volunteer [page](#) of our web site or contact DuBois Center at 618-787-2202 or dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org.



SUMMER JOBS

Make a Difference this Summer!

Got big plans for winter break? It's a great time to apply to serve on summer staff at DuBois Center! Pursuing a career in education, recreation, ministry, counseling, health care, social work or other service-related field? A summer at camp provides valuable hands-on experience that can enhance your resume.

If you or someone you know is energetic, child-focused and fun-loving - check out the Summer of Service [flyer](#) and consider whether a summer at camp might be just the opportunity to make a difference you have been looking for. Faith! Fun! Significant Friendships! Hard Work! Amazing Memories! Open positions include cabin counselors, barn staff and coordinators. Questions? Contact Shirley at shirley.director@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202. Application packets are available [online](#).



Here's a Thought!

Here's a Thought

Know someone who might make a great camp leader? Please forward this article to them or use this [form](#) to recommend them.

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

In time for Christmas gift giving!

Order your tickets for the whole family, and maybe a few friends, for the 2nd Annual Night at the Improv benefitting Uni-Pres Kindercottage on April 14, 2018.

We will send you the tickets and some Christmas cards in which you can enclose the tickets. Just tell us how many cards you will need and we will send those to you with the tickets. Order by December 15 to make certain you get your tickets and cards by Christmas!

Tickets include dinner and the show and are just \$40 each or 8 for \$300. Send your name and address with your ticket order, check, and the number of cards you need to Kindercottage, 564 Veronica, East St. Louis, IL, 62205. Have a Merry Christmas and we hope to see you on April 14!



Job Opportunity

Uni-Pres Kindercottage is looking for a Part-Time Bookkeeper/Accountant

18-24 hours per week. Knowledge of QuickBooks and Microsoft Office. Responsible for Accounts Receivable/Payable, Payroll and General Ledger. Must also be familiar with not-for-profit organizations. Must be able to work independently and be reliable. Send email with salary requirements and resume to unipres@sbcglobal.net.

Hoyleton Youth & Family Services invites you to help in Funding the Need for our organization by attending this year's ROCK THE NEED GALA on Fri, Feb 9, 2018 at The Fountains Conference Center, 319 Fountains Parkway, Fairview Heights, IL Cocktail Hour begins at 5:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 pm. You will have many opportunities to **FUND THE NEED** for many critical, life-changing measures; including emergency support for Foster Care Children and Families and immediate need support for victims of human trafficking. Entertainment by: Butch Wax and the Hollywood's from 8-10 pm. Dinner is \$50 per person or \$375 per table of 8. Reservations must be made to agarrison@hoyleton.org or 618-688-4742 by 1/30/2018. **Sponsorship Opportunities Available.**



Job Opportunities

Adult Day Program Caregivers - Collinsville & Edwardsville

St. John's Community Care is seeking qualified individuals for our Adult Day Programs. Must be enthusiastic, self-motivated, and able to handle a variety of tasks to maintain a safe and fun environment. Experience working with individuals with disabilities, dementia, and aging issues. Experience in assisting with ADL's and social activities promoting mental and physical stimulation. Part-time 25-30 hours per week. For information call 618-344-5008 Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4:30 pm.



Now Hiring Caregivers

St. John's Community Care's Home Services Program provides homemaker and personal care to the elderly and disabled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Caseyville, Collinsville, Edwardsville, Fairmont City, Fairview Heights, Glen Carbon, Granite City, Maryville, and Troy.

Requirements: Compassion, patience, honesty; sound decision-making skills; dependable attendance; housekeeping experience; willingness to help with personal care; valid driver's license & auto liability insurance; dependable transportation; ability to pass criminal background check.

Flexible scheduling; periodic increases in pay; paid orientation & training; paid vacations; attendance bonuses; the reward of making a difference in someone's life.

For more information please call 618-344-5008 Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4:30 pm.



Job Opportunities

Coordinator, Building Maintenance

The primary responsibility of this full-time position is the maintenance and operation of Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being to keep building and grounds clean and safe. The secondary responsibility is logistical support of meeting rooms and convening spaces. Duties include regular cleaning, operation and preventative maintenance of building systems (mechanical, electrical and plumbing), set-up and transition of meeting rooms and assisting Deaconess Center Manager as needed.

To learn more about this opportunity including responsibilities, qualifications, and how to apply, visit the Deaconess Foundation [website](#).

Manager, Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being

The primary responsibility of this full-time position is relationship management and constituency support services for the program activities of Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being to optimize its profile as the regional hub for child-friendly public policy advocacy. The secondary responsibility is managing routine operational processes for Deaconess Center. Duties include prospecting, triaging and aligning potential community convenings; supervising building maintenance and meeting logistics; coordinating hospitality; and assuring proper documentation of use to inform evaluation and compliance standards.

To learn more about this opportunity including responsibilities, qualifications, and how to apply, visit the Deaconess Foundation [website](#).

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...



Save the Date - Calling all VBS Directors & Staff

Friday, January 5, 2018, all VBS Directors & Staff in Illinois South Conference are invited to St. John Evangelical UCC, 307 W. Clay St., Collinsville, from Noon - 3 pm. Come take a look at the VBS starter kits for 2018, share ideas, and coordinate sharing decorations and programs throughout the Conference. Lunch will be served! RSVP to Dana Callahan at 618-344-2526.

A Call for Sermons in Solidarity with Youth Seeking Justice

Twenty-one youth have taken our federal government to court in demanding accountability and action in response to the damage done to our climate and the immense impact this damage has on their generation. One of those youth is Kiran Oommen who is the son of the Rev. Melanie Oommen of First Congregational UCC in Eugene, Oregon. Ultimately, the case brought by the youth is about seeking justice for #EachGeneration. To further the compelling and inspiring efforts of the youth, the UCC Council for Climate Justice has initiated a call for more than a thousand sermons to be preached in solidarity with them. To pledge a commitment to deliver a sermon, visit www.eachgeneration.org. Youth are especially encouraged to preach.

Irvington Friedens UCC has sixteen(16) 13' pews for sale at \$125 for each. If you are interested, contact Rev. Stacy Tate at sundown6@gmail.com or 618-249-8445.

Region 2

St. Paul UCC, Columbia, will hold their 7th Annual Plowsharing Fair Trade Crafts Sale on Sat and Sun, Dec 16 and 17, 8 am - 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall. There will be many one-of-a-kind pieces, such as jewelry, clothing, art, home decorations, baskets, musical instruments, games for kids, etc. Finely crafted, handmade products provide work and vital income to families in need of adequate food, housing, education and medical care.

Region 4

Brighton St. John UCC will present an Adult Spiritual Enrichment Study following their church services on Dec 17 - 31 titled "Do Not Be Afraid: Defeating Fear with Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and a Wholehearted Life." Delve into ways of defeating fear through the power of hope, peace, joy, love and living a wholehearted life in Christ. This is not a Bible Study, but a way to engage the topic through spiritual practice, practical teaching and shared group discussion. Speaker is Dr. Bren'e Brown, a social worker, researcher and best-selling author. Dr. Brown's work on vulnerability speaks to how we let fear, in many forms, affect our lives.

Region 4

Brighton St. John UCC will hold a Blue Christmas Service on Dec 21 at 7 pm. Depression, work or family stresses, or loss of a loved one may make this time of year particularly hard. The Blue Christmas service is an opportunity to acknowledge our sadness and gather together to give and receive comfort through a service of prayer, reflection and light held on the longest night of the year. This day marks the beginning of the lengthening of days, and is symbolic of the light of Christ brightening our darkness. All are welcome.

Region 9

The St. Louis Symphony Brass Quintet will perform as part of worship at the O'Fallon UCC on Sun, Dec 17 at 9:45 am. The service will include numerous selections from the symphony members. All are welcome.