

Weekly Connection

For the Week of December 24, 2017 - December 30, 2017
For the Week of December 31, 2017 - January 6, 2018
Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One in the Body of Christ



When they arrived in Bethlehem, it seemed as if there was no room for them or for their child.

It seemed there was no room for the most important event of human history to take place-
the birth of the one who prophets had spoken of,
the one who people had waited for
the one who would be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Up to this moment...

All things had been set into motion and all things seemed to be in place.

Many of the things that seemed impossible...

Improbable...

Unlikely....

Were already in place.

A young woman had been told by an angel, a messenger of God that she would conceive a child by the power of the Holy Spirit. The angel told her...*"He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. For nothing is impossible with God."*

Mary believed and said *"Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Use me according to your will."*

A man who was betrothed to the young woman had discovered that she was with child.

As it is said in Matthew 1: 19

"Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly."

Until...an angel, a message of God appeared to him and told him of God's plan for Joseph and this child...

"You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Joseph believed and took Mary as his wife.

Miles away in Ein Karem, Mary's cousin Elizabeth who was thought to be barren, was with child.

For she too was told she was a part of God's plan.

She would give birth to a son that she and her husband Zechariah would name John who would later be known as John the Baptist...the one who would prepare

Important Links

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Pray for...

Prayer list for

Dec 24 - Dec 30, 2017

Churches & Pastors

- O'Fallon UCC, Rev. Martha Thierheimer

the way for Jesus.

All the pieces were falling into place, but then...
it seemed like it might all fall apart.

No place for the Son of God to be born?
Was it possible that there would be no room in the world for God to be with us?
Was it possible that darkness had truly overcome the earth and the light of God would not shine?

Isn't this the fear that we still have?
Aren't these the questions we still ask?

Is there any room for God in our world?
Has the darkness of fear, intolerance, violence, and hatred overcome the earth?

In a quiet night in the small Palestinian town of Bethlehem... there was one that essentially said...Don't go, Joseph. Bring Mary back, and I will make room."

Through a small act of human kindness and a faithful response to need...
the door was opened
the window was cracked
for the light of the world to shine through.

The stable...might not have been where the prophets of old had imagined the Savior would enter the world.

Among the animals...might not have been the birthing place a young mother would have imagined.

A feeding trough filled with hay...might not have been the crib a carpenter would have imagined.

Disheveled shepherds...might not be the first greeters of the Messiah that the religious community would have imagined.

But they are reminders to us of how, despite all odds,...
the power,
the grace,
the beauty,
the love of God
will arrive
when we listen to the message of the angels to not be afraid
and we make room for God in hearts, minds and lives.

Instead of giving up
Instead of living in fear
Instead of wringing our hands in disappointment and disillusionment of all that is wrong in the world, let us proclaim to the Hope of the World, to the Christ child...

Don't go...
Come back...

We will make room in our lives for your presence.
Christmas blessings, Shana

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 14

Worshipping with the participants of our Winter Weekend retreat at DuBois

January 21

Preaching at St. Mark's UCC, DuBois

January 28

Preaching at Concordia UCC, Belleville

I am currently planning my 2018-2019 worship schedule. If I have not visited your church yet or you have a special event coming up at which you would like me to be present, please contact me with your desired date.

You can reach me at the Conference office at (618) 654-2125 or on my cell phone at (618) 882-8247. You can also send me an email at sjohnson@iscucc.org. I look forward to the opportunity to share in worship with you. **This is your OCWM monies at work.**

- Ohlman St. Paul's UCC, Rev. Dr. Steve (Debbi) Nance
Retired Pastor
- Rev. Elmer and Linda Bowman, Trenton, IL

Prayer list for Dec 31, 2017- Jan 6, 2018

Churches & Pastors

- Okawville St. Paul UCC,
Pastor Cherie (Michael) Stolze
- Okawville St. Peter's UCC,
Rev. Jeffrey (Sara) Schwab
- Pana United in Faith Church,
Rev. Joel Jackle-Hugh
Retired Pastor
- Rev. Bill and Patti Causer,
Mt. Vernon, IL

People with Life Concerns

- 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.





Where Has the Year Gone? - Time to Close the Books!

Illinois South Conference Financial Books will close on January 10, 2018 at 4 pm. If you want OCWM or special offerings to be credited to 2017, these things must apply:

1. *The date of the check must be dated 2017,*
2. *The contribution form must be dated 2017.*

If these two requirements are not there, the contribution will be posted to your 2018 financials. This could affect your 5 for 5 standing for 2017. If you have questions, contact Shirley Bergmann at sbergmann@iscucc.org or 618-654-2125.

Extending Christmas!

The tradition of sending Christmas Cards is one that I like to extend farther into the year than the holiday season. So when I receive a Christmas card, it is transformed into a box. And in that box, I enclose a small piece of paper that reads, "This is not an empty box! Remember, YOU hold in your hands the possibilities for anything and everything." It is a message that is many times never heard, forgotten, or drummed out of us by life. So remember to think of this message, even if you don't make boxes from your Christmas cards. But, here are the [directions](#) in case you want to give it a try. **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!** Lynnette



Imagine It!! A Week's Stay in Williamsburg, Virginia

Make a bid! Highest Bidder wins!!! Silent Bid deadline is January 4, 2018.

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

Location: Marriott Manor in Williamsburg, Virginia;

Accommodations: 1-week (2 bedrooms)

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 nborgmann1658@charter.net or 618-292-4617. 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.

Yearbook Time Is Here! Opens for input on January 2. Closes on March 7, 2018

Although this yearly task may seem daunting, it will help your church in many ways...

- The 11-year report provided by the data can be used when reviewing budgets, calling a pastor, and planning for future missions.
- The statistical information for ministerial support (which is not tied to individuals or churches) helps National UCC to provide statistics for compensation guidelines.
- Trends about church-going and the needs to be met by our churches is part of the statistical information we can pull from the database.

So, though it may seem daunting and/or like busy-work, there is a method to the madness.

Instructions will be coming to the churches soon.

The database opens on January 2 at noon and closes on March 7, 2018 at midnight. The ISC office can input the information if you do not want to do it online. Send information to Lynnette at lschuepbach@iscucc.org. Here is a [form](#) to help you gather the information you need.



Mark Your Calendars for March 3, 2018!!

We will be combining 2 events in March 2018. The Installation of Rev. Shana Johnson as Conference Minister and Day of Discipleship. Between the two events, ISC Pride will host a reception for all those attending.

The day begins at 9:30 am at the Highland Evangelical UCC for Day of Discipleship, featuring the keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Director of the United Church of Christ CARD (Center for Analytics, Research and Data) ministries. She will speak on the vitality of all sized churches in the United Church of Christ. After her presentation, there is an option for attendees to choose two of the 11 one-hour workshops being presented. Lunch is also provided. The theme is *Mission Making Members*. Come to learn how mission makes members and members make missions. From 2 pm - 3 pm, the ISC Pride will host a reception as we prepare ourselves for the installation service for Rev. Shana Johnson at 3 pm. Plan now to celebrate the gift ISC has been given by calling Rev. Shana Johnson.





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 - 2 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 at noon! A Group Publishing representative will be present to introduce Group's VBS curriculum. Cokesbury is sending two curriculum kits to review. RSVP to Dana Callahan at 618-344-2526.

Deaconess Foundation has several copies of *Doing Business by the Good Book* by David Steward. They are available first come, first served. If you are interested in the books, contact annr@deaconess.org or 314-436-8001.



Greetings from UCC



Region 2 Advent Pilgrimage Progressive Dinner #2

DuBois Center News

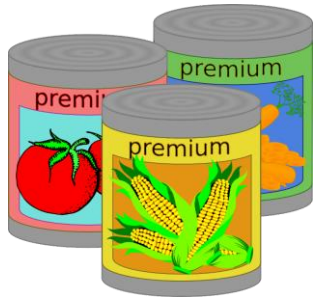
The Camp and Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ



DIGITAL CAMERAS - Used Compact Models Needed

Great photos and smart phones go hand in hand nowadays. So what happened to all those small, point and shoot cameras - the Coolpix, PowerShot and FinePix? DuBois Center is in search of 8-10 used (or new) cameras. They are great for scavenger hunts, photography classes, photo booths and so much more. **Requirements:** good working condition and SD card compatible. For more information contact DuBois Center at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.





BUNCO NIGHT The Challenge Sat, Feb 24

Calling all churches and youth, groups and community clubs! Join Region 2 for a night of winter blues-busting fun and support DuBois Center and a local food pantry! There's nothing wrong with a little

friendly competition, so this year Bunco Night includes an effort to "Fill a Food Pantry," a lively game of dice, cool Silent Auction treasures, a 50-50 drawing and help for those in need. By February, the major "food" holidays will be distant memories and pantry shelves will need restocking. Make a difference and have a lot of fun - all at the same time! Help spread the word; share this [flyer](#) and invite everyone you know.

The Challenge:

1. Bring a can or box of nutritious food to donate to a local food pantry. For each item you donate, you will receive one ticket for a special drawing - the more items donated, the more chances to win. The prize will be a fun basket of items appropriate for a variety of ages.
2. Recruit Bunco players from your local church or community group. The church/group with the most individuals who pay and play Bunco at this event will have the honor of selecting the food pantry to receive the night's collection.

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](#).



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.

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

Annual Night at the Improv

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. 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 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 preferred. 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.

125 YEARS IN MISSION



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...

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.

Merry

Christmas

To All!!

