



Weekly Connection

Diverse Minds,
Covenant Hearts,
Made One in the Body of Christ

February 16, 2021

You Are Loved

This past Sunday was Valentine's Day. It was also the sixth anniversary of my father-in-law's death and the day of the memorial service of one of my colleagues, the Rev. Keith Mills. Keith was the Conference Minister of the Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ. His family and his Conference held a worship service on Zoom to celebrate his life. Like so many things we have done during the pandemic, an online memorial service didn't seem the same as being in person sharing this moment of remembering as a community of faith. What I did not expect was how intimate this service felt. When it comes to funerals, we have so many spoken and unspoken rituals and rules about what is expected--everything from how family and friends would process into the church and where people should be seated to what should be said, sung or worn. While there was a structure and flow to the time together, much of the pretense and pomp were stripped away. Something I know Keith would have appreciated. There was no guest book to be signed. No bulletin to follow. No family pew or ushers to tell us where to sit depending on how we were related to the deceased and their family. No floral arrangements. No funeral banners, paraments or a casket pall. And there was no opportunity to distract ourselves by focusing on the fidgeting child, the movement of participants walking up to the lectern, the vestments of the officiant, or the fingers of the pianist flying off the keys of the piano. Following good Zoom etiquette, those participating kept their cameras on as a

Prayer list for Feb 21-27, 2021

Churches & Pastors

- Addieville Zion UCC, Rev. Bill Groennert
 - Alhambra Salem UCC, Rev. Jeremy Wood, Senior Pastor
 - Alhambra Salem UCC, Pastor John (Marilee) Mindrup, Associate Pastor
- #### Retired Pastor
- Rev. Ivan and Vivian Horn, Waterloo, IL

People with Life Concerns

- Keep **Rev. Diane Grohmann** in your prayers as she deals with some health issues. Rev. Grohmann is the pastor for Edwardsville St. Paul UCC. Cards may be sent to 5438 Brick School Rd, New Athens, IL 62264.
- Please pray for **Rev. P. Jerry Bennett** as he deals with some health issues. Rev. Bennett serves as the pastor for Hookdale St. Peter UCC and previously was the ISC Associate Conference Minister. Cards may be sent to him at PO Box 39, Highland, IL 62249.
- Pray for **Rev. Nancy (Kevin Lee) Spier-Lee** as she deals with some health issues and rehabilitation. Rev. Spier-Lee was the Pastor for Zion UCC St. Joe in Waterloo and served on several ISC teams. Cards may be sent to her at 309 Kroeger Ave, Dupou, IL 62239.
- Pray for **peace** during the post-election.
- Keep **all pastors** in your prayers as they continue to provide spiritual support.
- Pray for the **people of the United States** as we work towards equality and civility for us all.
- Pray for the **healthcare workers** and **families who are dealing with loved ones who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.**

way to acknowledge our commitment to be fully present for one another. This meant instead of being distracted by things in the room from which we were Zooming, the only thing we could really be focused on was each other, which at times was almost too intimate and raw for me to bear. As the intense mix of love and loss on display not only in the words that were shared, but in the close up faces of those attending, family members, friends, and colleagues alike, I could see their tears and they could see mine. Seeing all of these faces of people who were logging in from different parts of the country was a visible reminder of all the ways Keith's life had intersected with people as a son, husband, father, pastor, Conference Minister, leader and friend at different points along his earthly journey. Outside of this context, we might wonder what this diverse ensemble might have in common. Yet, in this context, it was abundantly clear that the one thing we had in common was love.

A love of Keith who shared his deep faith, sense of humor, and joy of life with all of us. A love of the One who created Keith and gifted all of us with the opportunity to be in relationship with him. A love which understands, in moments like these, there is only one true thing in life that is lasting—love itself. And so, a memorial service on Valentine's Day seemed so fitting, so beautiful, so meaningful.

On a day when it is easy to be swept up in the notions of romantic, fleeting love, this was a reminder of the deeper, lasting love of which our faith calls us to embody. It was also a powerful reminder of something we all intellectually know, but I believe bears repeating—don't ever pass up opportunities to express this love to others.

We convince ourselves that we will always have tomorrow to say or do something for someone else. Yet, the truth is the only thing we can know for certain is that we have this moment. Don't wait to tell others and to show others you love them. No one regrets how many times they said or showed others how much they loved them and how important they are to them.

So...let me go first. Dear friends, you are deeply loved. God loves you and so do I.
Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

Clean Energy Jobs Act

One of the projects that the ISC Justice & Mission Team is working on is CEJA – Clean Energy Jobs Act. Local supporter of this act is Jean Korte. She attended the J&M meeting on Feb 11 and shared these resources:

- YouTube [video](#) about CEJA:
- Ways to communicate with your local representatives regarding CEJA. Click [here](#).

Jean said that the goal is to pass CEJA at the May legislative session. So, if you're interested in supporting CEJA, contact Kay Ahaus of the J&M Team at kayahaus@yahoo.com and/or contact your local representative.



The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference... Columbia St. Paul UCC's Board of Mission and Stewardship partnered with Boy Scout Troop 357 to "Share the Love" on Feb 13

to demonstrate 3 Great Loves and collect items for New Athens Home for the Aged. The response was overwhelming! They collected so many items that one carload went to New Athens Home, one carload to Integrity Nursing Home, another





carload to Garden Place, and individual baskets were made up for our members in other nursing homes/assisted living facilities in Waterloo. Every month, this Board hosts a drive-up event to help our Missions. They have collected for Backpack Ministry, Kindercottage and House of Neighborly Service, to name a few. Kudos to Columbia St. Paul UCC for stepping up during this pandemic to honor the 3 Great Loves!

FREQUENTLY ASKED COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST HYMNALS

This document was prepared by Heather Kimmel, General Counsel of the United Church of Christ; Rev. Susan Blain, Minister for Worship and Gospel Arts, UCC National Setting; and Aidan Spencer, Communications Specialist for Tri-Conference Ministries.

1. My church is going to show words to hymns on a monitor during our live-streamed services. Do we need permission to show the words to the hymns on the monitor?
 - Yes. The publishers of **New Century Hymnal** and **Sing! Prayer and Praise** negotiated use of and paid for copyrighted material with the various copyright holders—publishing houses or individuals—to publish the songs in the hymnals. Every time a hymnal is sold, the various copyright holders get paid a royalty. The copyright permission does not extend further than that; an individual church, though it owns a hymnal, cannot reproduce or stream copyrighted material from that hymnal into an electronic or paper bulletin, onto a screen during an in-person worship service, onto a monitor during a remote service, or into a video without further permission.
 - There is no blanket permission to reproduce or stream **copyrighted** material published in our hymnals, **New Century Hymnal** or **Sing! Prayer and Praise**. Music which is in the **Public Domain, that is, no longer under copyright**, may be reproduced and streamed.
2. How does my church obtain permission?
 - Your church needs to obtain a license from the copyright holder. This can be done by contacting the copyright holder directly, or by using a music licensing service (see #3).
 - In **New Century Hymnal** the copyright index begins on page 888. If the hymn number is not listed there, the song is in the public domain. All other music is copyrighted with details given. **Sing! Prayer and Praise** includes copyright information at the bottom of each song.
3. What is a music licensing service and how does it work?
 - Copyrighted music is licensed with a service to ensure that the copyright owners are compensated for their work. Churches can subscribe to music licensing services, such as OneLicense.net or CCLI. Through the license you purchase limited rights to use the music without obtaining a separate agreement for each song. To see if the song you want to use is covered by the service, you will need to go to the licensing site and look up the song in the service's catalog to see if it is covered; if it is, then you report your use of copyrighted material to the licensing service, and the service distributes the royalties. If it is not covered, then you will need to get a license directly from the copyright holder, unless the song is in the public domain.
 - Most of the music used in **NCH** and **Sing! Prayer and Praise** is licensed under OneLicense.net, which specializes in hymnody. CCLI (Christian Copyright License International) specializes in contemporary praise music.
 - The music licensing fee is an annual fee. Congregations should factor license fees into their annual budgets as a routine expense.
4. Isn't there a way that the denomination could get a blanket permission for all UCC Local Churches to display words to hymns on screens or reproduce the words in bulletins for purposes of worship?
 - Copyright law doesn't work that way. The Pilgrim Press and United Church Press honored their copyright obligations by negotiating and paying for copyrighted material to be included in

the hymnals. As long as the hymnal owners are sticking with the books, they are fine, but once they reproduce or stream the copyrighted works, different laws apply. Licensing services make this easy—they are well worth the fee (which is prorated according to congregation size). [Here](#) is a pdf of this article to share with others.

One Great Hour of Sharing

A Note from Karen Georgia A. Thompson, Associate General Minister, Wider Church Ministries Co-Executive for Global Ministries

On behalf of Wider Church Ministries, I wish you blessings for this calendar year. We are grateful for your on- going support and prayers with us as we minister with you and our partners around the world.

As many of you are aware, the One Great Hour of Sharing experienced significant decrease in 2020 due to the pandemic. The date for the collection of the offering was March 22, the first day that many of our churches were out of their building due to lockdowns across the country. We are extremely grateful for the gifts we received and for the opportunity to journey with our partners in the US and around the world as they found ways to provide for the emerging needs and health concerns they faced.

We begin 2021 with the hope that the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will regain the momentum lost due to the pandemic, and we are noticing a few good signs of a potential rebound. Our promotional efforts for the offering have shifted to accommodate the virtual worship environment, and also includes options for churches with in-person worship. Here's a brief update:

1. OGHS packets with sample printed materials were mailed to all congregations, and [links](#) to online OGHS resources were also sent via email.
2. Since most of our congregations continue to worship virtually, additional videos were created for use in virtual settings. This [video](#) depicts the local and global reality of the pandemic and the need for “masks”:
3. The other OGHS videos will be available [here](#).
4. Recently, we heard from one congregation that plans to receive their OGHS offering over a 6-week period (expanding the opportunity to give beyond the Sunday, March 14 recommended offering date). We are thankful for new insights and ways to take the offering. Thank you for your generosity and ongoing support of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

A Message From Global Ministries: 2020 and 2021 - Giving and your taxes

As you prepare to file for the 2020 tax year, did you know there are new deductions and benefits for those who made gifts to nonprofits, such as Global Ministries through the 2020 CARES Act? These could apply even if you use the standard deduction. Additionally, these new benefits and deductions were extended for 2021, which you may find helpful as you plan your 2021 giving. Read [more](#).

40th Annual Ecumenical Rural Ministry Conference will be held via Zoom on Mon, March 8 from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. The theme is “Engaging and Ministry with Cultural Traditionalists” and is co-sponsored by Wartburg Theological Seminary and the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

The keynote Speaker, Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, author of *A Christian Justice for the Common Good, and Working Class Rage: A Field Guide to White Anger and Pain*, will explore world divisions by looking at a key demographic, cultural traditionalists. Cultural traditionalists are the largest demographic in rural America and one of the largest in the country. This demographic is not limited by age, gender, or denomination.

The presentation will provide a description of this important group and offer suggestions for working with cultural traditionalists to provide a greater understanding of this demographic found in many, if not most, congregations. For more information, click [here](#).

DuBois Center News



CHHSM News

Council for Health and Human Service Ministries

St. John's Community Care will once again be opening its doors to families who are in need of Adult Day services in the Edwardsville and Collinsville locations. They will open on March 1 and be available Monday through Friday. If you have families who would benefit from the Adult Day Program, please contact Stacey at 618-344-5008. [Here](#) is the link to program information. If you would like to take a tour, contact Stacey at srhodes@stjohnscc.org



The National Setting of the UCC is overjoyed to announce the formation of 4 General Synod Virtual Choirs! The main choir will feature individual volunteers from across the country. As we know there are a number of churches producing amazing virtual choirs already, we are also producing a Church-Choir Choir, featuring entire church choirs singing different sections of hymns! For worship and theological reflections, we are preparing one song featuring a Youth Choir (youth currently in 6th-12th

grades) and one song for a Children's Choir piece, which will rehearse virtually but will be produced and shared audio only (for anyone who has security concerns!). Children ages 5-current fifth graders may volunteer for the children's choir. The deadline to volunteer is Feb 19! Click [here](#). Check out the Virtual General Synod [info](#).



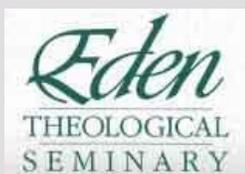
Global Ministries presents a Webinar about rebuilding in Nicaragua and Honduras on March 3 at 2 pm CST.

Representatives from the Moravian Church in Nicaragua, Christian Mission Church of Nicaragua, Evangelical and Reformed Church in Honduras, and Christian Commission for Development in Honduras will share about their work responding to the two category-four hurricanes, Eta and Iota. In November of 2020, they caused massive damage and flooding across Nicaragua and Honduras.

Since the storms hit, these global partners have responded quickly to assist their communities and walk alongside those impacted by the destruction of the storms. Speakers will share about the work that has been done to date and about the long-term plans for rebuilding affected communities. Register [here](#). To learn more click [here](#).

Open and Affirming Convocation will be presented on Zoom from 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, March 6 with featured speaker, Austen Hartke, the author of *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*, which is a book on theology and personal narratives published by Westminster John Knox Press in 2018.

Open and Affirming (ONA) is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations, and other settings of the church which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. If you are an Open and Affirming congregation, talking about Open and Affirming or thinking about starting the conversation, if you want to explore how to be effective allies, there will be something for you and your church. Come be in conversation with others, learn what it means to be Open and Affirming and how to fully express extravagant welcome to all God's children. For more information and a tentative schedule, click [here](#).



Feb. 19 – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) session – UCC History & Polity with Dr. Jill Baker

This intensive class will provide an overview of the predecessor denominations that shaped the United Church of Christ's style of congregational governance. It will also look at how General Synod functions, explore some theological foundations, discuss how the authorization process works and review educational resources available from the denomination. Read [more...](#) Click [here](#) for flyer.

Feb. 26 – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) & Walker Leadership Institute – ONE in THREE: Sustainability in the Time of COVID with Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise Baker and Rev. Steve Lawler

Predictions that 1 in 3 churches will close because of the COVID pandemic make innovative pastoral and congregation leadership development urgent. Couple this with the ongoing realignment of the church from maintenance to mission and the stakes are even higher. Funding, staffing, and programs are changing as ministry models, disrupted by the prolonged period of closed churches, declining participation, and the move from the familiar to the emergent. In this highly disrupted time, congregational leaders and congregations need to find accelerated ways to pivot; to avoid becoming 1 in 3. Read [more...](#) Click [here](#) for a flyer.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference

Job Opportunity: Church Organist/Musician

Grantfork UCC is looking for a musician to support our inspiring music program and help it continue to thrive. We are looking for someone who is willing to play the pipe organ and/or the piano and/or the electronic keyboard for traditional worship services once or twice a month. (When services are virtual, this needs to be pre-recorded during the week. When services are in-person, this needs to be live on Sunday mornings.) An interest in directing one or more of our adult choirs - Men's Choir (gospel/Gaither), Ladies' Choir (traditional), Women's Ensemble (contemporary), and Chancel Choir (holiday services, cantatas) - would be a plus, but is not required. Musician will work in cooperation with the current music director, Connie Plocher, to determine schedule, and with the pastor. Pay will be determined according to the number of weeks willing to serve. To express interest, please contact Rev. Tim Darmour-Paul at 618-675-2595 or grantforkucc@agtelco.com.

Job Opportunity: Custodian

O'Fallon United Church of Christ is seeking applicants for a part-time custodian. The normal workweek will be 15 -20 hours doing typical cleaning, maintenance and grounds duties along with preparing for scheduled activities and meetings. The work schedule is negotiable for daytime and evening hours. Applicants can contact the committee through the Church office 618-632-3496 or by contacting Allen Garner 618-910-2913 or Ted Lewis 618-977-8184.

Job Opportunity: Music Director

St. John's UCC of Smithton, IL is seeking a part-time Music Director for 20-25 hours per week. The Music Director will select, play and lead music for worship services. They will collaborate with the worship committee and pastor, and also establish opportunities for other music-related activities within the church. See their [website](#) for areas of responsibilities and qualifications.

Region 2

Valmeyer St John UCC has canceled the Wed, Feb 17 fish fry due to weather. The next Carry-Out Fish Fry will be on Fri, Feb 26 from 4 pm - 7:30 pm. Menu includes cod plates, cod sandwiches, or cod by the pound, potato salad, and coleslaw.

Region 2

Columbia St. Paul UCC will hold its annual Rummage Sale on Fri, March 26 & Sat, March 27, the same weekend as the Columbia's annual City-Wide Sale. Masks will be required; hand sanitizer will be provided; and social distancing will be observed for the sale. They cannot accept donations of clothing or electronics but welcome all other donations. Saturday drop-off times begin the first of March.

Region 5

Troy Friedens UCC will host its Annual Drive-Thru Sausage & Kraut Dinner on Sun, Mar 14 from 11:30 am to 5:30 pm. The menu includes grilled pork sausage, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, sauerkraut, & dessert. All dinners will be \$10.00. If you have any questions please contact the office, 618-667-6535 or [email](#). Friedens is located at 207 E Center, Troy, IL 62294.

CONTACT US - YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK

During the shelter in place order, all Conference staff will be working remotely, but they are available to help you. Keep these contacts handy.

For the work of Conference teams and committees or search and call inquiries, contact Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org.

For financial matters (in terms of your church's giving to the Conference or OCWM), contact Debbie Kesner at dkesner@iscucc.org.

For communicating within the Conference, the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, contact Lynnette Schuepbach at lschuepbach@iscucc.org.

For DuBois Center information, registration for upcoming events and camp sessions, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or jriechmann@iscucc.org.

To speak with the Conference Minister, contact Rev. Shana Johnson 618-882-8247 or sjohnson@iscucc.org

*Inclusivity Statement for DuBois Center and Illinois South Conference of the UCC
Because we affirm the value of all God's people, the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, ability, national origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. To the extent possible, we endeavor to accommodate those with a variety of physical, mental, emotional, medical, or dietary needs.*

Important Links

[Illinois South Conference](#) [Back Bay Mission](#) [CHHSM](#) [Deaconess Foundation](#)

[Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#) [DuBois Center](#) [Ecuador Partnership](#)

[Eden Theological Seminary](#) [Emmaus Homes](#) [Hitz Memorial Home](#)

[Hoyleton Youth & Family](#) [LIFE Program](#) [Unleashing Potential](#) [New Athens Home](#)

[Pension Board-UCC](#) [St. John's Community Care](#) [St. Paul's Sr. Community](#)

[UCC Insurance Board](#) [Uplands Village](#) [UCC Campus Ministry](#) [Uni-Pres Kindercottage](#)

