

Weekly Connection

For the Week of April 1, 2018 - April 7, 2018
Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One in the Body of Christ



Not Done Yet...

They knew the facts.
They had heard with their own ears.
They had seen with their own eyes.
They had touched with their own hands.
They had tasted with their own tears.
They had experienced the death of their Friend and Savior.

For those who followed Jesus, especially the women, they were present for it all. The facts seemed to lead to a dismal and hopeless final ending of Jesus' life and ministry.

Like standing bedside as a loved one takes their last gasp of breath.
Like hearing the door of the hearse slammed shut as the pallbearers have just placed the coffin in the back of the car.
Like watching the casket being lower down into the grave and tossing a hand full of dirt upon it.

IT SEEMED SO FINAL.
IT SEEMED FINISHED.

There was very little they could do now.
As Jesus was arrested and questioned, accused of inciting a rebellion against the Roman government, and eventually being charged with claiming to be the King of Israel, they could not speak in Jesus' defense.

As Pilate decided to turn Jesus' fate over to the crowds, fulfilling the tradition of letting the crowd decide which prisoner would go free, they could not appeal to Pilate.

When the crowds shouted for Barabbas to be set free and for Jesus to be crucified instead, they could not stand against the crowds.

As the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus, whipping him, placing a crown of thorns on his head, they could not overpower the Roman soldiers.

As they stood beneath the cross, watching Jesus bleed, crying out in pain, and taking his last breaths, they could not storm the Roman guards, climb up the ladder, and save Jesus from that agonizing death.

What could they do?

It seemed like they were without ANY POWER.
It seemed like they were without OPTIONS TO CHANGE THE PRESENT SITUATION.
It seemed like things were HOPELESS.

Maybe you, too, have been in that situation or circumstance?
Maybe you were in a dead-end job or just lost a job.
Maybe you were in a life transition in which you could not see or envision what might come next for you.
Maybe you were in a loveless relationship.
Maybe you were experiencing such isolation, loneliness or grief that you wondered if you would ever experience life again.
Or maybe you ARE in the midst of something right now that seems like you are without ANY POWER to CHANGE your present situation.

Maybe it seems like you are WITHOUT ANY OPTION
Maybe it all seems so HOPELESS, so DISMAL, so FUTILE, and so FINAL.

Important Links

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duboiscenter.org

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[Back Bay Mission](#)

[CHHSM](#)

[Ecuador Partnership](#)

[Eden Theological Seminary](#)

[Deaconess Foundation](#)

[Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#)

[Emmaus Homes](#)

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[Neighborhood Houses](#)

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

[St. Paul's Home](#)

[Uplands Village](#)

[UCC Campus Ministry](#)

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[ISC Directory](#)

Pray for...

Prayer list for

April 1-7, 2018

Churches & Pastors

- Carlinville St. Paul UCC,
Rev. Kevin (Shellie) Strobe

- Carlyle Immanuel UCC,
Pastor Ken (Barbara) Schafer

Yet that, dear friends, is what I call our Good Friday experiences.

This Friday, Christians around the world will observe Good Friday as we recall when Jesus died and was placed in the tomb. We call it good, not because it's something to take delight in, but because the word that has been translated to be "Good" also means holy, pious, and moment of fulfillment.

For me, what is so incredible on that first Good Friday is the way in which the women, especially, faced the reality of the experience of Jesus' death.

Yes, they waited.

Yes, they prayed.

Yet, they also acted in faith.

Even though it seemed like there was little they could do, they embraced what they could do.

They could wait while Joseph of Arimathea pleaded with Pilate for the body of Jesus.

They could help Joseph place the body of Jesus in the tomb.

They could prepare the body of Jesus in a proper and respectful way by anointing Jesus with burial spices and wrapping him in linens.

They could observe the Sabbath when it arrived by waiting and praying that God would act on their behalf and on behalf of all humanity.

This is what they did.

They did **something**.

They did not give up.

They did not walk away and throw up their hands.

They did not declare that all was lost and God was dead.

No...in faith, they did SOMETHING.

The best thing that we can do when it seems like there is very little to do...is to do something.

The best thing that we can do is wait on God and act in faith.

As Hebrews 11: 1 says, *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

It is the understanding that there are cosmic plans happening that we cannot see.

As the women saw the stone being rolled over the entrance of the tomb to seal it, their faith told them that surely this could not be the end.

It was their faith that led them back to the tomb to find it empty.

To see their Savior alive.

To hear Him speak their names.

To know that God was not finished yet.

When we think of the empty tomb, it is that ultimate reminder that God is NOT finished with us yet.

What may seem **DEAD, HOPELESS, Or FINAL** in your life...is not!

God is in the background, working out the details of what, in time, will be revealed to you.

There are more chapters in your story.

The end is probably not what you fear or imagine, because God has a greater plan and more perfect story for your life.

This, dear friends, is what Christ's resurrection means for us.

If we believe,

if we trust,

if we wait,

if we act in faith,

we will see and experience that it is not finished yet.

This is the message of the empty tomb.

This is the good news for you and for me.

May this be what we celebrate and remember this Easter season.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

Retired Pastor

- Rev. Paul and Debby Schippel, Centralia, IL

People with Life Concerns

- Keep Kyle Nuetzel (24) in your prayers as he recovers from a serious car accident. Kyle is the son of Kathy Nuetzel, the fiancée of Rev. Patrick Poole. Rev. Poole is the pastor at Maeystown St. John UCC. Kyle and his mom live in the St. Charles area.

SHANA'S JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 29

Worshiping and officiating communion at St. Paul UCC Belleville

April 7

Worshiping at Friedens UCC, Irvington for the 2018 church renovation dedication

April 8

Preaching at Immanuel UCC, Hamel

April 15

Preaching at St. John UCC, Wood River

Worshiping at St. John UCC, Fairview Heights for Rev. Rosemary Captain's Installation

April 22

Preaching at Godfrey Evangelical UCC

Preaching at Zion UCC, Central City for Rev. Nancy Pebbles' Installation

April 29

Worshiping at Zion UCC, Waterloo for Rev. Nancy Spier-Lee's Farewell Service

THIS IS YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK

To invite me to your church for a particular event, season in the life of the church, or a special occasion, please reach out to me via email at sjohnson@iscucc.org or by phone at 618-654-2125 (office phone) or 618-882-8247.



Get Ready for 2018 Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 27, 2018

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Knights of Columbus Hall/Collins Club

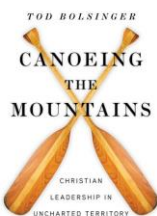
1 Columbus Plaza, Collinsville, Illinois

Guest Speaker: Rev. Tod Bolsinger

Rev. Tod Bolsinger is the Vice-President for Vocation and Formation and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. For seventeen years, he was the Senior Pastor of San



Clemente Presbyterian Church in San Clemente, California, after serving for ten years at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. He earned a Ph.D. in Theology and Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the author of two books, including *Canoeing the Mountains* and the Christianity Today Award of Merit recipient, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian: How the community of God transforms lives*. He blogs, speaks, consults and is an executive coach for corporate, non-profit, educational and church organizations in transformational leadership.



Explorers Lewis and Clark had to adapt. While they had prepared to find a waterway to the Pacific Ocean, instead they found themselves in the Rocky Mountains. You too may feel that you are leading in a cultural context you were not expecting. You may even feel that your training holds you back more often than it carries you along. Drawing from his extensive experience as a pastor and consultant, Tod Bolsinger brings decades of expertise in guiding churches and organizations through uncharted territory. He offers a combination of illuminating insights and practical tools to help you reimagine what effective leadership looks like in our rapidly changing world. If you're going to scale the mountains of ministry, you need to leave behind canoes and find new navigational tools. Reading this book will set you on the right course to lead with confidence and courage.

The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network presents UCC W.I.S.E. (Welcoming--Inclusive--Supportive--Engaged) Mental Health Conference on Friday, May 4 at St. Paul UCC in Downer's Grove (Chicago), Illinois from 8 am - 5 pm.

At this conference, you will:

- * Hear stories by persons who have been affected by mental health issues;
- * Receive practical steps to engage in a mental health ministry in our congregations;
- * Be introduced to the WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) Covenant for congregations for mental health; and
- * Worship together, share together, and meet new people. Click [here](#) for more information or [here](#) to register.



Are you a member of a Committee or Commission on Ministry (COM)? Are you concerned about professional ethics among authorized ministers? Would a more comprehensive approach to professional ethics for clergy enable you to respond to the unique issues which you face as a member of a COM?

PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc., has received a special donation to cover the costs for up to twelve COM members from any UCC Conference for the course, *Professional Boundaries and Ministerial Self-Care*, held from Wednesday, May 9 to Tuesday, June 19. This six-week asynchronous online course explores ethics and their application for professional pastoral ministers. In addition to the topic of boundaries that define the relationships

between pastoral ministers and congregants, the course also explores issues like confidentiality in ministry, ethics related to competency in pastoral ministry, power differential in ministerial settings, and the use of social media. Through the coursework, participants will come to a greater understanding of the need for an ethical paradigm for ministerial engagement. In addition, the course explores the professional minister's right to privacy. Claiming one's appropriate right to privacy helps the professional maintain appropriate boundaries. Knowing how to discern where our public self begins and our private self ends serves as an essential aspect of self-care.

The Course Facilitator is Rev. Lou Kavar, Ph.D., President of the Board of Directors, PATHWAYS, and a member of the faculty in the School of Psychology at Capella University. Lou has facilitated courses in professional ethics for health and mental health professionals as well as clergy. He has been teaching online courses for 18 years.

Required readings for the course include:

- Lebacqz, Karen, and Drickill, Joseph. (2000). *Ethics and Spiritual Care: A Guide for Pastors, Chaplains, and Spiritual Directors*. Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-0-678-07156-2
- Gula, Richard M. (2010). *Just Ministry: Professional Ethics for Pastoral Ministers*. Paulist Press. ISBN: 978-0-80910463104

Participants who complete all required coursework will earn four continuing education units. For more information, contact: pathways.ucc@gmail.com. Click [here](#) to learn more about PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc.



Old church.....New church

Friedens United Church of Christ and Rev. Stacy Tate invite you to the dedication of its 2018 renovation and addition on Saturday, April 7, 2018 at 7 pm

Special Guests include:

- Bronze Expressions Bell Ensemble
- Rev. Shana Johnson, UCC Illinois South Conference Minister
- Gera Simms, Irvington Mayor
- Friedens United Church of Christ
- 307 S. Third Street, Irvington, Illinois

*Wine, NA punch, and cheese reception and tours immediately following in Gathering Area and Formation Wing



**Summer is Just Around the Corner
Gather Your Youth for the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event**

The Great Lakes Regional Youth Event (GLRYE) on July 5 - 8, 2018 at Elmhurst College in Elmhurst (Chicago), Illinois. The theme, *A Just World for All: Your Voice Matters!*, will encourage your youth to ponder, pray, and play. GLRYE is open to youth who have finished 6th grade through those who have just finished 12th grade.

Rev. R.J. Morgan, Pastor at Zoar UCC New Hanover, has agreed to be the group coordinator.

There have been some discussions about riding the train to Chicago rather than drive or take a bus. Train tickets are approximately \$30 one way from St. Louis. However, churches can make their own travel arrangements to get to Elmhurst College. If your church has interest in attending RYE, please let us know and tell us who your contact person will be. Then watch for further emails from the ISC office and/or Rev. R.J. Morgan for more details.

Early Bird registration is \$300/per person through May 1. Regular Registration after May 1 through June 1 is \$325/person. Both registration fees are for double occupancy in sleeping rooms. **Late registration from June 2 through June 15 is \$350/person** and double occupancy. The registration fees include lodging, event t-shirt and meals. Required paperwork will be emailed out after registration. Please note: Youth Group Leaders and Youth Group Chaperones must be 22 years old or older.

If your group cannot pay by credit card, contact Lisa Hart at glrye18reg@gmail.com for assistance. Click [here](#) to like the GLRYE Facebook page and keep updated on plans, and click [here](#) to register youth from your church.

The St. Louis area AUCE (Association of United Church Educators) is planning the *Better Together: Children and Family Ministry Resource Fair* on Sat, April 7 from 8:45 am - 1 pm at Eden Seminary Main Building, 475 E Lockwood Ave, St. Louis. There is no cost to attend. You can look forward to resource samples, book tables (sharing personal resources so you can look before you buy), workshops including OWL, LOGOS, Godly Play, and a Multi-Generational Faith Formation Roundtable. The morning will conclude with a "sample" of Messy Church model of ministry! Click [here](#) for a flyer.



MEET our SUMMER STAFF

Welcome Ryan Goetter to our 2018 leadership team! This will be Ryan's fourth summer on staff. He will be serving as a village coordinator - supervising and supporting our counselors and campers, as well as coordinating activities and special events. Ryan grew up near Collinsville IL; he was an active member of St. John Evangelical UCC and an avid member of his high school band. He attended summer camp at DuBois Center for many years, including our CIT (Counselors in Training) program. Ryan currently attends Missouri State University where he studies Instrumental Music Education. He has especially enjoyed his recent practicum experiences. During the school year he works at the Taylor Health and Wellness Center. His focus is student wellness programming, including coordinating a variety of special events. Ryan is a member of Kappa Kappa Psi - an honorary band service fraternity and a founding member of Lambda Chi Alpha. He has served his fraternity as the Director for Drug and Alcohol Awareness for the MSU chapter of FSLSA (Fraternity and Sorority Leaders of Social Awareness). Ryan has a great mentor in his father who is always involved in whatever Ryan and his sister Catie are doing. Ryan loves the smell of fast food and the taste of hot wings. All his favorite childhood memories are from his adventures at camp. When asked why he has such a passion for working at DuBois Center, Ryan wrote, "I grew up at camp! It's such an amazing and magical place and I wanted an opportunity to give the kids a great experience like I had!" The wonderful, often off-beat, interactions with campers and the enduring friendships with fellow staff members (his camp family) - he loves it all! One more important thing you should know about Ryan - he absolutely loves Pentatonix Christmas music and chances are he'll be heard humming those tunes throughout the summer.

REGISTER for SUMMER CAMP! Early Bird - April 5

We are excited about this summer! Our program staff is coming together nicely. There will be lots of familiar faces, as well as some new ones. The same goes for our chaplains and other volunteers. New activities are in the works and fresh approaches to some traditional favorites. Now is the time to register - before the Early Bird deadline and before sessions are full. Register [online](#) or by mail. Click [here](#) for a camp schedule or find the full camp brochure in your church office or on our [website](#). You may also contact DuBois Center to receive a brochure by mail at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.



BULLETIN INSERTS

There are many ways to help spread the word about DuBois Center and our shared ministry. One is by utilizing bulletin inserts which are periodically included in Weekly Connection or sent directly to churches as print-ready PDF documents. All you need to do is copy, cut and stuff! Check out this [one](#) focusing on Summer Camp and Service Saturday, or this [one](#) about the Block Party and volunteer opportunities.



Father Son Retreat REGISTER by Fri, March 30

The annual DuBois Center Father-Son Retreat is just two weeks away - April 13-15! Do you or does a man in your life need some time away with their son, father, grandfather, nephew, brother or buddy - some quality guy time? Look no further! Spend time on the waterfront fishing for a whopper, at the archery range shooting bullseyes, or around the campfire telling silly stories and roasting marshmallows. Whatever your interests, there is something for you! **Don't let this fish get away; registration ends Friday - March 30.** For more information, click [here](#). Register [online](#), by mail or email. If you have additional questions, contact DuBois Center at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.



SUMMER JOBS - APPLY NOW!

Is this the year for more than just another summer job? DuBois Center is searching for fun-loving and child-focused individuals with a heart for ministry to serve on our summer staff.

Amazing memories + resume building skills = a summer to remember. Check out the Summer of Service [flyer](#) and consider whether serving outdoors with a dynamic team might be just the opportunity for you. Open positions: cabin counselors, barn staff and coordinators. Lifeguard certification, a plus for all positions. [Online](#) or contact shirley.director@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

SPRING LINE-UP

4/1	Sunday	Happy Easter!
4/11	Wed	Nature's Classroom Season Begins
4/13-15	Fri-Sun	Father & Son Retreat
4/21	Saturday	Wrangle & Ride - Horse Day Service Saturday - Work Day
5/6	Sunday	BLOCK Party for Middle & High Schoolers
5/14-18	Mon-Fri	St. Paul UCC, Belleville Work Week
5/21-23	Mon-Wed	Southern Illinois Art Workshop
5/30	Wed	Summer Camp Staff Training Begins
6/10	Sunday	1 st Day of Summer Camp 2018



BLOCK PARTY! - Sunday, May 6

We're having a Block Party in the Rustic Village and your middle and high school youth groups are invited! Join DuBois Center staff and volunteers for an afternoon of fun, food, games, contests and music. One of the best parts - IT'S FREE. We'll roast hot dogs and make s'mores, meet some of the horses, and explore the Rustic Village. Whether you are a DuBois Center camper or not, you're invited! Load up right after church, grab some lunch and head to camp. We'll be on the move from 1-4:30 pm, but arrive when you can. Youth must be accompanied by adult chaperones or parents. RSVP by Monday, April 30 - we need to stock



the coolers and send you permission forms. For more information or to RSVP, check out this [flyer](#) or contact DuBois Center at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

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



Marine United Church of Christ will host an evening of friendly competition with Hoyleton Youth & Family Services as the winner! The church is set to host the 17th annual Trivia Night benefiting Hoyleton Youth & Family Services on Sat, April 28. Join the hosts for challenging trivia, door prizes and more. The cost is \$12 per person, with up to 8 players to a table. The church is located at the intersection of Center Street and Hwy 143 in Marine. Prizes will be awarded to the first and second place winning teams. Contact the

church at 618-887-4465 to reserve a table for trivia or click [here](#).

Do you belong to your church's men's or women's group? Or one of the church fellowship groups? If so, does your group need a speaker?

St. John's Community Care would be happy to come to your church, to present information on caregiving, including relevant aging topics and helpful resources. St. John's Community Care speakers are experts in the field of elder care, dementia and family dynamics. Its presentations focus on helping aging and disabled people live at home as independently and as long as possible and helping family caregivers and their loved ones experience less stress. With this information, caregivers can often avoid having to sacrifice their employment, daily responsibilities, health, rest and/or leisure activities. St. John's Community Care is willing to come to your location (within a 25 mile radius of Collinsville). You can pick the best time that is convenient for your group. For more information email mathmer@stjohnscc.org. Click [here](#) to learn more about the topics of the presentations.



Caring compassionately for aging and disabled people since 1985

Surviving Caregiving, A MAP THROUGH THE MAZE, is an insightful conference designed for family caregivers who wish to gain valuable knowledge and resources that will help them navigate the maze of caregiving. The Conference is Sat, April 28 from 9:30 am 2:30 pm at St. John Evangelical UCC's Faith Hall, 307 West Clay Street (rear), Collinsville, IL 62234. To register call Age Smart Community Resources at 618-222-2561. This conference is free, but registration is required. Box lunch included. Complimentary care will be available at St. John's Adult Day Center during the conference hours. Pre-registration for adult day service is required. Contact Stacey Rhodes at 618-344-5008. Surviving Caregiving is co-presented by: St. John's Community Care, AgeSmart Community Resources and Hospice of Southern Illinois.

St. John's Community Care will offer Savvy Caregiver Training sessions several times through 2018 using a curriculum developed by the University of Minnesota. This training provides tools to family members who are caring

for an individual with dementia/memory loss who is living at home, either alone or with family. This series of 6 two-hour sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings on April 17 & 24 - May 1, 8, 15, 22 at Fairview Heights Community Room, 10025 Bunkum Road, Fairview Heights, IL 62208. To register or for more information, call 618-344-5008.

2nd Annual Night at the Improv - Uni-Pres Kindercottage presents **Night at the Improv on Sat. April 14 at St. Paul UCC, 115 W "B" St, Belleville.** A night of Laughter, Frivolity & Jocularly featuring *Ed Reggi and The Paper Slips Theater*. Doors open for silent auction at 5 pm. Dinner and show at 6 pm. Here are two ways to promote the event at your churches. Click [here](#) for a bulletin insert. Click [here](#) for a pdf to be placed on your PowerPoint slides during your services.



What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...

100 Plus Copies of the E&R Hymnal- FREE

Concordia UCC near Belleville has 100-plus copies of the 1941 Evangelical & Reformed Hymnal (Eden Publishing House) free for any interested church. You must arrange pick up of the hymnals. Contact: Douglas Anders-Interim Minister (314.546.6772 or douglas.uccrev@att.net). If interested, please respond promptly. If there is no interest, we plan to dispose of the hymnals by April 15.

St. John's UCC Midway presents a Personal Safety and Self-Awareness Presentation on April 15 from 1 pm - 3 pm. This is an ESSENTIAL Class for anyone and everyone! Learn more about awareness and protecting yourself! We tackle this very serious issue while learning techniques to empower and defend ourselves against acts of aggression and violence! While much of the class is geared to women, men will learn personal safety as well as what is necessary for your wives, daughters, mothers and sisters to stay safe. Leslie Sphar Reeves, owner of All You Studio and Party Place in Troy, IL will be presenting. She has an extensive training and experience in self-defense, conceal carry, and physical fitness. Learn about distractions, intuition, psychology of fighting and more! This is a speaking engagement only; there will not be a physical demonstration during this presentation. Put more tools in your SELF DEFENSE and AWARENESS Toolbox! Great for college students, mother, daughters, sisters, office staff or anyone else! You are worth defending! No registration required to attend. Contact 618-377-9288.

Join St. John UCC in Fairview Heights for the installation of Rev. Rosemary Captain on April 15, 2018 at 3 pm at St. John UCC, 10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights. Pastors who wish to participate are asked to robe with a red stole and arrive 1/2 hour prior to the service.

Join Zion UCC in Central City for the installation of Rev. Nancy C.L. Peebles on April 22, 2018 at 3 pm at Zion UCC, 101 N Broadway, Central City. Please RSVP to: 618-532-1751 or zionuccil@att.net. Following the service of worship, all are invited to a Celebration Tea. Pastors who wish to participate are asked to robe with a red stole and arrive 1/2 hour prior to the service.

Save the Date!! The Illinois South Conference Confirmation Retreat is a tool for enhancing youth ministry in local congregations and a time for personal spiritual renewal. It is designed as a supplement to the confirmation program of our local churches and it offers a unique opportunity for confirmation classes from across the Conference to bond within and between their groups. Music, worship, theme presentations, play times, discussion groups, and "hang out time" are all part of the retreat. If this sounds of interest to your confirmands/leaders, then please save the date for the 2018 Confirmation Retreat - September 14-15, 2018 at DuBois Center. And please make sure to include this retreat in your upcoming confirmation paperwork.

Our Whole Lives(OWL): Sexuality and Our Faith Facilitator Training will be held from April 12 - 14 at the First Congregational Church of Webster Groves, 10 West Lockwood, Webster Groves, MO. Meals are included with the training. Training begins with a meal at 4 pm on Thursday, April 12 and ends on Sat, April 14 at 4 pm. You will have a choice of training levels of K-1, 4-6, Secondary or Adult. All participants must purchase and/or bring with them a copy of the curriculum for the levels they are being trained on. Before the training, contact the UUA bookstore or UCC Resources to purchase the materials. Registration deadline is April 2. Click [here](#) for registration form or contact Tracey Harris at tracey.harris@firstchurchwg.org.

FREE High Chairs - Evangelical UCC in Highland has six high chairs available to give to anyone in need of one. Please contact the office at 618-654-7459 or bbray@evucc.org. First come, first served.

Earth Day 2018 is Sunday, April 22, making it an excellent opportunity to center worship services & activities around: Environmental Awareness - Stewardship - Justice - and Climate Change.

Earth Day is now a global event each year, and we believe that more than 1 billion people in 192 countries now take part in what is the largest civic-focused day of action in the world.

It is a day of political action and civic participation. People march, sign petitions, meet with their elected officials, plant trees, clean up their towns and roads. Corporations and governments use it to make pledges and announce sustainability measures. Faith leaders, including Pope Francis, connect Earth Day with protecting God's greatest

creations, humans, biodiversity and the planet that we all live on.

Earth Day Network, the organization that leads Earth Day worldwide, today announced that Earth Day 2018 will focus on mobilizing the world to End Plastic Pollution. For more information, click [here](#).

Earth Hour is a global WWF (formerly known as World Wildlife Fund) climate change initiative. For more information, click [here](#).

Region 2

Maudy Thursday Worship Service on March 29 at 7:30 pm in Dupo Christ UCC will be The Last Supper Tableau, an inspirational hour in the Upper Room where you will hear the disciples' testimony of the Master. All are welcome.

Dupo Christ UCC will hold an All You Can Eat Chicken & Dumpling Dinner on Sun, April 8 from 11:30 am - 3:00 pm. Dinner includes chicken, dumplings, green beans, carrots, cole slaw, bread and dessert. Adults \$10; Children 5 - 12 \$4; Children under 5 Free. Carry outs available. Call 618-286-4211.

Region 3

St. John Evangelical UCC in Collinsville will hold its 10th Auction - the Main Event - on the evening of April 7. Lots of great items to bid on!! Proceeds benefit their Homework, Help and Hoops after-school and summer programs as well as St. John's Community Care program of in-house and home service programs for the elderly. All are welcome to attend. For tickets, contact the church at 618-344-2526 or St. John's Community Care at 618-407-0343.

Region 5

Exhale youth group at Salem UCC in Alhambra will host a Trivia Night and Silent Auction on Sat, April 14. Doors open at 6 pm. There will be soda for sale. Free water. Bring snacks for your table. 50/50. Cost is \$10/person with up to 10 per table. Proceeds will help them raise funds for their summer mission trip to Houston. Contact 618-520-0185 or rjbraundmeier@gmail.com.

Region 8

Zion UCC in New Baden will hold its dine in or carry out Fish Fry on Fri, March 30 from 4 pm - 6:30 pm. Menu includes cod tail or catfish, mac and cheese, fries or chips, cole slaw and dessert. \$8/dinner. Good Friday Worship Service at 7 pm.

The Region 8 Easter Vigil will be held on March 31 at St. Paul UCC in Lebanon beginning at 7 pm. All are welcome.

Zion UCC in New Baden will hold a drive-through Spaghetti Dinner on April 13. Menu includes a choice of spaghetti with marinara, meat or white sauce, bread sticks, salad and dessert. \$8/dinner.