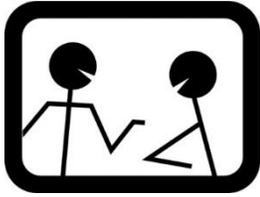


Weekly Connection

For the Week of September 9 - September 15, 2018
Diverse Minds, Covenant Hearts, Made One in the Body of Christ



Tell Your Story

In 2003, National Public Radio embarked on an experiment, which they could never have imagined would blossom into a powerful tool for transformation, compassion, and change. They created a simple radio segment entitled "StoryCorps." In order to curate stories, they simply put a "storybooth" (much like a self-service picture booth) in Grand Central

Terminal in New York City. They offered an open invitation for New Yorkers to sit in the booth, press the record button, look into the camera, and tell their story. Then they used portions of those stories to share with listeners on the radio.

Sometimes the stories were funny or inspirational.

Sometimes the stories were reflective or thought provoking.

Sometimes the stories were sad or tragic.

Regardless of the story, what NPR and the "StoryCorps" listeners discovered was that they were always profound because they revealed the wider story of humanity...the story of finding courage, resiliency, inspiration, forgiveness, redemption, grace, kindness, and love.

To their surprise, the radio segment became so popular that listeners living in places other than New York City began to contact NPR requesting a "storybooth" be placed in their city so they could tell their story. Eventually not only did the "storybooth" travel, but countless compilations of the stories were sold, podcasts were created and a not-for-profit organization which funds mission projects was founded.

The "StoryCorps" purpose statement is "our mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world."

I don't know about you, but that sounds like something the Church of Jesus Christ should be doing.

Yet, the sad thing is that, in my line of work, too often the church is the last place where people are willing to share their stories.

Why?

Because it takes bravery and vulnerability that, many are not willing to risk.

Too often, people are afraid to tell their stories because they fear the story will not be received and understood, but rather used against them in order to point out one's flaws, failings, or failure to look, sound, act, or even believe how others think they should.

Too often people are afraid to tell their stories because they have seen the judgment, scorn, hurt, and pain others have felt when they openly and honestly shared their stories.

What I find interesting is that the Church was born out of people telling their stories. Stories of how their encounters with the presence of God, with Jesus Christ, or the workings of the Holy Spirit had changed their lives for good. The Church was born out of ordinary people telling ordinary stories.

I imagine sometimes the stories were funny or inspirational.

Sometimes the stories were reflective or thought provoking.

Sometimes the stories were sad or tragic.

Always the stories were profound because they revealed the wider story of

Important Links

iscucc.org/

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[CHHSM](#)

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[Deaconess Foundation](#)

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[St. Paul's Home](#)

[Uplands Village](#)

[UCC Campus Ministry](#)

[Uni-Pres Kindercottage](#)

[ISC Directory](#)

Pray for...

Prayer list for

Sept 9 - 15, 2018

Churches & Pastors

- Nashville St. Paul UCC, Rev. Beverly Kahle

- New Athens St. John UCC, Rev. Dr. Robert (Cathy) Koch

humanity's encounter with the divine and how they discovered finding courage, resiliency, inspiration, forgiveness, redemption, grace, kindness, and love.

Yes, I would imagine that sometimes those hearing the stories were critical, judgmental and disapproving when they did not fully understand that the story was NOT about the nature of the person, but rather about the nature of God. Sometimes the stories were diminished, silenced, or quickly dismissed and erased in the minds and hearts of the hearers.

Yet those who had, as Jesus described it, "the ears to hear" were able to hear the extraordinary stories of how God can and will work in and through ordinary people just like them.

Those who had "ears to hear" understood all persons were made in the image of God and had access to the Creator.

Those who had "ears to hear" discovered that when they received and honored the stories of others and when they authentically shared their own stories, God-inspired connections between people could be formed.

These God inspired connections enabled communities to be formed and out of these connections, compassion, mercy and grace would reside. These connections were threaded together to create the beautiful, intricate, and diverse early Church.

I believe we need a story revolution in the Church.

I believe we need to pay attention to the ways we are or we are not fostering environments in which people feel safe to tell their stories.

I believe we need to teach one another how to receive and honor one another's stories and to see the beauty, complexity and diversity of God's creation in all persons and their stories.

I believe we need to help people have the courage and permission to share their stories.

I believe the Church needs (more than ever) to be brave enough to tell these stories, for these are the stories of not only people, but of Jesus.

Dear friends, there is a world that is "hungering and thirsting" to hear and witness Jesus and his love.

Let us start telling the story again.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

SHANA'S UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

September 9 - Participating in the installation service of Rev. Christy Eckert at St. John UCC, Trenton.

September 16 - Preaching at St. John UCC, Mascoutah.

September 23 - Participating in the Farewell Service for Rev. Lisa Hart at St. Peter's UCC, Red Bud.

If you would like our Conference Minister to participate in a worship service or special event at your church, please invite her. Please reach out to Rev. Johnson at the office at 618-654-2125 or her cell phone at 618-882-8247 with some possible dates. You can also send her an email at sjohnson@iscucc.org. **This is your OCWM monies at work.**



The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference....

Rev. Joel Jackle-Hugh and Glenn Mullins from the United in Faith Church in Pana, went to visit Uni-Pres Kindercottage to deliver a gift. During the month of July, Glenn Mullins and Brenda Crisp, Director of Uni-Pres Kindercottage, made separate presentations to the Pana United in Faith Church congregation. Then special offerings were collected. At the end of July, Rev. Jackle-Hugh (left) and Glenn Mullins (right) presented Brenda Crisp (center) with a check for \$3,700. Kindercottage loves visitors who share their

generosity and help the children learn about the world outside of Kindercottage. What a blessing from the United in Faith Church of Pana!

Retired Pastor

- Rev. Dr. Sheldon Culver, Columbia, IL

People with Life Concerns

- Keep Kyle Nuetzel (24) in your prayers as he continues rehabilitation at home. Kyle is the son of Kathy & Rev. Patrick Poole.

- Pray for Rev. Gary (Joyce) Kniepkamp as he recuperates from an accident. Rev. Kniepkamp recently retired from being the Pastor for St. Jacob UCC and Summerfield St. John's UCC. Cards may be sent to him at 1431 Summerfield Rd, St. Jacob, IL 62281.

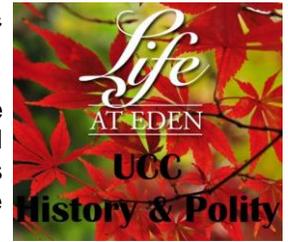
- Keep Rev. Paul and Marilyn Thompson in your prayers as each of them deals with health issues. Rev. Thompson is retired, but serves on the ISC Recruitment Committee. Cards may be sent to them at 910 Circle Drive, Red Bud, IL 62278.

- Pray for Pastor Cherie (Michael) Stolze as she deals with pain from an accident. Pastor Stolze is the pastor for St. Peter's UCC Stone Church in Addieville and St. Paul UCC in Okawville. Cards may be sent to her at 12023 Lake Meade Dr, St. Louis, MO 63146.

Eden Theological Seminary has added a new LIFE at Eden class called "UCC History & Polity." The class will be held at Eden Seminary on Sat, Oct 6, from 9 am - 4 pm.

Class Description

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. Dr. Jill Baker will be the class instructor.



Who Should Take this Class?

This class is designed for people seeking licensing, dual standing or privilege of call. It is also appropriate for anyone who wants to learn more about the United Church of Christ and who have no need for ministerial authorization. This LIFE course is a single day format. It will count as one credit in LIFE.

For more information and to register for the event, click [here](#).



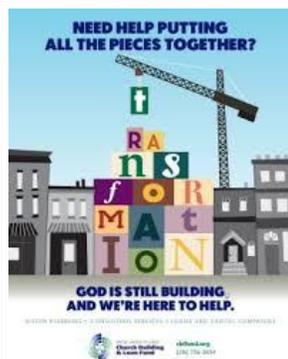
Eden Seminary presents the Schmiechen Lecture. This year, Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney joins us to talk about "Womanist Biblical Translation and Hermeneutics." Everyone is welcome to attend this free event in the Wehrli Chapel on Friday, October 5, from 10AM to 3PM.

Dr. Gafney will address her translation of biblical text as a womanist practice focusing on her recent work. "Translation is the only means non-Hebrew readers have to access the Scriptures of Israel in their own tongues. Yet the act of translation and principles that govern an individual translation are frequently invisible to many readers..." (Womanist Midrash, p 281).

The Rev. Wil Gafney, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas. She is the author of *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to Women of the Torah and of the Throne*, a commentary on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* and co-editor of *The Peoples' Bible* and *The Peoples' Companion to the Bible*. She is an Episcopal priest canonically resident in the Diocese of Pennsylvania and licensed in the Diocese of Fort Worth, and a former Army Chaplain. A former member of the Dorshei Derekh Reconstructionist Minyan of the Germantown Jewish Center in Philadelphia, she has co-taught courses with and for the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Seminary in Wyncote, PA. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

On Sun, October 14, Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Retiring Massachusetts Conference Minister, is preaching and speaking on the topic of Environmental Justice at the Lebanon St. Paul UCC at the 8 am and 10:30 am services. Between services, he will facilitate a conversation on *The Church and Environmental Justice* from 9:15 am - 10:15 am at the church.

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal is the retiring UCC Massachusetts Conference Minister, a denominational leader, climate activist, author and public theologian. He serves as Special Advisor on Climate Change to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. **Antal's recent book, *Climate Change, Climate World*** was featured on Earth Day 2018 in the Chicago Tribune. Click [here](#) for a flyer with more information.



Church Building and Loan Fund:

For Over 160 years, helping build YOUR congregation through:

- Loans for new construction or remodeling
- Capital Campaign Consultations to help you determine your church's readiness to build, remodel, or expand - and then walking with you each step of the way. FREE Information meeting.
- **NEW!** Stewardship Campaign Consultations to help you congregation achieve its mission hopes and dreams. *FREE information meeting.*
- **NEW!** Repurposing Consultations to help your congregation begin the process of more fully matching its assets to its mission! *FREE information meeting.*

Visit their [website](#) to discover all the ways that they can help build your church's mission dreams! Contact Rev. Priscilla Bizer at bizerp@ucc.org .



The Illinois Conference of Churches seeks to be an inclusive community of churches that celebrates and makes visible our sacred bonds of unity in Christ. They seek to unite churches and denominations in cooperative ministries intended to educate others and be witnesses of Christ's love for all. Their Annual Assembly takes place on Friday, September 28 in Champaign, IL. To read more about the ICC and their annual meeting, please click [here](#). Hotel block ends Sept 6. Annual Assembly registration deadline is Sept 23.

One person's story:

Like an Elephant on My Chest

When I am still, quiet, and alone, sadness washes over me and
Sits like an elephant on my chest.

I disguise it as anger and scream for it to "Leave me alone!" but it
Sits like an elephant on my chest.

I hide it with a fog of fantasy, pretending that it doesn't exist, but it
Sits like an elephant on my chest.

I put on my supermom cape, and act as if I'm strong enough to fight sadness all by myself, but it
Sits like an elephant on my chest.

Finally, I invite it to stay, so I can get to know it better.

I see what its eyes have seen.

I hear what its ears have heard people say to me, and what I've said to myself.

I review the memories it carries in its trunk.

I smell the half-digested food and feces within.

I feel the huge feet stomping over me.

And as this happens, the elephant grows smaller until it fits in the palm of my hand.

This I can carry.

I breath deep and promise my attention when it grows larger, to sit with it so it no longer

Sits like an elephant on my chest.

--Lynnette Schuepbach, 2012



DuBois Center News

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

HELP PROMOTE

Fall Festival & DuBois Center

DuBois Center's Annual Fall Festival is just around the corner and your help is needed to spread the word! Date: Sun, October 7. Time: 11 am - 5 pm. There will be food, music, craft booths, hayrides, horses, boat tours, kidz kraits and more - something for the whole family!

Here's what you can do to help promote:

- Post flyers around your church and community [b&w](#) or [color](#).
- Make announcements during services and meetings.
- Put this [link](#) to our Fall Festival web page on your web site and in bulletins.
- Like and Share our Facebook [event](#).
- Promote the event on your church's outdoor SIGN BOARD.
- Submit information to your local community newspaper or newsletter.
- Make it a CHURCH EVENT! Promote attendance and/or volunteering as a church or church group.

Thanks in advance for your support of DuBois Center and our annual Fall Festival!



THERE'S STILL TIME! - Calling All Handicrafters

Are you gifted with gourds, clever with color or cloth, handy with hardware, talented with tools or skilled in stitchery? If yes, DuBois Center is still accepting applications for Craft Vendors at our annual Fall Festival on Sunday, October 7. Each year over 2000 people turn out for this family friendly event. To learn more about displaying your wares, click [here](#). To register, click [here](#). At this event, the focus is on hand-crafted pieces; no items may be sold that are primarily commercially produced. We are also continuing to encourage the addition of truly vintage and re-purposed merchandise. A limited number of vendor spaces are available, so don't delay. For more information, contact Susan Fuchs at SusanKFuchs@gmail.com or 618-978-3182.



Upscale Resale and Silent Auction Donations

What do stylish purses and accessories, gift baskets, classic toys and holiday decorations have in common? All are items needed for the Fall Festival Upscale Resale Shop and Silent Auction. Please see the attached [flyers](#) for details. Donations must have a sale value of at least \$5 each and be clean; new, nearly new OR classic; easy to carry and appealing. All proceeds support the ministry of DuBois Center. To donate items, contact Norma Borgmann at 618-292-4617 or nborgmann1658@charter.net. Items may also be brought directly to DuBois Center on Saturday, Oct 6 or by 10 am on Oct 7. Thanks in advance for your help and donations!





FREE RECYCLING - Tees & Tanks

Are your dresser drawers packed with old t-shirts? How many more do you have in storage? Tees and tank tops from special events, school, sports, camp, vacations, grandparents - they are everywhere! For the next three weeks you can recycle t-shirts and tank tops for FREE! One of the featured crafts in the Kidz Korner at DuBois Center's Fall

Festival is cool bags made out of recycled shirts, and we need your help. **SPECS:** sizes youth large - adult large, decent condition, no significant arm-pit stains, kid-appropriate logos and wording. Due to the prep work involved, shirts are needed IN ADVANCE, by September 25. If you can, please deliver to the following locations or contact Norma Borgmann at 618-533-1658 (home), 618-292-4617 (cell) or nborgmann1658@charter.net for assistance.

Drop-Off Locations:

Thurs, Sept 13 only: Pre-Annual Meeting at Christ UCC, Dupo; 7-9 pm

Sun, Sept 16 only: Pre-Annual Meeting at St. Peter's UCC, Murphysboro; 3-5 pm

Sun, Sept 23 only: Pre-Annual Meeting at Grantfork UCC, Grantfork; 3-5 pm

September 4-25: DuBois Center or ISC Office in Highland or St. Paul UCC, Waterloo

SAVE THE DATE Wrangle & Ride! Saturday November 3 9 am - 5 pm



MOMS & DAUGHTERS - October 12-14

Early Bird Deadline: Friday, Sept. 21

Get away and re-energize your relationship with your daughter, mother, granddaughter, niece, aunt or other special woman or girl in your life. Enjoy a playful, faith-based weekend together, one packed with engaging activities, inspiring God times and wonderful fellowship. All ages are welcome, but most activities are geared for girls and women age six and older. There's still time to sign-up, but the deadline is quickly approaching. Register by **Friday, Sept 21** and save. **Early Bird Rates:** \$108 for adults, \$93 for 12-17 years old youth, and \$84 for 4-11 year old children.

There is an additional charge for horseback riding. Registration Deadline is Friday, Sept 28. Check out this [flyer](#) and RSVP form or go to www.DuBoisCenter.org and register [online](#). For more information 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

St. John's Community Care Upcoming Events

Savvy Caregiver Training sessions provide tools to family members who are caring for an individual with dementia/memory loss who is living at home, either alone or with family. Each session will be comprised of six two-hour sessions. The classes will be held on Fridays, September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5 and 12 from 10 am - 12 pm at the St. John Evangelical UCC in Collinsville. For more information or to register, call 618-344-5008. Download [poster](#).

The Cardinals Reminiscence League sponsored by St. John's Community Care and the Alzheimer's Association is open to people with memory loss who would like to share memories about the Cardinals baseball team. New fans and those who would like to socialize and learn more are welcome. Session dates: Sept 20, Oct 18 from 10:30 am - 12 pm each day. All sessions are free. Download [poster](#).



LIFE at Eden Begins in September

Date(s) - 09/14/2018 - 09/15/2018

5:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Certificate Course - *Telling and Living the Story: Evangelism*

Rev. Shana Johnson,

Conference Minister, Illinois South Conference UCC

This course will be a journey in exploring how pastors and church leaders can navigate their way towards expressing the Gospel in an authentic manner. In a non-threatening, invitational space, participants will consider what they believe the good news to be. Through examining what we believe, who we are in the image of God, and how we develop our own spiritual lives, we will begin to see how our personal witness can be compelling to others.

Required reading prior to Sept. 14: The book *Evangelism for Non-Evangelists* by Mark Teasdale

Elective Course - *Prepare the Way: Creative Advent Planning for Clergy and Musicians*

Paul Vasile,

Director of Music, Eden Theological Seminary

Explore the prophetic and poetic power of the Advent and Christmas seasons through music and improvisation with sacred text. We'll explore Revised Common Lectionary texts for the season (Year C), seeking insights that inspire compelling preaching and liturgy. We'll sing together, experiencing how music from a breadth of traditions can enliven and enrich worship, and we'll collaborate, building a community of creativity and mutual support.



The UCC for Mental Health presents **WISE (Welcoming-Inclusive-Supportive-Engaged) Conference for Mental Health: *The Power of Personal Story and Breaking the Silence on Mental Illness*** on Sat, September 29 at South Congregational Church, UCC, 41 Central Street, Andover, Massachusetts 01810, with Keynote Speaker, Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice.

Sarah is passionate about loving God, her family, and being part of faith communities. Her personal mission is to partner with others to share God's healing and hope. She is an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has served as pastor to churches in Brooklyn, New York,

Minneapolis, Minnesota, and New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

She is the author of the widely regarded book "Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness, Family and Church" (Chalice Press, 2014) and blogs at sarahgriffithlund.com. Sarah has recently joined the UCC National Staff in a part-time position on the Wholeness Advocacy Team of Justice and Local Church Ministries, serving as the newly created Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice. Cost: \$45/person. Churches with 3 or more registrants: \$40/person. Onsite Registration: \$55/person. Click [here](#) for more information. Click [here](#) to register.

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...



Green DuBois

Many of us think of DuBois Center as a special piece of God's creation. With the formation of a new Conference team, we're going to renew our emphasis on the ecological biodiversity that makes our camp unique.

Green DuBois is a new team that will focus on camp sustainability by sharing our resources with the public in ways that work around our camp season, while bringing in new revenue. The other two branches of Green DuBois will focus on active forest management and building on our existing green, ecologically sustainable practices.

Green DuBois is looking for volunteers who love the outdoors. If you have an interest in biology, botany, ornithology, herpetology, ecology, astronomy or many other facets of science, we're looking for you.

If you are a master naturalist, master gardener, or weekend invasive species removal specialist, come join us. If you're a professional in these areas, we could definitely use your help, too.

If you'd like to learn more, come to a meeting **Thurs, Sept 20, at 6:30 pm** at the Highland office. We'll sketch out some initial ideas, and start to form groups to focus on the three branches of Green DuBois. Before the meeting, please contact Jill Baker at jabaker5@aol.com, for a copy of our forest management plan. Members of the Outdoor Ministries Team, Finance Ministries Team, Property Committee, and the Conference Council are especially invited to attend.

The ISC Pastors/Spouses Fellowship gatherings will resume its monthly luncheons at the Red Apple Restaurant in Maryville on Thurs, Sept 27 at 11:30 am. Although this group is made up largely of retired folks, we welcome any clergy and/or spouses who would like to come to share in conversation and fellowship over a lunch meal. Please RSVP by Monday evening, Sept. 24 to Herb & Bennie Schafale at 618-476-3925 or [email](#). Thanks.

First Congregational UCC in Dupo has two sets of hymnals to give away: approximately 75 of "Hymns of the Christian Life," manufactured by Christian Publications in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania (1978) and approximately 75 of "The Hymnal of the United Church of Christ," manufactured by the United Church Press in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1974). Contact Gary Edwards at 618-806-1337 or garyedwards3477@gmail.com.

Region 4

On Sun, Sept 23 at 11 am, St. John's UCC in Brighton will hold Pets in the Park Festival at Schneider Park, 414 N Maple St on Hwy 111/267 in Brighton. A brief worship service to bless pets and farming animals will be followed by lunch and pet festival. Petting zoo, friendly contests and various pet judging competitions. Bring a lawn chair. Pets should be leashed or in a carrier to avoid run-away pets. A free will offering of pet supplies and cash donations will also be received and donated to area shelters.

Region 5

Highland Evangelical UCC will host a Sausage Dinner on Sun, Sept 30 from 11 am - 2 pm in the dining room and from 11 am - 5 pm in the drive-thru option. Adults \$11; Children ages 4 - 11 \$6; Children ages 3 and under Free. All drive-thru meals are \$11.

Region 9

St. Paul UCC in Belleville will hold a Cornhole Classic on Sat, Sept 29 from noon - 4 pm at the Swansea Moose. Cost: \$40/team of two players or \$20/person. Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. Hot dogs, brats and chips available for purchase. Cash bar. Family friendly event to benefit St. Paul UCC in Belleville. All are welcome.

Region 8

Join St. John UCC in Trenton at the Installation of Rev. Christy Eckert on September 9, 2018 at 3 pm at St. John United Church of Christ, 21 N Walnut St., Trenton. Offering will go to Our Church's Wider Mission. Reception with light refreshments to follow. No gifts, please. Pastors who wish to participate are asked to robe with a red stole and arrive at 2:30 pm.

Belleville St. Paul UCC presents Crafty Mania on Sat, Sept 22 from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm at the church. If you are a scrapbooker, card maker, jewelry maker or like to sew, you may spend the entire day doing what you like to do. Adults: \$30 with lunch or \$25 without lunch. Cost includes snacks, vendors, reserved space, attendance prizes. Raffle. Registration deadline is Sept 10. Contact Diana at dmhaar@charter.net or call 618-233-3303.