



**OUR NEW  
COMMUNICATIONS STAFF MEMBER:  
A MULTI CONFERENCE GRANT POSITION**



Dear Illinois South Conference family,

We are very pleased to announce that on November 1, 2019, our Conference will be entering into a new-shared venture with the Indiana-Kentucky (IKC) and Ohio Conference of sharing a new Communications staff person, Nicole Shaw.

As the result of a joint grant proposal written by Rev. Shana Johnson, Rev. Chad Abbott (IKC) and Rev. David Higgins-Long (Ohio), Illinois South Conference has been approved to receive a matching grant from the Essential Conference Ministries fund to support a two-year Communications staff member which will serve the three Conferences as collaborative effort of innovation and shared ministry. The remaining portion of this position's compensation will be funded by Strengthen the Church monies.

While this will be a part time position among the three conferences, we are expecting to yield significant results and a wider covenant connection among our three conferences. Nikki will be

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working remotely and in cooperation with Lynnette Schuepbach, our ISC Communications Coordinator, to expand our social media presence and messaging.

Nikki Shaw, a licensed minister in the UCC, a member in discernment, and a soon-to-be graduated seminarian, first felt a vocational tug in her teen years as a Roman Catholic where she was heavily and fruitfully involved with youth group work. She led retreats, served on various youth teams, and fell in love with the Body of Christ, the people she felt connected to through worship and fellowship.

In the intervening years, she got a degree in English in her home state of New Jersey, began working in journalism and publishing, and met and married her husband. They moved between four states from 2001 and 2010 and welcomed four children into their family. Nikki began freelancing professionally as a writer, social media content creator, and speaker.

In 2010, she moved with her family to Fort Wayne, IN. There they joined Peace UCC in Southwest Fort Wayne. It wasn't long before she asked the church's pastor, "Do you invite other people to deliver the children's message?" Turns out the pastor did invite others to deliver the children's message and Nikki has been doing that ever since. Now she's the Christian education director at Peace, which called her into licensed ministry in 2015.

Nikki loves giving children and youth the opportunity to fully participate, assess, and name their faith; she believes that children are not only precious but brilliant, capable participants in church life. She has a passion for diving deeply into Bible study and church history, which is evident in her work with adult education.

The heart of all her work involves communicating within and outside the church so that our missions and our personality shine through, inviting folks into our pews or into ecumenical partnership. Nikki graduated from Christian Theological Seminary in 2019 with an MDiv, and is excited to be part of the Indiana-Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois South conferences as the half-time communications director.

She brings a belief in the vitality and value of church and interest in strengthening the bonds of the body of Christ to her work.

You will have the opportunity to meet Nikki at this year's Annual Meeting and welcome her into our Illinois South Conference family.

Sincerely,

The ISC Conference Council

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