Remember...From Dust You Came, To Dust You Shall Return
As pastor, one of my favorite worship services has been Ash Wednesday. There is something deeply profound about a worship experience, which invites us to think about the darkness that resides in each of us and to remember that our time here on this earth is finite.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
There is also something beautiful about the ways such a worship experience invites us to be vulnerable and brave.
As worshippers come forward to receive the ashes, I can see if their eyes are somber, almost looking a bit anxious. I know it is a little unsettling to walk down an aisle, make our way to the altar to receive the ashes, and hear the instruction to remember our own sinfulness, our brokenness, and our mortality. It is a little unsettling not to be able to see (until we look in the mirror later) the mark of both our darkness and God's light on our foreheads, that is visible to all around us.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
Being the one who has the advantage of looking into the eyes of those who are receiving the ashes, I see both the dark and the light. Often, I know dark places of people's lives, which they try to hide from others. I know their struggles with despair, depression, loneliness, isolation, self-hatred, and doubt. I know the pain of physical abuse, substance abuse, mental illness, and rejection they or someone they know faces. I also know the reality of the "if only people really knew" fear they carry. I know the weight of this burden. For I also know my dark places.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
Then we are greeted, embraced, and held by the One who created us and knows us better than we know ourselves. We are reassured there is no darkness which the Giver of Light cannot break through. We are reminded that just as our own spirits came to this earth through our Creator, our spirits will return to our Creator when our life on this earth is over. Yet, our spirits are invited to return to God even before this life is over, to return to our original state of being in tune with God's spirit.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
If we allow ourselves to be honest before God and one another...
If we allow the truth of restoration and redemption to be proclaimed...
If we allow the weight of our embarrassment and shame to be lifted...
If we allow the light of God to shine once again in our lives but fully receive the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ...
THEN we can experience the beauty, the joy, the sweet relief of returning to the person God has created us to be.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
On this Ash Wednesday, may we hear and receive the good news of God's grace, truth, and light.

Remember from dust you came, to dust you shall return.
Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

Important Links
iscucc.org/
duboiscenter.org
ucc.org
Back Bay Mission
CHHSM
Ecuador Partnership
Eden Theological Seminary
Deaconess Foundation
Deaconess Nurse Ministry
Emmaus Homes
Hitz Memorial Home
Hoyleton
Insurance Board
LIFE Program
Neighborhood Houses
New Athens Home
St. John's Community Care
St. Paul's Sr. Community
Uplands Village
UCC Campus Ministry
Uni-Pres Kindercottage

Pray for...
Prayer list for
March 1-7, 2020
Churches & Pastors
- Nashville St. Paul UCC, Rev. Beverly Kahle
- New Athens St. John UCC, Rev. Dr. Robert (Cathy) Koch

Nature Photography Retreat
May 1-2, 2020
Registration is now open for a Nature Photography Retreat at DuBois Center May 1-2. This overnight retreat will feature two experts- Brady Kesner (left), professional nature photographer from Highland, and Marty Kemper (right),
retired biologist and avid birder from Nashville, to guide you through camp during spring bird migration and spring wildflower season. Friday night will include presentations on common wildlife, rare plants and photography skills. Saturday will allow plenty of time for photos anywhere your feet can take you at camp. Get more details, registration info and the full retreat schedule on the flyer here.

This is a great opportunity to explore some flora and fauna at camp, hone your photography skills, or just enjoy a spring weekend outdoors. Bring your friends and a camera - beginners and amateurs of any age with a DSLR camera are welcome. Early bird registration is now open until April 1. Register early online to ensure your spot.

Click here for more information or here for poster layout.

**UCC Disaster Ministries Joins Ecumenical Coronavirus Response**

UCC Disaster Ministries is contributing a $5,000 solidarity grant toward a growing ecumenical response to the coronavirus emergency in China. Funds will enable purchase and air shipment of medical standard masks and robes to the Amity Foundation, an independent Chinese social organization founded in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians.

At the foundation's request, American Baptist International Ministries is coordinating the U.S. response, including purchasing of requested supplies and shipping.

An initial shipment will go shortly, with a second projected in about a week's time. Wuhan, at the center of the epidemic, is especially in need of medical supplies. Goods are running short.

The worldwide ecumenical community is anticipating the possibility that the coronavirus epidemic "could expand dramatically beyond China, given the spread of the virus already in a dozen countries," said Derek Duncan, Area Executive for East Asia and the Pacific, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ.

Nearly $100,000 has been raised already. UCC's Global Ministries partner Week of Compassion (Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)) also is contributing funds, as are the American Baptist Churches, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Canada - to name just a few on a growing list.

**People with Life Concerns**

- Pray for Rev. Debbie Lawson as she mourns the death of her mother. Rev. Lawson is the settled pastor of Peace UCC in Jerseyville. There are no funeral plans. Instead there will be a memorial service when a date and time are determined by the family. Cards may be sent to: Rev. Debbie Lawson, 10318 Niblic Dr., St. Louis, MO 63114.
- Please keep Rev. David Beebe in your prayers as he recovers from surgery and serious health issues. He has served as Intentional Interim for several churches in Illinois South Conference over the years. You may reach him by email or his home address at 1219 Flagstone Terrace, Lake St. Louis, MO 63367.
- Pray for Rev. E. John Schaller as he deals with health issues. Rev. Schaller is the father of Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss. Cards may be sent to 623 Hamacher St, Waterloo, IL 62298.
- Pray for Rev. Bob Coffey as he deals with some health issues. Rev. Coffey is serving as Pastor for St. Peter's UCC in Lenzburg. Cards may be sent to 6213 Jo Ann Dr, Belleville, IL 62223.

**The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference...**

Sunday, February 16, 2020 marked an amazing ending of a beautiful ministry between Pastor Nancy Shubert and Darmstadt Holy Ghost UCC and Biddleborn Trinity UCC. Thanks to Pastor Nancy Shubert for your ministry in Illinois South Conference. You have been a blessing to Illinois South Conference, Darmstadt Holy Ghost UCC and Biddleborn Trinity UCC. We wish you well on your future path.
Yearbook Information is Due by March 4. Get your information in as soon as possible. Here's why...

1. Update your church's contact information.
2. Compare your church's statistics in an 11-year report.
3. Determine the number of Delegates representing your church.
4. Determine the number of Delegates from ISC to General Synod.
5. Gather statistics for recommended compensation for Pastors.
6. Receive thanks for your support of the wider church.
7. Attendance statistics help you to see ways in which can "do church."
8. Statistics for our denomination.
10. Statistics for churches seeking loans through the Church Building & Loan Fund or Cornerstone Fund.
11. A historical statistical record for your congregation.

Click here for church Instructions.

What's a Star Party? An evening of star gazing, with hot chocolate and snacks around the campfire! This specific night just might be one of the best nights of the season to check out the night sky - depending on the weather. Mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate the start of spring! Festivities are scheduled from 7 pm - 10 pm on March 20 - the Spring Equinox and will begin with a bonfire and snacks at Picnic Point. The big open playing field in the Rustic Village will be our prime star gazing location. Trams will run to and from this area from the toasty campfire at 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Bring your own binoculars or view the sky with provided equipment. This is a FREE conference-wide, family-friendly event sponsored by Green DuBois. Dress warmly and bring your friends, neighbors, youth group or Sunday School class.

SUMMER CAMP BROCHURE
Hot Off the Design Table!
You heard it here first! Our summer camp brochure is at the printer and will be in the mail to churches and past campers in early March. But no need to wait! Check out this online version. The Early Bird deadline is April 1 and online registration is now open. Download this form to register by mail or email.

THANK YOU PARTY
Sunday, May 3
Save the Date
The annual DuBois Center THANK YOU Party is an opportunity to share our appreciation for your prayers and support; your gifts of time, talent and treasure; and your partnership in our shared mission and ministry at DuBois Center. Together we have touched countless lives over the past five decades with gifts of God's abundant love. Volunteers, staff, supporters and friends make it all happen. If you fit into any of these categories - then YOU are invited. Enjoy a yummy meal, take a nature hike, tour the grounds by tram or pontoon boat and see what's happening around camp. DuBois Center is beautiful in the spring, so don't miss this opportunity! Churches are encouraged to send representatives. Activities will begin at 2 pm, with dinner at 4:30 pm. We'll conclude by 6 pm. Please RSVP to DuBois Center at dcinfo@duboiscenter.org or 618-787-2202 by Friday, April 24.
WRANGLE & RIDE - Saturday, April 4
Spring is a great time to be outside at DuBois Center... even more so when horses are involved! Join our equestrian team on April 4 from 9am - 5pm for a full day of fun with the DuBois Center herd! Designed for both beginning riders and those with some experience, this is a horse-intensive day of grooming, tacking, riding, instruction and other horse-related activities. Beginners will be introduced to basic skills, while more experienced riders work on more advanced techniques. The cost for this event is $65 with lunch included. Online registration is NOW OPEN. Click here for more information or to register by mail or email. Questions? Contact us at dcinfo@duboiscenter.org or 618-787-2202.

LENTEN WORK DAY - Saturday, April 4
Stretch your muscles, get a little dirty and make a difference! Help spruce up the grounds for our busy spring and summer seasons. It’s a great Lenten discipline for you and a wonderful way to get involved and help at DuBois Center. Projects vary, depending on the weather and the skills of the workers - carpentry, cleaning, painting, moving items out of winter storage and more. Lunch is provided. Check out and share this flyer. RSVP to 618-787-2202 or dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org. If this date doesn’t work for you, call to set up an alternative day for your church or family group.

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!

LIFE at Eden - March 14, 2020
Certificate Course What is the Church?
Rev. Shana Johnson
This course will be a journey in exploring the multifaceted ways we speak of and imagine what it means to be the Church. We will not only reflect on the historical roots and form of Church, but the emerging forms of being and becoming authentic communities of disciples invested in transformative action. Participants will also be invited, challenged, and nudged to consider how the Spirit is summoning them to be a part of the continuing creation of the Church, the living manifestation of Christ’s presence in the world.
Rev. Shana Johnson is the Conference Minister of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ.
Elective Course Spiritual Formation: Spiritual Writing with Dr. Bill Tucker

Flannery O'Connor said that anyone who survived childhood has enough material to write for the rest of his or her life. [Bird by Bird, Anne Lamott, p. 4]. What speaks to you and to others about your spiritual development, about your beliefs, your commentary on scripture, your prayers and reflections? We will attempt and share a variety of genres and begin a small portfolio of writing, both personal and professional. All sharing of writing is voluntary.

Dr. William Tucker, Professor Emeritus Eastern Michigan University

Click here for more information and to register. Contact Jill Schantz at jschantz@eden.edu or by calling 314-918-2554 FREE for Eden Students! Click here for a flyer.

24 Hours at Eden - March 8 - 9, 2020

Everyone faces challenges that are unique to their time. Whether you are preparing to launch a new career or enhance your skills and ability to lead, finding the perfect place to learn is an important step in your life's journey.

There is no better way to find out if Eden is right for you, than to walk in the shoes of an Eden student for 24 Hours.

- Attend a class
- Worship in chapel
- Ask Eden students your questions
- Meet faculty and staff
- Build your network
- Learn about our programs
- Self reflect and explore

Eden Seminary is committed to helping you grow your personal faith, develop critical thinking and practice, and sharpen your leadership skills for the sake of the church and the world. Take this opportunity to be our guest.

We provide all housing and food.

Click here to register or here for a flyer.

Planned Giving to Support Mission and Ministry Webinars

While a significant wealth transfer occurs (and will occur) in our country as our eldest generation passes, many congregations and ministries remain unprepared to promote planned giving options among their members.

Preaching Generosity

It can be hard to talk about money. And yet Jesus spoke about it often, second only to the Kingdom of God. Join Rev. Andrew Warner (a Generosity Outreach of the United Church of Christ) to explore how to preach and teach about generosity and the use of our financial resources. Each webinar will focus on a specific liturgical season and a set of readings. We will plan out at least one preaching opportunity for teaching generosity as a spiritual practice.

Wednesday Feb. 26th - 2 pm Central

The Season of Lent: A Changed Life - Using the story of Nicodemus, we'll see how increasing generosity created change in his life. We'll look beyond the lectionary reading to consider the other two appearances of Nicodemus. The story will focus attention on what it means to experience change in our lives. Register here.

Monday April 20st - 2 pm Central

The Season of Easter: Beloved Community - The stories of Good Shepherd Sunday (May 3) speak to what it means to live generously in a community (Acts 2: 42-47, Ps. 23, and John 10: 1-10). This Sunday offers a chance to think broadly about the many forms of generosity and how it reinforces connections within a community. Register here.

For ISC Estate Planning Record, click here.

Surviving Caregiving Conference will be held on April 4 from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm at St. John UCC Faith Hall in Collinsville. Attendees will learn about resources and techniques to help them on their caregiving journey. Speakers include Heidi Dodd, speaking on Legal & Financial Issues; Cindy and Christina Hardin-Weis, speaking on Learning Proper Techniques for Using Medical Equipment; and Gail Shaw and Chris Fulton, speaking on Dementia Resources & Coping - Helping You Age Well, Your Way! Attendees will receive a resource packet. Continental breakfast and box lunch provided. Complimentary care available at St. John's Adult Day Center during the conference hours. Pre-registration for the adult day service is required. Event is free but registration is required at 618-222-2561. The event is sponsored by St. John's Community Care, Hospice of Southern Illinois Inc, and AgeSmart Community Resources. Click here for a flyer.

St. John's Community Care Presents Savvy Caregiver Training. The 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 Tuesdays, March 31 and April 7, 14, 21, 28 and May 5 from 10 am - Noon at St. John UCC, 307 W Clay St, Collinsville in the West Conference Room. For more information or to register, call 618-344-5008.

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...

Zion United Church of Christ St. Joe - Waterloo
Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ
Invite you to attend the
Installation of
Rev. Patrick Poole
on
Sunday, March 8, 2020
3:00 pm
Zion United Church of Christ St. Joe
4202 Kaskaskia Rd
Waterloo IL 62298

Who Leads Your Church?
The Illinois South Conference is the association of churches which is here to help you find information and resources for all of the areas of its members' churches. In order to get this information to the right leaders of your church, we need to update our information as to your leadership. Here is a form we would like you to fill out after your yearly elections so that we will send financial information to Treasurers and music information to your musicians, etc. Please help us to keep current and funnel information to the right people. We are sending as an excel file and a pdf. Both are fill-able on your computer or can be printed to write the information in. 2020 Church Leaders excel  pdf

Region 2
New Hanover Zoar UCC will hold its Spaghetti Dinner/ Trivia Night on Fri, March 6 from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm for dinner and trivia begins at 7 pm. Ticket includes dinner and trivia. Adults $10 for tables of 8 players. Children 12 and under $5. They invite you to see their new Fellowship Hall. Contact Cathy Brandt for reservations at 618-939-4917. Bring infant care items for Kindercottage.

Hecker Friedens UCC will hold its Homemade Soup/Chili & Pie Supper on Sat, March 28 from 4 pm - 7 pm. All are invited.

Region 3 & 5
Various Churches from Regions 3 & 5 will conduct joint Wednesday night services during Lent. Here is the schedule:
March 4 - Marine UCC, 111 N. Center St., Marine
March 11 - Immanuel UCC, 5838 Staunton Road, Hamel

Region 5
Troy Friedens UCC will hold its Ash Wednesday Church Meal at 6 pm on Feb 26. Ash Wednesday Worship Service follows the meal at 7 pm with Rev. Janet Darmour-Paul conducting the Ash Wednesday Service.

Exhale Youth Group from Alhambra Salem UCC will hold a Nertz & Euchre Tournament on Sat, March 7 at 6 pm. Friends and family are welcome. A supervised nursery will be available. Snacks, soda/water, baked goods available to purchase.

Staunton St. Paul UCC presents Trivia Night on Sat, March 14 from 6 pm - 10 pm at Concordia Hall in Staunton. Trivia, Games, Silent Auction, 50/50 Drawing and more! Doors open at 6. Play begins at 6:30 pm. $15 per person for teams of 8-10 people. Bring your own snacks. All alcohol must be purchased at Concordia. All proceeds go to St. Paul UCC ministries. Register by

Region 8
New Baden Zion UCC will hold its Chicken Dinner on Sat, March 7 from 4 pm - 7 pm. Menu includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes, dressing, corn, green beans, slaw, bread, applesauce, desserts and beverages. Adults $10; Children ages 6-12 $5; Children 5 and under Free; Child take-out $5. Curbside orders available. Contact 618-588-4155.

New Baden Zion UCC will hold Fish Dinners on Wed, Feb 26, Fri, March 20 and Fri, April 10 from 4 pm - 6:30 pm. Dinner includes cod tail or catfish, mac & cheese, fries or chips, hush puppies, coleslaw and dessert. Adults $10; Children $5.

Freeburg St. Paul UCC will host its Quartermania 2020 and Vendor Fair on Sun, March 15 at the Catholic War Veteran's Post 370 from 1 pm - 4 pm. Items from over 15 vendors will be auctioned off, and you could win for as little as 25 cents! Doors open at 12:30 pm and event
**Region 4**

Brighton St. John’s UCC presents its famous Friday Fish Fries starting Fri, March 6 and ending April 3 from 11 am - 6 pm each Friday. Dine in or carry out. They deliver to Brighton area businesses and school during the lunch time. Please call ahead for delivery or carry out. 618-372-3737. Menu includes both white fish and buffalo fish, pulled pork sandwiches, brats and hot dogs, green beans, baked beans, mac and cheese, coleslaw and potato salad, and a wide selection of homemade pies and sweet desserts.

**Region 5**

Troy Friedens UCC will hold its 15th Annual Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner on Sun, March 15, from Noon - 2:00 pm. RSVP by calling 618-667-6535. Adults: $12; Children 12 & Under - $6; Carry-outs and curb service - $10.

Region 4

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Grantfork UCC, 206 S. Locust St., Grantfork</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>St. Paul UCC, 3277 Bluff Road, Edwardsville</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Marine UCC, 111 N. Center St., Marine</td>
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**Region 9**

Belleville Concordia UCC will hold its Youth Pancake & Sausage Breakfast on Sat, Feb 29 at 7600 IL Rte 163 in Bellville from 7 am - 10 am. There will be two kinds of pancakes - Buttermilk & Oatmeal. Adults $8; Children 5 - 12 years $5; and Children under 5 No Charge.