



## Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response UPDATE #4, April 6, 2020

To Illinois South Conference pastors, church leaders, and congregations:

### Don't make your church the next "hot spot" on the news

Easter will be very different this year. Acknowledge the grief of not worshipping in-person, but don't be tempted to think social distancing might be enough to get away with a face-to-face gathering. There are multiple news stories about church choirs and worship exposing hundreds of people to this deadly virus, and many are now desperately sick or dead. The country is at a critical junction, and for the next two weeks people should not leave home, unless absolutely necessary. Isolation is the only thing we have at this moment to reduce the rate of COVID-19 infections. There are confirmed cases in 11 of 12 counties where ISC churches are located.

#### *Practices to avoid right now:*

- Visiting anyone in person, not even if they're ill, and especially if there's been a recent death. Only connect face-to-face with those you live with; call or connect online with everyone else.
- Encouraging people to park and talk from open windows or sit in spaced-out chairs.
- Doing drive-through communion or blessings.
- Asking musicians, or anyone else, to come to the church building.
- Gathering in a group, even if it's under 10 people, and even if it's outside.

Find other ways to meet pastoral care and social interaction needs. If you're stuck on how to do something, contact a colleague and get a fresh perspective.

### ISC Spirit



If you know of stories that illustrate people being the church, please send it to [ISCspirit@iscucc.org](mailto:ISCspirit@iscucc.org). We need to see the hands and feet of Jesus in action right now! Share the stories that are warming your heart. #ISCspirit

One of Salem UCC, Alhambra youngest parishioners, with her hands folded in prayer in front of her iPad, virtually worshiping along with Rev. Jeremy Wood and the Salem Church faith family on Palm Sunday. "Hosanna, loud Hosanna, the little children sing..."

David and Carol Shanks hand out lunches with TWIGS in Granite City to reach children who live on the outskirts and don't have a way to visit one of the Granite City schools that distribute lunches. They are doing the essential work of keeping kids fed while wearing protective gear and limiting interaction time to an absolute minimum. Bethel UCC in Cahokia is assisting these children with weekend food.



## **Paycheck Protection Program, part of the national stimulus program**

Churches are eligible to participate in the Paycheck Protection Program, which can help cover payroll and other specific expenses. Contact the bank you normally do business with about applying for this loan through the Small Business Administration. The Conference is also exploring getting a loan from this program. There is some possibility these loans could become grants down the road, but the rules for this are not finished at present. It is strongly recommended by the United Church of Christ and the Executive Committee of the Conference that anyone exploring this program consider it a loan to be repaid, and not a debt that will be forgiven. Estimate your needs accurately and conservatively before applying, and understand the terms of repayment. Go here to learn more:

[Small Business Administration - Paycheck Protection Program](#)

## **Illinois South Conference Easter Service**

With the nimble assistance of the Local Church Ministry Team, the Conference is offering an Easter worship service that will be available starting at **6am on Easter morning, April 12, 2020**. The video will be on our Conference website (iscucc.org) and on our Facebook page. (@Illinois.South.Conference.UCC). We will also send out an email later this week with instructions of how to access the video. You may use it as your worship or you can direct congregants to view it anytime it works for them. **Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!**

### *Helpful Information*

- Everyone is advised to wear a face covering if they must be out in public. Many of the masks you've seen on TV or online are sewn, but some don't have the knowledge or the equipment to make these. But, there are many more options to make a mask including: bandanas and hair ties, cloth and paracord, and shop towels and rubber bands, and even a single sock cut just the right way. While none of them are medical grade, they offer some protection to both the wearer and the public. A quick search will yield dozens of patterns and ideas for whatever you have on hand.

Rev. Shana Johnson will hold a **meeting for pastors** tomorrow, Tuesday, April 7 at 10 am.

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/7088890946>

Meeting ID: 708 889 0946

To dial in:

+1 312 626 6799 US

Meeting ID: 708 889 0946

### **Together in Christ's ministry with you,**

Dr. Jill Baker, Conference Moderator  
Rev. Christy Eckert, Conference Vice-Moderator  
Mr. Dwight Asselmeier, Conference Treasurer  
Rev. Ivan Horn, Conference Secretary  
Rev. Shana Johnson, IL South Conference Minister

Rev. Rosemary Captain  
Ms. Virginia Ilch  
Rev. R.J. Morgan  
Rev. Mike Southcombe  
Ms. Barbara VanAusdall