Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response UPDATE #5, April 13, 2020

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

**Keep Practicing Social Distancing**

There are confirmed COVID-19 cases in all 12 of the counties where ISC churches are located, and we know of people in our Conference who are now fighting the virus. 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.

Pastors are working very hard right now, reinventing worship online, finding safe ways to provide pastoral care, and just helping keep congregations connected. A pastor's job is always stressful, and that's especially true now. Thank a pastor for their dedication and effort this week as part of your contribution to the common good.

**ISC Spirit**

If you know of stories that show people being the church, please send it to ISCspirit@iscucc.org. **Share the stories** that are warming your heart. #ISCspirit.

Thank you to these churches for their OCWM donations received in recent weeks. It's a critical time for all our congregations, our Conference, and especially DuBois Center. These donations continue to support all the work of the Conference, from search and call processes that don't stop because of a virus, all the way to horses that still need to be fed and cared for daily.

Belleville- Christ UCC
Carbondale- Church of the Good Shepherd
Centralia- St. Peter UCC
Dupo- Christ UCC
Fairview Heights- St. John UCC
Hamel- Immanuel UCC
Marion- Zion UCC
O'Fallon- O'Fallon UCC
Okawville- St. Peter UCC
St. Jacob- St. Jacob UCC
Trenton- St. John UCC
Waterloo- St. Paul UCC

**Nature Photography Retreat to be Rescheduled**

The Nature Photography Retreat planned for May 1-2 has been suspended by the Executive Committee, to be rescheduled at a later date. Even if the shelter-in-place order were to end on April 30, it would be impossible to have a successful event the very next day. This Green DuBois retreat will return at a later date.

**National Youth Event Has Been Postponed**

The UCC National Youth Event has been postponed until the summer of 2022. It will be held at Purdue University in Indiana, as previously designed. Refunds will be issued in the next couple of weeks for registrations that were already sent it.

**ISC Easter Service is Still Available**

The beautiful ISC Easter service, including a virtual choir from across the Conference, is still available online. You are welcome to use it as part of your congregational worship experience.

- [Video with Lyrics](#)
- [Audio only](#)

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

If you have not applied to the Paycheck Protection Program but think you might need to, there's still time. Many banks were not fully ready to accept applications last week. Contact the bank you normally do business with about applying for this loan through the Small Business Administration. Go here to learn more:

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

**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 April 20-April 26, 2020**

**Churches & Pastors**
- Staunton St. Paul UCC, Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins
- Stone Church St. Peter's UCC
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.

Helpful Information
- Pastors everywhere have gracefully adapted to the initial challenges of recording and sharing worship. Now, many are looking to improve their online experiences, and they are discovering halo lights. These are simply rings of light on a boom stand that you can adjust so you have better lighting on your face. If this is something you're interested in, several kinds can be found on Amazon under "halo light" or "ring light." And, if you designate the Illinois South Conference through the Amazon Smile program, a small percentage of all your purchases will go to the Conference. Go to smile.amazon.com and select Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ as your charity, and .5% of your future purchases will automatically be donated to the Conference, without costing you anything.

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 Ich
- Rev. R.J. Morgan
- Rev. Mike Southcombe
- Ms. Barbara VanAusdall

THIS IS YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK
During the shelter in place order, all Conference staff will be working remotely. However, this does not mean we are unavailable to you. If you need to reach someone in the Conference office here is some important information to keep handy.
Concerning the work of Conference teams and committees or search and call inquiries, please reach out to Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org.
Concerning financial matters (in terms of your church’s giving to the Conference or OCWM), please reach out to Debbie Kesner at dkesner@iscucc.org.
Concerning getting something communicated within the Conference or where something is posted on the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, please reach out to Lynnette Schuepbach at lschuepbach@iscucc.org. Concerning registration for upcoming events, please reach out to Julie Riechmann at jriechmann@iscucc.org.
For all things DuBois Center, please reach out to Shirley Asmussen at DuBois Center or email dcinfo@duboiscenter.org.
To speak with the Conference Minister, please reach out to Rev. Shana Johnson via email at sjohnson@iscucc.org or by phone at 618-882-8247.

The Insurance Board will present a live webcast, HR Issues and Your Ministry During COVID-19, on Wednesday April 15 at 1 pm CDT. Click here for more information. Click here to register. All webinars are recorded and available on their website after the live broadcast is completed. Should you have additional questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us. Stay safe!
Shawn M Polzin, CIC, at 309-660-1818 or smaxson21@gmail.com
Patricia A Stein, CIC at 309-530-4600 or pastein48@outlook.com

Inclusivity Statement for DuBois Center and Illinois South Conference of the UCC
Because we affirm the value of all God’s people, the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, ability, national origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. To the extent possible, we endeavor to accommodate those with a variety of physical, mental, emotional, medical, or dietary needs.

Retired Pastors
- Rev. P. Jerry Bennett, Highland, IL

People with Life Concerns
- Pray for the healthcare workers and first responders who have put their lives on the line to protect us.
- Special prayers for the families who are dealing with loved ones who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are not able to visit them in person for support. Give strength to the sick and to those who are struggling with separation.
- 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.
We are asking for your help. We have created an Amazon Wish List at this link with much needed supplies for the safety of our youth and staff, and just as important, the mental and physical well-being of each and every one of them. We ask that you visit our list and if you so feel inclined, select a wish and help us through these days of social distancing. We realize some items are in tight supply and not available to us. We are looking for masks for our youth in care and staff in the congregate settings, and like most everyone, are unable to locate them. If you or someone you know is using their God-given talents to make masks, we would gladly accept them. All of our mission partners are valuable to our continued success. We couldn’t do it without you. With prayers of comfort and safety to all of our mission partners, we will get through this! If you have any questions, please reach out to Alice Drobisch, Director of Philanthropy, Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, 618-541-9049.

Click here for the latest news from Eden! Thank you for engaging with the Eden community. Our joint efforts to offer opportunities to connect with each other have resulted in new friendships and an expanded shared mission. Please invite others to join our beloved community! It is so very important we stay in touch! It is our prayer that you will find the seminary wholly committed to forging a joy-filled future for Christianity, a place of extravagant welcome, no matter who you are. Read on to see the many ways you can become involved with the Eden community.

**NEW** Convocation Re-Imagined! Alumni, watch your email for details about the special worship service and virtual alumni reunions! Read more.

Worship service: April 15 at 11:40 am. Preacher: Dr. David Greenhaw, president of Eden Seminary.

Alumni reunions hosted by Dr. Greenhaw:
- 45th-50th Anniversary Reunion (1970-1975), Friday, April 17th at 3 pm
- All Alumni Reunion, Friday, April 17th at 5 pm
- All Alumni Reunion, Saturday, April 18th at 11 am
- Herbster Anniversary Reunion (2015-2019), Saturday, April 18th, at 2 pm

*Spouses are invited and welcome to all reunions
*All events are central daylight time

**NEW** The Walker Leadership Institute is happy to announce the “Tools For Leadership Webinars.” The webinars are designed to provide pastors and laity with information to assist them in their role as church leaders. Webinar viewers may, if they so choose, obtain a certificate from Eden by choosing the certificate option on the “Tools for Leadership” registration page and completing questions at the end of the webinar. Webinars currently available for viewing are “Church Finance” and “Church Conflict.” For more information and the recent press release, click here.

Eden Seminary’s Theological E-Forum. Register here for week 5, Thursday, April 16, at 7:00 pm. This week's theme: “Virtual Hallelujahs - Faith Communities are Singing and Making Community Online.” Presenter: Paul Vasile, Eden’s Music Director. Previous sessions are recorded and available online.

NEW STUDENTS: This crisis period may be a time that you or someone you know is feeling called to explore meaning, purpose, and ministry. Now more than ever we are called to be a servant leader. If you want to explore how Eden can help you with that discernment process, please contact admissions at EdenAdmissions@eden.edu.

Eden's campus is blooming! See recent photos here.

Join Eden for Chapel services on the Eden Seminary Chapel Facebook page Mondays and Wednesdays at 11:40 am and on selected Tuesday evenings at 6:15 pm. Actively participate and respond through CHATTING during service. View recordings of chapel here.

Are you new to Eden? Sign up here here to receive this weekly E-Newsletter.

Eden Seminary operates through your generous donations. Give today or contact us at advancement@eden.edu. If you'd like to send a check, please mail to Eden Theological Seminary, 475 E. Lockwood Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63119.

---

HORSE CAMPS - Ready to Ride?

Horse Campers spend more time with the ponies, but still have time for other camp favorites like swimming, 9-Square, vespers and crafts. If the weather cooperates, they have the option to ride each day. Some mornings, these horse enthusiasts are up and at 'em long before breakfast to feed, groom and tack the herd. An early morning ride - in the cool of the day - is a great reward for early morning chores! Later in the day, the stalls need to be mucked out. Horse campers take turns, and actually have fun while learning about the responsibilities of caring for horses. Younger campers can hop aboard the Pony Express for an introduction to horse camp. Older ones can choose from a variety of sessions. Ready
to register online? Click [here](#). For more information, check out the [brochure](#) online. Contact DuBois Center at [dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org) or 618-787-2202 to have one mailed to you.

**PONY EXPRESS** (completed grades 4-6)
July 19-22

**HORSIN’ AROUND** (completed grades 5-7)
June 7-12*, July 12-17

**SADDLE ’EM UP** (completed grades 7-9)
July 5-10, July 12-17

**WRANGLERS** (completed grades 8-12)
June 21-26

* This session, June 7-12, is nearly full.

**A FEW GOOD MEN - Summer Jobs - Apply Now!**
DuBois Center is in search of a few good men to round out our summer staff roster. We have solid applicants for the female cabin counselor positions, but not for their male counterparts. If you or someone you know enjoys working with people, has a heart for ministry and is looking for a resume-building summer job - look no further! Check out the Summer of Service [flyer](#) and consider whether serving outdoors with a dynamic team might be just the opportunity. Believe it or not, working at camp is a REAL JOB with tangible benefits. Click [here](#) to read further about the benefits of working at camp. Questions? Contact Shirley at 618-787-2202 or [shirley.director@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:shirley.director@DuBoisCenter.org). Application packets are available [online](#) or can be sent by mail upon request.

**EVENT CANCELLATIONS**

**Father-Son Retreat, April 24-26:** If you are registered for this event, contact Julie our camp registrar regarding payments at [register@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:register@DuBoisCenter.org) or 618-357-1809.

**Spring Thank You Party, April 28:** This event will be rescheduled for late summer or fall. Watch for updates.

**Nature Photography Retreat, May 1-2:** If you are registered for this event, contact Julie our camp registrar regarding payments at [register@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:register@DuBoisCenter.org) or 618-357-1809.

**Block Party, May 3:** This event will be back next spring!

**REGISTER without RISK**
Due to current circumstances, if DuBois Center is required to cancel any camp program, you will have the ability to:
- Donate any/all of your deposit and event fee paid to support the ministry of DuBois Center or
- Transfer any/all of your deposit and event fee paid to a future DuBois Center camp or retreat program, or
- Receive a refund of any/all of your deposit and event fee paid.

In addition, if the federal government, the CDC, state or local authorities, or the written advice of a physician keep you from coming to a DuBois Center camp or event due to COVID-19, the same options listed above apply to your deposit and payments. These exceptions to our normal cancellation and refund policies only apply to

**REDUCE - RECYCLE - REUSE**
An easy way to celebrate Earth Day when sheltering at home is to look around and see what common, items you might be able to
reduce, recycle or reuse. In the DuBois Center office, one could say that we reuse paper towels and toilet paper. GROSS, but partially true. Throughout the facilities, we use larger, commercial-sized rolls of these two products. It's never good for campers or guest to run out, so we try to replace them before the rolls get to that point. But what about the leftover? These are taken to the office bathroom. It may not be pretty, but it does cut down on waste. What are you doing at home to reduce waste?

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!

FALL LINE-UP
It's never too early to start planning for fall! Here are some events you won't want to miss!
- Sept 11: Bunco Night at Zoar UCC
- Sept 28: 1st Day of Nature's Classroom
- Oct 3: Fall Festival Work Day
- October 4: DuBois Center Fall Festival
- Oct 9-10: ISC Confirmation Retreat
- Oct 16-18: Mother-Daughter Retreat

Now is also a great time to make reservations for your fall church or fellowship event at DuBois Center. Consider a conference council visioning weekend, youth escape to DBC, family camp, or men's or women's retreat.

Nature Photography Retreat - May 1-2, 2020 to be Rescheduled
The Nature Photography Retreat planned for May 1-2 has been suspended by the Executive Committee, to be rescheduled at a later date. Even if the shelter-in-place order were to end on April 30, it would be impossible to have a successful event the very next day. This Green DuBois retreat will return at a later date.

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. The 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.

Monday April 20 - 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.

Deaconess Nurse Ministry and the Good Samaritan Fund
The Good Samaritan Fund through Deaconess Nurse Ministry provides financial support, subject to available funds, for UCC active and retired clergy and their partners/spouses who reside in the Missouri Mid-South and Illinois South Conference. Deaconess Nurse Ministry assumes no financial liability or fund-raising responsibility for this program and only the Good Samaritan Fund will be utilized.

Eligible Applicant criteria:
Active or retired UCC clergy with good standing and residing in the Missouri Mid-South or Illinois South Conference of the UCC.
Surviving domestic partners or spouses of active or retired UCC Clergy residing in the Missouri Mid-South or Illinois South Conference of the UCC. If a surviving spouse of clergy remarries, they are no longer eligible.

Types of Assistance:
One time, Emergency Assistance Grants are for unforeseen circumstances that create financial demand. Emergency Grants do not subsidize churches or agencies or relieve them of meeting normal compensation responsibilities.
Emergency grants are generally considered once per person in a twelve-month period with a maximum of $3,000 for the year. Credit counseling or other no-cost financial counseling programs may be recommended for those who have avoidable financial circumstances. The Deaconess Nurse Ministry’s Executive Director is authorized to give approval for Emergency Assistance Grants. Gap Assistant Grants are for a specific financial need for a short-term period which will eventually be resolved by other funding sources. Gap funding is available for up to 12 months rolling for a total amount of $15,000 to an individual. Approval of the Executive Director and a Finance Committee member from Deaconess Nurse Ministry will be required for Gap Assistance Grants. An exception for additional grant amount may be approved by the Deaconess Nurse Ministry’s Executive Committee. Referral Process: Applicant will need to make contact with their respective conference minister for referral process.

What’s Happening at Illinois South Conference...

**Worship Resource** - A gift of music from The Oïkos Ensemble for you and your church
These 9 original compositions, plus a jazz arrangement of an Easter hymn, were recorded by The Oïkos Ensemble and have been performed at more than 300 worship services and sacred jazz concerts around the country. Each one has a story to tell. You are invited to freely use the music in your worship streaming or for personal and group meditation. Each entry contains:

- Link to the musical selection on YouTube
- Reflection about the music
- Prayer for personal use or in worship
- Lyrics where applicable

My best wishes and prayers to you as we all seek to navigate through these uncertain times.
Abundant Blessings, Rev. Cliff Aerie with the Oïkos Ensemble

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Music

Click on each song title to be linked to the Worship Jazz Blog. There you will find a link to the music on YouTube, a reflective thought and personal prayer.

- **Forest Muse** by Cliff Aerie (7:47)
- **Dreams and Visions** by Chris Bakriges & Cliff Aerie(5:46)
- **Earth Walk** by Cliff Aerie (8:58)
- **Jiangjing** [Live the Way] by Cliff Aerie (6:38)
- **Up the Downspout** by Cliff Aerie (11:15)
- **Salaam Q’ahira** by Chris Bakriges & Cliff Aerie (10:05)
- **Dance of the Aegean** by Chris Bakriges (7:00)
- **Singing All My Blues Away** by Chris Bakriges & Cliff Aerie (7:42)
- **As One** by Chris Bakriges & Cliff Aerie (4:15)
- **Joy Dawned Again** by Chris Bakriges [arrangement on hymn tune] (5:45)

Job Opportunity: Staunton St. Paul UCC is searching for a new director for Exhale, their youth ministry for grades 6-12. Approximately 15-20 hours weekly. Must be familiar with the UCC and theologically progressive. Responsibilities include weekly Exhale meetings, planning and implementing annual mission trip and fundraisers; devotions; service projects; assist with Vacation Bible School and attend worship at least twice monthly. Send resume or contact Pastor Debbie at revdjetkins@gmail.com or 618-635-2386.

Job Opportunity: Full-time, salaried Executive Director of Child-Care Center, 6 weeks-6 years of age with after-school program; works with ministry-led board. Bachelor’s degree preferred. Director’s credential Level 1, experience & understanding of quality rating scales, DCFS licensing, applicable certifications & credentials required. Full job description, click here. Apply with cover letter, resume, three professional references, academic transcripts to: search@unipreskindercottage.org. For more information, contact Rev. Don Wagner 618-537-4991 or 618-444-2834.

**Region 5**

St. Jacob UCC will sponsor the Strawberry Festival on Sunday, May 17 from 10 am - 3 pm at Town Park in St. Jacob. Music, crafts, jump houses, entertainment for kids. Hot dogs, brats, pork burgers, strawberry desserts. Berry Bike Ride sign up here.

**Region 5**

POSTPONED
Highland EvUCC Auction scheduled for Sat, April 18. No future date has been set at this time.

**Region 9**

CANCELLED
Belleville St. Paul UCC’s Fine Art Concert Series scheduled for Sun, May 3 at 3 pm.