For the week of May 3 - May 9, 2020

Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response
UPDATE #7, April 27, 2020

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

Recommendation to Extend the Suspension of In-Person Worship until May 30, 2020

By consensus, the Executive Committee extended the recommendation to suspend in-person worship through May 30, 2020, matching the latest state guidelines. This date might still be revised. If it doesn't, it would make May 31, Pentecost Sunday, a possible day for in-person worship. We expect social-distancing guidelines will be in place whenever the shelter-in-place order is lifted.

We recommend every congregation start preparing for in-person worship for May 31, the first Sunday in June, or whenever seems appropriate in your area, as some of our counties have much higher rates of infection than others. In a few weeks, we will share a list of recommended practices for socially-distanced, faith-filled worship this summer. You can begin gathering a small task force now to make plans for things like pew spacing, hymnal use, coffee time and other parts of your regular Sunday morning. Purchase gloves and hand sanitizer now, because of supply and delivery issues, so you'll have them before you need them. Start now asking folks in your churches to sew cloth masks for congregational use.

We may have a possible break in the Covid-19 clouds soon. Let us be ready for a little sunshine.

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.

O'Fallon Weekly News recently shared a story about how many in our local communities are showing support for the medical personnel on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. Their article also mentions one of our own, Tarrah Vaupel, a student pastor at St. John UCC in New Athens, who displays a lit red heart in front of her home. Click here for the story

Hoyleton Youth & Family Services, a mission partner of Illinois South Conference, recently asked for locally made face masks. Highland resident Jan Firth had already made several for a local hospital, and when she heard about the opportunity at Hoyleton, she jumped in. Jan involved her extended family by asking them to find...
elastc at local stores for her creations. The Machine Shop in Highland donated 25 yards of elastic to the cause. In short order, a Hoyleton representative picked up 70 handmade cloth face masks for their staff. We are thankful to Jan and her family for supporting our friends at Hoyleton.

Thank you to these churches for their OCWM donations received last week. These donations continue to support all the work of the Conference.

- Hookdale- St. Peter UCC
- Hoyleton - Zion Evangelical UCC
- And anonymous gifts from individuals

Helpful Information
- Encourage folks to like the Illinois South Conference Facebook page. Current information is posted here weekly

Worship Resources
- We now have a worship resources section on the Conference website, with a link on the home page.

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

Be Still
In this time of pandemic, we wonder and worry about the uncertain time ahead of us. Will we return to a scenario of normalcy? Will the economy crash and burn? Will people love succumb to the disease? All of these create a whirlwind of thoughts, which keep our minds unsteady, in constant confusion and in a state that cannot imagine things clearly.

It reminded me of the time my son was perhaps 10 or 11 years old. He had a question about a math problem at school and asked me for some help. As I was diligently explaining it, step-by-step, I could see his eyes glaze over. I knew the inner dialogue he was listening to was, "I'll never get this. I just don't understand. I'm probably too stupid to learn anything new. What if I can't get it, and the other kids laugh at me? I'll be so embarrassed! I might as well quit school now, because I'll never learn it............"

I stopped talking. I was still. When I was still, suddenly his inner dialogue said, "Wait a minute. She's not talking. What's going on?" His eyes perked up, and he looked at me with clear eyes.

I asked him if he trusted that I knew how to do it.
He said yes.
I asked if he thought I would give up if he struggled to learn it.
He said he knew I would not stop until he learned it.
I said, "Then you must be still. You must quiet your mind and actually listen to the directions I'm giving you."

As I now recall this incident with my son, I recognized me in his position and God in mine. Have I been listening to my uncertainty and worry, which prevents me from trusting that God is with me? And so, I read Psalm 46: 1-10 (NIV).
1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells
5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.
6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
7 The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
8 Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.
9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.
10 He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

Join me. Take a breath. Find stillness by looking at the calm of nature. If you cannot get out to find nature to calm yourself, visit Brady Kesner’s website (bradykesner.com) for photos that can heal by the calm they project. The photo above is by Brady Kesner, local artist/photographer, with his permission. Please check with him before reposting the photo.
Blessings, Lynnette Schuepbach, ISC Communications Coordinator

Fun in a Pandemic
The choir director in Marion Zion UCC, Diane Lazorchak, was missing her choir members during the shelter-in-place suggestion. So she made a little fun to see them all together again. Sing the new lyrics to the chorus of White Christmas and enjoy her sense of humor.

I’m dreaming of a full choir,
Just like the ones I used to know!
Where the altos glisten, and sopranos listen,
To hear the basses sing so low. (Ahhhhh!!!)

I’m dreaming of having Doris on piano,
With lots of tenors on each note,
May we all stay healthy and bright
And may all the notes we sing be right!!!

More Worship Resources Coming In
The generosity of several pastors in Illinois South Conference has encouraged us to share worship materials that all may use, free of charge - proving that "together, we are better!"
If you have liturgy, prayers, songs, videos, that you feel would be beneficial to all and are willing to share them, send them to Lynnette at lschuepbach@iscucc.org. She will add them to the Shared Worship Materials page on the ISC website. There is also a link on the home page under Worship Resources.
Thank you to those who have suggested we create a page to help each other through this unprecedented experience.
Virtual hike and bike for the Kids! 5-mile, Run, Walk or bike on May 9, 2020 Race starts at 9 am or whenever! Post your photos on the St. John, Maestown Facebook page. Register online for $20. T-shirts or tote bag for each person registered. All proceeds benefit Hoyleton Youth & Family services. Call for information at 618-340-2372.

CANCELLED
The Boundary Training that was scheduled for May 12 has been cancelled. Those who were registered for the training will be contacted, but we want to make sure anyone that was considering attending the training also knows. Boundary Training for active clergy is scheduled for November 10 and for retired clergy on November 11. Reminders will go out to all who are due for training a few weeks prior to those dates. Questions? Contact Christy at cpursell@iscucc.org.

The Insurance Board Offerings
Save the Date: May 5th at 1 pm CDT for a free webcast discussion on “Boundaries and Youth Ministry during COVID-19”. Click here for the flyer and more information or here to register. If you missed a previous webcast and are interested in viewing or sharing the webcast, visit here.

Praesidium, the Insurance Board’s abuse prevention partner, offers many resources relating to COVID-19 for keeping youth safe. Feel free to share these tips and resources with your congregations. Click here for the tips.

Love in Action "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." –Desmond Tutu
Hope is LOVE-in-action - 3 Great Loves is Hope-in-action UCC asks you to show how you are spreading the message of hope these days by sharing God's love through your actions!

3 Great Loves is our denomination-wide mission initiative, telling the story of how we live out God's love through the lens of 3 Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation. For sharing the stories of how we, as a united church, live out God's love in missional, measurable and meaningful ways and find resources, click here. Be sure to include pictures and videos, too!

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.

SUMMER 2020 UPDATE
Dear Friends, Like many camps across the country, DuBois Center has been adjusting to the uncertainty that the COVID-19 pandemic has created.
As you know, our facilities are closed to the public, but critical tasks are being addressed. Our horses and cats are checked and fed regularly. The grass is being cut; fences are being mended; and other essential work around the grounds is being addressed. Office and management functions also continue, but with reduced hours.
We give thanks that currently our staff and key volunteers are healthy. They are doing their best to be good stewards of DuBois Center and the ministry it provides, as they work together to find the best path forward. Please know that you and your families are at the forefront of our thoughts as we consider the options. As you are likely aware, our Governor has canceled in-person learning for students in Illinois for the balance of this school year. He has not yet, however, spoken definitively about summer school or the summer camping season.

In order to give you, your family and your congregation time to plan, our leadership is committed to making a decision about summer programming at DuBois Center by May 5. We will be carefully reviewing guidance from the Governor and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Whatever decision is made, know that the health and safety of our campers, guests and staff is and will remain the most important factor in our decision-making process. Remember that our Register without Risk policy continues.

A special thanks to those families, individuals and churches whose financial support has continued or has been newly added. These are challenging times for all, and your commitment is greatly appreciated!

We are sending prayers for inner peace and strength from DuBois Center to you and yours.

Sincerely,
Shirley Asmussen, Director

THEY'RE BACK!!

And YES, that is a very good thing! Returning to leadership roles at DuBois Center this summer are Kristian Avise-Rouse, Ryan Goetter and Bailey Reichert. Their camp names? Sparrow, Shark Bait and Minnow! Bailey will be back at the lake serving as our Waterfront Coordinator. Kristian and Ryan will be serving as Village Coordinators, providing support and supervision for our cabin counselors.

Kristian (right) is graduating this spring with a degree in music education. He recently accepted a position at Pinckneyville Junior High School as the Director of Bands. He will also be taking the lead with the choir and musicals at the high school. The music programs at the two schools have had a collaborative design for years, and Kristian is excited to have this expanded opportunity. At camp Kristian can be seen at the teams course, in the chapels and cabins, around the barn and at the waterfront - he loves it all. This will be Kristian's fifth summer on staff.

Ryan (left/kneeling) is completing his first year as the music teacher and band director at Du Quoin Middle School. He's been honing his ukulele skills while introducing students to the instrument. Ryan is a new homeowner and is staying busy working around the house and yard. It was great to have him in the area this past year. Living just 20 minutes from camp, Ryan was able to assist with evening activities for Nature's Classroom and a variety of hosting and office tasks. We especially appreciated his guitar and voice during campfires. This will be Ryan's sixth summer on staff.

Bailey finishes her online classes and exams this week! She is graduating with a degree in biology and minor in psychology and plans to head to nursing school in January. She is excited to get back to DuBois Center and build on her first year as the skipper of the waterfront. In addition to being a "minnow," Bailey is a horse lover who is a fan of candle time, vespers on the beach and just connecting with the campers. She hopes to sneak in a week of counseling sometime during the summer. This will be Bailey's third summer on staff.

CREATION CORNER

Spring Chimneys

Yard work has become a favorite activity for many as we shelter-in-place. Chalked sidewalk mosaics and messages, manicured lawns, and newly planted gardens can be common sights. At DuBois Center, earthen chimneys are common sights. While homeowners may not be excited about their presence, we love searching for them. These chimneys are made by crawdads, also known as crayfish, freshwater lobsters, mountain lobsters, mudbugs.

SPREAD THE WORD

Share DuBois Center Online

An easy way to help spread the word about DuBois Center is to put links to our website, Facebook and Instagram pages on your church’s website and in your e-newsletters. The links are easy to remember -


If you are Facebook savvy, please "share" our posts and ensure your church members are in the know. Encourage members to “like” and “follow” our Facebook page, and do the same from your church’s Facebook page. Instagram is fun and lots of your youth are on it, so encourage everyone to “follow” us there as well. Let’s see how many new shares, likes and follows we can get this week!
and even yabbies. Crawdads are a freshwater species, but their chimneys can be found hundreds of yards from lakes and streams. The one pictured above is outside the camp office by the sign at the front gate. The mounds are not for protection but are the result of digging to find ground water. Crawdads need to keep their gills moist, so they dig. Observing them as they dig is a challenge - they are more active at night. Wondering about yabbies? They are native to Australia and are a favorite delicacy of the platypus. Learn more about crawdads in southern Illinois and how some midwest farmers appreciate the critters.

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! Now is a great time to make reservations for your Spring 2021 church or fellowship event at DuBois Center, to consider a church council visioning weekend, youth escape to DBC, family camp, or men's or women's retreat. Here are also 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

New Students: If you or someone you know is using masks, we would gladly accept them. 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.

**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.

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.

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...

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 2

CANCELLED
Region 2 meeting planned for Tues, April 28 due to shelter-in-place request.

Region 5

CANCELLED
St. Jacob UCC Strawberry Festival scheduled for Sunday, May 17 from 10 am - 3 pm at Town Park in St. Jacob.

Region 9

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

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 618-635-2386 or revdjatkins@gmail.com.