Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response - UPDATE #9, May 11, 2020

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

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

After the end of shelter-in-place, when will you choose to return to in-person worship? Or will you stay suspended for the foreseeable future? There are many factors to consider, from public health to the specific practicalities and needs of your congregation. The Faithfully Phasing Forward document was sent to each church and can be found in an article below. This document poses questions to consider, relates to the Restore Illinois plan released by Governor Pritzker last week, and includes some best practice guidelines for worship and church-sponsored activities.

Paycheck Protection Program

Illinois South Conference applied for a very conservative loan from the Paycheck Protection Program, and we received funding in the second round of SBA funding. This money will cover only payroll, for approximately two and a half months.

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.

Hoyleton Youth and Family Services connected with us in April about the possibility of housing kids and/or staff at DuBois Center, as they planned for keeping sick folks isolated and recovering away from well folks. We pursued this path for a few weeks until we hit a roadblock. Principally, we discovered the camp would need a Fire Marshal inspection, which would be an initial inspection that would require us to meet 2015 DCFS Guidelines. Because this would have been a first inspection, we could not be ‘grandfathered’ in. When we got to the requirement for a sprinkler system, we realized we would not be able to offer space to children. There is no way for us to meet that requirement.

We discussed using camp for staff housing, for those Hoyleton employees who did not want to risk taking anything home to their families. In the end, the distance to other locations wasn’t practical if no Hoyleton youth were on site. We continue to look for ways to support our partners at Hoyleton in these difficult times.

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

Carbondale - Church of the Good Shepherd
Dupo - Christ UCC
Edwardsville - St. Paul UCC
Granite City - St. John UCC
Maesytown - St. John UCC
Marion - Zion UCC
And anonymous gifts from individuals

Mascoutah - St. John UCC
Nashville - St. Paul UCC
Pana - United In Faith
St. Jacob - St. Jacob UCC
Smithton - St. John's UCC
Waterloo - St. Paul UCC

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 May 17 – May 23, 2020
Churches & Pastors
- Waterloo Zion UCC St. Joe, Rev. Patrick (Kathy) Poole
- Wood River St. John UCC, Rev. Dwayne (Donna) Dollgener, Supply Pastor

Retired Pastor
- Rev. Fred and Shirley Wehrenberg, Columbia, IL
Helpful Information
- An excellent article by Erin Bromage on how COVID-19 is spread: The Risks Know Them- Avoid Them.

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

Illinois South Conference
Faithfully Phasing Forward

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
~ Jeremiah 29:11

Even when it does not seem clear what tomorrow will bring, we need to plan ahead seeking God's wisdom and guidance.

For the last nine weeks, we in the Illinois South Conference have been following the stay at home orders of our state and paying close attention to the recommendations of the CDC, as well as local and national health care professionals. Our churches adapted quickly to staff working remotely from home and offering worship, faith formation, spiritual care, and fellowship in new ways. Pastors and worship leaders immersed themselves into new forms of helping members still feel connected by using online platforms, phone calls and even letters. Many church members have bravely learned a new language of technology. We have been practicing good physical distancing to reduce the risk of spreading the COVID 19 virus, while seeking to remain spiritually close and connected.

While at first, many felt the adrenaline rush of seeing God "doing a new thing" among us. Now perhaps they just feel tired, wondering like the psalmist "how long, O Lord?" As we have sought to do up until this point, your Conference seeks to share best practices and provide as many resources as possible as you and your congregations begin to consider what is next.

We have done our best to include some important questions for consideration when making decisions, as well as some resources and good practices to consider. To read all of the considerations, click here.

We encourage you to continue to check the ISC website, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Center for Disease Control for up-to-date information.

People with Life Concerns
- Please pray for the family of Virginia Terrill as they mourn her death. Virginia is the mother of Rev. Elizabeth Terrill, the Interim Pastor at St. John UCC in Valmeyer. A private service was held on Tuesday, May 12. Memorial donations may be made to Chesterton Art Center at 115 S 4th Street, Chesterton, IN 46304. Please designate in memory of Virginia Terrill. Cards may be sent to Rev. Terrill, St. John UCC, PO Box 251, Valmeyer, IL 62295.
- 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. 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.

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.

This may seem to be late, but perhaps we should extend the celebration for mothers, fathers, children and all to 365 days of the year? Just a thought! Hope your day was enjoyable. Life is good!
THIS IS YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK
During the shelter in place order, all Conference staff will be working remotely, but they are available to help you. Keep these contacts handy.
For the work of Conference teams and committees or search and call inquiries, contact Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org.
For financial matters (in terms of your church's giving to the Conference or OCWM), contact Debbie Kesner at dkesner@iscucc.org.
For communicating within the Conference, the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, contact Lynnette Schuepbach at lschuepbach@iscucc.org.
For registration for upcoming events or for information about cancelled camp sessions, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or jriechmann@iscucc.org.
For DuBois Center, contact Shirley Asmussen at 618-787-2202 or dcinfo@duboiscenter.org.
To speak with the Conference Minister, contact Rev. Shana Johnson at sjohnson@iscucc.org or 618-882-8247.

GRADUATION EDITION - Part 1
Four of our 2019 Summer Program Staff are graduating this month! Since graduations will be so different this year, we wanted to celebrate this milestone with them here.

Kristian Avise-Rouse AKA Sparrow will be graduating from Illinois Wesleyan University with a Bachelor of Music Education. This fall, he will be joining the team at Pinckneyville District #50 as a Junior High Band Director and High School Choir Director. Kristian grew up at Eden Theological Seminary and St. Paul UCC in Columbia. He has always been active in his schools and communities - playing in bands, singing in choirs, acting in plays, participating in sports and volunteering at church and elsewhere. Kristian was a camper and retreat participant at DuBois Center for years before his first summer on staff in 2016. He attributes much of who he is as a person to his weeks as a camper and his first summers as a counselor. Kristian once commented that his favorite part of summer camp is "the love!" He is continually amazed by all the campers, staff and volunteers who bring and share their love for each other and DuBois Center. His favorite memory from last summer was when Crazy Jam was on the beach and everyone made crazy sandcastles. Walk with us through memory lane from 2013 and Kristian's first summer as a high school camper, to his first summer on staff in 2016, to time with the horses - always a favorite activity and finally connecting with campers. Throughout the years, Kristian's big heart, engaging smile and gentle coaching as a peer and supervisor have had a significant impact on campers and leaders alike. CONGRATS Sparrow!

Laura Renken AKA Twig graduated on Saturday with a Bachelor of Science in Education from Eastern Illinois University. The current health crisis has slowed her job search, but Laura hopes to have her own classroom in the fall. She is certified to teach grades 1-6. Laura is an active member of Salem UCC in Alhambra. When not at school or camp, she sang in the praise team choir and volunteered for VBS. Laura was a camper at DuBois Center for a number of years and then a counselor in training. 2019 was her third summer on staff. She is also a regular volunteer at our Father-Son and Mother-Daughter Retreats. Laura's favorite memory from last summer was leading a candle time in the basement of Oak Lodge during staff training. "We all sat around and talked about the reasons DBC was home to us and why we wanted to make it home for others. It was a beautiful moment and I feel like it really helped us get to know one another
on a deeper level." Laura is known for her commitment to our campers, her fun and quirky personality, infectious smile and LOVE of creek walks. The vintage photo is from Laura's second year as a camper in 2007. She's the one in the blue hat. The second photo is from ten years later - her first summer on staff. In the third she's hosting and learning from a mission group. Last, but definitely not least, Laura's on a creek walk - no surprise. Laura is quite the artist when it comes to shale tattoos! She specializes in mustaches, beards, and even eyeliner and lipstick. Her favorite, though, is writing her camp name. CONGRATS Twig!

**SUMMER CAMP 2020 - Fallow Ground**

Here in the Midwest, fallow ground is a familiar concept. It refers to land that has been plowed but not seeded for one or more growing seasons. It is a ritual that helps restore the land's fertility. The Illinois South Conference Council met on May 4, and after prayerful and tearful consideration, it was decided that this summer will be a season of fallow ground for DuBois Center. The vote was unanimous, though made with heavy hearts. Currently scheduled programs for June - August 9, 2020 are being postponed until summer 2021. The ground was plowed and harrowed as brochures were sent to eager families, potential staff were interviewed, and plans were set in place. But the seeds, our blessed campers and leaders, will not be sown at DuBois Center this summer. This decision was announced last week. To read the full announcement, click [here](#). Options related to camper fees already paid can be found [here](#).

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!

**The Insurance Board Addresses Concerns When Reopening Offices**

In response to your inquiries concerning steps needed to re-open church offices and ministries once permitted to do so by State and Local authorities, The Insurance Board Loss Control team has created a resource to provide tips and information on how to re-open church offices and to prepare your building before returning.

Deaconess Nurse Ministry shares a story of how they are helping others during this difficult time.

Late one Saturday afternoon, Elizabeth George from the St Louis Community Foundation, reached out to Deaconess Nurse Ministry’s Executive Director, Rev. Donna Smith-Pupillo. A person had emailed her pleading for her family’s needs and asked if Deaconess Nurse Ministry could do something to help. Donna called Reta, one of their nurses, to follow up. Reta called this person, who shared that their 29 years old sister was living with the family and had been diabetic since she was 11 years old, with further complications of hypertension and a history of stroke. She was currently doing dialysis 4 days a week and had a diabetic ulcer on the left great toe with some necrotic tissue. This person who called was receiving active cancer treatment at Siteman. Her daughter who is mentally disabled, two young adult children who lost their jobs, and five children ranging in ages from 1 to 9 live with her. The family had just moved from a pest- and mold-infested home and had nothing. Reta got them food from Trinity Food Pantry and went to the store to buy supplies for them, which she delivered on Sunday.
Reta has provided this person and her family a list of resources including assistance for rent, utilities (LIHEAP applications), and diapers. Reta helped them with bills, contacted Salvation Army for furnishings, and Gateway STEM High School homepage link for chrome book access for their daughter in high school. Reta has provided home visits for wound care and supplies and will continue to monitor her until she is seen by a podiatrist. Because they are balancing so many balls in the air to keep their family together and needs supplied through minimal resources, Reta has been providing them with emotional and spiritual support resources as well. Their landlord is working with them to convert their house rental into a section 8, making it more affordable for her. Reta said she will continue to provide whatever support is needed and made available through Deaconess Nurse Ministry. They are very proud of their Deaconess Nurses who provide this much-needed help to people who need it the most during this time. Any donation is very much appreciated. Thank you.

**Hoyleton Youth and Family Services** has had the distinction of being a mission partner with the Illinois South Conference for the past 125 years. Established in the midst of a Cholera outbreak, we now face the coronavirus confidently and adapt to social distance and shelter-in-place initiatives. In these turbulent times, we strive to provide our youth and the families we serve with the required care and support we have always provided. Our communities’ mental health is at the core of our work, and with food, assistance, and counseling we have reached more people than ever before to offer hope, stability, and well-being in their lives. As we advance boldly, we ask for your gift of prayers. It is our hope that you will remember us through your prayers as you consider Sunday, May 17th as Mental Health Sunday and Pray for Hoyleton. "Prayer is powerful. It can heal, prayer can give, and it can change lives." Shane DeCreshio,

**May is Older American Month**

In honor of this celebration, St. John UCC will host an on-line Older Americans Worship Service. They will send out more details on how to watch this service soon!

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What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...

**Strengthen the Church Offering - May 31, 2020**

Materials for the offering have been mailed to churches. If you have not received your supply or need additional materials, click [here](#). Recognizing that many churches are not meeting in person, we are providing a number of digital resources online. Thank you for your continued support of your local Conference, the National Setting, and our work together to build the Body of Christ. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jacqueline Owen, Development Strategist, at [owenj@ucc.org](mailto:owenj@ucc.org) or 216-736-2169.

**One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC) - Invest in Futures**

The United Church of Christ National Office invites you to serve in 2020 or 2021 in three of their programs, Partners in Service, Young Adult Service Communities, and Summer Communities of service. **Partners in Service** is a program that helps increase the service capacity of our partner host organizations and provides leadership development and the opportunity for volunteers to use their gifts and skills. Volunteers serve full-time for periods of 1 - 12 months with a host. This program is open for adults of all ages. **Young Adult Service Communities** are unique opportunities for you to live in an intentional community with others who share your commitment to service and social justice. Young Adult Service Communities are 11-month leadership programs for young adults aged 21-35. **Summer Communities of Service** is a leadership program for young adults aged 19 and above. Summer Communities focuses on intersecting faith communities, service, and justice advocacy. Participants live and serve from late May to early August in host congregations around the United States. All three applications are open. Click [here](#) for more details and apply now!
Online Peer Support Groups for Clergy Living with Mental Health Challenges

**Free * Confidential * via Zoom**

# 1 Mental Health Is as Important as Physical Health

Thursdays, 2 pm - 3 pm CDT

**Contact:** Rev. Amy Petre Hill, UCC Mental Health Network Board Member; Mental Health & Inclusion Minister; Mountain View United Church, CO, at revamy@mhministries.org or 510-967-4890

#2 Be Gentle with Your Mind

Tuesdays, 3:30 pm CST Beginning May 5th

**Contact for Zoom Link:** Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, UCC Mental Health Network Vice-Chair; Former Psychiatric Chaplain; Pastoral Psychotherapist; Author of *The Lifesaving Church* (2018) by Chalice Press; Senior Minister at Living Table UCC, South Minneapolis, MN at rachael@livingtable.org or fb.com/rachael.keefe.

**Job Opportunity:** Collinsville Faith in Action is seeking to fill a vacancy with our Answers on Aging Program. This is a full-time position with benefits. Please see the attached Vacancy Announcement for specific details of the position and education/experience requirements. Some travel is required with this position - mostly local. Applications can be emailed to Kristi Hofferber at khofferber@fiacollinsville.org, or mailed to Collinsville Faith in Action, Attention Kristi Hofferber, 233 N. Seminary, Collinsville, IL 62234. Applications will be accepted through May 15, 2020.

**Region 5**

**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 email. For more information, contact Rev. Don Wagner 618-537-4991 or 618-444-2834.

**Drive-thru - NOT cancelled**

St. Jacob UCC Strawberry Festival scheduled for Sunday, May 17 from 11 am - 4 pm at Town Park in St. Jacob IS scheduled but as a drive-thru event to accommodate the current situation. Menu includes brats, pork burgers, hot dogs, sides and strawberry desserts. Virtual raffle drawing at 4 pm on FaceBook live.

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

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