The Hope Present in Pentecost

"And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the mighty rushing wind...divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Amazed and astonished, the people began to say...in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

--Acts 2, selected verses for the retelling of the story of Pentecost

Sunday, May 31st on the liturgical calendar of the Church is Pentecost Sunday. For Christians, Pentecost has become the celebration of the birth of the Church. One of the scriptures allocated for that day is from the Book of Acts. These first verses of Acts 2 are the retelling of the moment in which the Spirit of God made it possible for the all people to hear and understand the power of God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to speak languages that would allow people from far reaching places of Jerusalem to hear the message of Jesus Christ. Thus, the good news was spread far and wide birthing new believers, birthing the beginnings of something new...the Church itself.

In this collective moment, as a whole people of God we universally face much uncertainty, pain, loss, and even death, and it might seem unfathomable to believe new life is emerging. It might seem inauthentic or artificial to celebrate Pentecost, as many will still not be joining in person for worship services like we have known in the past with beloved members of our communities of faith. Pentecost celebrations might even feel a bit flat or forced as we boldly proclaim the power of the Holy Spirit, which birthed the beginnings of the Church, when we quietly question the future of its existence.

The truth is, before we entered this moment in which our norms as churches would be turned upside down and inside out, the narratives of decline had already begun to shake us. We were already feeling the loss from changes and worried about things, which were out of our control. Moreover, maybe for some we were even already losing a bit of hope not certain of what the future would hold. All which has lead to a wondering of "Where is the hope?"

Yet, the hope is all around us.

The hope is those who have learned in a relatively short period of time to learn a new language, a language of technology.

The hope is churches whose primary focus had been upon buildings are now focused on how to build and maintain relationships.

The hope is those who were isolated in their homes because of disabilities now have access to communities of faith and support.

The hope is those who did not feel brave enough to walk through the physical doors of a church, afraid they would not be welcome and accepted, are discovering a wide open virtual welcome and hearing of God’s mighty deeds.

The hope is in the midst of an unsettling time; many of the things we would not dare to believe we could change have needed to change in order for the life of the Church to continue.

The hope is while many question when the church will reopen, many understand and know fully the church has never been closed.

The hope is the work, mission and ministry of Jesus Christ has carried on by incredible leaders and pastors who trust in the power of the Spirit to lead them on. The Spirit of God IS blowing. New life IS emerging. The Holy Spirit IS enabling us to speak different languages. For as always has been and as always will be, nothing will be able to stop the power of God to bring forth new life. Something new is being birthed among us.

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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 31 - June 6, 2020
Churches & Pastors
- Belleville Christ UCC, Pastor
Jon (Lisa) Tinge
- Belleville Concordia UCC, Rev. Joan Mier
It is a resiliency. It is an evidence of our ability to adapt and change. It is a recalling of how we have survived and thrived through difficult moments in our life together and how by the grace of God we will do this again. It is a reminder that the core of who we are called to be as the Church is to be the manifestation of God’s love, power, and hope in the world.

Yes, this Pentecost might look and feel a bit different than Pentecost celebrations of the past. Yet, I believe it still calls for a celebration. A celebration of the power of the Holy Spirit. A celebration of what is being birthed among us. A celebration of the Church being and becoming the Church God has and is calling us to be. This Pentecost, this moment, invites us to celebrate the mighty power of the Spirit moving among us as we testify to God’s deeds of power and hope.

On this Pentecost may we draw near to God trusting in God’s power and grace. May we bear witness to the ways the universal language of God’s love continues to connect us and bind us together as the Church. And may we name and claim the hope present in our collective Pentecost praise and thanksgiving.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

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**Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response**

**UPDATE #11, May 27, 2020**

**Moving to Phase 3 of Restore Illinois Plan**

All of our Conference is about to move to Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois plan, which brings us to the junction of our polity and public health. There isn’t one magical date that will work for every congregation to return to in-person worship.

- Every building has different considerations for social distancing.
- Every congregation has different average worship attendance.
- Every church has congregants that won’t feel safe for a long time.
- Every congregation has different concerns for people in high-risk categories.

And, our congregational autonomy ensures each setting determines what is best for their members, regardless of their contextual decision. As sibling congregations, we are called to practice grace as we all go through this process. Our churches never closed, they just started doing ministry in a different way. The shelter-in-place order feels like it’s been around so long, and yet it feels like it’s ending abruptly, like we forgot to step quickly at the end of the airport walkway. Remember, you have the latitude to take your time. Some of our churches have suspended worship the rest of the summer. Others are making decisions one month at a time. Some denominations have recommended suspending in-person worship until May 2021. Yes, that’s a year from now.

Last week, the national staff of the UCC strongly encouraged congregations to take their time in determining when to restart in-person worship.

- Bring clergy and lay leadership to the Zoom table and discern your path with deliberate intention.
- Read Faithfully Phasing Forward, the ISC guidebook, on the Conference website.
- The United Church of Christ has many COVID-19 resources
- An article in the Chicago Tribune explains what’s open or closed in each phase
- This is the entire Restore Illinois plan

**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

**DuBois Center and Hoyleton Youth & Family Services** have a long-standing relationship. One aspect involves food. At the end of each summer and in mid-December, the cooks at DuBois Center traditionally check for any food that is good but will likely go bad or be past the “use by” date before the next flurry of groups. Most of this food is taken to Hoyleton Youth & Family Services. Door to door, it’s only about 24 minutes. This year, due to the camp closure, a mid-May

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**Retired Pastor**

- Rev. John and Shirley Trnka, Newburgh, IN

**People with Life Concerns**

- We ask you to pray for the family of Armand Bieber who passed away on May 18, 2020. Armand is the father of Tarrah (Jasen) Vaupel who is an ISC Member in Discernment, recent graduate of Eden Theological Seminary, member of O’Fallon UCC, and serves as student minister at St John UCC in New Athens. Funeral arrangements will be through Wolfersberger Funeral Home in O’Fallon, IL and a celebration of life will be held in the future. Cards of condolence can be sent to Tarrah Vaupel at 209 N Main St, Shiloh, IL 62269.
- 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
delivery was added. Rather than go to waste, cases and sealed bags of everything from muffin and pancake mix to hot dogs and hamburgers were delivered to the main kitchen at Hoyleton. From there, the cooks from the various cottages divided it up and integrated the food into their menu plans.

Submitted by Shirley Asmussen

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

Addieville - Zion UCC
Darmstadt- Holy Ghost UCC
East St. Louis- Good Shepherd of Faith
Granite City- St. John UCC
Valmeyer - St. John UCC
Wood River - St. John UCC

And anonymous gifts from individuals

Helpful Information
- The Conference Local Church Ministries Team is producing a worship service that will be shared before Sunday, June 28. Pastors in the Conference can plan now to use this video as a Sunday off from preparing worship and to get some mental space to rest. More information coming in June.
- The Council of Conference Ministers are preparing webinars that will be available to pastors and churches across the UCC. They will be on a variety of topics, and the first one will be released soon. More information coming in June.

Worship Resources
We have worship resources 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

Save the Date - ISC Confirmation Retreat
Dates: Fri-Sat, Sept 25-26 // Fri-Sat Oct 9-10
- Like all ISC events, these will only happen if we think we can offer them safely and meet state guidelines.
- We are going with two events instead of one to more easily allow for COVID safe interactions and stay under the 50 person limit. (We will hopefully be in that phase by then.)
- A team will plan the events together, so the events will be similar.
Ideally, there will be four people involved in leadership - 2 for each event.
- Capacity will be 40 youth and chaperones... which will allow a little room for fudging, but not much.
- More details to come.

‘God-sent’ gifts, volunteers fix hurricane-damaged home, thanks to One Great Hour of Sharing

“If it wasn’t for God and you people, I wouldn’t be in my house tonight.” That’s how Josephine Henry (front row, left, in the picture) described the situation as a crowd joined her recently - before the COVID-19 crisis - to dedicate her restored home in Wilmington, N.C. Hurricane Florence had torn the roof off, but now it was fixed, thanks to One Great Hour of Sharing donations and volunteer work by United Church of Christ members and others.

“When the storm came, I was in my living room,” Henry said in a recent interview with United Church News, remembering September 2018. She had a tin roof, but when she heard the sound of damage, she thought it was coming from the house next door, also made of tin. Some rain came in, so she wiped up the water. Her daughter called to check on her, then came and took her out for a meal. It was only upon returning that she realized how badly her roof was damaged. “When I opened the front door, there was the sky looking at me,” Henry said. “I cried, turned around and went back to my daughter’s house.” For 19 months, she...
spent nights there and days at her son's home. Her house was uninsured. After months of exchanges with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she learned FEMA could not help.

'Workers came from everywhere'

Then, in June 2019, came a call from someone named Steve, offering help. He was with one of 15 recovery teams assembled cooperatively by UCC Disaster Ministries and its regional counterpart in the United Methodist Church to help the southeast United States rebuild. For six months, Steve brought work crews to Henry's house - not only to fix the roof, but to strip the interior back to its studs, haul away damaged materials and fully renovate it. "That is a God-sent man," Henry said. "Workers came from Canada and everywhere. Ohio. Upstate New York. And from the West. I don't remember their names, but I remember every one of them."

In the continuing relief work in that part of North Carolina, "Methodists are the 'boots on the ground' for administrative and practical reasons - for efficiency," Whiston said. "I'm glad the UCC is financially supporting the effort."

One Great Hour of Sharing gifts still being received

In 2019, the year when the work on Henry's house occurred, the UCC contributed $38,000 to Hurricane Florence disaster relief, thanks to gifts received through the One Great Hour of Sharing special mission offering. For the moment, all volunteer relief-work opportunities are suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic. But UCC members and congregations can still contribute financially. The suggested date for local churches to receive the offering - set before the COVID-19 outbreak - was March 22. But the offering can be received anytime and will still benefit all the mission work OGHS makes possible, including disaster relief, said Phyllis Richards, the UCCs acting team leader of humanitarian and development ministries. Volunteer teams will again be needed after the pandemic passes. OGHS information and an online giving portal are here.

When it comes to disasters, this kind of long-term recovery is an OGHS specialty, often lasting long after first responders have done their important work. The donations that make it possible - money and volunteerism - benefit the giver as well as the recipient.

Whether the distance is from Maine to Mississippi or just to a nearby neighborhood, "I believe these are border-crossing experiences - going outside our familiar territory as well as our commonly held knowledge and perceptions of area and people," said one of the volunteers. "Broadening our horizons while we open our hearts, realizing that no one lies outside God's family tree."

"They are God-sent people," Henry said of those who fixed her home. "They did not have to do it. They took their expertise to come help me when they found out how I was."

Communications Specialist Carol Fouke-Mpoyo and Digital Content Specialist Hans Holznagel contributed to this article.

Response to other disasters during the COVID-19 pandemic

March 3, 2020 Tornado damage in Tennessee

COVID-19 doesn't give other disasters a holiday. To the contrary, it complicates immediate response as evacuees and volunteers who come to help them struggle to "social distance" in food lines and shelters, including the thousands who right now are fleeing flooding and two dam breaches in Michigan and wildfires in Florida. The New York Times May 21 reported the same dilemma in eastern India and Bangladesh, where on Wednesday Cyclone Amphan "upended communities where people had been locked down amid rises in coronavirus, forcing a dilemma of whether to shelter in place or evacuate" to packed emergency shelters. In addition, COVID-19 has hit a very large "pause" button on cleanup and long-term recovery from earlier disasters, including survivors of several pre-2020 hurricanes and the rash of nearly 500 confirmed tornadoes that killed 76 people across the U.S. Southeast earlier this year.

And as if all that wasn't quite enough, an active 2020 hurricane season is forecast, threatening severe weather conditions not only in coastal areas but far inland. The Atlantic hurricane season officially begins June 1.

United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries and UCC Conference Disaster Coordinators, along with their partners in disaster recovery, are struggling together on how to meet disaster survivors' needs - and volunteers' persistent desire to help - while keeping them safe from COVID-19 infection.

Issues include safety in congregant housing, feeding, transporting and deploying volunteer work teams and getting them the personal protective equipment they need.

The UCC has an active program of disaster long-term recovery, which most recently has been deploying volunteer work groups (mission teams) to hurricane rebuilding sites in Florida, North Carolina and Puerto Rico. Some conferences also deploy volunteers at recovery sites - for example, flood recovery in Pennsylvania.

One rebuilding project is in the Florida Panhandle, where Hurricane Michael caused significant damage in 2018. "Right now we have suspended all volunteer travel through September 2020," said Eden Roberts, volunteer manager.
"My thoughts are that we will have to cap volunteer numbers at a low number to allow extra sleeping space. Perhaps only allow in-state teams for a short time," Roberts said. "These are just a few things I've seen other organizations talk about."

"Being prepared for disasters is on a lot of our minds," said Karl Jones, Conference Disaster Coordinator for the United Church of Christ Pennsylvania Northeast and Southeast Conferences. "Next time we get a bad storm will be interesting. Especially how to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, underserved, unrepresented."

All volunteer work teams helping 2018 flood survivors in Pennsylvania "have now suspended," Jones said. He noted that Pennsylvania is among states limiting disaster volunteers to those within driving distance of home, effectively saying, "Volunteer in your own community first before going somewhere else. That is, if reopening guidelines allow." To date, in Puerto Rico, all work to restore Hurricane Maria-damaged homes is on hold. More than 400 UCC volunteers helped restore more than 100 homes damaged by the 2017 hurricane before rebuilding was suspended.

"All our teams coming from the mainland had to cancel their trips due to the pandemic," said Lydia Rosaly Velasquez, Social Action and Response Coordinator for UCC's sister church and partner IEUPR (Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico). "Our last team was here in February. Our staff has not been able to complete any work either because Puerto Rico is under a very strict lockdown and curfew where only essential workers are able to leave their houses for work."

Velasquez continued, "The teams that had to cancel are hoping to be able to reschedule sometime in the near future but times are very uncertain and I have not rescheduled anything yet." About 100 households are still awaiting help restoring their homes - mostly lost roofs - damaged in Hurricane Maria, she said.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has hindered recovery work after the multiple earthquakes that have shaken Puerto Rico since December 2019. "No earthquake recovery but still shaking!" Velasquez reported. "All our projects have been delayed. The pandemic has affected us tremendously."

FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) offers specific advice related to disaster preparedness during the COVID-19 pandemic. First and foremost, it says, "Do not let COVID-19 virus prevention stop you from seeking shelter during severe weather. If sheltering in a large group, take steps to ensure you are following Centers for Disease Control guidelines on social distancing. Follow guidance from local authorities on evacuation and sheltering as it pertains to COVID-19 prevention guidelines."

FEMA notes that it and other federal agencies, along with the American Red Cross, "have modified policies and planning and have taken actions to ensure the federal government can respond to any disaster during its continued COVID-19 response efforts.

For updates on volunteer opportunities, click here.

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**National Youth Event, postponed until 2022**

**Now offering interactive digital experiences**

Every four years for four decades, the United Church of Christ's National Youth Event has attracted young people from all over the denomination for high-energy inspiration, faith-building and educational activities, community service, and in-the-moment actions for social justice.

Now, like so many other events in the Year of the Coronavirus, the live event has been postponed, with online opportunities taking its place this summer.

The in-person gathering is now scheduled for two years from now: July 27-30, 2022, at Purdue University in Indiana. It was originally set to be held on that campus July 22-25 of this year.

However, disappointed youth and young adults can still get in on some virtual NYE options in 2020:

* Live chat opportunities will accompany the premieres of two original NYE videos on YouTube: "Loving Your Neighbor in Quarantine," Sunday, May 31, and "Creativity and Justice in Quarantine," Sunday, June 28. One of NYE's organizers, the Rev. Trayce Potter, minister for youth and young adult engagement, will host the chats - both to be held at 4 p.m. EDT. She said information on how to view and take part will soon be posted at the NYE website.

* A "culminating interactive experience," taking shape now, will be held online Friday, July 24, and Saturday, July 25, Potter said. She encourages people to watch for details and registration information soon at the NYE website.

* For musical inspiration, a digital NYE playlist is available now, here, on Spotify. "It's a great mix of older and new," said one of its curators, the Rev. Tracy Howe Wispelwey, minister for congregational and community engagement. "The songs are chosen because they exemplify the themes of NYE2020 as it was coming to life: 'Unite! Unite for the earth! Unite for justice! Unite in faith!'"

Potter and Wispelwey said many of the artists and speakers who had been scheduled for this summer's event are preparing content that will be shared virtually, accompanied by chat opportunities.
"We are disappointed but not discouraged," Potter and Wispelway said in a recent email announcing the postponement to registered participants. "We have been hard at work to offer meaningful and faithful virtual gatherings this summer. We recognize this is not the same, but nothing is the same. We look forward to welcoming all seniors for whom this may have been your last NYE to join us virtually and in 2022 as youth ambassadors."

**WORLD PREMIERE DEBUT - "TOGETHER WE'RE STRONG"**
An original song, written for NYE
We may not be able to gather in person this year, but we know without a doubt that God's love for us remains and we are stronger than we have ever been. This original song, written for NYE, is an uplifting symbol of unity in these extraordinary times. In it, we are reminded: we have wisdom, purpose, and youth. We are here for a time such as this. This amazing video features the faces of youth and young adults who were volunteering and helping to plan NYE2020, as well as some of the adult volunteers and staff from Justice and Local Church Ministries. You might even see another face or two that you recognize!

**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.

**Pandemic grants for churches added to UCC National Setting COVID-19 relief response**
The United Church of Christ National Setting is offering financial assistance to local churches whose ministries have been challenged by the novel coronavirus pandemic.
As one, the national officers have collectively identified $2.6 million in COVID-19 relief, $1.5 million in loans that will be administered through the Cornerstone Fund and another $1.1 million in micro grants. The grant application process opens June 1. To find out more details, click [here](#).

**Zoom Upgrade to Zoom 5.0**
On April 27, Zoom released Zoom 5.0. On May 30, everyone will need to upgrade in order to use Zoom. That means the host of the session as well as everyone who wishes to join the meeting and conversation must upgrade. Usually, an automatic reminder will come up as you try to use Zoom. Click to allow the upgrade to happen so that you will be able to enjoy the session together.
This past Sunday, there was maintenance being done on Zoom so many of the churches were not able to continue with that venue. After you upgrade to Zoom 5.0, that should not be an issue for future sessions.

**THROWBACK MAY**
Not nearly as poetic as Throwback Thursday, but the sentiment is the same. May is typically a very busy month for DuBois Center staff, volunteers and guest groups. Usually there are school groups wrapping up the year with quality time outdoors, artisans escaping to the woods to quilt and create, volunteers building, painting, repairing and installing during what has become a tradition - May mission week, and summer staff from local churches and around the world beginning to trickle in and begin preparing. We celebrate Great May Memories and look forward to many more!
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.
The Walker Leadership Institute announces the addition of the "Insights for Leadership in Challenging Times" series. Insights is a series of conversations on topics related to missional leadership. Recorded videos include an inspirational message from visiting professor at Bentley University in Boston, Michelle Barton. Other Insights feature Founding Director of Glean Network, Rabbi Elan Babchuck; Executive Director of Integrated Marketing & Branding, Virgil Tipton; and Director of Youth Ministry for the Episcopal Church of St. Michael and St. George, Kyle Tallman. Click here to register.

Online Alzheimer's Support Group - Tuesday, June 9 from 1:30 pm - 3 pm
If you would like to join the Zoom Group meeting online, please email Gail at gshaw@stjohnscc.org. She will send you the instructions and invitation to join the meeting. Join others dealing with dementia and memory loss on the second Tuesday of each month.

Chartered in 1991, this group is intended for family caregivers with loved ones suffering from Alzheimer's. This group is facilitated by experienced leaders specially trained in issues of dementia and aging.

Online Family Caregiver Support Group Wednesday, June 10 at 6 pm
If you would like to join the Zoom group meeting online, please email srhodes@stjohnscc.org. She will send you instructions and invitation to join the meeting. Intended for family caregivers caring for loved ones with any type of disability held the second Wednesday of every month. Join other caregivers for fellowship and support at this meeting. This group is hosted by the Director of the Adult Day Program.

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...

ZOOM VBS
The director of Christian Ed at St. Paul UCC, in Belleville, Craig Bielke, is putting together a Vacation Bible School program using the materials "Wilderness Escape Program". The sessions will be held on June 29, June 30, and July 1. The program will be presented using Zoom. It is for children Pre-K through the 6th grade. There will be a registration fee which includes the materials for the crafts. The craft package will be available for pickup at St. Paul UCC in Belleville on dates to be determined. If you have children who would like to participate, please contact Craig Bielke 210-383-0385 or email cbielke@stpaulucc.org.

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 or 216-736-2169.

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 revd ATKINS@gmail.com or 618-635-2386.

Children's Ministry Curriculum
Bloom! Children's Ministry Curriculum will be $50 for all congregations this fall due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 on so many of us. To support you more in the event of sheltering-in-place again, we'll also include a Story Intro video that you can send to families to use at home. It can stand alone or you can use it as an introduction to other Bloom! activities that you can put together for families to use as well. There will also be children's sermon videos that you can either edit into a worship video, or that you can use to get ideas from. Bloom! follows the Narrative Lectionary for our Bible story sequence, though it is great for all congregations. We offer ideas for PreK-6th grade (in sections of PreK, K&1, 2&3, 4-6) as well as for large group and a Christmas program. Check out more about it at www.bloominfaith.com.