CONFERENCE-WIDE BOOK STUDY ON RACISM

Starting Wednesday, July 22 at 6:30 pm, the Justice and Mission Committee will be sponsoring an evening biweekly book study on *White Fragility: Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo. In this best-selling book, author Robin DiAngelo, an antiracist educator, illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and challenges the reader to understand racism “as a practice not restricted to ‘bad people.’”

This four-session study can be a meaningful first step for well-intentioned white people to engage in the Christ centered work of dismantling racism and seeking equity and justice for black and brown people.

Through this book study, we hope participants will become aware of the attitudes that have maintained the status quo of systems, structures, policies, and practices of oppression. We will examine together white fragility, how it develops, how it protects racial inequity, and what we can do to engage more constructively.

Our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson, will lead the online experience open to all members of the Conference.

In order to participate, please purchase the book and read the corresponding chapters before attending and participating in a session. The book can be purchased at a local bookstore, through an online distributor (such as Barnes and Noble or Amazon), and it might be available through your local library. The book is also available in digital form for a Nook or Kindle or audio form. Please make sure you buy the book and not the workbook.

Below is the schedule. Please email Rev. Shana Johnson to register for the Zoom Gatherings and to receive preparation materials.

**Wednesday, July 22, 6:30 pm on Zoom**
Session 1: Facing White Supremacy (focusing on chapters 1-3)

**Wednesday, August 5, 6:30 pm on Zoom**
Session 2: How Does Race Shape the Lives of White People? (focusing on chapters 4-6)

**Wednesday, August 19, 6:30 pm on Zoom**
Session 3: Understanding White Fragility in Action (focusing on chapters 7-11)

**Wednesday, September 2, 6:30 pm on Zoom**
Session 4: Where Do We Go From Here? (focusing on chapter 12)

Illinois South Conference shares the inspiring stories that show the faith-filled lives within our Conference. We hope this gives you comfort during this time of sheltering in place. 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.

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**Illinois South Conference Flamingo’ed!!**
Collinsville St. John UCC held a fundraising event to raise some money for the youth group of the church AND to add a bit of joy to all of us. The participants
could donate money and specify who would be graced with pink flamingos in the yard. It would make smiles in the community and funds for the youth group. We hope you smile while viewing these photos. If you want to find out more about the fundraising program, contact Pastor Katie Jo at pastorkatiejo@stjohnucc-collinsville.com. Notice, the flamingo wearing a mask!

Mascoutah St. John UCC Prepare Pillows, Pillowcases and Fleece Throws for Kindercottage
At a February "sewing day" a group of 40 people gathered to prepare pillows, pillowcases and fleece throws for the children of Uni-Pres Kindercottage. The group included several of St. John's Happy Quilters and many others. In June, they packed three cars with the pillows, pillowcases, and fleece throws and delivered them to Uni-Pres Kindercottage in East St. Louis. The original plan was for all the quilters to deliver our load and meet the children and staff; however, they could only go into the entrance of the building. The Director of Kindercottage, Brenda Crisp, said that the donation was the best excitement for her staff as well as her students. The staff had a great time choosing specific pillowcases to match the children in their classes. The children received their pillows a few days later.

COVID-19 Didn't Stop Columbia St. Paul UCC from Celebrating
Last Sunday marked Rev. Bob Goddard's last Sunday at St. Paul UCC in Columbia, Illinois as he moves into retirement. Although they had not begun in-person worship at the church, it didn't stop them from celebrating the ministry that Rev. Goddard has shared with them. The church put together a beautiful service to celebrate his ministry including a special message from Chris Cox, the CEO of Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, and a video presentation of their special memories of him as their pastor and

Retired Pastor
- Rev. Robert Schmidt, Dawson, IL

People with Life Concerns
- Keep all pastors in your prayers as they continue to provide spiritual support and creative services during this unprecedented time.
- Pray for the people of the United States as we work towards equality and civility for us all.
- 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.
The Zoom party filled 4 screens of people attending to help them celebrate. Thank you, Bob, for your tremendous ministry and for all the ways you have shared your gifts, pastoral presence and heart for mission with so many. Bob has also served the Illinois South Conference on the Finance Ministry Team, speaking at Day of Discipleship, attending General Synod and as a member of the Green DuBois committee.

Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response
UPDATE #14, June 29, 2020

Thank you to these churches for their OCWM donations received the past two weeks. These donations continue to support all the work of the Conference.

Addieville - Zion UCC
Biddleborn - Trinity UCC
Carbondale - Church of the Good Shepherd
Centralia - St. Peter UCC
Darmstadt - Holy Ghost UCC
Dupo - Christ UCC
East St. Louis - Good Shepherd of Faith
Edwardsville - St. Paul UCC
Fairview Heights - St. John UCC
Godfrey - Evangelical UCC
Highland - Evangelical UCC
Maeystown - St. John UCC
Marion - Zion UCC
Mascoutah - St. John UCC
New Baden - Zion UCC
New Hanover - Zoar UCC
Pana - United in Faith
Red Bud - St. Peter UCC
St. Jacob - St. Jacob UCC
Troy - Friedens UCC
Waterloo - St. Paul UCC

Helpful Information

- Conference Wide Book Study on Racism - The Justice and Mission Committee will be sponsoring an evening biweekly book study on White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo. This four-session study can be a meaningful first step for well-intentioned white people to engage in the Christ centered work of dismantling racism and seeking equity and justice for black and brown people. The group will meet biweekly on Wednesdays at 6:30pm, starting on July 22. Weekly Connection will have more details on how to register and where to purchase the book. This online experience is open to all members of the Conference, and it will be led by our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson.

- Save the Date: our Justice and Mission Committee is preparing for a Peace Rally at the Highland office July 25, 10am-Noon. Watch Weekly Connection for more details.

- Remember to wear masks and keep social distance if you are worshiping in person, regardless of whether you're inside or outside. We're all eager to return to some sense of normalcy, but the safest rules for avoiding COVID-19 haven't changed. If you need help with the guidelines, refer to: Faithfully Phasing Forward, the ISC guidebook, on the Conference website; The UCC's many COVID-19 resources; and the Restore Illinois Plan.

- This is the last edition of the COVID-19 Update for the foreseeable future. Should infection rates change in our area, or if Illinois changes direction on reopening, we will return to publication to share current information as needed.

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

Attention Music Contacts at
All ISC Churches
On Wednesday, July 8 at 7 pm, Lisa Cleveland, Music Director for Highland Evangelical UCC, will organize and host a zoom meeting for any interested choir director, organist, pianist, bell choir director or music leader in Illinois South Conference to discuss the status of music in current worship services. Her hope is to share resources and/or collaborate ways to keep music alive in worship. There may be ideas floating around that some have not considered or are not aware of. Our hope is to discuss:

What HAVE we been doing to provide music for worship?
What tools are each of us using?
What tools or talents are we able to share?
How are we ministering to our choir members - of all ages while we are not able to meet with them? Watch for an email from her to invite you to a zoom meeting with other music leaders within Illinois South Conference. You may contact her at lcleveland@evucc.org if you have things to share and cannot make the Zoom meeting.

Annual Meeting - October 24, 2020
Greetings from the Gatherings Team of the UCC Illinois South Conference: As we all try to plan for future events, we are faced with many questions and considerations as to how we will function as a church for Sunday worship, Christian education programs, special events like funerals and weddings, and for our particular team, how to plan for our Conference annual meeting. By this time in years past, your church would have received a pre-annual meeting mailing (90 days prior to the annual meeting, as per our by-laws) with a specific agenda of activities and registration information, as well as a reminder to send the names of your conference delegates to the ISC office. As much as the Gatherings Team would like to abide by the by-laws, we are just not able to provide a lot of specific information at this point.

The Covid-19 pandemic certainly threw a monkey wrench into the plans that we had been making since last November. By April we realized that a large, in-person annual meeting was not the best idea. For the safety of our church leaders and pastors, we recommended to the Conference Council that a virtual meeting be considered. The Conference Council determined in May that we would hold a "virtual annual meeting."

After five months of planning, we had to "throw out the book" and reconfigure a meeting in a way we have never done before. We still have a theme, a guest speaker, and a guest musician. We will still have a business meeting and worship service, but how this is all going to happen is still a work in progress.

At this point, we would like to ask for your support in two specific ways:
We ask for your patience as we put together a safe yet effective annual meeting. It will be held on October 24 with additional opportunities for continuing education and gathering during that weekend. There are still too many "unknowns." Therefore, we hesitate to share specifics which may change a week later. Please know we will work to keep you updated with our plans. We will send out information as we have more clarity.

If you are still in the process of determining your delegates for annual meeting, we would ask you to consider approaching church members who have a computer (with video capability) and email to serve in this capacity. You may also consider having an annual meeting "watch party" at your church where your delegates can come together to experience annual meeting in a smaller, safer venue and without the travel.

We are deeply grateful for your support of us as we will work to make this annual meeting a meaningful experience for all. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,
The Illinois South Conference Gatherings Team
Walt Hart, Chair
Eileen Hoag
Chilang Lawless
Christy Pursell
Rev. Michelle Torigian

Carol Harms
Rev. Shana Johnson
Mimi Llamas
Pastor Jon Tinge
Rev. Andy Wilson

Click here for a pdf to share with your church delegates.

2020 UCC Stewardship Materials
"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." - 1 John 4:7
Materials for your congregation's 2020 stewardship campaign featuring the theme "Beloved, Love".
Available in print form or as a digital download, including social media graphic appropriate for Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.
Full stewardship materials package includes the following:
  Campaign Resources Document that includes:
    Directions and suggestions for an effective campaign
    Campaign song and prayer suggestions
    Letters (ready for editing)
    Newsletter article (ready for editing)
    Sermon (ready for editing)
  Theme artwork (formats: PDF | EPS | JPG | PNG)
Facebook, Twitter and Instagram artwork (formats: PDF | EPS | JPG | PNG)

Digital copies of all pre-printed items:
- Poster: 4 Sunday bulletin inserts w/ giving chart
- Envelope: 4 different Commitment cards
- Worship folder: Letterhead

$39.95 for full print or digital package.

Printed packs of 50 each of the following items sold separately:
- Bulletin Insert A (5.5” X 8.5”) Single Commitment Card (3.5” X 8”)
- Bulletin Insert B (5.5” X 8.5”) Double Commitment Card (3.5” X 8”)
- Bulletin Insert C (5.5” X 8.5”) Faith-Promise Card (3.5” X 8”)
- Bulletin Insert D (5.5” X 8.5”) Time & Talent Pledge Card (3.5” X 8”)
- Letterhead (8.5” X 11”) #10 Envelope
- Report/Worship Folder (8.5” x 14 flat)

Additional 17” X 22” posters also sold separately. Click here for more information and to order.

Longtime Conference Minister Kent Siladi named national UCC philanthropy director
An experienced Conference minister has been named to lead philanthropy ministries in the national setting of the United Church of Christ. The Rev. Kent Siladi will join the UCC’s Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communication Sept. 1 as director of philanthropy. The news came June 29 in an email from Siladi to the Southern New England Conference, where he serves as one of three bridge Conference ministers, and in an announcement to denominational leadership and the national staff by the Rev. John Dorhauer, general minister and president. Read more.

CONTACT US - 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.

FALLOW GROUND - Two Stories
As you may recall, in May with great sadness, we announced our summer of Fallow Ground. Realizing that every family’s situation is different, we provided a variety of options for summer camp fees already paid. Families were able to request a full or partial refund, roll over all or part of the fees to Summer Camp 2021, or donate all or part of them. It has been a humbling experience to read the notes of support that accompanied responses to the announcement and to speak personally to some families. Two encounters stand out for me.

The first was a call from a grandmother who sends her grandson to camp because his young parents can’t and there is literally nothing for him to do at home. The families are not UCC members and don’t have historical ties to DuBois Center; Grandma lives in the area and her grandson attended last summer for the first time and LOVED it. She chose to donate a portion of the fees paid to camp - a commitment which we celebrate.

Another family that chose to donate their fees has long ties to DuBois Center. Mom, Cara Magee-Johnston, attended from a young age and also served as a work camper, summer staffer and chaplain.
Cara's mother, Arlene, was a faithful member of the Auxiliary-Boosters until her passing. She baked, quilted and did so much more to support DuBois Center over the years. Arlene's memorials were even designated for enhancements to the camp waterfront.

Louise, Cara's daughter and Arlene's granddaughter, started attending as early as she could at Just You & Me Camp with mom. This summer would have been Louise's first year attending our High School Week.

When Cara first heard the news, she wrote in an email, "My eyes are swelled with face-streaming, tears of overwhelming sadness. I've never known DuBois to not have traditional camp sessions (in my lifetime anyway)." In the same email, she pledged their family's support. Despite moving to Louisiana years ago, Cara and Louise commute for camp and family visits. They call St. Paul UCC in Lebanon one of their church homes.

Last week, we received a letter and a check from the family. The amount of the check represented the full fees - with no discounts applied - for Louise, her cousin who was also registered and a friend who would have been attending for the first time. Another significant commitment to celebrate! Cara shared a Bible verse from Hosea 10:12: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." It is her hope and ours that "Camp DuBois' fallow ground will be broken to allow campers and staff to seek the Lord in a new light and He will come and rain righteousness upon DuBois Center once again, stronger and deeper."

SUMMER CAMP FEES

The task of connecting with families about their summer camp fees is complete. After five checks are written and mailed, the job of closing out traditional summer camp 2020 will be complete. As challenging as the process has been, we celebrate the support DuBois Center has received. Of the $20,265.25 in deposits and balances that were paid, the approximate split is 36% - refunded, 26% - donated, 38% - rolled over to 2021. We celebrated the number of families that committed to returning next summer and those that donated over $5,000 in support. While that initial $20,000 represents only about 15% of projected summer camp fees, every dollar that was donated or rolled over makes a difference toward ensuring the short-term viability of DuBois Center. THANK YOU for your support.

VIRTUAL CAMPFIRE

Returns Thurs, July 9

There will be no DuBois Center virtual campfire this week. Traditionally, this is the week of our Hoyleton Day Camp, so no closing campfire on Thursday evening and no virtual one in its place. We'll return with a celebration of 2019 Week #4 on July 9. You can find the links to the first three campfires on our website and Facebook page. To join the cast of our next event - create a goofy skit or sing a song with your family, or share your favorite silly jokes and riddles. Remember to SPEAK LOUDLY and make sure the microphone is not obstructed! Be sure to keep submissions clean and positive! All items will be reviewed for appropriateness and some may be saved for upcoming editions. Your submission implies consent for DuBois Center to use the submission in items produced and shared by DuBois Center. Send videos or written jokes and riddles to our YouTube email, dbcprogramoffice@gmail.com. If you have questions about or challenges with sending your creations, send them to this same email address.

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!
Mission Co-workers Share About Time of Service on Facebook

Global Ministries started sharing presentations from mission co-workers on the Global Ministries Facebook page starting last week. The mission co-worker will be present to answer questions and interact with you in the comments. Come learn about the ministries of global partners and some of the ways in which mission co-workers are present with partners around the world.

All presentations will go live at 2 pm CDT.

**Schedule:**

**Tuesday, July 7** - Kaitlin Thompson presenting on her time in the Dominican Republic with Caminante
**Thursday, July 9** - Fiyori Kidane presenting on her time in Greece with Perichoresis of the Evangelical Church of Greece
**Tuesday, July 14** - Mark Knowles and Danielle Murry-Knowles on their time in Lesotho with the Lesotho Evangelical Church
**Thursday, July 16** - Kahala Cannon on her time in eSwatini with the Council of Swaziland Churches
**Tuesday, July 21** - Dusty and Kelsey Riebel on their time in Ecuador with FEDICE

St. John's Community Care is pleased to announce that they resumed their Medical Equipment Loan Program Monday, June 8 with changes necessitated by the pandemic. They will be open to loan and accept equipment returns and donations on Monday and Thursday mornings from 9 am to noon. Please call 618-344-5008 before coming to determine if they have the equipment needed and available. They will hold the equipment in your name until the next scheduled day. When coming to pick up equipment, you MUST wear a mask to enter the building. Please be sure it covers your nose and mouth. Ring the bell to the right of the locked glass doors. Click [here](#) for more details and what equipment is available. Contact St. John's Community Care at 618-344-5008 or email info@stjohnscc.org for more information or to reserve equipment. Your voicemail message will be returned within one business day.

**CALL TO OUR COMMUNITY**

Two gifts of service with Deaconess are building community and accountability. That said, we invite the Deaconess Community to join us in these commitments.

* Please visit [www.M4BL.org](http://www.M4BL.org) to learn about the power-building work and policy commitments of the Movement for Black Lives and make a financial contribution.
* We invite fellow board members of philanthropies in St. Louis and state of Missouri to begin a relationship with ABFE by (a) reading and responding to the philanthropic call to action; (b) signing up for institutional membership; and (c) underwriting individual memberships for the professional development of your staff (especially Black staff).
* We invite our faith partners, especially those in the Missouri Mid-South and Illinois South Conferences of the United Church of Christ, to join us in affirming and acting on SDPC's calls to the church for racial justice.

Finally, please help us by holding us accountable. As mentioned above, partners in our community are currently giving us feedback on how we are living up to (or falling short of) our desire to build, wield and share power equitably, using NCRP's Power Moves framework. As this work concludes, we will post all results on our website ([www.deaconess.org](http://www.deaconess.org)) and host a public forum in September to discuss the findings and the course-corrections we will surely need to make to strengthen our resolve for the racial equity and racial justice necessary to be sure that children and youth in our community are thriving.

Please join us for this session and the journey ahead. Sign up to receive details and regular updates through our action alerts. The journey to equity, justice and child well-being will take all of us.

For the children,
Rudolph Nickens, Jr., Board Chair
Cheryl D.S. Walker, Esq., Board President
Deaconess Foundation
Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being
Kindercottage is open but has new needs as well as continuing needs which give you an opportunity to help. Here is a current wish list or you can make a financial donation to cover these items.

1. Masks must be worn by everyone, ages 2 and above. They will accept homemade masks as well as purchased masks.
2. Latex vinyl gloves sizes - small, large and extra large.
3. Shoe coverings, socks, and footie for children ages 1 to adults. Shoes cannot be worn inside the building. Also, when looking for footie or socks, please be sure and get the ones with texture on the bottom to give them some grip on the floor.
4. Nonperishable food items for breakfast, lunch and snacks.
5. Hand sanitizer, bleach, and disinfectant, hand soap.
6. Paper products, Lysol or Clorox (or some other brand) wipes.
7. Baby wipes, Vaseline or diaper rash creme, Infant formula (Similac Pro Advance. Many doctors are placing babies on this formula. Since WIC doesn't pay for it, it's an out of pocket expense which isn't cheap).
8. Construction-minded people to remove and replace a wall. This must be done on a Saturday, so watch for the announcement in their e-newsletters.

Read the entire letter here.

What’s Happening at Illinois South Conference...

The Insurance Board announces an upcoming webcast Abuse Prevention - Creating a Safe Environment on July 1 at 1 pm CDT. Be sure to tune in! As a reminder all our webcasts are recorded and available to you at any time on our website. Click here for a poster or here to register.

Region 5

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

Region 5

This summer, Highland Area Christian Ministries’ focus is on collecting school supplies for their clients’ children. Although schools may operate on a non-traditional schedule when August rolls around, they want to be prepared! Here is their wish list:
- Wide rule spiral notebooks
- Composition notebooks
- Wide rule notebook paper (loose leaf)
- Sharpies
- Plastic folders
- Black dry erase markers
- 10-pack washable markers
- Colored pencils
- 3-pack highlighters
- Pencil top erasers
- Quart and gallon bags
- Kleenex
- Elmer’s glue bottle (no school glue)
- Clorox wipes
- K-2 boys and girls backpacks
- Crayola water paint sets

All Regions

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.
- A team will plan the events together, so the events will be similar.
- Capacity will be 40 youth and the appropriate number of chaperones.