Words to Speak & Ability to Do

Lately, I have been thinking quite a bit about the legacy of John Lewis. As a son of sharecroppers, John grew up on a farm in Alabama. In a more recent interview with Krista Tippett, he recalled how by the age of five he believed he would grow up to be a preacher. His first congregation consisted of the chickens that were his responsibility to care for and feed.

From the beginning, it seemed God had big plans for John's life. By the time he was fifteen, he heard Martin Luther King Jr. on the radio and preached his first sermon to a human audience. At seventeen, he met Rosa Parks. At nineteen, he became actively involved in the Civil Rights movement. As a seminarian student, he organized sit ins and studied philosophy and practiced the discipline of nonviolent resistance. John was one of the original thirteen freedom riders and was one of the "big six" who organized the March on Washington and the marches from Selma to Montgomery.

Despite almost being beaten to death by mounted troops after crossing the Edmund Pettis bridge, being cursed at, spit on, ridiculed, criticized, mocked and scorned throughout his life, John never gave up standing up and fighting to his dying day against the injustices he saw. One of his personal mantras he shared with the world was "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." Yet, this was not simply a statement he made; it was a code by which he lived his life and challenged others to do the same. This was his ministry, his call, his life's work to do as the scriptures command to "speak the truth in love."

To speak up, to say something, and to do something can be a frightening task. To speak truth in love, especially to power is a risky business. It requires courage to listen and pay attention to the One who places the uneasiness feeling in our Spirit and the trust to know that the same One who nudges us will be the One who will give us the words to speak even if our knees quake and our voices shake. In the United Church of Christ, we claim God is still speaking, but can we claim that we are still listening, speaking up and doing something when we know something is not right or fair. Lately, this is a question I have asked myself quite a bit.

Something I have learned is Christ-like courage takes practice. Much like when you went from crawling to walking, you learned you can only walk taller and stronger when you're willing to risk some bumps, bruises and falls. The more you practice, the easier it becomes. The more you risk speaking up and doing something in small ways, the more empowered you will be to stand up and take action in big ways. I believe this is how God works. I believe God works through those who are willing to stand up and make changes so that those in need, those who are oppressed, and those who are being harmed can experience the abundance, freedom, and peace God desires and intends for all of God's children. When we see something that we know is not right or not fair, may we have the courage to trust God will give us the words to speak and the ability to do something.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

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 Aug 9 - Aug 15, 2020
Churches & Pastors
- DuQuoin St. John's UCC, Rev. Robert Morwell
- East St. Louis Good Shepherd of Faith UCC, Pastor Norma Patterson

Webinars Presented by UCC
The Restorative Racial Justice Summer Institute
Wednesday, August 5 at 05:00 pm CDT
The Sacred Conversations to End Racism (SC2ER) Quarterly Institutes - Fall 2020, Winter and Spring 2021 have reached capacity. If you are interested in becoming a SC2ER trained facilitator, which is a 12-month in depth and intense community learning experience Visit the SC2ER website for more information SC2ER. SC2ER facilitator application deadline is Friday, January 8, 2021. Facilitator training begins Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Join the restorative racial justice journey and learning community. Facilitator Application. For more information please contact Rev. Dr. Velda Love Lovve@ucc.org. Click here to register.

**Thursdays for the Soul: Living Psalms - hope and justice in word, cloth, clay, play and spirit**
Thursday, August 6 at 2:30 pm CDT
Psalms is the one book of the Bible that defines itself as not the Word of God. This webinar will share what is available to worship and study leaders through the ongoing work of re-writing the Psalms with a heart of justice as “Living Psalms” in UCC WorshipWays, invite the participants to create a psalm-line of their own, and share simple methods to invite faith community members to write, draw, or act their own psalms. Click here to register.

**Special Edition Tuesday for Nurture: SANKOFA: Reaching Back and Stepping Up**
Tuesday, August 11 at 2:30 pm CDT
We have rescheduled the webinar for a Special Edition Tuesday for Nurture on: Tuesday, August 11th from 3:30 - 5:30 Eastern Time and will have conversation between Rev. Traci Blackmon, and Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak & Rev. Dr. Curtiss DeYoung, co-authors of the book: Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism. After the conversation, all panelists will be present for some time to answer your questions as you have them. **Note: This is a two hour conversation, and it will be recorded.** To get your own copy of the book, you can click here. To register, click here.

**Thursdays for the Soul: Building Bridges of Faith Across Political Divides**
Tuesday, August 18 at 2:30 pm CDT
In a time when our nation is becoming increasingly more socially, politically, and spiritually divided, what does our faith require of us? Click here to register.

**Tuesdays for Nurture: Supporting Your Pastor so They Can Support You**
Tuesday, August 25 at 2:30 pm CDT
Tuesdays for Nurture is a Tuesday webinars series which we faithfully focus on education for the people of God. Topics from faith-filled politics, to interviews of key leaders, to "how to's" in congregational life, to the impacts of current realities on the life of the church will be featured. Each webinar will include clear suggestions on what YOU can do to change the church, and the world, towards the world God imagines for us. Click here to register.

**Thursdays for the Soul: Sacred Boundaries**
Thursday, August 27 at 2:30 pm CDT
Thursdays for the Soul: A webinar series to care for the whole church. Topics are wide ranging and are focused on the spirituality and care of people. Prayer, worship, music, psalm readings, or compassionate teaching are included. This will be a predictable time of gathering for something to feed your spirit, offered by Faith Education, Innovation, and Formation and Justice and Local Church Ministries of the national setting, United Church of Christ. Click here to register.

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**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.

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**Retired Pastor**
- Rev. Charles Preston and Rev. Karla Frost, Granite City, IL

**People with Life Concerns**
- Keep the family of Laurie (Rev. John, deceased) Riggs in your prayers as they mourn her loss. Rev. John Riggs served as Pastor at St. John UCC and as Interim Pastor for several churches in Illinois South Conference. Services are pending. Cards to the family may be sent to John Riggs, 2300 Elk Pointe Blvd., Jeffersonville, IN 47130.
- 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.

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**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
Click [here](#) for a pdf to share with your church delegates.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:dkesner@iscucc.org).

For communicating within the Conference, the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, contact Lynnette Schuepbach at [lschuepbach@iscucc.org](mailto: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](mailto:jriechmann@iscucc.org).

For DuBois Center, contact Shirley Asmussen at 618-787-2202 or [dcinfo@duboiscenter.org](mailto:dcinfo@duboiscenter.org).

To speak with the Conference Minister, contact Rev. Shana Johnson at [sjohnson@iscucc.org](mailto:johnson@iscucc.org) or 618-882-8247.
SIXTY SECONDS of SOLITUDE
Today's edition of 60 Seconds of Solitude features snapshots of rainy days at DuBois Center. Gentle summer rains without concern for thunder and lightning are a special treat in the Midwest. Aaron Fuchs captured most of these photos of a camp at rest. Sit comfortably, relax your shoulders, breathe deeply and let the gentle rains wash over you. Meditate on their healing and nourishing characteristics. "I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:26. Watch for weekly solitude postings on our website and Facebook page.

EMBRACE A SPACE
DuBois Center is kicking off a new initiative - Embrace a Space. Individuals, families and groups are invited to make a commitment to a space at DuBois Center and return throughout the length of the commitment to work on that plot of earth, building or area of camp. The possibilities are nearly endless. Consider tending a patch of native plants, maintaining a hiking trail or weeding the labyrinth. Sign-up for the windows and screens in Oak Lodge; they need washing at least once a year. Painting - you can update one building (a cottage) or a series of them (the cabins in Fish Ridge), and there are always sections of fence or decking that need attention. Over the decades, volunteers have been a significant piece of DuBois Center's ministry. With limited maintenance hours in general, and especially during the COVID-19 shut-down, there is a significant need for willing and able workers. Currently we have projects for individuals, family groups and small teams that agree to follow camp rules related to wearing masks and practicing good physical distancing. For more information, contact Shirley at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

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 Cornerstone Fund Presents a Free Webinar
“A Capital Campaign in COVID-19?!”
Is this even possible?! Join them on Monday, August 31 at 1 pm for a FREE, one-hour webinar to discuss this question. Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ (Chicago) and Rev. Michael W. Caine of Old First UCC (Philadelphia) will be featured as well as Rev. Kent Siladi, the National Setting's new Director of Philanthropy, and Jill White, a Regional Mission Interpreter with the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund. Maria C. Coyne, the Cornerstone Fund's President & CEO, will serve as moderator. Both local church leaders and thought leaders in faith-based giving will sit down to discuss how to-even in the face of a pandemic-continue to focus on the capital needs of a congregation and how the definition of capital is expanding, from technology infrastructure to HVAC systems and air filtration, to building modifications and more. The webinar is FREE, but registration is REQUIRED.

Hoyleton Golf Classic
Hoyleton Youth and Family continues moving forward and adapting to the changes they face. Mark your calendars for Friday, October 2, 2020 for the Hoyleton Golf Classic at Tamarack. Info will be coming soon, and you can find out more at www.Hoyleton.org. There are sponsorship opportunities, foursomes and, of course, single golfers! The event is always a good time, and they will follow the state of Illinois and CDC guidelines to stay safe and be well.

Back to School Drive
During the month of July, the Back to School Drive will be collecting school supplies for nearly 500 youth! The support from their UCC partners has been outstanding over the years, and they are hopeful you will continue to partner this year. Please reach out to make accommodations that will meet your needs. Due to COVID19 restrictions, they have also added an Amazon Wish List (https://a.co/gUdQyoW) to make it easier for shopping and delivery as well as drop off locations for supply donations at three Auffenberg locations. Please see this flyer for more information or contact the Development Department at Hoyleton by calling 618-688-7094 or emailing adrobisch@hoyleton.org.

Churches Fighting an Invisible Enemy
By: Lisa Gonzalez, Director of Loss Control (reprinted from “The Steward”) Loss Control at Insurance Board has spent an exorbitant amount of time dedicated to offering resources to support our churches during COVID-19. It pains me to think that for all the hours I spent staring into a computer screen late at night researching, reading, writing, meeting via video calls, and producing resources that could help save lives, I could not save my own family. Two weeks ago, my beautiful cousins (the youngest of which is only 23) had to say goodbye to their only living parent, my uncle, via video call. It was every bit as tragic and sad as one would imagine it; experiencing it first-hand was nothing short of surreal. I watched countless people sharing stories on how COVID-19 wreaked havoc on their families and congregations, but for all the empathy, compassion, tears, and prayers said for those people, there are no words for facing it personally. Read the entire article and more.

Deaconess Foundation has many ways to engage with the community, advocate for change and invest in the lives of children. Deaconess is pleased to have supported the Close the Workhouse Campaign with funding through their Responsive Grants program, space as a Center-Based Initiative and our voice as an institutional advocate. We continue to learn from the campaign's leaders (Action St. Louis, ArchCity Defenders and The Bail Project) and its lessons for our community. The most significant lesson this campaign has illuminated is that sustained public education, followed by mobilization and democratic action can generate, allocate and reallocate public resources for the benefit of children and families. With this success in mind, we are affirmed in our commitment to invest in the power of people in communities to advocate, organize and mobilize for change. Their newsletter highlights many ways to engage, advocate and invest in the lives of children. If you would like to see the entire monthly e-newsletter to find out more of the ways you can get involved, click here.
Men and women who serve as family caregivers to loved ones struggling with dementia or Alzheimer's can be challenged by stress which can cause depression or anxiety. A caregiver who is suffering from the added stress may not be at their best to care for themselves or their loved one. With your help, we can spread the word that St. John's Community Care can support them on their journey that no one should take alone. Here are a few programs you can suggest to friends or neighbors who serve as caregivers.

- On Line - Stress Busting Program
- On Line Support Groups Offered monthly - Family Caregivers Support Group or Alzheimer's Support Group
- On Line - Memory Cafe Group Offered monthly
- In Person - BRAIN WAVE Early Memory Loss Program
- In Person - Savvy Caregiving

St. John's Community Care is currently offering in-person and online support and programs for family caregivers at no charge using Zoom. For more information, call Gail Shaw at 618-344-5008.

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**UCC launches "Recovering Hope," emotional care in COVID-19**

Disasters are stressful for survivors and caregivers alike, including the pastors and chaplains to whom survivors turn for spiritual and practical help. The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. This long-running disaster is taking an enormous emotional toll on millions of people, sparing no one as they and those around them suffer sickness and death, isolation and loss of community and livelihoods.

In response, a multidisciplinary United Church of Christ team is launching "Recovering Hope," which is rolling out resources for emotional and spiritual care to pastors, chaplains and other church leaders, congregants, vulnerable communities and beyond.

"Recovering Hope" is offering resources, indexed here in a variety of formats, including virtual workshops, referrals to vetted providers, and other easily accessible resources from the UCC and beyond. The team is working in close contact with UCC conference ministers and disaster coordinators to complement, not duplicate, the support services they are providing to their pastors, chaplains and churches.

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**What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...**

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

**Region 8**

New Athens St. John UCC will hold a drive-thru, carry-out Fried Chicken Dinner on Sun, Aug 16 from 11 am until the food runs out. Menu includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, corn, slaw and dessert. Adults $12; Children 10 and younger $6.

New Baden Zion UCC will hold a Drive-Thru Spaghetti Dinner in the church’s front parking lot on Fri, Aug 28 from 4 pm - 7 pm. Meal includes Spaghetti with a choice of Marinara, Meatball, or Alfredo sauce; dressed salad; breadsticks, and dessert. All meals $9.

**Region 8**

**Job Opportunity:** St. Peter UCC in Lenzburg is looking for an organist/pianist starting at the 10 am worship service on the first Sunday in September. Contact the office at stpeterlenzburg@htc.net or 618-475-2557.