Joy and Sadness - A Letter from Shirley Asmussen
September 9, 2020
Dear Friends and Partners in Ministry,
It is with great joy and great sadness that I announce my resignation as the Director of Outdoor Ministries, effective December 1, 2020. This decision has been percolating for the last 12-18 months. I turn 65 at the end of October and it's time for new adventures and new challenges, as well as a little less stress and responsibility. I love working at DuBois Center and enjoy living at camp, but the last months have taken their toll. I am looking forward to spending quality time with friends and family, traveling and working on my bucket list - all with good safety precautions in place.

It has been a blessing and an honor to serve with you and to serve on your behalf. Thank you all so much for your support of the ministry of DuBois Center and my efforts. Over the past ten years, I have had the opportunity to work with, to be in community with, so many amazing people - our campers, guests and students, their families, our donors, and all the incredible staff and volunteers. I am sad that I won't see one more Mother-Daughter Retreat, one more Summer Camp season or one more Father-Son Retreat. It's been a rough year for all of us - but I will leave with so many great memories.

Despite the pandemic, there is still much to celebrate! DuBois Center truly is sacred ground - a place to be cherished. It is a wonderful space where people of all ages grow in their faith, live and work together in Christian community, learn about respect - respect for themselves and for others, and show God's love by truly caring for all of creation. Together, we have been good stewards of the programs, grounds and facilities. The number of committed volunteers has grown significantly, and their efforts can be seen in every facet of life at DuBois Center. We have solid partnerships with Hoyleton Youth & Family Services and the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. With the support of donors and volunteers, we have made a huge dent in the deferred maintenance list - the docks, the spillway, the tractor, the upgrades in Hickory Lodge... the list goes on.

While there is much to celebrate, there are also many challenges to be addressed. In my opinion, to move boldly through this decade, even more committed volunteers are needed. Capacity needs to be addressed: this is a critical piece for financial viability. Despite the work on deferred maintenance, there is still much more to be done. New partnerships need to be developed. And last, but not least, to advance and sustain these efforts, an effective staffing and support structure needs to be put into place. I have given my best effort, now it is time for fresh eyes and new energy at DuBois Center.

I wish all of you the very best as your ministry continues in this conference, your local church, at DuBois Center and with your neighbors - near and far. I close with two of my favorite quotes which encompass my hopes for you and the Illinois South Conference.

"We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly embracing one another." Unknown
"Look Up, and Laugh, and Love and Lift." adapted from Howard Walter

May God Bless and Keep You and Yours,
Shirley Asmussen, Director of Outdoor Ministries

Christ's Love in Action: 3 Great Loves
This year's Annual Meeting will center on the 3 Great Loves campaign of the UCC which will wrap up at the 33rd General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 2021. We believe in this moment of our nation and world's history, more than ever,
people need to hear and experience the love of Jesus Christ. Our focus will be on how we can uniquely continue to tell and live out the story of Christ's love by expressing love to neighbors, children, and the environment. We hope to inspire you and your church to continue to tell and share Christ's love, which has the power to impact and transform the Church and the world in a common purpose of creating a just world for all.

**Offering**
The Conference Council approved the Conference Gatherings Team's decision that the Annual Meeting offering will be designated for food pantries supported by our ISC churches. We will ask churches to "bring" their offerings to the meeting by sending in their checks to ISC with Annual Meeting offering on the memo line and the amount being donated on the "Hunger Project" line of the monthly contribution form. The ISC Hunger Action Team will assist in the distribution of the monies raised for our food pantries. We know that hunger is an ongoing issue and that COVID-19 has put an extra strain on the pantries. So, we pray that the generosity of the churches and delegates will assist the pantries and their patrons during this time.

**Zoom Prayer and Lectionary Lunch Hour for Pastors**
Starting today, September 9, the Local Church Ministries team will be hosting a weekly Zoom Prayer and Lectionary Lunch Hour on Wednesday at 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm for all Illinois South Conference pastors. This is an opportunity for clergy in the Conference to get together for weekly prayer, support, and the sharing of preaching and worship ideas for the coming Sunday. We hope to see you in Zoom for our Wednesday lunch hours. An email with the Zoom link was sent to all pastors.

**UCC President Avery Post - ecumenist, justice advocate, skilled preacher - dies at 96**
The Rev. Avery D. Post, president of the United Church of Christ from 1977 to 1989, died Monday, Sept. 7, at Kendal Retirement Community in Hanover, N.H. He was 96.

Through a career that also included heading the UCC’s statewide body in Massachusetts and pastoring local churches in three states, Post was known as an ecumenist, an advocate for social justice, and a skilled preacher. He led the denomination through years that included Cold War peace dialogues, racial-justice activism and support for emerging movements for women’s and LGBTQ rights and inclusion.

In July 2019, Rev. John Dorhauer, the current UCC general minister and president, joined by several past and current UCC leaders, presented Post with a medallion in honor of his service.

Read the entire article.

**Have You Read a Good Book Lately?**
Each year the Committee on Ministry Team asks authorized ministers of ISC to complete an annual review form. This request serves as an opportunity for pastors to share their ministry joys and concerns for the past year. One of the questions on the form asks pastors to share one book and/or experience that they would highly recommend. We will be sharing some of those recommendations for the next few weeks to help pastors and lay alike to find new and inspiring books and/or experiences.

**Recommendations for September 9**
- Katharina and Martin Luther - The Radical Marriage of a Runaway Nun and a Renegade Monk by Michelle DeRusha
- An Interracial Adventure in Dixie in the 1950’s by Rev. Herb Schafale (available through the ISC office or by contacting Rev. Herb Schafale)
- Courses through Center for Progressive Renewal/Convergence - click here.
- A Pilgrimage to Eternity: From Canterbury to Rome in Search of a Faith or The Worst Hard Time by Timothy Egan.
- Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk About Race and How to Do It by Shelly Tochuk

**Retired Pastor**
- Rev. W. Curtis and Martha Lee, Newburgh, IN

**People with Life Concerns**
- Please pray for Rev. Bill (Patti) Causer as he continues to recover from surgery. Cards may be sent to 11315 N Presley Ln, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.
- 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.
Let Music Ring
This is normally the time of year that choirs begin rehearsing their fall programs, but of course, group singing is not safe right now due to COVID-19. Worship Design Studio (WDS) wants to support your choirs during this time and still provide ways for them to make music together.

Virtual Choir Webinar Series
WDS is partnering with Practical Resources for Churches (PRC) to provide a webinar series all about the basics of Virtual Choirs. The first session of the webinar series began on September 8, but you may still participate because the September 8 session is available as a recording. The webinar series is available to non-members of WDS or PRC for $10. To register for the Virtual Choir Webinar Series, click here.

Fully-Scripted Advent Worship Series
WDS also presented this week a fully-scripted Advent worship series "I Believe Even When..." based on the beautiful anthem by Mark Miller. It will provide a wonderful way for communities to come together with virtual choral music during the Advent/Christmas season. "I Believe Even When..." series is FREE to full-year Worship Design Studio Subscribers, and available for separate purchase without a WDS subscription for $99. Click here to see more about this series.
Both opportunities work together to help churches bring music to congregations during this time. For more information contact marcia@marciamcfee.com.

A Letter from the United Church of Christ Board of Directors
The United Church of Christ Board (UCCB) is committed to Christian discipleship and Synod resolutions toward an anti-racist church and society. To advance racial diversity, equity, and inclusion, the UCCB announced the work of an institutional assessment on September 1 and began seeking consultants to the process by posting a request for proposals at the UCC website. Access the RFP here.

UCCB: Open Letter to the United Church of Christ
The United Church of Christ (UCC) is among the whitest Christian denominations in America. In spite of our strong commitments to racial diversity, equity, and inclusion, our congregational reality remains 84% White with no other racial or ethnic group representation exceeding 6%, according to the UCC Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data gleaned from the 58% of UCC churches reporting. Given the racial divide is even more stark.

"Regardless of public statements and actions, such empirical data presents a sobering reality for a church that makes bold commitments to anti-racism and toward the dismantling of White supremacy in our institutions of faith. The U.S. population is 62% White. Not only is there dissonance between our stated aspirations and our present reality, there is dissonance between many of our churches and the communities we are called by God to serve.

But there is more to the story.
The perpetual call to discipleship means such data need not be an indictment of who we are, but rather can serve as an opportunity to transform our theological, social, and cultural traditions in ways that more closely align with the gospel we preach. We believe the unity of the church is not of its own making. It is a gift of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are a united church and a uniting church.
We are certainly no stranger to such movement of the Spirit. Our historical narrative and current commitment remind us that such transformation is possible.
As the church continues to align our operations, culture, and ministries with our values around racial diversity, equity, and inclusion, we recognize denominational leadership must lead by example. Everyone has their personal experience of the UCC and of the national setting, and all of those experiences matter. In order to engage the deeper emotional and spiritual work of building an equitable ministry, empirical data is necessary to establish a baseline from which to identify challenges and measure progress.
Toward this spiritual call, the United Church of Christ Board voted, unanimously, to lead both the UCCB and national setting in an institutional racial diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment. Just as we audit finances annually to assess fiscal stability and viability, on September 1, 2020, the UCCB will issue a public Request for Proposal (RFP) to several identified racial equity organizations to accompany us on this journey of self-examination by leading us through an objective racial equity assessment from which we will challenge and hold ourselves accountable. Please feel free to share the RFP with others who specialize in such work.
Developing a common analysis and language is not a task for only one workshop, nor is it a 90-minute session to fit in a board meeting. There must be an ongoing commitment to build staff and board knowledge and skill to talk about racism, power, and white privilege within the church; to analyze data, to identify and implement interventions, and to develop a roadmap for racial equity.
At this moment in our nation’s history, when the world seems to have paused at the intersection of courage and compassion, people of faith are poised to live justice out loud in new ways. It is in this moment that the church is called
to go deeper. And we will not go alone. The same God who has guided our incredible journeys in years past is the God who guides us now.

Yvette Wynn, Chair, UCC Board of Directors
John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President
Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister, Global Engagement & Operations, Co-Executive Global Ministries
Traci D. Blackmon, Associate General Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, Deaconess Foundation, Takes a New Challenge
As America finds itself immersed in a new movement to end racial and economic injustice, the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) today announced the appointment of Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson to be the next President and CEO of the nation's leading child advocacy organization.
Dr. Wilson is a national thought leader in racial justice, community organizing, and movement building. He is a champion for children's rights and has a longstanding relationship with the Children's Defense Fund, having led the effort to bring the CDF Freedom Schools literacy and empowerment program to serve children and families in the St. Louis area and serving as a leader of the annual CDF Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry. In the wake of the 2014 shooting of teenager Michael Brown, Dr. Wilson co-chaired the Ferguson Commission, which released the 'Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity' report calling for sweeping changes in policing, the criminal justice system, child well-being and economic mobility.

Read the entire article.
Read the letter from Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson and Deaconess Foundation Board of Trustees

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 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.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS!
The last two weeks have been hot and busy at DuBois Center. Trees damaged by the storm in early August are slowly being cleared away and the deadfall removed. Wood to replace the fence near the new spill pipe area is being painted. Our bees are being tended. The new power washer is being put to the test. Storage areas are being cleared out and cleaned. Our electric company has been working on line issues. And hay is being baled and stored.

FALL PROGRAMMING
As announced in early August, all in-person retreats and events sponsored by DuBois Center and/or the Illinois South Conference
Deaconess Foundation invites you to join them for the virtual release of their Power Moves Assessment Results and Action Plan on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 from 9 am - 10:15 am. Earlier this year, Deaconess Foundation engaged Makiyah Moody, senior manager with LaPiana Consulting, to assess how the Foundation builds, wields and shares power using the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy’s (NCRP) Power Moves toolkit.

Through a collaborative, investigative process involving surveys and interviews with their partners, community members and philanthropic colleagues, they received feedback and got a view of Deaconess Foundation's work from the various fields they engage. The hope was to get an eye on whether Deaconess Foundation is fully leveraging their resources in pursuit of the equity and justice required to assure child well-being in the St. Louis region.

On September 29, Lisa Ranghelli, senior director of evaluation and learning with NCRP and primary author of Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice, will join us alongside Ms. Moody as they present the assessment results publicly and invite the community to hold them accountable in an interactive virtual experience. Please join the circle of accountability. Click here to register.

Good Samaritan Fund through Deaconess Nurse Ministry

The Good Samaritan Fund through Deaconess Nurse Ministry provides financial support, subject to available funds, for UCC active and retired clergy and their partners/spouses who reside in the Missouri Mid-South or the Illinois South Conference.

**Eligible Applicant Criteria:**
1. Active or retired UCC clergy with good standing and residing in the Missouri Mid-South or Illinois South Conference of the UCC.
2. Surviving domestic partners or spouses of active or retired UCC Clergy residing in the Missouri Mid-South or Illinois South Conference of the UCC. If a surviving spouse of clergy remarries, they are no longer eligible.

**Type of Assistance:**
1. One time, Emergency Assistance Grants are for unforeseen circumstances that create financial demands. Emergency Grants do not subsidize churches or agencies or relieve them of meeting normal compensation responsibilities. Emergency grants are generally considered once per person in a twelve-month period with a maximum of $3,000 for the year. Credit counseling or other no cost financial counseling programs may be recommended for those who have avoidable financial circumstances.
2. Gap Assistant Grants are for a specific financial need for a short-term period which will eventually be resolved by other funding sources. Gap funding is available for up to 12 months rolling for a total amount of $15,000 to an individual. Talk to your conference minister if you need assistance.

**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.

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 on-line support and programs for family caregivers at no charge using Zoom. For more information, call Gail Shaw at 618-344-5008.

What's Happening at Illinois South Conference...

Get Ready to Vote: Early, By Mail, or In Person! Justice and Mission Team Asks You to Vote
You must be registered to vote. You can check to see if you are registered to vote here, and if not, register to vote online here. To learn more about registering, check out this document. There are several ways to vote in the election:

Vote Early
- By Mail: Due to concerns over COVID 19, many people may elect to vote by mail. You must apply to get a mail-in ballot. For those who apply to vote by mail, ballots will begin being mailed on September 24. There are three ways to apply:
  - in person at your election authority by November 2 OR
  - by mail by returning the application you may get in the mail. OR
  - apply online here.

  All mailed or online applications for ballots must be received by your Election Authority by October 29, 2020.

- In Person: Vote in person by early voting (October 19-November 2.) You can learn about places to vote early by selecting the 2020 General Election and your Election Authority at this website. However, as of this writing, the places for early voting are not yet posted.

Vote at the Polls on November 3, 2020
- Vote in person at your polling place on Election Day. To find your polling place, go here.

To all who participated in the Zoom sessions concerning White Fragility:
Rev. Phil Kershner invites you to a Zoom session on Wed, Sept 16 at 6:30 pm to hear a guest speaker who has a very different view of the book from most of our participants. Our guest is Dr. Wilfred Reilly, professor of political science at the historically black school, Kentucky State University. We will use my “freebie” Zoom account which limits us to 40 minutes. Dr. Reilly will speak for about 15 minutes and then take questions. The link is below. Hope to see you!

Topic: Phil Kershner's Zoom Meeting with Dr. Wilfred Reilly
Time: Sept 16, 2020 06:30 pm Central Time
Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 791 7769 5429
Passcode: 9cfFBh

Job Wanted:
Retired teacher seeking church (or other business) in need of full/part time receptionist/secretary. Confident people skills, competent in Microsoft and Google apps, familiar with office equipment, experience with bulletin layouts, PowerPoint, and ProPresenter. Please contact Lisa Cleveland at neal.lisa4@gmail.com or 618-410-0663.

Ferguson Buying Blitzes
Dear Friends in Ministry,
As we did a few years ago, Marine UCC invites you to a series of “Ferguson Buying Blitzes” to help the businesses of that community recover from recent rioting. Our first gathering was on August 29. We will meet at 10:00 am on two more Saturdays, Sept. 12 and Sept 26. Our meeting place will be at New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church. Their Pastor
Emeritus, Alonzo Adams, has agreed to allow us to meet there. The address is 1 N. Dade Street in Ferguson. The idea is to spread out and spend money in the businesses of the area. Hope to see you! Thanks. Rev. Phil Kershner

3 Great Loves is the UCC-wide mission initiative, telling the story of how we live out God's love through the lens of 3 Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation. For sharing the stories of how we, as a united church, live out God's love in missional, measurable and meaningful ways and to see ideas from other churches, please visit 3greatloves.org. If you decide to share your story, be sure to include pictures and videos, too!

Goodsearch and Goodshop
GoodSearch is a search engine that donates a portion of its income from advertisements to charities. When you sign up for GoodSearch it will show that you are supporting "Global Ministries - Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ." Additionally, you can support "Global Ministries - Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ" as you shop online through GoodShop, which donates up to 20% of your online purchases to the work of Global Ministries. Global Ministries is grateful for the more than $4,000 received by taking these simple steps! To learn how to use GoodSearch and GoodShop click here.

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.