



For the week of September 20 - September 26, 2020

**FREE TO YOU - The Gift of Revitalization:
6-week interactive online worship learning with
Dr. Marcia McFee**



As your Conference Minister, I have been in awe at the ways you, our pastors, musicians, and worship leaders, have adapted to the many challenges of worshiping in the ever-changing world of COVID. You have been on my heart and in prayers, as I know many of you have expressed your weariness and a bit of trepidation, knowing this Advent/Christmas season will be like no other you or your congregations have experienced. It is my deepest desire to support you and your churches as you continue to boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Years ago, I attended a week-long retreat with Dr. Marcia McFee, which was deeply transformative. The retreat offered new resources, ideas, and techniques to share with my music staff, worship leaders, and worship committees. Recently I reached out to Dr. McFee to talk to her about offering some webinars for our Conference. She shared that she had recently adapted her "Reboot Your Worship" series in light of the realities of worshiping in a pandemic and, if we would be interested, the Illinois South Conference could purchase this opportunity for all of the churches in our Conference. When I approached the Conference Council about this idea, they wholeheartedly supported offering this as a gift to all of you.

Thanks to monies from our Strengthen the Church fund, we are pleased to offer you and anyone in your church who would like to participate the opportunity to be a part Dr. Marcia McFee's "Reboot Your Worship" training at no cost to you starting on September 20th, 2020.

Now let me first say I know we are all ZOOM'ed out at this point. So perhaps the idea of participating in yet another online session makes you want to groan and quickly delete this email. But, please hear me out.

I am confident this will be a wonderful experience for those who choose to participate. Usually registration fees for one of Dr. McFee's workshops or retreats are at least \$250 on up. However, because we are gifting this to all of our churches, this experience will be at no cost to you.

I know not all of her suggestions, ideas or resources will work in your local context. I also know some of you will not be able to attend all of the sessions and that is ok. Even if there is one idea that offers you excitement and inspiration for your worship preparation, I believe it will have been worth being a part of this experience. So, I would encourage you to make time for participating and encourage others in your churches to do likewise.

The registration fees have been paid through our Strengthen the Church fund in order for all of our churches to participate. This gives you access to 6 weeks of downloadable resources (articles and videos) and 6 live webinars (also recorded for your archives) with Dr. McFee, a renowned worship designer, consultant, and educator. Read more about her at her [website](#).

She will be training churches in five basic ways to improve their worship immediately, no matter the size or style of worship and without a big budget or drastic change. Just as we have an occasional need to reboot our computers, "rebooting" your worship is simply a way to look through fresh eyes and get some fresh skills.

This course is also tailored to approach worship practices during the pandemic and will explore the basics of sensory-rich worship design while emphasizing safety protocols and getting creative for online expressions without burning out.

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
Sept 20 - Sept 26, 2020
Churches & Pastors**

- Grantfork UCC, Rev. Timothy (Rev. Janet) Darmour-Paul
- Hamel Immanuel UCC, Rev. Dana Schindler

AND Dr. McFee has shared with me that part of the series will be dedicated to getting you ready for your best Advent season ever all along the way! All you need to do is register (at no charge) to receive the emails. You can invite unlimited members of your worship team (or potential worship team members) to receive these communications as well. We encourage you to take advantage of this free offer (usually \$99 per church) made possible through our registration.

Click [here](#) for our registration link.

Feel free to share this information and the registration link with others in your church who assist in worship planning.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister



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. 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 through expressing love to neighbor, children, and creation. 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.

Friday, October 23 afternoon will consist of a panel of educational speakers. Friday night will feature a pre-recorded celebration event which will include highlights from churches and pastors who are celebrating milestone anniversaries.

Saturday morning, October 24, will be a combination of pre-recorded videos and five interactive webinars with voting capabilities for the business portion of our meeting. We plan to have our guest speaker, Rev. Dave Sigmund, the UCC's 3 Great Loves Campaign ambassador, talk to us about the ways in which the Church has been the Church by caring for our neighbors, children, and the environment.

Sunday morning, October 25, will feature a worship service that will be available for everyone in the Illinois South Conference to view.

More details on all that will be taking place during the weekend will be sent to churches and delegates and be made available in upcoming Weekly Connections

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.

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 15

- *The Artist's Rule* by Christine Painter
- *Becoming* by Michelle Obama
- *A Hidden Wholeness* by Parker Palmer
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero
- *The Harbinger*, *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, *The Paradigm*, *The Oracle*, and *The Book of Mysteries* by Jonathan Cahn

Retired Pastor

- Rev. James and Lelynna Langdoc, Sun City Center, FL

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.



COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund Impact Report

In April, Deaconess Foundation launched the COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund to provide emergency support for Black-led organization's responding to community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Fund, Deaconess partnered with local Black- led social service and social change organizations committing more than \$2.2 million to their work.

To meet the needs of a rapidly changing environment caused by the advent of COVID-19, the foundation recalibrated its funding model and processes to expedite the grantmaking process for this Fund. Most organizations received funds within three weeks of submitting a funding proposal. Grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Grants were considered general operating support with application request detailing the desired use of funds for informational purposes and internal analysis of service scale. Additionally, review processes were streamlined and reporting requirements were eliminated, so that applicants could focus on the work of relief response across the region.

Read the entire [report](#).

UCC Webinars

Tuesday, September 15 - 2:30 pm CST

The Backstage Pass: How We Do Digital Events and Measure Impact

Join the Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data and the Tech Team of our webinars to learn HOW we are pulling them off! We've compiled the best practices documents, we're navigating Zoom and other digital platforms and all of their updates, and we're STILL learning as we go. We'll reveal HOW we make the magic happen behind the scenes and invite your questions along the way. Featuring: The Innovativeness of the Rev. Phiwa Langeni. The Off-Camera Wisdom of Taylor Russell. The Social Media and Tech Savviness of Laurel Steinetz. The Brilliance of Backstage Manager Jennifer White. Hosted by the Merry-Making Rev. Dr. Chris Davies. More info and register [here](#).

Thursday, September 17 - 2:30 CST

The Sermons that Keep Preaching

It's said that the sermons preachers preach fall into a few key themes, year after year. Join a panel of local pastors thinking through the sermons that keep coming back, year after year, and why those messages continue to be critically important. In times of crisis and calm, we lean on our faith to guide us through. What are the messages that have resonated through the scripture and through the ages? Find out more and register [here](#).

Tuesday, September 22 - 2:30 CST

Strengthening the Bonds Between Us; The UCC Musicians Association

The UCC Musicians Association is a national organization of clergy, musicians and laity, inspiring, educating and nurturing those who minister through music and the arts. Join board members as they offer ideas to strengthen the bonds between clergy and musicians, our congregations and the global community during this time of isolation. They will address the challenges of planning worship, learning new technology and the vital need for collegial support and professional development to equip and sustain us. Find out more and register [here](#).

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.

Care for the Environment

Runoff from excess fertilizer and other chemicals carried downstream by water and erosion will poison our drinking water, feed toxic algal blooms and contribute to a massive deadzone in the Gulf of Mexico.

Illinois state government has established a plan to improve our water quality by reducing runoff pollution through the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices like cover crops and vegetative buffers. Farmers across Illinois may be eligible for the Fall Cover for Spring Savings Program, a new pilot project run by the Illinois Department of Agriculture that pays a \$5 per acre premium discount on the following year's crop insurance invoice for every acre of cover crop enrolled. Applications will be open for submission in December 2020. Find out more [here](#).

† DuBois Center News



NEW POLLINATOR GARDENS

Work has begun! Soon, the front of the DuBois Center office will host a shade pollinator garden, while the side facing the road will be graced by a sun pollinator garden. When complete, they will be great teaching tools - beautiful to the eye and good for the environment. Pictured here are Green DuBois volunteer Margie Lindhorst and her husband Melvin after installing a new rain barrel. This project is Margie's brainchild and much work has gone into the preparations already. The first planting was scheduled for last spring, but due to the pandemic, Margie has been nursing plants in pots at home. She wrote, "Because the ephemerals die back in



late spring, I don't know if I am taking care of plants or just pots of soil!!! Since a lot of woodland plants take years to grow and flower from seed, transplants are the best and give a head start." Three inches of rich composted earth will be spread over the area and used for planting. This will leave the original soil and the subsoil system mostly undisturbed. After established, the garden will be very low maintenance. It will need to be checked for invasive species and - after storms - for fallen branches, but that's about it. **SPECIAL THANKS to Margie** for taking the lead on this project and providing much of the funding for it. Watch Weekly Connection for ways to be involved with the new gardens.



Embrace a Space

Join us and **Embrace a Space!** Is there a special spot at DuBois Center that brings you great joy or that stirs wonderful memories? Are there specific work tasks that you especially

enjoy? Individuals, families, groups and churches 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. The possibilities are nearly endless. Consider weeding and pruning the Rustic Chapel, cleaning the Craft Grotto, or painting the hidden deck near Oak Lodge AKA Java Point. Thinking bigger? Take on a building - maybe a cottage - or a group of them, perhaps the cabins in Fish Ridge. All our buildings would appreciate some extra TLC! Over the decades, volunteers have been a significant piece of the ministry of DuBois Center. 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 safe physical distancing. For more information, contact us at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

YOUR TRASH, OUR TREASURE

Before storing your yard tools at the end of the summer gardening season, it might be good to take stock of just what has accumulated over the years - 4 trowels, 7 kneeling pads, 3 hoes, etc. Amazing - isn't it?! Are there



extras that are no longer needed to care for your garden? If yes, please consider donating them to DuBois Center. We have a random hand tool or two, but not enough to accommodate work projects for family groups, confirmation classes, scout troops, or other willing volunteers. We do have lots of full-sized rakes and shovels, but more tools specifically for garden work - planting, weeding and pruning - are needed. Think trowels, cultivators, hand weeders, hoes, small pruners and shrub rakes. Contact DuBois Center for more information at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202, or consider a leisurely drive to DuBois, Illinois. Tools can be left on the front porch of the office. Thank you!

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!



Thanks from Eden Theological Seminary & Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss

On September 9, 2020, Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss, Vice President for Advancement at Eden Theological Seminary, sent this note to the churches of Illinois South Conference as thanks for their donations...

On behalf of the students and faculty of Eden Theological Seminary, it is my pleasure to acknowledge your gifts in support of the Eden Annual Fund. Your congregations' support of Eden means a great deal to us. Churches are at the core of culture and faith, and we appreciate the work you do. More than anyone, you know how important it is to prepare the next generation of ministers and leaders, so we are especially grateful for your help in maintaining Eden as an ecumenical educational center for the progressive Christian movement.

I look forward to visiting in person or virtually with Illinois South Conference churches during the coming year.
Rev. Mary Schaller Blaufuss

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 Rangelhelli, 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.



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...

Zoom Prayer and Lectionary Lunch Hour for Pastors

The Local Church Ministries team will continue to host a weekly Zoom Prayer and Lectionary Lunch Hour on every 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.

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.



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: 9cfBh

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 Blitz" to help the businesses of that community recover from recent rioting. Our first two gatherings were on Aug 29 and Sept 12. We will meet at 10:00 am on one more Saturday, 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

All Regions

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!

All Regions

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](#)

Region 8

New Athens St. John UCC will hold a drive through / carry out Wurstmarkt and Pre-Order Country Store on Sunday, September 27 from 11 am until they are sold out. Country Store pick up on Sunday during the Wurstmarkt. Menu: fresh whole hog pork sausage, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, green beans and dessert. Adults \$12; Children 10 and under \$6.

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