For the week of September 27 - October 3, 2020

The Gift of Time

"My times are in the hands of the Lord"
--Psalm 31:15

These days one of the most important things I do for self care is getting up early to journal, read, and pray. I have a particular chair in my living room that is my designated spot for my morning practice. A few days ago in the quietness of my prayer time, I was deeply distracted by a disturbing sound. "Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock."
The more I tried to ignore the sound the louder it seemed to get. "Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock." A background sound, which is a daily sound in my house, suddenly seemed to reverberate in my soul and rattle my mind. I found I could not get into a more peaceful state of being until I actually addressed the disruption. As I walked through my living room and kitchen, I discovered the culprits. After I took the batteries out of the clock in my living room and the clock in my kitchen, it seemed the whole energy of my house shifted. Suddenly, there was a tranquil hum, which also shifted the energy in my mind, body, and spirit to a more peaceful tempo. As I thought about how the noisy cadence was due to the inner mechanics of the clocks, I thought about how true this is for us as well.

In reality, time is a human made construct. We have constructed a reality of time that often causes us to feel as if we are anxiously trying to catch up or hold on. Many approach the construct they have created like a fire-breathing dragon they must slay. Think about how we, as a culture, speak of time.

"I am too busy."
"I don't have time to..."
"There just aren't enough hours in the day."
"I am on a time crunch."
"If only I had more time to..."
"We can save time by..."
"We are running out of time."

A droning metronome of tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock, becomes the rhythm of our lives because of the ways we think about time. Although it is true that there is much beyond our control (especially in these days), we do control our thoughts and beliefs about time. The scriptures remind us we are not the creators of the universe, God and God alone is. God's timing is not our timing. All the moments we are given in which we breathe the breath of life into our lungs and are able to experience the wonders of this world that God has created is a gift.

Just by shifting our perspective of time as being a gift rather than a curse can transform the rhythm of our days. God has given us the gift of time. We have the power to choose how we think about and receive this gift. God provides us everything we need, even enough time. For as the Psalmist says, "My times are in the hands of the Lord." May you discover this gift each day.

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

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 27 - Oct 3, 2020
Churches & Pastors
- Hecker Friedens UCC, Rev. Ivan (Vivian) Horn
- Highland Evangelical UCC, Rev. Eric (Kay) Quinney-Burnard
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.

Local Church Ministries Presents Virtual Workshops
There is no registration. A link to the workshops will be sent to everyone by email.

Friday, October 23 - Afternoon
The Re-formation of the Church
Come as you are with your questions and comments to speak with Rev. Dr. Chris Davies of Faith Education, Innovation and Formation of the national setting. We will take a break together, witness to the time we are in, and hope for the world we are co-creating together. We hope that you will feel restored and deeply heard after having attended this conversation and Webinar on October 23 from 2 pm to 3 pm.

Engaging the Youth
Are you struggling with keeping your youth involved? Bring your questions and concerns regarding ways to keep your Youth engaged in the life of your church during these unprecedented times. Join us via Zoom on October 23 from 3:15 pm to 4 pm as we pose questions and seek the wisdom of our panelists: Julie Gvillo, former Presbyterian Youth Pastor and founder of A Place of Grace and Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins, pastor of St. Paul UCC in Staunton. Gain insight and ideas to rekindle or spark your youth ministry.

Friday, October 23 - Evening
Friday night, Chilang Lawless and Eileen Hoag will host a celebration of churches and pastors who are celebrating milestone anniversaries, the Memeber in Discernment and the pastors who have retired this year.

Saturday morning, October 24 - Business Meeting
The Conference Council with all church delegates will experience a combination of pre-recorded videos and 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 creation.

Registration is in the process of being set up and will be done online.

Sunday morning, October 25
Join the rest of the conference in an online pre-recorded 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.

registration required. Click here.
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 have been sharing and will continue to share 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 22
- *The Me I Want to Be* by John Ortberg
- The Holocaust Museum Tour & lecture in St. Louis
- *Letter from an Astrophysicist* by Neil DeGrasse Tyson
- *Speaking Christian* by Marcus Borg
- *Virus as a Summons to Faith* by Walter Brueggemann

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.

ST JACOB UCC
Stack, Paint & Haul!
On Sunday, a small but mighty crew from St. Jacob UCC headed to DuBois Center for a day of service. They unloaded and stacked 350-400 bales of hay, primed 43 boards and painted a number of posts, and moved and stacked wood. The hay is for the horses - obviously - but this year we had more than ever, and the team filled the hayloft in the barn and the hay shed. The boards and posts are for fencing - 300 feet of old fence was removed for the spillway renovation. The wood came from two precariously placed trees on the lake side of Coveside cottage which were removed earlier. All three projects were on our priority list, and the efforts of this group saved our staff many hours of work and speeded up the fence project significantly. It's amazing what five people can do! THANKS to the crew from St. Jacob for your hard work! It truly does make a difference. They also did a great job wearing face coverings and physical distancing when appropriate! There is always lots to be done to help maintain your outdoor ministry facilities and grounds and you can help! For more information, contact us at 618-787-2202 or dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org.
HAPPY AUTUMN
Celebrate the season with these photos from DuBois Center. They were taken by Anne Petry, a DBC volunteer, nature lover and photography buff.

SIXTY SECONDS of SOLITUDE
Fall is in the air and new, subtle changes in the natural world become evident each day. Our woods and meadows have taken on more golden tones. The woodland sunflower, elm-leaved goldenrod and tick seed sunflower are showing their colors. In the spirit of the season, today’s edition of 60 Seconds of Solitude features gentle fall breezes and native goldenrod. Jason Petry captured this quiet moment while on a photo expedition at DuBois Center. Sit comfortably, relax your shoulders, breathe deeply and let the gentle winds refresh you... allergen-free. Join Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and imagine God's music in the wind. "I hear the wind among the trees playing the celestial symphonies; I see the branches downward bent, like keys of some great instrument." Watch for occasional solitude postings on our website and Facebook page.

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!
If your church has property insurance on our church building with the Insurance Board of the UCC, please be aware the Insurance Board wants to help your church protect your ministry.

Imagine finding a pipe burst when you walk into your building. Maybe a bathroom flooded or a hot water heater leaked. In addition to addressing water damage, now you are faced with overwhelming task of cleanup during a pandemic.

Instead, imagine you received a text or email alert telling you there was an issue before significant damage occurred. The Insurance Board has collaborated with HSB Connected Technologies to offer you with a valuable early warning system that uses the latest sensor technology. This technology will detect water and monitor indoor temperatures that may help avoid a disruptive impact on your ministry.

There are 3 easy steps to put sensor technology to work for your ministry:
- Sign up today by speaking with your Insurance Board agent or click here.
- Receive your sensors by mail. You will receive emails with delivery status.
- Activate. Using the HSB iSensor app or the instructions provided, activate your account and sensors in less than a half hour.

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.

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. 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.

Mission Moment for your church.
Job Opportunity:
The Highland Evangelical UCC is searching for a Director of Audio-Visual Ministries. The person in this position will lead all areas of multimedia and technical productions in a manner to glorify Christ to further the mission and ministry during all worship services, ministries, and special events at EvUCC. Click here for a full job description. Send resumes to office@evucc.org by October 15.

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.

Rescheduled Zoom Session
Rev. Phil Kershner apologies to those who tried to get in on the Zoom session last Wednesday with Dr. Wilfred Reilly. The guest speaker was unable to make it because of a long flight delay. He has agreed to do it this Wednesday, Sept 23, at 6:30 pm. Here is the link.
Time: Sep 23, 2020 6:30 pm CST
Meeting ID: 721 8955 7453  Passcode: 1DheXK

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

Region 4

Drive Thru Friday Fish Fries at St. John's UCC Brighton on Nov 6, 13, 20 serving from 11 am to 6:30 pm as a kick-off of the celebration of their 150th anniversary of ministry. Menu includes a choice of entrees of white or buffalo fish ($5), pulled pork ($5), brats ($2), hot dogs ($1) or meals including entree plus two sides from potato salad, cole slaw, green beans, baked beans, mac & cheese and desserts of assorted pies or other desserts. Entrees $5; Sides $1; Desserts $3; Meal $10. Delivery of meals to local schools and businesses from 11 am - 1 pm. Credit/Debit Cards or Cash Accepted. Call ahead at 618-556-0801 or fax 618-372-3737 or drive up to place an order. All proceeds will go to support the ministries of St. John's UCC.

Region 8

Zion UCC New Baden will host their Drive Thru Chicken Dinner on Sat, Oct 3, from 4-7 pm or while supply lasts. Dinner includes ½ chicken, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, corn, green beans, slaw, applesauce, and pie. Cost is $12 each. To reserve a meal, call the church at 618-588-4135 by 3 pm on Fri, Oct 2 with pick up name, number of meals, and pick up time. Your meals will be waiting for you when you arrive.

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.

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.