Beloved Church,

I believe there is important work that you and I are being called to right now. It is not new work to the Church, but it is work to which we need to recommit ourselves. It is recommitting ourselves to shining the light of Christ’s love in all places the dangerous, damaging, and dark shadows of fear, hatred, and evil lurks in this world, in this country, in this community, in this church, in your families, and even in our own lives. It is recommitting ourselves to stand with the least, the last, the lost, and the marginalized. It is recommitting ourselves to stand with the people who fear for their very lives and with those who feel that they have been heard for the first time in a long time. It is recommitting ourselves to fighting for justice by making sure that every person is safe and welcome in the Body of Christ by making sure that we are listening to the ONLY voice which matters, the voice of Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. It is recommitting ourselves to live in and express the fullness God’s enduring, expansive love. But please hear me when I say this is the work of each of us, trusting, moving and responding in our faith. It is not the work of a political party. It is not the work of one leader. It is also not work to be done alone, or only by you or me. It is our collective work knowing and trusting we are not alone.

For we have and always will have a God who is bigger than the chasm and more powerful than the differences we face in our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, our country and our world. Honoring the God of ALL of us, loving our beloved siblings, showing grace to those with different opinions than ours, listening to the pain of those who are afraid, and praying for this divide to be healed. Yes, we have our work cut out for us. Yet, consider this powerful reminder.

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**Prayer list for Nov 15-21, 2020**

**Churches & Pastors**
- Mascoutah St. John UCC, Rev. Hugh (Bo) Fitz
- Illinois South Conference/DuBois Center Staff

**Retired Pastor**
- Rev. Dr. Richard and Johann Ellerbrake, Lebanon, IL

**People with Life Concerns**
- Please pray for the family of Ellen Kuergeleis as they mourn her death. Ellen is the mother of Tom (Susan) Kuergeleis and Bonnie (Steve Thom) Kuergeleis. Tom Kuergeleis has been very active in ISC and served as ISC Moderator for several years. Memorials may be made to St. John UCC in Maestown, where Ellen was a member. Read the full obituary. Funeral services will be private.
- Pray for Rev. Nancy (Kevin Lee) Spier-Lee as she deals with some health issues and rehabilitation. Rev. Spier-Lee was the Pastor for Zion UCC St. Joe in Waterloo and served on several ISC teams.
- Pray for peace during the post-election.

- Keep all pastors in your prayers as they continue to provide
It is a story originally written by Carter Heyward which I first encountered in Parker Palmer’s book *Touching Our Strength*:

“Once there was a wise old woman who lived in a small village. The children of the village were puzzled by her—her wisdom, her gentleness, her strength. One day, several of the older children decided to fool her. No one could be as wise as everyone said she was, and they set out to prove it.

So they found a baby bird. One of the boys cupped it in his hands and said to his friend, ‘We’ll ask her whether the bird I have in my hands is dead or alive. If she says it is dead, I will open my hands and let it fly away. If she says it’s alive, I’ll crush it and she’ll see that it’s dead.’

So they went to the woman and presented her with this puzzle. ‘Old woman,’ the little boy asked, ‘the bird in my hands, is it dead or alive?’ The old woman became very still, studied the boy’s hands, then looked carefully into his eyes. ‘It’s in your hands,’ she said.”

Beloved Church, the work is in our hands. It always has been and it always will be. But we are not alone. And we cannot do it alone. We need each other.

Let us recommit ourselves to do that which Christ has called us to do together.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

**Annual Meeting Webinar Recording**

If you were unavailable for the Friday Annual Meeting Webinar with Rev. Dr. Chris Davies, Team Leader for Faith Education, Innovation and Formation at the National Setting, or if you want to view it again, the Re-Formation of the Church is available on ISC YouTube account at this [link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=123456789).

**All ISC, IKC, and Heartland Pastors are invited to join the Rev. Shana Johnson, Rev. Chad Abbott and Rev. Dave Long-Higgins for our Adaptive Leadership in the Messy Middle: Open Clergy Conversation on Wednesday, November 18 at 2 pm CTS.**

We are looking forward to being in conversation with you.

**Topic: Adaptive Leadership in the Messy Middle: Clergy Conversations**

**Dates:** Wednesday, November 18, 2020

**Time:** 2:00 PM CST

To Join the Zoom Meeting, click this link about 10 minutes prior to the meeting. The host will let you into the meeting when it begins. [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7088890946](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7088890946)

Meeting ID: 708 889 0946

One tap mobile

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**Stewardship in Advent?**

Dear ISC pastors have you considered how you will engage your congregation in thinking about generosity this Advent season?
It may seem “unspiritual” to talk about money during Advent. But every Advent, charities see their members and friends make some of their biggest gifts. People give at this time of year. The Awaiting Generosity Webinar provides a way for pastors and lay leaders to think about promoting generosity and discuss our relationship with money in ways rooted in our sacred stories. Join Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach Officer, to learn ways to faithfully and meaningfully talk about money and fundraising during Advent. On November 30 at 2 pm CST, you are invited to participate in this FREE webinar which is being sponsored by Illinois South Conference, Heartland Conference, and the Indiana Kentucky Conference. To register, use this link.

A Very UCC Christmas: 2020
Brought to you by the United Church of Christ National Setting
The staff of the national setting is working on a Christmas Pageant and full worship service for Local Churches to use as worship on or around December 27, or use portions of it in their own services. Each piece will be downloadable as a video file from the national setting, with more details released before November 20.
In the meantime, as congregations are planning for Advent and Christmas, please know that the following components are coming for your use in worship through Advent and beyond:

10 Digital Hymns as Music Videos:
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel (with John 1: 1-5)
- In the Bleak Midwinter (with Luke 2: 1-5)
- Star of Country Down (with Luke 1: 46-56)
- Away In a Manger / Santo Santo Santo
- O Come All Ye Faithful
- Each Winter as the Year Grows Older - v 1 & 3
- Jesus, Jesus, What a Wonderful Child
- Angels We Have Heard on High
- O Little Town of Bethlehem
- Silent Night
- Go Tell it on the Mountain
A “Lessons and Carols” Pageant service (including some of the above.)
A fully produced UCC Movie: “A Very UCC Christmas: 2020” with four scenes and music tracks as above.

Scene 1: The Board Room Brainstorming
Scene 2: Finance Committee Transformations
Scene 3: Faith Formation Finds Volunteers
Scene 4: Lessons and Carols
The Lessons and Carols will be streamed on Christmas Eve on Facebook and Youtube as Thursdays for the Soul. 2:30pm CT
The Full Movie “A Very UCC Christmas: 2020” will be streamed on our platforms (Youtube and Facebook) on December 27, 9 am CT.
The Season of Advent Resources.  
An Advent like no other. Knowing that, this resource has been adapted with online and streaming worship in mind. Click [here](#) to download the free 3 Great Loves Advent 2020 Toolkit. The toolkit includes:
- A sample suggested calendar
- Theme graphics
- Weekly social media graphics
- Weekly Advent video prayers on the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love for use in worship and on social media. (Prayers written and recorded by UCC clergy and lay leaders from across the life of the church.)

3 Great Loves is our denomination-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, please visit [3greatloves.org](http://3greatloves.org). Be sure to include pictures and videos, too.

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Pastoral Care and Small Group Ministries  
Pastoral Care and Small Group Ministries - NOW more than ever - could be just what our Pastors NEED to help navigate our times! Students, pastors, laypersons and seekers from all denominations and walks of life need to have BETTER skills to Pastor to any and all groups they find themselves in - churches, book groups, organizations, and family. This course could NOT be timelier. Whether the focus is bible study, grief support, social justice or spirituality, small groups are an essential part of any faith community’s work. In this course we will explore the functions and possibilities of small groups in faith communities, with an emphasis on pastoral care in small groups. We will give attention to the theological grounding for small group, giving special attention to the caring role of small group facilitators.

Even if you have graduated from the LIFE Course or have been ordained for years - this is another “take” on a skill set that is so needed. Dr. Leslie has special skills in the area of dealing with trauma, and it seems like our entire world is enduring trauma just now.

JOIN us via Zoom to get new skills, to brush up on the skills you have, to learn from someone that is an expert in the field, and/or maybe get a little self-care as you engage with others that are on the front lines of providing Pastoral care for their communities.

This could NOT be more important than RIGHT NOW! Join us Fri, Nov 13 from 7 pm – 9 pm and on Sat, Nov 14 from 9 am -11:30 am and 12:30 pm -2 pm CST for a course that will HELP YOU-HELP OTHERS. Click [here](#) for flyer. Click [here](#) to register.

Dec 1 – NEXT Steps Prelude: On the Brink of Everything  
This event will introduce one of the texts used in the full NEXT Steps course, On the Brink of Everything; Grace, Gravity & Getting Old by Parker Palmer

Join us as we engage in an evening of conversation, challenge, creativity, and fellowship as we do a short prelude course, taught by the NEXT Steps faculty, and modeled on the larger NEXT Steps program. Click [here](#) for a flyer. Click [here](#) for more online information and registration.

Dec 4 – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) session – Cultural Competency with Felicia Pulliam, JD  
This cultural competency learning immersion is the beginning. Together, we will explore our national and local history, current socio-cultural dynamics to understand how to navigate complex issues, build cultural capacity and support individuals and the congregations they lead to work together to improve life outcomes for members and the broader community. Click [here](#) for a flyer. Click [here](#) for more information and registration.
RAKE & ROAST
Service! Fellowship while Distancing!
Quality Time Outdoors!
It’s snowing leaves at DuBois Center, and that means it’s time to rake, blow and burn. Many hands make the task easier, faster and more fun. So, gather your youth, family or fellowship group and spend an autumn day, morning or afternoon at camp. You are welcome to bring a picnic meal or roast hot dogs and marshmallows over a campfire. If you have rakes or leaf blowers – bring them! COVID safety procedures will be place. Contact DuBois Center for more information or to reserve a time: dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202. Current permission and waiver forms required.

IT’S BACK!!
The fence across the dam is back! Actually, a new and improved version replaced the section removed for spillway upgrades. A SPECIAL THANKS to the team from Grantfork UCC for their installation work and to all the individuals and groups that painted … and painted… and painted. There are additional boards and posts ready to go when the Grantfork team returns in 2021 to work on other sections of fencing.

FAMILY TIME at DuBois Center
Family Camping is becoming a new norm at DuBois Center, with housing and programming based around small, intact groups. Families come for the day or stay overnight in a cottage or a side of a cottage. Most activities are done in these same small groups. For other activities, masking up and frequent hand washing or sanitizing are the norm. Everyone tries to use only the restroom in his/her own cottage or another assigned area, except in an emergency. Families carry their own hand sanitizer and take their trash directly to the dumpster. Dr. Jillian Mayer, Director of Christian Education & Faith Formation at St. Paul UCC in Waterloo was the first to organize a true overnight family camp at DuBois Center during this season of COVID. She planned grab-and-go and cookout meals for the families as well as a variety of small group activities. Horses were a part of the mix, but riders and leaders masked up when appropriate and gear was cleaned between riders. As the OMT (Outdoor Ministry Team) continues planning for spring and summer – watch for a variety of family-oriented events. Distance when you can, mask when you can’t, and enjoy quality family time at DuBois Center.
**Bread for the World** will be holding their Midwest regional webinar on Nov 17 at 12 pm CST. This is an opportunity to build Bread’s network and partnerships in Illinois to make our advocacy stronger in 2021. Along with a legislative update and next steps, this webinar will feature Bread’s new president, Rev. Eugene Cho, and we’ll hear his vision for Bread’s work moving forward, whatever the outcome of the elections. Participants will also be able to submit questions. It should be a great conversation! There is no cost to join in this Zoom webinar, but you must register. Register at this [link](#). Contact Zach Schmidt at zschmidt@bread.org with questions.

**Volunteer Engagement and Disaster Response Positions Open on National Level of the UCC**

United Church of Christ National Ministries has two open positions on the Global H.O.P.E. (Humanitarian. Opportunities. Progress. Empowerment.) team of Wider Church Ministries. They are for Minister for Volunteer Engagement and Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery. The application close date for both positions is November 20, 2020.

Minister for Volunteer Engagement

The Minister for Volunteer Engagement bears primary responsibility for developing and coordinating strategies, initiatives and resources related to the comprehensive UCC Volunteer Ministries Program. Full [description](#).

Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery

The Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery leads and supervises efforts to position the United Church of Christ as a denomination fully prepared to respond to natural and human-caused disasters in the United States, and its territories. Full [description](#).

**Claims for Boy Scouts of America Bankruptcy**

The deadline for filing claims related to the Boy Scouts of America’s bankruptcy is Nov 16, 2020. Many churches allow BSA activities to take place on their premises and some charter a troop. Should your church file a claim? This information [sheet](#) will provide some questions and answers that may be pertinent for your church.

**The Insurance Board presents “Securing Your House of Worship: A Roadmap to Success” Webcast on Nov 19**, featuring two phenomenal presenters, Christine Figueroa and Patrick Shaw, Protective Security Advisors with CISA (Department of Homeland Security’s Cyber Security and Infrastructure Agency). Register by following the link from the [flyer](#) or click [here](#).

**St. John’s Community Care Celebrates National Family Caregivers Month in November**

St. John’s Community Care knows that caregiving is a tough job. This November, we remember the people who lovingly give baths, clean houses, shop for, and comfort the millions of elderly and ill people who are friends and loved ones. November is National Family Caregivers Month and this year’s theme is “Caregiving Around the Clock.” Check out the latest helpful [hints](#) and community resources because if you don’t take care of yourself, you can’t take care of anyone else.
Worship Resource from Emmaus Homes

Emmaus Homes in St. Louis helps people with developmental disabilities live like you and me, as a ministry of the UCC. They invite you to use the digital resource kit that they have developed. It is Emmaus’ gift to the church because of our partnership in ministry. This resource kit includes an all-in-one video, as well as each worship element separately, which gives you flexibility to edit it or add your own touches, like music and prayer, as desired. The Emmaus team hopes these resources will bring some fresh content that you can use during this time of virtual, and/or modified worship. The kit can also be used to hold an Emmaus Sunday if desired. Some churches take up a special offering for Emmaus or give a donation in the amount they would have paid for pulpit supply. We appreciate any support of our ministry that you choose to send. Gifts can be sent to: Emmaus Homes. Attn: Development, 3731 Mueller Rd., Saint Charles, MO 63301. Questions about supporting Emmaus or if you use any part of the resource, contact Ashley Panhorst at email or 636-699-9641 so that we can recognize you. Knowing how many churches have used the resource will let us know if it is helpful and if we should develop another kit like this in the future. This information will help us report the collaboration to our Board and funders.

Reset for Renewal - November 12, 2020—November 14, 2020

Reset for Renewal is a virtual conference designed for individuals who are working with youth and young adult ministries in any of the following ways: Local Churches, Conference level, Outdoor Ministries or Education/Campus Ministry settings of UCC.

We have intentionally designed this program to meet the needs of those serving young people in a variety of ways for personal development, spiritual grounding and the building of collaboration to strengthen our individual and collective witness to the Church and world.

Registration Fees

Full price registration is $99. For all who are able, we strongly encourage you to pay the full price as an act of giving. Because we do not want cost to be a barrier to anyone attending, we are offering a discounted rate of $49 using the code RESET50. If you still require additional financial help, or for any other questions, please contact Rev. Trayce Potter at pottert@ucc.org.

Zoom connection information will be provided prior to the meeting.

Register here. Registration Deadline: November 10, 2020 11:59 pm

What’s Happening in Illinois South Conference

Region 4

Drive Thru Friday Fish Fries at St. John’s UCC Brighton on Nov 13, 20 serving from 11 am to 6:30 pm as part of the celebration of their 150th anniversary of ministry. Menu includes a choice of entrees alone or meals with 2 sides: white or buffalo fish, pulled pork, brats, hot dogs, potato salad, cole slaw, green beans, baked beans, mac & cheese and desserts. Entrees $5; Sides $1; Desserts $3; Meal $10. Delivery of meals to local businesses and schools from 11 am - 1 pm. Credit/Debit Cards or Cash. Order at 618-556-0801 or drive up to place an order. Proceeds support Brighton St. John’s UCC.

CONTACT US - YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK

During the shelter in place order, all Conference staff will be working remotely, but they are available to help you. Keep these contacts handy.

For the work of Conference teams and committees or search and call inquiries, contact Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org.
For financial matters (in terms of your church's giving to the Conference or OCWM), contact Debbie Kesner at dkesner@iscucc.org.
For communicating within the Conference, the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, contact Lynnette Schuepbach at lschuepbach@iscucc.org.
For registration for upcoming events or for information about cancelled camp sessions, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or jriechmann@iscucc.org.
For DuBois Center, contact Shirley Asmussen at dcinfo@duboiscenter.org or 618-787-2202.
To speak with the Conference Minister, contact Rev. Shana Johnson 618-882-8247 or sjohnson@iscucc.org.

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.

Important Links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illinois South Conference</th>
<th>Back Bay Mission</th>
<th>CHHSM</th>
<th>Deaconess Foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deaconess Nurse Ministry</td>
<td>DuBois Center</td>
<td>Ecuador Partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Emmaus Homes</td>
<td>Hitz Memorial Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoyleton Youth &amp; Family</td>
<td>LIFE Program</td>
<td>Neighborhood Houses</td>
<td>New Athens Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Board-UCC</td>
<td>St. John's Community Care</td>
<td>St. Paul's Sr. Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCC Insurance Board</td>
<td>Uplands Village</td>
<td>UCC Campus Ministry</td>
<td>Uni-Pres Kindercottage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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