



For the Week of November 22-28, 2020



Every Day Blessings

It will soon be Thanksgiving, a time we set aside to show our gratitude for what we have received, but it doesn't need to stop after that one day.

A good friend of mine invited me to participate in a book club with several women that I had never met. The first book on our list was *One Thousand Gifts* by Anne Voskamp. Each week we read a chapter and came together to discuss it while at the same time getting to know each other. The group was (and is) diverse, spanning three decades. There are teachers, a nurse, a day-care worker, a communications coordinator, and a few full-time moms. As we completed that first book, we agreed to begin a text thread to share gifts that we acknowledged for that day.

The daily (okay, sometimes not daily) list from each of us shared a bit of what had happened in our lives and lifted up some things that others would not have thought to put on their lists. They are mostly simple things, but some are very important. Think like these...

- Rain after a long period of drought
- Clean water that is easily accessible
- A neighbor sharing sweet goodies
- My 6-year-old neighbor who rings my door just to see if I'm okay
- Catching a backed-up sewer before it became a horrific problem
- Plumbers who can help me fix the problem and enough money to pay them
- A beautiful sunset
- My grandchildren who are willing to play a game to text photos of the sky
- Sons who are willing to help when I call
- "I love you" messages as we part

Prayer list for Nov 22-28, 2020

Churches & Pastors

- Moro St. John's UCC of Midway, Rev. Lori (Wayne) Schafer
- Murphysboro St. Peter's UCC, Rev. Michael Cassady

Retired Pastors

- Rev. Chris and Lena Edwards, Converse, TX

People with Life Concerns

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.

Cards may be sent to her at 309 Kroeger Ave, Dupo, IL 62239.

-Pray for **peace** during the post-election.

- 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.

- Zoom meetings when we cannot gather in person
- Weather that allows me to open windows and doors
- Co-workers that I enjoy working with and a leader that leads
- Time to bake cookies
- Birds at my feeders

This exercise has shown me how to give thanks for daily experiences on more than one day. It celebrates the small things. Just for a moment, it emphasizes the goodness in the world rather than focusing on the things that could be better. My soul is lifted.

So, on this Thanksgiving 2020, I give thanks for the invitation to participate in this gifts-thread and meeting authentic people who have become good friends. I invite you to play along and see how it lifts your soul.

I'm thankful for you!

Lynnette Schuepbach

ISC Communications Coordinator



- 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.

The Illinois South Conference is blessed by the generosity of our Pastors to share with each other.

Rev. Dr. Don Wagner is generously sharing his Advent Devotional with all of you. Rev. Wagner created the devotions and Fr. Gerald Schweitzer shared his photographs. If you feel called to give a gift in order to thank them for these talents, all gifts received in the distribution of this Advent Devotional will be divided equally and distributed to:

DuBois Retreat Center, the camping and retreat center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ.

These funds will be used to assist with scholarships for children and families in need. www.duboiscenter.org and Sojourner Truth House, in Gary, Indiana, which provides much needed assistance to women and children who find themselves homeless or in need of specialized care and assistance. www.sojournertruthhouse.org

Click [here](#) to download your free copy. If you need a printed copy, contact Becky Harris at St. Paul UCC in Lebanon by [email](#). She will make sure you get a copy.

*"For a Time Such as This,
He Comes!"*



*An Advent Devotional for a most unusual
journey to Bethlehem*

*Photographs by Fr. Gerald Schweitzer
Devotions by Rev. Dr. Don Wagner*



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 your 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 (John 1: 1-5)	Away In a Manger /Santo Santo Santo
In the Bleak Midwinter (Luke 2: 1-5)	O Come All Ye Faithful
Star of Country Down (Luke 1: 46-56)	O Little Town of Bethlehem
Each Winter as the Year Grows Older - v 1& 3	Silent Night
Jesus, Jesus, What a Wonderful Child	Go Tell it on the Mountain
Angels We Have Heard on High	

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 3: Faith Formation Finds Volunteers
Scene 2: Finance Committee Transformations 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 Council of Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ has created a video worship service for all churches of the UCC to use as they see fit. You may play this video service from beginning to end, or use the individual components of the service in your own

worship plans. Although the text for this service aligns with the Revised Common Lectionary text for November 15, you may use it on any Sunday that is convenient for you. Click [here](#) to download the worship resources, including the videos and a service bulletin. Click [here](#) to view the components video on Vimeo.



A Global Ministries Alternative Gift is a meaningful and unique way to express your care for loved ones both near and far. This year, we especially ask you to consider making an undesignated Alternative Gift in honor or memory of a loved one to be used where needed most. Given the uncertainty of 2020, your general support of Global Ministries will help us prepare for whatever comes in 2021! Undesignated gifts enable Global Ministries to work with more than 290 church partners and programs in 90 countries around the world on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. If you would like to give an undesignated Alternative Gift, click [here](#). To find out more, click [here](#). The purchase of global artisan crafts, such as beautiful dresses, bags, stoles, bookmarks, and cards made by global partners, supports microcredit projects of Global Ministries partners, who are providing skills-training and income-generating opportunities for families around the world! Browse the catalog [here](#).

Celebrating the 157th Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address - November 19

IT IS AUTUMN AT GETTYSBURG

It is autumn at Gettysburg,

seven score and seventeen years after Lincoln spoke here.

The leaves are about their annual task.
Vivid in color, they drop from their trees;
softly, gently, quietly they fall,
not at all like those boys in blue and grey:
their falls punctuated by screams of terror
and cries for mothers gone unanswered.
Together, leaves and boys decompose,
someday to become the stardust from which they came,
while six feet above them the living
again succumb to the siren call of invincibility.
It is autumn at Gettysburg;
watch the leaves gracefully fall.
In their graceful relinquishment they have something to teach you.
Learn, too, from Odysseus, lest the sirens
keep you from your arboreal epiphany.
It is autumn at Gettysburg.
Winter waits.
© Rev. Phil Kershner



Happy Friday

Shop your Black Friday deals at AmazonSmile and Amazon donates
amazon smile

Choose Illinois South Conference as your charity with [Amazon Smile](#) and Amazon Smile will donate a portion of your purchase to ISC. Enjoy your holiday shopping on Black Friday while donating to ISC. Thanks for your generosity.

DuBois Center News

CAMP NURSES - Servants with Sunscreen

Despite the falling leaves, it's never too early to think about summer! We are hoping to be able to provide a full line-up of DuBois fun and adventure in 2021! One setting for ministry at DuBois Center is our Health Center. Volunteer camp nurses, most of whom are RNs, are a vital piece of our summer camp program. Many find serving at DuBois Center to be a rewarding mission opportunity, one that is quite different from their regular job. Responsibilities include reviewing camper medical forms, conducting health screenings, receiving & administering medications, providing first aid & basic medical treatment, and documentation. But when you really get down to it, nurses spend most of their time removing ticks, soothing rashes, distributing medications and providing extra TLC for homesick and nervous campers. If you are an RN, please consider serving with us for a full or partial week. The living quarters do have AC and there is often time to join us for worship, explore the woods, ride a horse or just sit back and enjoy a book. Orientation is provided. For more information, contact Alaina Scherle at alainakarn@yahoo.com or leave a message on her cell at 618-604-2540.



GIVING THANKS!

For many, November 1 kicks off a month of daily thankfulness. Reasons to give thanks are plentiful at DuBois Center. God's creation is majestic – the plants, the critters, the



people, the seasons. Enjoy this autumn sunset at DuBois Center. In the words of Don Moen, “Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One.”

In addition to this sunset, we are celebrating and giving thanks for God’s creation with some of our favorite **60 Seconds of Solitude** from this year. Get comfortable; relax your neck, shoulders and back; breathe in

deeply; and know that God IS.

- Picnic Point & [Lake](#)
- Sunday Stroll with [Jason](#)
- Rainy Days at [DuBois](#)
- Skies and [Reflections](#)
- Goldenrod in the [Wind](#)

Photograph of dragonfly by Jason Petry.



Floral Expressions

The Universe speaks to us through flowers.

For instance, a Queen Anne’s Lace blossom could represent God.

Each floret is exactly like the entire blossom or in other words, made in the image of the whole.

What a great way of visualizing the scriptures that say we are made in the image of God.

Scriptures materialized for us by a Queen Anne’s Lace blossom.

© Lynnette Schuepbach

Excerpt from *Floral Expression* by Brady Kesner & Lynnette Schuepbach

Photograph taken at DuBois Center by Jason Petry



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.

A Message from Hoyleton Youth & Family Services

Dear Friends of Hoyleton,

It’s that time of year! Hope you are doing well.

At Hoyleton, we make it our goal that every child in our care has a gift to open at Christmas. In order to comply with COVID 19 restrictions, we have put together an Amazon Wish List to help



gather some of the gifts. Click [here](#) to see the list and fulfill a wish. Have the item shipped to us and we will wrap and deliver your gift. Please include your name and email/address so we can acknowledge your gift.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Development Team at Hoyleton Youth and Family Services through [email](#) or calling Meghan at 618-688-7092. Click [here](#) for a flyer to share with your congregations.



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. Be sure to include pictures and videos, too

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](#).



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.



Emmaus

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](#) as part of our partnership in ministry. Use it in total or as individual elements of worship or as an Emmaus Sunday for a special offering for Emmaus. Gifts may be sent to: Emmaus Homes. Attn: Development, 3731 Mueller Rd., Saint Charles, MO 63301. Contact Ashley Panhorst at [email](#) or 636-699-9641 so that we can add you to the list of churches finding the worship material.

The Illinois HIV Integrated Planning Council (IHIPC) invites you to participate in its upcoming webinar meeting on Thurs, Dec 10 from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. Register [here](#). After registering for the webinar meeting, you will receive an email confirmation notice with instructions for logging into the webinar and include access to the online IHIPC Public Comment Card. If you would like to make a public comment relevant to HIV planning during the designated time on the meeting agenda, complete the card in its entirety as soon as possible. If you do not receive a confirmation email within two business days, contact marleigh.andrews-conrad@illinois.gov. Click [here](#) for the agenda.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference



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](#) .

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>

Meeting ID: 708 889 0946

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,7088890946# US (Chicago)

Region 4

Drive Thru Friday Fish Fry at St. John's UCC Brighton on Nov 20 serving from 11 am to 6:30 pm as part of the celebration of their 150 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

[Illinois South Conference](#) [Back Bay Mission](#) [CHHSM](#) [Deaconess Foundation](#)

[Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#) [DuBois Center](#) [Ecuador Partnership](#)

[Eden Theological Seminary](#) [Emmaus Homes](#) [Hitz Memorial Home](#)

[Hoyleton Youth & Family LIFE Program](#) [Unleashing Potential](#) [New Athens Home](#)

[Pension Board-UCC](#) [St. John's Community Care](#) [St. Paul's Sr. Community](#)

[UCC Insurance Board](#) [Uplands Village](#) [UCC Campus Ministry](#) [Uni-Pres Kindercottage](#)