



January 12, 2021

New Year - Kindness and Love

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” --Galatians 6: 9

I know many of us had high hopes for the new year, as if turning over the calendar might have the magical, mystical power to reset the myriad of messiness and mayhem of 2020. Then the horrific events in Washington DC on January 6 happened. And the blinding reality of the disunity, discord, dysfunction, and division, which are so prevalent in our country, came rushing back.

Yet before we shrug our shoulders in defeat, withdraw into sentiment, or joke about being only a few days into a new year and we can already see the ways 2021 could be a wash of disappointment, I would encourage us to step back and take a collective breath. I believe there are a few things we need to acknowledge and challenge ourselves on.

First, the emotional climate of intolerance, hatred, cynicism, and mistrust which exist in our country is not new. It did not develop overnight, so it will not disappear overnight. It will take time, and it will take incremental work to transform ourselves. Transformation only comes when there is a change of thinking, a change in perspective, and a change in one's heart, mind, and spirit. It is an internal job. And the hardest truth is we cannot make other people change.

However, we can create atmospheres, environments, and spaces which allow people (including ourselves) to experience something different.

Prayer list for Jan 17 - 23, 2021

Churches & Pastors

-Smithton St. John's UCC, Rev. Andy (Kristin) Wilson
-St. Jacob UCC, Rev. Nancy (Stephen) Gamache

Retired Pastor

- Rev. Wesley and Doris Bornemann, Fenton, MO

People with Life Concerns

-Keep **Rev. Donna Smith-Pupillo** in your prayers as she recovers from surgery. Rev. Smith-Pupillo is the Interim Pastor for Fieldon UCC and the Executive Director for Deaconess Nurse Ministry. Cards may be sent to 1275 Swan Dr, Florissant, MO 63031.

-Pray for **Rev. Nancy (Kevin Lee) Spier-Lee** as she deals with 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, Dupou, IL 62239.

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

- Keep **all pastors** in your prayers as they continue to provide spiritual support 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.

- Special prayers for the **families who are dealing with loved ones who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.**

For example, if we have come to expect judgment, indifference or even cruelty, we can be disarmed by the experience of acceptance, care, and kindness. If the experience of genuine love and kindness is a consistent contrast to what is experienced in other places, there is a bit of cognitive dissonance which occurs.

If wrestling with others is what people have come to know and expect, the relief of genuine love and kindness will be welcomed as something quite different. It can soften our hearts and cause us in turn to reciprocate genuine love and kindness in our interactions with others. In other words, what we experience is often what we pass on and contribute to the world. This is why we claim and hold to the truth we sing, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." Ideally, I believe the church can and should be the place where we can come to expect and experience the life-changing power of love.

Therefore, we must not give up hope. We must continue to do good as Christ calls us to. Now more than ever the world needs, you need, I need to know and experience that kindness, acceptance, forgiveness, and love can still exist and still has ultimate power over cruelty, intolerance, blame and hatred. Even when it is hardest to do, even when we are weary and wonder if we can make any difference at all, we must not give up. For the power of Christ's love can prevail. But it must be seen, experienced and expressed through us. May it be so in all of us.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister



Cultivating Generous Congregations Seminar offered jointly by Illinois South, Heartland and Indiana Kentucky Conferences

The Cultivating Generous Congregations Seminar for pastors and lay leaders offers an opportunity to explore faithful, practical, and tested ways to promoting generosity in our congregations. We will draw on current research, seek guidance from the wisdom of scripture, and discuss the best practices in church-based fundraising.

The seminar will improve the "bottom line" of your congregation. But please know this bottom line is about more than money. Mission and ministry remain the real bottom line of our work. This seminar will help pastors and leaders engage generosity as a spiritual practice.

The program will be taught by the Rev. Andy DeBraber and Rev. Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach Officers of the UCC, and is based on materials for the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving.

We'll meet for six online sessions over the course of the spring:

5:30 pm to 7:00 pm CST on Thursdays

Feb 11, Feb 25, Mar 11, Mar 25, Apr 15, and Apr 29, 2021.

Between class sessions, Andy and Andrew will provide materials to help you analyze the culture of your own congregation and learn how to create change. By the end of the seminar, pastors and leaders will be equipped to lead effective fundraising and you will have a strategy to guide your success moving forward.

Be sure to recruit at least a team of two for this program. Changing the culture of your congregation requires more than one dedicated leader. Success depends on engaging a team of leaders from your congregation.

The registration fee is \$50 for all participants and due at the time of your online registration.

The course will be hosted on the Damascus Project Network, an online educational platform. Information on accessing the online course site and zoom connection information will be provided after your registration.

Please sign up now for the Cultivating Generous Congregations Seminar. **The deadline is January 15, 2021.** Click [here](#) to register.

Scholarships will be available on request. If you would like to know more, please reach out to Rev. Shana Johnson directly at sjohnson@iscucc.org.

UCC Yearbook Instructions have recently been sent to the church, pastor, staff, presidents and treasurers of the ISC churches. If you didn't receive it, contact Lynnette at the email below.

Top 8 Reasons why the UCC Yearbook is important to YOUR CHURCH!

1. All UCC churches have **501(c)3 status** because of your church's affiliation with the United Church of Christ. If you need to prove your church's 501(c)3 status for grants or special purchases, it is important to be listed in the yearbook as a member of Illinois South Conference and of the United Church of Christ.
2. Annual reporting allows you to update your church's contact information to share with **future members** on [Find A Church](#).
3. When **making your congregation's future plans** or when your congregation is in the search process, an eleven-year membership and financial report for your church will be available from the data that you submit during the yearbook process. You can see what money was spent on salary, housing, pensions, etc. to understand and prepare a package for the proposed candidate. If your church doesn't report the information, you cannot easily benefit from that statistical information. If you'd like to see your church's 11-year report, let Lynnette know and she'll run it for you.
4. When you report the membership numbers, we keep that number to determine **how many delegates are allowed to represent your church** at Annual Meeting, Ecclesiastical Councils, and any other official meetings. So without that information, we cannot determine your representation accurately.
5. The numbers you report help to determine **how many delegates your Conference can designate for General Synod**, which is one of the essential ways your voice is heard on important issues.
6. The information given about **ministerial support** is anonymously combined with other churches' information to give a suggested compensation package for any pastor. These statistics are a benchmark to determine appropriate church staffing configurations and compensation guidelines. It will be helpful for your congregation when in the search process or when establishing your budget. (Individual data is not published but is used to accumulate the final statistics for the benchmarks.)
7. Reporting your church's OCWM and special offerings giving allows conferences and the national setting to **recognize and thank you** for your support of the wider church and to encourage future support.
8. The trend of attendance gives you one way of tracking the ways in which you have an **opportunity to "do church."**

Helpful Information (Or go to www.iscucc.org)

1. Customized Illinois South Conference Church [Instructions](#)
2. Blank [Worksheet](#)
3. Who are your [officers and leaders](#)?
4. [Tip Sheet](#)
5. UCC "Other Giving" [Explanation](#)
6. Yearbook [Guide](#) to Community Engagement and Church Participation
7. UCC Supplemental [Survey](#)

8. If you need your data from last year, contact Lynnette Schuepbach at

lschuepbach@iscucc.org

9. Video [Tutorials](#) from UCC



The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference...

St. Paul Columbia's much anticipated Solar Project is almost complete. St. Paul is very excited to become the first "green" church in Columbia.

These pictures show the solar



panels being installed on the roof of the Education Building

. A huge thanks to long-time church member, Robert Habermehl, for his perseverance and hard work to see this project through.



**ALL UCC authorized pastors
and delegates from each ISC congregation,
please mark your calendars and plan to attend
THE ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL
of Tarrah Vaupel
on Sunday, January 24 at 3 pm
on Zoom**

The Illinois South Conference Committee on Ministry invites you to the Ecclesiastical Council of Tarrah Vaupel at 3 pm CST on Sunday, January 24. Ecclesiastical Councils are special called meetings of a Conference and the last step in the process for Members in Discernment towards ordination. As part of the Ecclesiastical Council, you, voting delegates of the Illinois South Conference will have the opportunity to listen to the work of the Spirit, and vote to ordain Tarrah Vaupel. YOU are an important part of this process as it is the Conference (which in our case also acts as an Association) which discerns and decides if an ordination candidate is worthy to ordain on behalf of the United Church of Christ. We will need a quorum to officially conduct our business of the day, so we hope you will make this a priority and plan to attend. Tarrah received her Master of Divinity at Eden Theological Seminary. While in seminary she did her CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at Laclede Groves, and was a student pastor at St. John UCC in New Athens, Illinois. Tarrah is a member of O'Fallon UCC and prior to seminary was their office manager. Currently, she serves as a Spiritual Care Coordinator & Chaplain at Heartland Home Health and Hospice and as a licensed associate pastor at Friedens UCC in Irvington.

The link to the Zoom, as well as Tarrah's ordination paper was emailed out to all UCC authorized pastors and voting delegates of the Conference. If you need this information sent to you again, please contact Christy at cpursell@iscucc.org. All the information you need to know to attend the Ecclesiastical Council will also be available on the Conference website at iscucc.org.

In order to prep for the Ecclesiastical Council, please make sure to download and read a copy of her [paper](#). After Tarrah's presentation to the gathered body (the "council"), you will have the opportunity to ask her questions about her paper, and her call to ministry.



Jan. 22nd – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) session – How Did We Get Here? The Story of the Church with Travis Ables

This course looks at the history of Christianity by looking at turning points: moments where the church transformed, for good and for worse. We will examine how Christians understood Christ and God through history, how they worshiped and prayed, and how they lived their lives in the world. Along the way, we'll find that Christian history is not really about learning the past — it's about finding a new way to

understand where we are right now (and how we got here). Click [here](#) for online information or [here](#) for a flyer.

† DuBois Center News

Meet the Search Committee for the Acting Director of Outdoor Ministries.



Pictured left to right:

Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister and chairperson of the Search Committee

Dr. Jill Baker, Conference Moderator and ex-officio member

Craig Bielke, Member at large

Hank Henderson, Member representing the Conference Personnel Committee

Rachel Kinzinger, Member representing the Conference OMT (Outdoor Ministry Team)

Nancy Wagner, Member representing the Conference OMT (Outdoor Ministry Team) and current OMT chairperson



Tami, Bill, and Rachel Hughes from St Paul's UCC in Freeburg spent days cutting old barn wood down to size before installing inside a cabin at Deer Run. Thanks for your hard work. It's beautiful. Left photo from L to R: Tami and Rachel Hughes. Center photo: View from the deck. Right photo from L to R: Bill and Rachel Hughes.





Vander Court is Coming Soon!

Hoyleton Youth and Family Services will have a new therapeutic foster care program at Vander Court in Belleville, Illinois. This site will serve as a step-down placement program as part of our service continuum. Vander Court house will serve 3 youth at a time for an average length of stay of 6 – 9 months. We estimate that six or more youth will call Vander Court home. As we put the finishing touches on our house rehab, we're beginning to recruit staff, and most importantly, foster parents. We'd appreciate your help and ask that you share the message below with the great people in your networks to help us find the right people to foster our young people.



Foster Parents Needed

Are you and your partner ready for the next chapter in your life? If you're up for an adventure and are interested in working with Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, consider this: We're looking for foster parents for our new therapeutic foster home. If you love teens, can care for three at a time and give your full-time attention toward their development and success, and are able to put Hoyleton's CARE philosophy into practice, in return you'll receive:

- Competitive, full-time compensation for both partners.
- Rent free living in a beautiful, spacious 5 bedroom, rehabbed home with new furnishings.
- Additional board payments that cover the costs of our youths' care.
- Membership in a team of supportive professionals.

If you think you might be interested and want to learn more, or know folks you'd like to recommend, call Hoyleton's Director of Child Welfare, Sharon Schultz at 618-688-4761. Thank you!



Caring compassionately for aging and disabled people since 1988

St. John's Community Care's Savvy Caregiver Classes

Taking care of a person living with Alzheimer's or related dementia at home is specialized work. To do this work successfully, caregivers need special skills, knowledge, and a positive attitude that helps them to care for themselves.

The Savvy Caregiver Program is a free, six-session training for family and friends who are actively caring for those living with Alzheimer's or related dementias. St. John's trainers use curriculum developed by the University of Minnesota for interactive classes. The next series will begin Thurs, Jan 21 at St. John's Community Care in Collinsville. To register call 618-344-5008 or email Stacey at srhodes@stjohnscc.org. Click [here](#) for a flyer.

The Online Zoom Memory Cafe concept provides a social experience for those who are living with mild cognitive impairment, early-stage Alzheimer's or other dementia, and their care partner. Attendees are able to socialize with others who are sharing a similar journey. The Memory Cafe provides a safe, understanding and compassionate setting in a relaxed atmosphere. Those with dementia must be accompanied by a family member or friend. There are no membership fees or charges to participate. Click [here](#) for a flyer.

Upcoming schedule is:

Fri, Jan 22; Thurs, Feb 4; and Fri, Feb 26 from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm; and Wed, Jan 13; and Wed, Feb 10 from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. To attend, contact Gail at gshaw@stjohnscc.org or call 618-344-5008.

Stress-busting Program for Family Caregivers

St. John's Community care presents a seminar to help caregivers reduce stress. It will provide education and support, teach stress management techniques and help caregivers develop coping strategies. The next ONLINE Session Starts Feb 1 and continues each Monday for 9 weeks. Sessions meet virtually from 10 am - 11:30 am. Call 618-344-5008 to register or for more information. Click [here](#) for a flyer.

Health and Human Service (CHHSM) Sunday is scheduled for Jan 31, 2021.

CHHSM, in partnership with the United Church of Christ, is pleased to provide worship resources to use for your congregation's celebration of Health and Human Service Sunday. At this [link](#), you will find suggested scriptures, a prepared liturgy, and a logo for your bulletin, including a Litany of Gratitude for Essential Workers and a Prayer of Remembrance for those lost in the coronavirus pandemic. Special thanks to the Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry, a member of the CHHSM staff, for writing the very moving elements of this service, designed to speak to our experiences with COVID-19 this year. Read [more](#)...



Deaconess Nurse Ministry looking back in 2020. Deaconess Nurse Ministry is proud of the impact they have made in their community and are so thankful for all of your support to allow them to do what they are called to do - Care for Every Life.

The pandemic was hard on everyone, but all were strong and lifted each other up. With St. Louis County and St. Louis City's Grants, through Circle of Friends, they served seniors who were isolated and needed help with managing a healthy lifestyle as well as communication. They formed multiple groups of seniors to discuss health and wellness, to have a group of friends that these seniors can talk to and share their stories through zoom meetings. It helped them tremendously with their mental health, and they always look forward to their next meeting.

In partnership with multiple donors, different organizations and food pantries, Deaconess Nurse Ministry was able to help people with low income, reduced hours or recently lost their job due to COVID-19 to get enough food to feed their families, to have a safe, warm place to stay during the Holiday, to have a Christmas tree that their little ones dreamed of, or to have toys and gifts that they would not otherwise be received on Christmas. The joy brought to people was priceless!



The UCC Insurance Board presents a webinar, COVID-19 Considerations for Church Employers on Jan 29 at 1 pm CST, featuring Dean Rocco, attorney with Wilson Elser. This webcast will address issues churches

face as employers during COVID-19 and provide best practice policies and procedures for managing employees and volunteers. Many states may require that employers have specific COVID-19 policies and procedures in place to protect their employees; learn about best practice considerations for your church. Click [here](#) to register. Click [here](#) for a flyer.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference

Job Opportunity: O'Fallon United Church of Christ is seeking applicants for a part-time custodian. The normal workweek will be 15 -20 hours doing typical cleaning, maintenance and grounds duties along with preparing for scheduled activities and meetings. The work schedule is negotiable for daytime and evening hours. Applicants can contact the committee through the Church office 618-632-3496 or by contacting Allen Garner 618-910-2913 or Ted Lewis 618-977-8184.

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 DuBois Center information, registration for upcoming events or for information about cancelled camp sessions, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or jriechmann@iscucc.org.

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](#) [CHSM](#) [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](#)

