Interfaith Town Hall Meeting on COVID-19 Vaccine in Illinois
On Wed, Feb 3 from 6:30 pm - 7 pm CST join a group of faith leaders from Chicago and Dr. Ngozi Ezike for a town hall discussion about the Covid-19 vaccine and our state's vaccination plan. This will be via Zoom and YouTube live. Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, will join us for a 30 minute online town hall to discuss our state's vaccination plan as well as address concerns and questions about the vaccine. This will be a time to dispel myths and provide essential education.
This event is organized by a strong network of faith leaders and organizations including the Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois, the Lighthouse Foundation, the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association - Chicagoland Cluster, and more.
ALL pastors are welcome. Click here to see the Facebook event for details. Click this link uuma.zoom.us to join the meeting.

Clergy Communities of Practice - Deadline to Register - Fri, Feb 5
It is with great joy that we are able to offer facilitated clergy communities of practice for all active ISC pastors in 2021. This wonderful opportunity is made possible by a generous grant we were awarded through the Brown Endowment Fund of the United Church Funds.
What is a Community of Practice?
The term comes from the work of Etienne Wenger-Trayner who defines a community

Prayer list for Feb 7 - 13, 2021
Churches & Pastors
-Valmeyer St. John UCC, Rev. Steven Boorsma
-Waterloo St. Paul UCC, Rev. Lisa (Walt) Hart, Interim Pastor
Retired Pastor
- Rev. Loren and Grace Windhorst, Vernon Hills, IL

People with Life Concerns
-Please pray for the family of Marilyn (Rev. Paul Thompson, Jr.) Thompson as they mourn her death on February 2, 2021. Marilyn served alongside Paul at numerous churches, including St John UCC in Maestown, other churches where he has provided supply services since his retirement, and his work with the ISC Recruitment Committee. Current membership is at Zion St Joe UCC in Waterloo. Service arrangements can be found here. Words of condolence can be sent to Paul at 910 Circle Dr, Red Bud, IL 62278.
-Rev. Keith Mills, the Conference Minister of the Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ, died unexpectedly yesterday, Monday, February 1 of a massive heart attack. Please lift Keith’s family, the member churches and pastors of Northern Plains Conference, and his many colleagues who are grieving this tremendous loss.
-Please pray for Rev. P. Jerry Bennett as he deals with some health issues. Rev. Bennett serves as the pastor for Jamestown St. Paul UCC and Hookdale St. Peter UC and previously was the ISC Associate Conference Minister. Cards may be sent to him at PO Box 39, Highland, IL 62249.
of practice as a group of peers who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Group members support one another, learn together, and share resources – experiences, stories, practices, ways of addressing recurring issues and problems. Building this community takes time and sustained interaction.

All pastors serving churches in Illinois South Conference have been sent a link to a survey that will register you for a Community of Practice. If you did not receive the survey, please reach out to Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org for assistance.

Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response - UPDATE #19, Feb 1, 2021

While infection numbers are improving across Illinois, health experts warn we might have a third virus surge, as more contagious COVID variants begin reaching our area. If you are returning to in-person worship, please also be prepared to button up again should we have a sudden increase in infections. Some folks have been able to get partial or full vaccination, but they don’t build full protection until about 60 days after their last dose. And, those without vaccinations are in the same position they have been throughout the pandemic. In other words, hang on a little longer with social distancing, masks and good cleaning protocols. We’ve come a long way, but we still have a few months to travel.

Lent and Easter Planning

Have a Plan A and a Plan B for Lent and Easter this year. Be ready for socially-distanced, in-person worship, but also be ready for drive-in or zoom worship as the situation might require. A lot can happen between now and Easter Sunday, April 4.

Clergy & Vaccinations

Several pastors have wondered if clergy would be considered a high priority for vaccinations. After speaking to the CDC, the Governor’s office, and many local counties, it appears there is both a "no" and "yes" answer to this question.

"No," there is no unified state agreement in Illinois for all clergy to be considered among those eligible for vaccinations in the 1A or 1B groups UNLESS they are serving in a health field context or have another attribute that qualifies them. "Yes," there are some counties which, after a conversation where a clergyperson makes a case that their work requires in-person interaction and social distancing is not possible, will give clergy a vaccination along with groups 1A or 1B.

As a clergy person, if you want to be considered for early vaccination, our strongest suggestion is to advocate for yourself with your county health department. Please know, some counties are requiring verification of your vocational credentials. If you have standing in the Illinois South Conference and would like the Conference to supply you with a certification card, please reach out to Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org.

Together in Christ’s ministry with you,
Dr. Jill Baker, Conference Moderator
Rev. Christy Eckert, Conference Vice-Moderator
Mr. Dwight Asselmeier, Conference Treasurer
Rev. Ivan Horn, Conference Secretary
Rev. Shana Johnson, IL South Conference Minister

-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.
- Pray for the healthcare workers and families who are dealing with loved ones who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
Creating a Climate Church
The ISC Justice & Mission Team shares this video about making your church a “Climate Church” featuring Ms. Karenna Gore (Al Gore’s daughter) and Rev. Jim Antal, former Conference Minister for the Massachusetts Conference. For those of you who were not able to attend the live event or those attending who wish to review all or part of it again, click here and feel free to share the link.

The Association of United Church Educators will hold its Virtual 50th Anniversary Celebration, "From Roots to Shoots," on Sat, February 13 from 11:00 pm - 2:30 pm CST. For pastors, faith formation leaders and all who are passionate about faith formation and youth ministries in the United Church of Christ (and beyond). Come celebrate with us as we look at the ministry of faith formation over the past 50 years, bringing what we’ve learned into the vibrant ministries needed for today - from roots to shoots! Guest Speaker: Melvin Bray, Emmy-award winning storyteller and author of Better: Waking Up to Who We Could Be; Worship: Rev. Molly Baskette, Lead Pastor for First Church UCC in Berkeley, California; music by Mark Miller; reading by Kassie Runsabove; and closing song by Walter Runsabove. Cost is $25 for AUCE or APCE members and $35 for non-members. Click here to find out more and to register.

Ash Wednesday During COVID-19
Several pastors are thinking outside of the box to distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday. The important focus should be on the meaning and symbolism of the ashes rather than the physical ashes. Here are some ideas that have been shared by various pastors:

- Place ashes with a Q-tip rather than a finger/thumb in a drive-thru service.
- Ash thumbprint placed on a small cards to distribute to each person.
- Charcoal pencils distributed so that each person can draw on their own cross.
- A small amount of ashes mixed with oil in communion cups to distribute.
- Substitute an inexpensive bracelet with a cross rather than ashes to wear during lent.
- Temporary tattoos that look like a cross made of ash, perhaps on hands rather than foreheads.

COVID has required us to think creatively.

Convergence, formerly The Center for Progressive Renewal, offers two training sessions. Transforming Church Conflict Training will be offered on Feb 5-6. Cost is $129 for early-bird registration. Conflict is inevitable and not necessarily bad. It can afford an opportunity for personal and congregational transformation when handled well. Rev. Cameron Trimble will serve as the facilitator. Click here to find out more and register.

Letters to 2021
Letters to 2021 is an initiative to make casting a new vision possible. They are inviting people of faith and congregations to write a letter to 2021 which will both remind us of the lessons we learned during this challenging season, how it felt to live through it, and cast our personal vision for the world we want to see coming into being by December 2021. Click here to find out more.

Save the Date for Virtual Day of Discipleship on Saturday, May 1, 2021. The theme this year is “Strengthening the Ties That Bind Us Together”. The Conference Gatherings Team is working on a list of educational opportunities to create an inspiring day.
Winter Greetings from DuBois Center!

While the temperatures are cold and Cabin Fever is starting to set in, you can rest assured that we are feverishly planning our summer possibilities with full expectations to be able to serve you this summer!

What does this mean?

We are currently making preliminary provisions to offer in-person summer camps complete with many, if not all, of your favorite activities! After having to take last summer off, we know that many of you are more than eager to get back to your camp! After all, this is your camp. Since 1965, we have been here for you. Each and every one of us has memories deeply embedded in the fabric that ties DuBois Center together. Even when we weren't able to be in person last year, we were still here for you.

For 2021, we have up to four, yes four, potential options that offer DuBois Center in different lights -- all contingent on the needs of the people, state of the current health situations, and governing authorities.

Plan A

First and foremost, our Plan A includes in-person summer camp options! If all goes to plan, we could begin welcoming summer campers the week of June 6. Exciting, right? Of course, we will have additional plans and protocols in place for enhanced safety measures. While our mission is to see all of our campers again, we need to be sure we can do that safely and effectively. While we do have Plans B, C, and D on paper, we wanted to share with you now that Plan A is what we are aiming for and Plan A is in person!

Final details will be a bit delayed as we are having to adjust with the ever-changing climate, but please continue to look for emailed updates like this. Our website is also being revamped as we speak to ensure it has the most helpful and up-to-date information as possible. If we ever have to ‘toggle’ our focus from Plan A to anything else, our website will have the details you need.

Check In With Us!

If you are anxiously waiting for a mailed brochure, or at least something brochure-like, you are in luck! While we will be mailing summer promotions and schedules a bit later than normal, you should still receive mailed postcards from us in early spring! These postcards will highlight what we hope to offer and to provide you with something to stick on your fridge to remember us by! Please follow us online, at www.DuBoisCenter.org for the most current information we have. Also, our Facebook and Instagram feeds are continually going as well. If you need to contact us, our phone number is the same at 618-787-2202, you may also email to DCinfo@DuBoisCenter.org.
During the onset of the pandemic, when other organizations temporarily closed or had to limit their response, more than 13,000 people in the U.S. and abroad received a helping hand because YOU supported Church World Service (CWS) Kits and Blankets. And your support continued all year with 101,472 kits and blankets being shared—Thank You! Times are still uncertain, and many places remain closed while communities still need help. Your church’s participation in the CWS Kits and Blankets program is a blessing to so many. CWS is planning to, safely, begin collecting kits, and want to make sure you or the person in your congregation working with the CWS Kits ministry receives a Kit Booklet.

Click here to request the 2021 CWS Kits Booklet. The Kit Booklet offers a few tips and ideas for fun ways to assemble kits virtually! Your safety is important. Due to the ongoing pandemic, changes may occur as to when or how kits are collected. Check www.cwskits.org often for important updates and information regarding your CWS Kits collection.

Feb. 5th – Bracke Public Lecture on Ministry – Leader as Midwife: Guiding What is New into Being with Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson
Worship @ 10:15 – 10:30 and Lecture with Q & A @ 10:30 – 11:30
Additional conversation following the lecture at the(Virtual) Alumni Gathering that follows 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. Read more... Click here for flyer.

Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27th – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) & Walker Leadership Institute – Urban Chaplaincy with Rev. Dr. Danielle J. Buhuro and Rev. Dr. Sonja B. Williams
Caring for Persons’ Social Needs
This session will teach students how to conduct a Community Needs Assessment and provide social service resources to address parishioners’ economic needs.
Caring for Persons’ Emotional Needs
This session will teach students how to provide pastoral care and counseling services to address parishioners’ mental health needs.
Caring for Persons’ Life Meaning/Purpose Needs
This session will teach students how to ask reflective questions to help parishioners develop new identities and purpose in the midst of systemic oppression.
Caring for Persons’ Faith Needs
This session will teach students how to help parishioners engage their faith and faith traditions to help them confront life’s challenges with renewed hope and faith in God’s enduring presence. Read more... Click here for flyer.

Feb. 19 – LIFE (Lifelong Learning) session – UCC History & Polity with Dr. Jill Baker
This intensive class will provide an overview of the predecessor denominations that shaped the United Church of Christ’s style of congregational governance. It will also look at how General Synod functions, explore some theological foundations, discuss how the authorization process works and review educational resources available from the denomination. Read more... Click here for flyer.

Predictions that 1 in 3 churches will close because of the COVID pandemic make innovative pastoral and congregation leadership development urgent. Couple this with the ongoing
realignment of the church from maintenance to mission and the stakes are even higher. Funding, staffing, and programs are changing as ministry models, disrupted by the prolonged period of closed churches, declining participation and the move from the familiar to the emergent. In this highly disrupted time, congregational leaders and congregations need to find accelerated ways to pivot; to avoid becoming 1 in 3. Read more... Click here for a flyer.

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!

St. John’s Community Care offers the use of GrandPads to clients or family members who need a way to connect to information virtually. These pads are extremely simple to use, which allows for less frustration in its use. The GrandPads offer games, internet access, email capabilities and more!!
If you know of someone who would benefit from access to a GrandPad to stay connected to their loved ones, take a virtual caregiver workshop, or participate in a Memory Café, encourage them to contact St. John’s Community Care at 618-344-5008 or ask their permission for St. John’s staff to contact them. St. John’s Community Care provides the pad, internet services (WIFI), and in-person and written instructions for use.
A deposit is required and kept until the pad is returned. There is no additional charge for the internet or the pad. To find out more about the GrandPad, click here.

Whether your church is just beginning its journey towards an Open and Affirming covenant, or you’ve been ONA for many years, you'll find a webinar that meets your needs! Open and Affirming Coalition presents a popular webinar series that has helped congregations plan for an ONA journey that builds consensus and reduces the risk of conflict for congregations new to ONA. Existing ONA churches have learned how to breathe new life into their ONA commitment. These services are priced to fit almost any budget, and there are deep discounts when you buy a season pass. The first session begins on Thurs, Feb 4 at 5 pm CST. Find out more...
What's Happening in Illinois South Conference

**Job Opportunity:** Evangelical UCC in Highland has an immediate opening for a Director of Christian Education, Youth Ministries and Communications. This position, in coordination with the Pastor, is responsible for all Christian Education and Faith Development of our members from cradle to grave. This is a full-time position requiring 40 hours per week. Competitive salary with health and dental benefits offered. The qualified candidate must have:

- Experience in related fields or equivalent training and/or education. A Bachelor’s Degree is preferred, but not required.
- Must have a minimum 3 years working or volunteering with Children and Youth in a religious setting
- Must have experience supervising, mentoring and developing team leaders
- Knowledge of Content Marketing, Social Media, Email/Automation and Website platforms

For a complete job description, click here. Interested candidates should contact Barb Bray in the church office at 618-654-7459 by February 15.

**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.

**Region 2**
Columbia St. Paul UCC will hold its annual Rummage Sale on Fri, March 26 & Sat, March 27, the same weekend as the Columbia’s annual City-Wide Sale. Masks will be required; hand sanitizer will be provided; and social distancing will be observed for the sale. They cannot accept donations of clothing or electronics but welcome all other donations. Saturday drop-off times begin the first of March. If you’d like to bring donations to their shed at another time, call Kathleen Habermehl at 314-440-4152 or 618-281-4613.

**Region 5 - Grantfork UCC presents SOUPer Bowl of Caring.** On Sunday, Feb 7, two NFL football teams will be playing in the Super Bowl. If you want to help in another type of SOUPer Bowl once again this year during the week of Feb 1-7, you are invited to bring cans of soup to the breezeway between the sanctuary and education building of the church. Your cans will serve as votes for your favorite Super Bowl team. If you prefer to donate money, slide an envelope marked SOUPer Bowl (and favorite team!) under the office door. Items and dollars will go to the HACSM Food Pantry in Highland.

**Region 5**
Troy Friedens UCC will host its Annual Drive-Thru Sausage & Kraut Dinner on Sun, Mar 14 from 11:30 am to 5:30 pm. The menu includes grilled pork sausage, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, sauerkraut, & dessert. All dinners will be $10.00. If you have any questions please contact the office, 618-667-6535 or email. Friedens is located at 207 E Center, Troy, IL 62294.

**Region 8**
New Baden Zion UCC will hold a Drive-thru Soup and Salad Dinner on Thurs, Feb 4, from 4 pm - 6:30 pm. A meal includes your choice of homemade chicken noodle soup, vegetable beef soup, or chili, plus salad, rolls, and dessert. Cost $10. Soup by the quart available for $5/quart (no sides included with quart purchase.) Zion is located at 414 W. Hanover Street, New Baden.
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 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

Facebook Illinois South Conference Uplands Village

Cash back card for merchants