



May 5, 2021



This year's Day of Discipleship "Strengthening the Ties that Bind Us Together" was a wonderful virtual event.

If you would like to see resources that were shared during the event, click [here](#). Check out the great video by the Hunger Action Team and another one by DuBois Center. You can visit our website - www.iscucc.org for other resources, info on our ministry partners, and ways to give.

Thank you to the AMAZING ISC Gatherings Team for imaging, planning, and offering this informative continuing education event for our churches. THANK YOU, Chilang Lawless and Eileen Hoag (co-chairs, Carol Harms, Walt Hart (advisory), Mimi Llamas, Matt Swinford, Rev Michelle Torigian, Pastor Tarrah Vaupel, Rev Andy Wilson, Rev. Lisa Hart, and Angie Zapp (Local Church Ministries' liaisons) and ISC Staff.

Thank you to the REMARKABLE workshop panelists for sharing your experiences, wisdom, insights, and practices with us. THANK YOU, Rev. Christy Eckert (pastor of St John UCC Trenton, IL), Dale Ritzel (member of Church of the Good Shepherd, Carbondale, IL), Rev. Michelle Torigian, (pastor of St. Paul UCC, Belleville, IL), Katie Hotze-Wilton, Eden Theological Seminary, Rev. Jeremy Wood and Ron Schmidt (Salem UCC, Alhambra, IL), Rev. Don Wagner and Becky Harrison (St. Paul UCC, Lebanon, IL), Rev. Tim Darmour-Paul (Grantfork UCC, Grantfork, IL), Rev. Lori Schafer (pastor of St John Midway UCC, Moro, IL), Rev. Andy Wilson (pastor of St John's UCC, Smithton,

Prayer list for May 9 - 15, 2021

Churches & Pastors

-DuQuoin St. John's UCC, Rev. Robert Morwell

-East St. Louis Good Shepherd of Faith, Pastor Norma Patterson

Retired Pastor

- Revs. Charles Preston and Karla Frost, Granite City, IL

People with Life Concerns

-Please hold the family of **Dr.**

Inbakumar Joseph in your prayers as they mourn his death. Dr. Joseph was the brother of Dr. Nesa (Anney) Joseph and was much loved by his family and a beloved physician for rural India. Dr. Nesa Joseph is a member of Lebanon St. Paul UCC and the CEO of St. Louis Visiting Nurses Association. Cards of condolence may be sent to Dr. Nesa and Anney Joseph, 747 Erika St, O'Fallon, IL 62269. Funeral services were held in India.

-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 **farmers**, our Hunger Action Partners.

Pray for those who are **hungry**.

- Keep **all pastors** in your prayers.

- Pray for the **United States** as

IL), and Rev. Rosemary Captain (pastor of St John UCC, Fairview Heights, IL).

And thank you to the INCREDIBLE “behind the screens” crew for helping it all come together.

we work towards equality and civility for all.

- Pray for the **healthcare workers** and **families dealing with COVID-19**.

THANK YOU, Christy Pursell, Executive Administrator, Debbie Kesner, Office Coordinator, Lynnette Schuepbach, Communications Coordinator, Nikki Shaw, Social Media Coordinator, Julie Riechmann, Conference Registrar, and Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister.

Great leadership, great programs, and great people giving generously of their time, talents, and resources for the sake of the Church of Jesus Christ are the ties that hold us together in the Illinois South Conference.



Strengthen the Church Offering May 23, 2021

Sunday, May 23 is Strengthen the Church Sunday in the United Church of Christ. Strengthen the Church is one of the special United Church of Christ offerings we encourage our local churches to support. However, this particular offering is a bit different for us at the Conference level. This offering is split between the National setting and the Conferences of the United Church of

Christ which means here in Illinois South Conference we retain 50% of the funds which are collected in the churches of our Conference.

In 2020, at the National level of the United Church of Christ, Strengthen the Church money was used to create programs and services which directly helped churches and local churches' pastors adapt and thrive under times of great uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. One program which was supported in part by Strengthen the Church Funds was “Reset for Renewal.” “Reset for Renewal” was designed especially for people working with youth and young adults. Rev. Lisa Hart, one of ISC’s own, has been quoted on the promotion literature in saying, “This was what so many in our churches and other ministry settings were desperately in need of during this extraordinary time” about this event.

In 2020, at the Conference level, Strengthen the Church money enabled Illinois South Conference to offer countless Conference-wide seminars, gatherings, workshops, trainings, worship services, and even support groups, as we were able to expand and fund our technology, using these funds. We also used the funds to offer Marcia McFee’s “Reboot Your Worship” series for FREE to pastors and worship leaders and the “Cultivating Generous Congregations” at a reduced price for pastors and church leaders.

For the last couple of years, Strengthen the Church money has been used to underwrite a majority of the costs of offering a retreat for our pastors in Illinois South Conference and to fund the remaining costs not covered by a joint grant we applied for alongside the IKC and Heartland Conferences to employ a part-time communication staff person, Nikki Shaw.

All of these programs and services would not be possible without you giving generously when a Strengthen the Church offering is taken in your church.

Dear Friends as you consider what you will give on Sunday, May 23 to this special offering, please know your donations, no matter what the size, make a BIG difference in the United Church of Christ and here in the Illinois South Conference. Your offerings expand the possibilities

of what we can offer to renew and revitalize our mutual ministries for the rest of this year and in years to come. Thank you for supporting all the ways we seek to strengthen our churches in the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ.

In gratitude, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

Your Hunger Action Task Force seeks to keep the issue of hunger and food insecurity on our minds and in our hearts. Thank you to the many congregations who support Hunger Action as well as your local food pantry. Your gifts are important.

Your prayers are also important. We ask you to lift up in prayer each week those who are hungry and our Hunger Action Partners. The Hunger Action Partners will be included in the Weekly Connection prayer list. Your mission committee, hunger group, Sunday School classes, women's group, VBS participants, those who are home bound may also wish to send a special note of thanks to Hunger Action partners they know.

Feeding the hungry is part of our discipleship. The work of addressing hunger is critical, and it can be exhausting. Let us give thanks to our Hunger Action partners.

MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY, MAY 16

The arrival of May brings Mental Health Awareness Month and, for many congregations, preparations for Mental Health Sunday on May 16.

The UCC Mental Health Network, has partnered with The United Church of Canada to offer a new resource: [Radical Belonging: Mental Health Sunday Liturgies and Resources for All.](#)

This downloadable resource, available in both a PDF and a large print Word document, is for any congregation of any size that wishes to become a place of radical belonging. Within it, you will find liturgy that challenges the systemic sins that create "otherness" and ableism, resources that share the stories of people living with mental illness and disabilities, and words of grace and celebration for the opportunities we have as the Body of Christ to love, care for and accept one another.

We hope you will find this resource helpful as you might be preparing worship services and liturgies for this month and especially, Mental Health Sunday on Sunday, May 16. See resources and download [here](#).

A Mother's Success (Happy Mother's Day)

How does a mother measure success,
Knowing she gave it her very best?
It isn't dollars she keeps in the bank,
But very small things for which she gives thanks.

It isn't that they have been perfectly raised.
Or that they will never act silly or crazed.
It isn't that no mistakes will be made
Or God will say "yes" for all she has prayed.

It's small things that measure this mother's success.
See if these questions are answered "yes."
Has her child grown to woman or man?
Does he know how to use pots and pans?

Is he gentle, confident, strong?
Does he consider what's right and wrong?
Does he love touching to show he cares?
Does he have feelings for "nerds" and "squares"?



If he is angry, upset or in pain,
Can he explain without causing the same?
Can he be loving, tender, and kind
Without losing sight of his own unique mind?

Does he set limits and goals to achieve?
Does he have strength to show how he grieves?
Mom knows these decisions have not been her own,
But feels that she influenced how he has grown.

The questions are true for daughters and sons.
A "mensch" is a "mensch", no matter which one.
If most of these questions are answered "yes,"
This mother knows she has reached success.
© Lynnette Schuepbach

DuBois Center News

Spend your summer at camp!

We are currently still hiring staff for summer 2021! Working at a summer camp is more than just a job, it is an experience unlike any other. If you or someone you know is interested in working at DuBois Center, we are currently hiring many positions including counselors/activity coordinators, kitchen and healthcare staff, and village coordinators. You can find more information at our [website](#). If you know someone who could benefit from this opportunity, please pass it along! We will need all hands on deck as we navigate a summer unlike any other!

Strengthen your community with DuBois Center

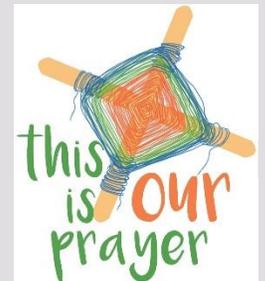
We were happy to welcome a group from St. Paul – Lebanon Sunday, May 2 who worked tirelessly to clean up our signs!

We also welcomed a group of Green DuBois volunteers last week to help eradicate invasive species and plant herbs in planters near one of our cottages. We are always happy to welcome volunteer groups, or host your communities for retreats! You can contact us at dcinfo@duboiscenter.org for more information on how to get involved!



Registration is Open

Registration for a summer unlike any other is open! To learn more about our summer 2021 camps, you can visit our [website](#) or contact the office. Our residential summer camp COVID-19 mitigations are being finalized and will be available to all parents, but we are also offering [family](#) camp and DuBois [Delivered](#) this year. We hope that by offering traditional, family, and distanced options this summer, we can all be reminded of what makes DuBois Center special.



Green DuBois News

The Green DuBois team is happy to be out of hibernation, and back at camp. At the recent DuBois Center Open House, we welcomed and blessed a new hive of bees. Our two previous hives were hit with American Foulbrood disease and did not survive the winter. We are in the process of adding 3 new hives to replace them, in two new locations. During the Open House, our

new Acting Director of Outdoor Ministries, our Conference Minister and two of our beekeepers all suited up to bless the first of the colonies to arrive. Above, pictured left to right, are Shana Johnson, Beekeeper John Pawloski, Hayley Elliott and Beekeeper Julie Kies. Two more colonies should arrive in the next few weeks.

Last week, the invasive species removal team was able to get out in the woods for the first time in more than a year, and they did extensive work around and behind the bathhouse on the Rustic side of camp. They removed in the neighborhood of 500 Japanese bush honeysuckle in one morning, and in the process came across some wonderful finds, including a mother dove on the nest, a few skinks, frogs, a native orchid and a whole log colonized with devil's cup mushrooms. The orchid, a Wister's Coralroot (or Spring Coralroot,) is of special interest. It's not particularly rare, but it does indicate a healthy forest. This orchid grows about a foot tall, has no chlorophyll, and its tiny white blooms only stay open a short time. It grows where it finds specific compatible fungi in the soil. Three specimens were found across the slope going down to the lake.



Sections of the woods where the team had previously worked had very few new bush honeysuckle, and that's a sign we're making progress in removing this plant.

If you're interested in being part of the bee team, helping with invasive species removal, or want to part of another branch of Green DuBois, send an email to GreenDuBois@aol.com. More activities will be announced through the summer.



Flooring Replacement

The DuBois Center office needs your help to replace the DuBois Center office flooring.

An office update, started in late 2017, needs to be finished. Currently the office has four types of flooring, of which all are not level from room to room. Some small areas might be old asbestos tiles and some areas are down to the sub-floor. The cost, just under \$9,000, for the new flooring materials and installation has been approved by the Conference Council Executive Committee. Now, we need to raise a big portion of the funds to start the floor replacement. Your donations, your intent to donate, or your skill in

laying flooring is needed to complete the job.

Donations of money, time or installation skills are welcomed from individuals, churches and/or their organizations. Checks can be sent to the ISC office at 1312 Broadway, Highland IL 62249 or click [here](#) to donate online. Designate your donations to the DuBois Office Flooring Project.

If your group plans to donate or raise money to donate to this, please contact Julie at 618-357-1809 or email jriechmann@iscucc.org.

If you or your group have experience with this type of work and want to volunteer to help, contact one of the ISC Property Co-Chairs: Priscilla Self at 618-318-0083 or pjj48@hotmail.com or Dave Hoffmann at 618-791-7002 or davehoff95@gmail.com. Thank you very much for your support.

A HUGE THANK-YOU to this week's donors:

Ida Nuernberger, Edwardsville St. Paul UCC

Eunice Hediger, Jamestown St. Paul UCC



CHHSM News
Council for Health and Human Service Ministries

Greetings from Eden Theological Seminary,

On May 14, 2021, at 7:30 PM CDT, Eden Seminary will be celebrating the class of 2021 in the 171st Commencement Ceremony. You and your congregation are invited to take part in this

celebration of the students' achievements. We are continuing to find ways to bring the community together though we are still in the midst of a pandemic. Commencement is a time-honored tradition within the Eden community, and we are delighted to be able to share that even if it is virtually. Come join in the joy and celebration as students embark on the next part of their journeys in their ministry. Register [online](#) to receive the link and password by email. You can also participate through Facebook Live at Eden Seminary [Chapel](#).



Spring Cleaning Day at Uni-Pres Kindercottage

A SPRING CLEANING DAY is scheduled for May 15 beginning at 9 am. If you can help, please bring your buckets, rags, gloves, mowers, rakes and tools for possible repairs. They will have bagels, donuts and coffee for your breakfast, but ask you to bring a sack lunch if you can stay past noon. Mark your calendar for May 15 Spring Cleaning Day. Your help is appreciated!

The Hoyleton Hybrid 2021 Hike & Bike will be on May 8. You can participate virtually, at your preferred location, or at the Maeystown Course from 8 am– 6 pm. The registration fee is \$20 which includes one T-Shirt. All T-shirts can be picked up on Friday, May 7 from 5 pm - 7 pm or all day Saturday at St. John UCC Maeystown. Click [here](#) to register. Share photos or videos with #HikeandBike2021 and post to St. John, Maeystown [Facebook](#) page. Call Pastor Poole at 618-458-6940 for more information. All proceeds benefit Hoyleton Youth and Family Services. Click [here](#) for a flyer.



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH: MAY 2021

May Is Older Americans Month

Older American's Month is celebrated each year in May. It has been an opportunity to celebrate the gifts that our Older Americans bring to us in our families, communities, and churches. It is especially important, during this unusual year, to celebrate this population and the challenges they may have faced through isolation and anxiety as well as the joys they have

experienced in learning new ways of communicating with loved ones.

We will provide you, the churches of ISC, with a down loadable worship service/sermon to use to celebrate Older Americans Month in May. Rev. Jennifer Sowell-Glover, Pastor of Collinsville St. John UCC, and St. John's Community Care, an outreach of Collinsville St. John UCC, will produce the service. Plans are to have this ready for possible use in your May 30 worship service or anytime that you would have a need or opportunity throughout the Summer months.

Read [more](#) about Older Americans Month 2021 – May. If you have any questions or would like to be notified when the service video is available, please contact Missy at mathmer@stjohnscc.org.

St. John's Community Care offers **Coffee Talk with Caregivers**, an informational group created for caregivers. This group will cover a variety of topics to help support and educate those who care for people living with dementia. It will meet on the last Monday of each month from 1 pm – 2 pm on Zoom. It is their hope that participants of this group will see a decrease in the feelings associated with caregiver burden, improvement in family relationships and caregiver confidence, and an increase in caregiver knowledge and problem-solving abilities.



The next session will be on Monday, May 31. If you are interested in participating, email Stacey Rhodes at srhodes@stjohnscc.org.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference



Register now for the 3rd Annual Pastors' Retreat sponsored by the ISC Local Church Ministry Team on Wednesday, May 12 at 10 am to Thursday, May 13 at 2 pm at the Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

The retreat will be based on the book, *Pursuing Pastoral Excellence* by Paul Hopkins. We are planning on a mixture of free time activities, such as walking the labyrinth or the beautiful grounds as well as indoor and outdoor safe (based on current CDC guidelines) socially distanced group activities. Click [here](#) for a flyer. To register, contact Christy Pursell at cpursell@iscucc.org. **Registration deadline is tomorrow, May 5.**

Vacation Bible School Schedules

June 1 - 4; In-Person; 9 am - 12 pm; St. John UCC; Maeystown; Theme: *Knights of the North Castle*

June 1 - 4; In-Person; 9:30 am - 12 pm; St. Paul UCC; Waterloo; Theme: *Knights of the North Castle*

June 7 - 11; In-Person; 9 am - 12 pm; St. Paul UCC, Columbia; Theme: *Knights of the North Castle*

June 21 - 25; In-Person; (tentatively) 8:45 am - 12 pm; St. John UCC, Mascoutah; Theme: *Rocky Railway*

July 19 - 21; Virtual; 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm; Salem UCC, Alhambra, *Knights of North Castle*

July 19 - 23; In-Person, 6 pm - 8 pm; St. Peter UCC Red Bud; *Knights of North Castle*

July 19 - 23; St. John UCC Collinsville, *Wilderness Escape*

No Vacation Bible School for These Churches

Addieville Zion United Church of Christ

Job Opportunity: Part-Time Secretary for Pinckneyville St Paul UCC

This position requires excellent people skills in working with the Council, Pastor, Music Leader, committees, and Sunday school teachers. Strong computer skills using Microsoft Office and worship software is important. Must be an independent worker. This position is essentially the church office manager for keeping the calendar, publishing newsletters and setting up for worship services. Typical office hours are 8:00-12:00 noon, Monday Through Friday. However, we may be shifting those hours to accommodate the church reopening. To apply, send resume with references to: St. Paul UCC, 205 Jackson St., Pinckneyville, IL 62274 or stpauluccpinckneyville@gmail.com.

Job Opportunity: Part-Time Music Leader for Pinckneyville St Paul UCC

This position requires excellent people skills in working with the Council, Pastor, secretary, committees and Sunday school teachers. Music skills include the ability to play a piano and a Wick's two-manual pipe organ with pedals. Good vocal skills are a plus but not required. The church does not have a choir but occasionally has special instrumentalists and vocalists. Sunday school children will often perform a song which may or may not require support from the Music Leader. Church services are currently 10 am – 11 am on Sundays with two services on Easter and special services for Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Advent and Lenten services are typically rotated with two or three other churches. To apply, send resume

with references to: St. Paul UCC, 205 Jackson St., Pinckneyville, IL 62274 or stpauluccpinckneyville@gmail.com.

Job Opportunity: Director of Faith Formation and Care

St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois, seeks a Director of Faith Formation and Care (30 hours per week). Job responsibilities include:

- Planning and executing the church's education program for all ages in collaboration with the Senior Pastor and Christian Education Team
- Sustain and expand the youth group
- Assist in worship elements
- Assist with and lead funerals as needed
- Visit congregants who are hospitalized, in long-term care facilities, and homebound

Please send a resume and three references to FaithFormationDirector@stpaulucc.org.

Volunteer Communications Coordinator Needed for ISC Justice & Mission Team

The ISC Justice and Mission Team is looking for a volunteer to join our focused and hard-working group. If you have a passion for justice, you can be of great help to us by:

- Attending monthly Team meetings (the second Tuesday of the month on ZOOM until we can meet in person)
- Receiving progress reports on Team projects and distilling that data into effective communications to create content for email blasts, Facebook posts, Weekly Connection articles, etc.

This volunteer position requires a self-starter who is anxious to seek new opportunities for spreading the word about issues of justice, mission, and peace. The benefits are the same as for any volunteer position—camaraderie with a great group of folks and the satisfaction of contributing to God's mission of justice for all Creation.

If you are interested or have questions, contact Jerry Bennett at 618-560-9282 or pjerrybennett@hotmail.com or Kay Ahaus at 618-520-1790 or kayahaus@yahoo.com.

Job Opportunity: Office Coordinator

St. Paul United Church of Christ (Belleville) is looking for an Office Coordinator, an individual who will manage daily operations and maintain office supplies and records; coordinate, plan, and execute church events; create publications and worship bulletins; understand office equipment; greet members and visitors; assist volunteers; navigate various forms of technology. Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Google Drive/Docs required. Some knowledge of video editing as well as using the Zoom, Constant Contact, and Onrealm platforms is preferred. Please send resume with references to officecoordinatorsearch@stpaulucc.org.

Job Opportunity: Church Organist/Musician

Grantfork UCC seeks a musician to support our inspiring music program. Best candidate should be willing to play the pipe organ and/or the piano and/or the electronic keyboard for traditional worship services once or twice a month (Virtual services will be pre-recorded during the week. In-person will be live on Sunday mornings.); an interest in directing one or more of our adult choirs - Men's Choir (gospel/Gaither), Ladies' Choir (traditional), Women's Ensemble (contemporary), and Chancel Choir (holiday services, cantatas) would be a plus, but is not required. Musician will work in cooperation with the current music director, Connie Plocher, to determine schedule, and with the pastor. Pay will be determined according to the number of weeks willing to serve. To express interest, please contact Rev. Tim Darmour-Paul at 618-675-2595 or grantforkucc@agtelco.com.

Region 5

St. Jacob UCC will present their Drive-Thru Strawberry Festival on May 16 from 11 am - 4 pm. Menu includes Brats, pork burgers, hot dogs, sides, and strawberry desserts.

Region 9

Belleville Concordia UCC will hold its Carry-Out Chicken Dinner on Sun, June 6 from 11 am until they are sold out. Menu includes 1/2 fried chicken with all the "fixins," Carry-out only. Quilt raffle tickets sold for \$5 each with a limit of 200 being sold.

CONTACT US - YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK

So we can better serve you, here is a list of your Conference staff and who you should contact, given your church's needs:

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, contact Hayley Elliott at 618-787-2202 or director@DuBoisCenter.org.

For DuBois Center registration for upcoming events and 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](#)

