

March 1, 2022



On her Sunday morning blog, Diana Butler Bass shared the following poem by Jack Gilbert entitled "A Brief for the Defense."

Sorrow everywhere. Slaughter everywhere.

If babies are not starving someplace, they are starving somewhere else. With flies in their nostrils.

But we enjoy our lives because that's what God wants.

Otherwise, the mornings before summer dawn would not be made so fine.

The Bengal tiger would not be fashioned so miraculously well.

The poor women at the fountain are laughing together

between the suffering they have known and the awfulness in their future, smiling and laughing while somebody in the village is very sick.

There is laughter every day in the terrible streets of Calcutta,

and the women laugh in the cages of Bombay. If we deny our happiness, resist our satisfaction, we lessen the importance of their deprivation. We must risk delight.

We can do without pleasure, but not delight. Not enjoyment.

We must have the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless t

to accept our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world.

To make injustice the only measure of our attention is to praise the Devil.

If the locomotive of the Lord runs us down, we should give thanks that the end had magnitude. We must admit there will be music despite everything.

We stand at the prow again of a small ship anchored

# Prayer list for March 13 - 19, 2022 Churches & Pastors -Godfrey Evangelical UCC, Rev. Jerry (Lori) MeCaskey





-Granite City St. John UCC, Rev. Karla (Rev. Charles Preston) Frost

#### **Retired Pastors**

- Rev. Michael and Elizabeth Marx, Jr, Owensboro, KY

#### **People with Life Concerns**

-Pray for Rev. Michelle (Aaron Brent Coleman) Torigian as she recovers from surgery. Rev. Torigian is the pastor and teacher for Belleville St. Paul UCC. Cards may be sent to her at 2716 Autumn Harvest Ln, Belleville, IL 62221. -Please pray for the people of Quito, Ecuador as they manage the clean up of the damage of the flood and landslide. Ecuador Partnership has been a mission partner with ISC for over 20 years. We pray for strength and comfort for all.

- -Pray for **Rev. Bill Causer**, as he deals with some health issues. Cards may be sent to him at 11315 N Presley Ln, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.
- -Keep Rev. Gus (Sue) Kuether in your prayers as he recovers from surgery. Rev. Kuether is a retired ISC pastor and has served on many ISC teams and committees. Cards may be sent to him

late at night in the tiny port looking over to the sleeping island:

the waterfront is three shuttered cafés and one naked light burning.

at 536 Pebble Brook Ln, Belleville IL 62221.

**-UCC Officers Share a <u>Prayer</u> for Ukraine.** Click on prayer to read and pray.

To hear the faint sound of oars in the silence as a rowboat comes slowly out and then goes back is truly worth all the years of sorrow that are to come. --"A Brief for the Defense," by Jack Gilbert (1925–2012)

While Gilbert's poem might not appeal to everyone, especially those who would rather not have the vivid images of suffering it evokes stick to them. However, I find it to be a call for resistance so many need these days. The vivid images of suffering I see or read in the news stick to me. It is this stickiness that causes me to wonder if the experience of "delight" or "gladness" is a betrayal of the suffering around me. Is it dismissive or insensitive to experience joy when others are experiencing such pain? Jesus didn't think so.

Consider the exchange he has with his disciples found in Matthew 26: 6-11. At the beginning of the chapter, we read Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples for his impending death. The chief priest and elders were assembled at the palace of the high priest Caiaphas scheming about how to have Jesus arrested and killed. Yet, Jesus even with the knowledge of the suffering that is to come, takes delight in the act of kindness shown to him by an unnamed woman with an "alabaster jar" who anoints his head with the oil of expensive perfume. The disciples' response to her extravagant gift was indignation. Condemning it as a waste of a resource that could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Overhearing their complaints and judgments Jesus says to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me."—Matthew 26: 10-11, NRSV

Pulled out of the context of the story, a message that "you always have the poor with you" seems problematic at best. Yet what if Jesus' response to the disciples was much like what the poet Jack Gilbert offers. Perhaps it is a reminder of the importance to risk delight. To resist being overcome by the sadness and despair of the world that will always be with us. What if our delight in seeing the beauty and joy God has created is an acknowledgement that beauty and joy is always with us too?? What if we, as many have suggested, choose joy as the greatest act of resistance? What if we could be stubborn enough to accept "our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world"?

Dear friends, it is certainly worth trying. Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

# The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference...

Grantfork United Church of Christ's 150th Anniversary celebration, originally scheduled for January 23, has been rescheduled for Sunday, March 6. Rev. Shana Johnson, Illinois South Conference Minister, will lead them at the 10:15 am worship. The Men's Fellowship will provide their Appreciation Dinner (pork sausage and side dishes) afterwards, and a program including musical selections will be shared in the educational



building. All current members, past members, and anyone searching to be with a warm and welcoming crowd are invited!



As a service project, the **O'Fallon UCC youth group** collected items and prepared 40 Birthday Boxes for the O'Fallon community food pantry. Each Birthday Box contains everything needed for a birthday party (cake mix, icing tub, candles, card, plates, napkins, balloons).

Mark your calendars for March 19, 2022, to attend **Day of Discipleship via Zoom.** The 2022 theme is Leaders and Followers: Guiding the Church Forward.

Here's what to expect...

**Town Hall Meeting** on Conference Wide Initiatives - WISE committee, DuBois 6.0 campaign, and more.

#### Workshops:

- Roles and Responsibilities of Officers Learn ways to run effective meetings, develop goals, stick to an agenda, delegate efficiently, and more. Mimi Llamas, past President at St Paul UCC, Belleville
- Good financial practices Discuss the role of treasurers & finance/budget committees, presenting a budget, and keeping good checks & balances. Darryl Collins, past Treasurer & current member of Finance Committee at St John UCC, Collinsville
- 3. Healthy communication Consider communication from an intentional interim who has had to learn how to assess & respond to various styles. Rev. Lisa Hart, Intentional Interim Pastor at St John UCC, Chesterfield, MO
- 4. "Discernment: The Holy Art of Decision-Making in the Church" What if church meetings felt meaningful and joyful? What if the decision-making processes in your church felt more engaging and holy? Come explore the possibilities as we discuss the life-giving role of Spiritled discernment in the Church. Led by Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister
- 5. Pathways to Promise: A Taste of Companionship You will be introduced to the five principles of the Companionship Model, a program which teaches members of congregations how to build a circle of care with individuals who are facing emotional and mental health challenges. Rev. Tim Darmour-Paul, Pastor at Grantfork UCC

Cost: \$25/person; scholarships available for anyone – contact Christy at <a href="mailto:cpursell@iscucc.org">cpursell@iscucc.org</a> for more information or register <a href="mailto:here">here</a>.

#### Schedule:

- 8:45 9:00 Gather on Zoom
- 9:00 9:30 Opening & Update on ISC initiatives (WISE Conference update, DuBois 6.0, and Hunger Action Team updates)
- 9:40 10:25 Workshop A (Your choice of the 5 offered)
- 10:35 11:20 Workshop B (Your choice of the 5 offered)



# One Great Hour of Sharing - March 27

The theme for the 2022 One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering is "Love Remains," based on 1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. These words were written to a

church in turmoil to remind them what love looks like in community.

What does love look like in our UCC Community? Through your collective generosity, the United Church of Christ has worked with both domestic and international partners to provide food, water, medicines, education, disaster recovery resources and opportunities for sustainable development, bringing hope to places of despair. Your gifts to OGHS allow UCC to put love into action to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities in crisis around the world.



**Sunday, March 27, 2022**, the fourth Sunday of Lent, is the recommended date for the offering. Resources to help you promote the offering were mailed to your churches beginning the week of February 21. And for your newsletters and worship planning purposes, resources are already available for download on the UCC <u>website</u>. You may also order additional copies of these materials from UCC Resources.

\*\*NEW\*\* Insurance Board announces the launch of a Legal Helpline through our partnership with the Association of Conference Attorneys (ACA) of the United Church of Christ. All Insurance Board participants can now access legal counsel that will provide a free legal consultation and referral service. Ministries will benefit from connecting with attorneys who have an intimate understanding of polity and how issues are processed in observance of free church traditions. Ministries can contact the Legal Helpline at 800-437-8830 (prompt #7) or email their inquiry to legalhelpline@insuranceboard.org. Please note the free consultation does not include contract reviews. Feel free to share the attached flyer with your Insurance Board policyholders. \*\*Coming Soon\*\* Insurance Board will be launching the Legal Corner site accessible from Insurance Board's website. Legal Corner will be the new home for the Legal Helpline in addition to sample forms and extensive HR tools. More information to follow!

**World Day of Prayer** is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. One location for World Day of Prayer within Illinois South Conference will be observed at 1:00 pm on March 4 in the sanctuary of St. John's Episcopal/Redeemer Lutheran Church in Centralia. This year's theme is "I Know the Plans I Have for You" as based on Jeremiah 29:1-14 passage when the prophet wrote to the exiles in Babylonia. Contact Norma Borgmann for more details at 618-533-1658.



#### **Disaster Recovery Mission Trips**

Due to the extreme caution required during the COVID pandemic, Global H.O.P.E. is currently not commissioning Mission Trips yet. With the lessening of COVID infections and state's releasing mandates, the UCC Disaster Ministries is coordinating with



VOAD communities where natural disasters occurred.

For groups considering Disaster Recovery Mission Trips, these are some options you might consider:

- Tropical Storm Isaias, Eastern Pennsylvania Contact: Judy Moore, Volunteer Coordinator 802-299-8290 or IsaiasRecoveryVolunteers@gmail.com.
- In the Dayton, Ohio area Disciples of Christ Week of Compassion Disaster Agency contact Caroline Hamilton-Arnold at <a href="mailto:Caroline@weekofcompassion.org">Caroline@weekofcompassion.org</a>.
- In Kentucky Fuller Center Disaster-Rebuilders in Kentucky. Click here.



Don't forget to change your clocks on **Saturday, March 12** so that you are not late for church! Time change springs forward.

#### Save the Date

Pinckneyville St. Paul UCC and Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ invite you to the **Installation Service** for their Pastor & Teacher, **Rev. Jason Eisele**, on Sunday, March 20, 2022, at 2 pm. Address for St. Paul UCC is 205 E Jackson St, Pinckneyville, Illinois

# † DuBois Center News



#### **Star Party – Upcoming Friday March 4!**

Have you been dreaming of an opportunity to get out into nature and see the stars? Look no further than Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>'s Green DuBois Star Gazing Party. We have star guides ready to point out the features of our night sky, hayrides, snacks, and a big camp bonfire. Everyone is welcome to join us from 6-9 for the

event. We look forward to seeing you all at DuBois Center on March 4! Blessings - Hayley

#### Come breathe the fresh air at DuBois Center~

March 4 - Star Party

March 26-27 - Confirmation Retreat at DuBois

April 1-3 - Father & Son Retreat

April 9 - DuBois Center Open House

April 15 - Stations of the Cross at DuBois Center

April 22-24 - Wrangle & Ride

April 23 - Volunteer Workday at DuBois Center

April 29-May 1 - Women's Retreat - NEW

May 13-14 - Photography Retreat - NEW

May 15 - DuBois Center Open House

May 21-22 - Volunteer Retreat



#### DuBois 6.0 - On the Move

DuBois Center will get a facelift in 2022. The current donations are at **\$70,166** because of generous donors. **Goal: 225,290** Find out more.

# **How You Can Contribute**

- Sponsor a project.
- Share your mandatory IRA distributions
- Share Stock or Bonds
- Share Tax Refund
- Dinners- Plan to attend two special Taste of DuBois Dinners in 2022
- Sweat Equity
- Cash Online at <a href="https://www.buboisCenter.org">www.iscucc.org</a> and <a href="https://www.buboisCenter.org">www.buboisCenter.org</a>.
- Pravers

Note: Project order will be determined by availability of materials and funds. Contact United Church Funds at 212-729-2628 or <a href="matt.wagner@ucfunds.org">matt.wagner@ucfunds.org</a> to learn how to donate IRA distributions and stock to DuBois 6.0. Dates and more information on the Taste of DuBois dinners will be coming soon.



**2022 Stewardship Theme Materials**Order stewardship



materials for your congregation's 2022 stewardship campaign now. This year's theme, "From Bread and Cup to Faith and Giving," makes the connection between our experience of God and our generosity as disciples, and includes practical tools

such as logos, commitment cards, bulletin inserts, and letters. The materials also provide resources for teaching stewardship throughout the year. Campaign guidance and calendars will help you make the best use of these materials. Available as digital download or print materials.



Special early bird pricing on download and bundle:

- Standard digital download: \$39.99 until April 1.
- Bundle download: \$99.99 until April 1.
- Printed materials ship in May.

See <u>link</u> for standard download and package download specifics. <u>Video</u> by Bruce Barkhauer about these materials.

You are invited to join a UCC Cornerstone Fund Webinar on March 9 at 2 pm CST via Zoom for a rich conversation about the State of Church Technology. Register <a href="here">here</a>. After



registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the webinar. The arrival of the coronavirus disease pushed many houses of worship to restructure their operations and ministries from an in-person experience to virtual. As we enter year two of the pandemic, we've invited an array of leaders who have varying insights concerning the use of technology in houses of worship. You will leave inspired to create or refine your vision for virtual ministry and learn more about the resources and best practices available to assist spiritual leaders. The exciting discussion will be moderated by Rev. Eric M. Elley, Dcn., Digital Minister of the Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ. Rev. Elley will be joined by the following panelists: Kenneth Crawford, Trustee, New Emmanuel, Charlotte NC; Rev. Thad Winkle, Pastor, Bethel Bethany, Milwaukee WI; Rich Pine, Tech Specialist, Bethel Bethany, Milwaukee WI Kevin Williams, Director of Welcome, Westfield Congregational Church, Killingly, CT.



#### **Nollau Leadership Institute Open for Registration**

The Nollau Leadership Institute is CHHSM's signature program with more than 250 attendees in its 20+ years. Through retreats, online interactions, and peer mentoring, this program is intended to support leadership formation through a variety of learning modalities and a

community of practice. Grounded in the tradition of the United Church of Christ, rituals, contemplative practices, small group sharing, and embodiment are all part of the program—alongside the interactive didactic sessions. The program will consist of two in-person retreats at the Cedar Valley Retreat Center (June 27-July1 and Oct 24-28), online interactions in between the retreats, and an additional day of programming at the CHHSM 85th Annual Gathering (March 6-9, 2023) that concludes with commissioning the class as Diakonal Ministers.

Enrollment is now open and the short online application can be found <u>here</u>. CDC guidelines will be followed.

# What's Happening in Illinois South Conference



The Illinois South Conference **Confirmation Retreats** are tools for enhancing youth ministry in local congregations and a time for personal spiritual renewal. They are designed as a supplement to the confirmation program of local churches and offer a unique opportunity for confirmation classes from across the Conference to bond within and between their groups.

THEME: "Gifted, Called, and Blessed" Exploring how God has uniquely

gifted each of us.

**DATES:** Saturday, March 26 - Sunday, March 27, 2022

**COVID PROTOCOLS:** In accordance with the current Illinois South Conference protocols all chaperones and youth will be required to wear masks for all indoor gatherings and activities. Social distancing and good cleaning practices will be in place for this event.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE:** Check-in at noon on Saturday. Program begins promptly at 1 pm. Eat lunch BEFORE arriving at DuBois Center.

The retreat concludes on Sunday at noon and includes breakfast and lunch.

**PARTICIPANTS:** The Confirmation is for all youth enrolled in confirmation classes for the 2021-2022 program year and their adult advisors. Churches are asked to provide a minimum ratio of 1 adult (age 21 or above) per 7 youth in proportion to the male/female breakdown of their group. **COST:** The cost is \$65 for confirmands and chaperones.

**RETREAT CAPACITY:** Registration will be limited to the first 100 confirmands and chaperones with completed registration forms and fees.





Troy Friedens UCC has a Riso EZ221U Copy machine (mimeograph printing) for sale \$500 or best offer. Great condition. Please reach out to the office if you are interested. 618-667-6535

#### Lenten Devotional to Benefit DuBois Center & The Sojourner Truth House in Gary, IN

Rev. Dr. Don Wagner has graciously offered his Lenten Devotional for use in your churches. Beautiful photos by Fr. Jerry Schweitzer are included in the devotional. The devotional is free, but the Preface provides some information about making a donation for the devotional, which will be split between DuBois Center's 6.0 Campaign and The Sojourner Truth House in Gary, IN. Click <a href="https://document.com/here">here</a> to download and view the Journey to Easter by Rev. Dr. Don Wagner, pastor and teacher for Lebanon St. Paul UCC. You can also find it on the ISC website here.

#### **Job Opportunity**

### Belleville St. Paul UCC Vacancy-Organ and Piano Position

Responsibilities - Areas of responsibilities include excellent organ and piano offerings for all services and accompaniment for weekly choir rehearsals and other musical ensembles as needed. In consultation with the senior pastor, serve as a resource for family weddings and funerals. Compensation will be appropriate to the weekly job responsibilities, background/experience, and professional preparation of the applicant. POSITION PROFILE

- at the direction of the senior pastor and director of music, establish goals and a plan of organization to contribute to the growth and development of the church music program
- in consultation with the pastor and director of music ministry, select hymns and weekly service music
- be personally responsible for hiring substitutes for all absences including vacations and illnesses
- during weekly rehearsals, work in the preparation of music for worship services
- work/communicate with the facility manager to monitor maintenance/tuning and movement of piano and organ in the sanctuary.

Please send resume with three references to musicsearch@stpaulucc.org.

#### 2022 Hunger and Health Illinois Regional Conference

The University of Illinois Extension and SNAP Education staff are excited to announce the first Hunger and Health Illinois Conference. Two regional conferences will be held on March 9, 2022, at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, IL, and March 17, 2022, at the Salvation Army in Springfield, IL from 10 am - 3:30 pm on both days. An optional pre-conference food handler's training will be from 8 am - 10 am. The cost for the event is \$10 per person and will provide a noon meal. Fee waivers are available. Registration opened on February 1, 2022. Click <a href="here">here</a> for a flyer. Contact: <a href="mailto:kaitlyns@illinois.edu">kaitlyns@illinois.edu</a>.

Region 2 - Red Bud St. Peter UCC will hold Drive-Thru Fish Fries on Friday, March 11 and March 25 from 4 pm - 7 pm. Menu includes cod, catfish and shrimp, homemade German potato salad, American potato salad, fries and slaw. Call ahead to order at 618-282-2417. Cash or check only.

Valmeyer St. John UCC will hold Carry Out Fish Fries on Ash Wednesday, March 2 from 4 pm − 7 pm and Friday, March 11, 4 pm − 7:30 pm. Menu includes cod cutups and sides of American potato salad, slaw and fries.

Region 4 - Godfrey Evangelical UCC will hold a Drive-Thru Only Lenten Fish Fry on six Fridays from 4 pm - 7 pm (March 4 - April 8) Menu includes whitefish, catfish fritters or buffalo (\$6 each), baked beans, cole slaw, potato salad, green beans (\$2 each) or chips (\$1), or hot dogs (\$2), soda or bottled water (\$1 each). All proceeds benefit our summer youth mission trip to Woonsocket, Rhode Island on July 14-24, 2022. Contact Tim Sandifer at 618-447-3089.

Region 5 - Troy Friedens UCC will hold an Ash Wednesday Soup Supper on March 2 at 6 pm in their Fellowship Hall followed by their Ash Wednesday night service at 7 pm in the Sanctuary. All are welcome.

Marine UCC will hold an All-You-Can-Eat Fried Chicken Dinner on Sun, March 6 from 11 am - 3 pm at the Moose Lodge, 7371 Marine Rd, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Carry-outs available. Menu includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, seasoned green beans, yellow corn, dinner salad, bread, tea and coffee. Dessert available for purchase. Adults \$10; Children 2 - 12 \$5.50; Children under 2 FREE.

On Sunday, March 13, 2022, Troy Friedens UCC will host its Annual Sausage & Kraut Dinner - DRIVE-THRU ONLY - from 11:30 am until 5:30 pm. The menu includes grilled pork sausage, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, sauerkraut, & dessert. (No substitutions, items available while they last) Cost \$12. No Bulk Sausage will be sold until the end of the event. Contact the office at 618-667-6535 or friedens@friedensucc-troy.org.

Several Region 5 churches will share the Wednesday Night Services during Lent at 7:00 pm. Here is the Lenten Schedule. All are welcome.

**March 9 -** Immanuel UCC in Hamel with Pastor Dana Schindler preaching.

March 16 - Friedens UCC in Troy with Pastor Tim Harrison preaching.

March 23 - Grantfork UCC in Grantfork with Pastor Timothy Darmour-Paul preaching.

March 30 - Marine UCC in Marine with Pastor Philip Kershner preaching.

**April 6 -** St. Paul UCC in Edwardsville with Pastor Dana Schindler preaching.

Hamel Immanuel UCC will hold its drive thru/carry out Chicken Dinner on Sun, March 20 from 11:30 am - 4:30 pm at the church (1-1/2 miles south of Hamel). Menu includes chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, slaw and applesauce. \$11 per meal. Quilt and TV raffle.

Troy Friedens UCC will have a Special Sunday Morning Service on April 3 with Sister Thea Bowman School. A luncheon will follow the service.

Region 8 - Marissa Friedens UCC will hold a Carry Out Only Wurst Markt on Sat, March 19 from 3 pm - 7 pm. Adults \$12; Kids \$6. Menu includes whole hog sausage, real peeled mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, corn, green beans, applesauce, & cake. Meat sales available at their country store. Also available-crafts and baked goods sales. For questions, call (618) 295-2004

Region 9 - On Sunday, March 20 the O'Fallon UCC invites you to join them as they celebrate Celtic spirituality at the 9:45 am worship service, with lots of Irish music provided by "Celtica," a traditional session group which performs locally.

#### 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 Ischuepbach@iscucc.org.

For DuBois Center information, contact Hayley Elliott at 618-787-2202 or <a href="mailto:director@DuBoisCenter.org">director@DuBoisCenter.org</a>.

For DuBois Center program information, contact Rylee Hodges-Stone at 618-787-2202 or program@DuBoisCenter.org.

For DuBois Center registration for upcoming events and camp sessions, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or iriechmann@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





