The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Suggested offering date - December 18

In the midst of Advent’s expectation and hope, we look toward the joy of Christmas just a few short weeks away. In this season, we ask you to please remember the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund. This United Church of Christ special offering provides hope and joy through financial relief to active and retired UCC pastors, lay church workers, and their families in need. Please watch the brief video below and consider a generous gift to the Christmas Fund this year! Your gift will make a difference!

ISC Property Team needs your help

Camp DuBois has no hay shed to keep their round hay bales dry. Wet hay bales are prone to mold and bacteria which pose a serious health risk to the camp’s horses. An ISC family has generously offered to donate their 43x68 metal pole building to the camp. Our challenge is to find a company that will dismantle the building, move it to Camp DuBois, and reassemble it at the camp. If you know of such a company please contact one of the Property Team’s co-chairs, Roger Harris (rharris2325@gmail.com or 618-631-4502) or Mark Beckmeyer (mbeckmey@icloud.com or 618-335-9945).

Prayer list for Dec 18 - 24, 2022

Church & Pastors

-Godfrey Evangelical UCC, Rev. Jerry (Lori) McCaskey (right)

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

Retired Pastor
Rev. Michael and Elizabeth Marx, Owensboro, KY

People with Life Concerns

-Pray for the family of Rev. William "Bill" (Patti) Causer as they mourn his death on Dec 10. Rev. Causer served as Pastor & Teacher for Hoyleton Zion Evangelical UCC, Mascoutah St. John UCC, Farina Friedens UCC, and Bible Grove St. Paul UCC as well as other churches. Visitation will be held Fri, Dec 16 from 5 pm to 7 pm at First United Methodist Church in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Funeral Service will be held Sat, Dec 17 at 1 pm at First United Methodist Church in Mount Vernon, with Rev. Victor Long, Rev. Stacey Tate, Rev. Joe Sheets, and The Gospel Messenger officiating. Interment will follow at Mount Vernon Memorial Gardens in Woodlawn, Illinois. Memorials may be made
Health & Human Services Sunday – January 29, 2023

Every year, the United Church of Christ designates a Sunday in January as the time to uplift the many gifts of the Health and Human Service Ministries across the church. This year, Health and Human Service Health and Human Service Sunday takes place on January 29, 2023.

Liturgical resources for observing Health and Human Service Sunday are now available on CHHSM's website or by clicking on the blue button below. This year’s materials were composed by the Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry, and include unique elements such as a Meditation for Mental Health and Beatitudes for Essential Workers.

Deaconess Foundation, Forward Through

Ferguson, and Missouri Foundation for Health collaborated to establish the Racial Healing + Justice Fund to invest in racial healing as a core component of achieving racial equity and to make space for affected Black and Brown residents to have direct power over the distribution of resources for healing, justice, and transformation.

The Community Governance Board (CGB) of the St. Louis Regional Racial Healing + Justice Fund announced today the distribution of five unrestricted, one-time crisis response grants of $16,000 each to The T/BRIC, Black Healers Collective, UnGUN Institute, St. Louis Community Health Workers Coalition, and Freedom Community Center. The grants will support these organizations’ ongoing efforts to provide frontline response to community trauma following the recent tragedy at Central Visual Performing Arts High School (CVPA) and Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience (CSMB).

The flexible one-time crisis grants provide recipients with the necessary resources to fill gaps in capacity, cover overhead costs, build existing programs, and respond quickly and effectively to community needs. The CGB chose the five grant recipients based on the urgent need for these organizations’ services during this critical time and the tireless dedication these organizations have shown to supporting the physical and mental well-being of individuals.
impacted by bullet-related injuries and other community wounds.

**Medical Leave for Rev. Shana Johnson**
Please know our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson, is on a short limited medical leave after her surgery on December 9 to the end of the year. Please get in touch with her via email or text if you have a question or an emergency.

**Weekly Connection Schedule**
There will **NOT** be Weekly Connection on December 20 and December 27, but the prayer lists are shared with you below, so that you may have it for your bulletins. It is heartwarming to see that the churches share prayers for their neighboring churches and pastors in Illinois South Conference.
All year, you may send church news to lschuepbach@iscucc.org to share with the Conference. Thanks for helping us keep churches updated with happenings within ISC. It takes a village...
Lynnette Schuepbach, Communications Coordinator

**Prayer list for Dec 25 - 31, 2022**
- Grantfork UCC, Rev. Tim (Janet)
- Darmour-Paul
- Hamel Immanuel UCC
- Retired Pastor
- Rev. Fred and Shirley Wehrenberg, Columbia, IL

**Prayer list for Jan 1 - 7, 2023**
- Hecker Friedens UCC, Rev. Ivan (Vivian) Horn
- Highland Evangelical UCC, Rev. Bill (Sally) Kapp
- Retired Pastor
- Rev. Jim and Lelynna Langdoc, Sun City Center, FL

**Year-End Donations**
Donations for the end of the year must be sent to the Conference office to arrive by **Tuesday, January 10, 2023**, in order to get all ISC donations to the National UCC by the end of the month. The check needs to specify that the donation is for 2022 and the date on the check should also be dated for 2022. Thank you for helping us to clear our financial 2022 records in a timely fashion.

**Get Ready! Get Set! In January We Go!**
It's time again for UCC Yearbook submissions. It will be done online again this year. You will need information such as:
- Membership changes, Mailing location changes, Attendance Averages, Community Involvement, Income, Expenses, Payments to your pastor, and more. Please notify the people who handle each department to be prepared for answering these questions. With the information, you will be able to easily compile an 11-year report for your specific church, which will be useful for budgeting and when you are in need of the search process. You have ALWAYS done a phenomenal job, and I hope for the same results this year. The portal is planned to be open January 4. More instructions will be coming after January 1. Thanks. Lynnette Schuepbach, Communication Coordinator
For Lightening Fast Speed - In consideration of the holidays, the fastest way to receive a response from DuBois Center involves a new process for snail mail, email, and donations. To reach DBC via email use this email dcinfo@duboiscenter.org. To send snail mail regarding DuBois Center, send to DuBois Center, c/o St. Peter UCC, PO Box 96, Okawville, IL 62271. Julie Riechmann, the ISC/DuBois Registrar, is processing mail and email from her office inside Okawville St. Peter UCC or you may send it directly to the Highland Office at Illinois South Conference, 1312 Broadway, Highland, IL 62249. Either of those ways will give you the quickest response from us.

Thank you for being so patient with the phone system at DuBois Center. The current phone system at DuBois was installed by a company that is no longer in existence, so we do not have access to customer service to help us correct some issues we have had, like changed voicemails or dropped calls. We purchased a new phone system installed last week, but our telephone carrier has had difficulty transferring our phone lines to the new system. Please know that our DuBois Center interns answer the phone in the mornings and early afternoons when they are in the office.

Search for Executive Director of DuBois Center - Are you a people person who also has a deep love of creation? Do you possess strong organizational and interpersonal skills? Are you someone with abundant initiative and enthusiasm? If so, you are the person we are looking for to be the Executive Director of DuBois Center. The Executive Director of DuBois Center is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of DuBois Center as well as staff recruitment and management, ensuring the health and safety of all campers and guests, and developing and sustaining partnerships to grow camping and retreat activities. The Executive Director of DuBois Center will serve in conjunction with the members of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ, which seeks to do the work of Christ on earth through our shared missions of healing, mercy, and justice and which rely on the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, challenge, empower, and bind all God’s people in a loving, covenantal relationship. To review the job description, expectations and compensation, please click here. To apply, send your statement of interest and resume to DuBoisCenterJobs@gmail.com.

DuBois 6.0 Campaign Update
Churches and individuals continue to show support of the DuBois 6.0 capital campaign through their donations. Because of your generosity the total for the DuBois 6.0 campaign is over $242,043.00.

A Letter from Uni-Pres Kindercottage
Dear Friends,
Happy Holidays. We hope this letter finds you well and taking good care of yourselves. As we continue to maintain high standards of cleanliness and care for our students, we are asking our Friends and supporters to send cleaning supplies as we maintain a healthy environment for our children and families.
We are also asking you to send in financial contributions that you can bless us with to assist families with making tuition payments for the children to attend our center. While we receive some funding from the State of Illinois and of course, generous donations from churches and individuals like you, we are always in need of more.
We thank you for your ministry of caring for our little lambs and so grateful that you pour into their educational journey. We appreciate your help, and speedy replies to give much needed items, such as coats and pajamas. We are still in need of hats, gloves, and socks. Please help us maintain the level of educational standards, by checking our website for educational supplies or you can donate Amazon gift cards so we can purchase items we need to enrich the children’s learning experiences.
We continue to need your support for our children as they thrive in a community that is challenged with economic and equity disparities. We thank you in advance for any ways in which you can be a blessing and we look forward to your continuous support.
Sincerely, Aimee Hart, Executive Director

**Stress-busting for Family Care-Givers** - St. John's Community Care holds sessions every Monday from 10 am - 11:30 am for 9 weeks. Although the current program is underway until Dec 19, the next session will be from Feb 6 - April 10, 2023. The program provides education and support, teaches stress management techniques, and helps care-givers develop coping strategies. Call 618-344-5008 for more information.

**The Savvy Caregiver Series** - Are you noticing memory loss, confusion or unexpected behavior in your family? St. John's Community Care provides a class for care-givers beginning Jan 19 - Feb 23, 2023, from 10 am - 12 pm every Thursday. Class size is limited so registration is required. Call 618-344-5008.

**Medical Equipment Loan Program** - St. John's Community Care is open to loan equipment and accept equipment returns and donations on Monday - Friday from 9 am - 4:30 pm. Call 618-344-5008 to determine if they have the equipment you need. Email info@stjohnscc.org for more information or to reserve equipment.

**Nollau Leadership Institute is Open for the 2023-24 Class** - The Nollau Leadership Institute is CHHSM's signature program with more than 250 attendees in its 20+ years. Enrollment is now open and the short online application can be found here. Grounded in the health and human service organizations of the United Church of Christ, this program offers a unique space in which to experience leadership formation. Each year, Nollau brings together a community of leaders committed to creating a just, caring, and compassionate world. Such values deepen during the program, as participants grow in their leadership skills from a place of belonging. Cultivating this connection between others, the world, and within themselves is the heart of the Nollau experience. Through retreats, online interactions, and peer mentoring, this program supports leadership formation through a variety of learning modalities and within a community of practice. The use of rituals, art, poetry, embodiment, and time to simply be in nature are all part of the program—alongside the interactive didactic sessions. Guided by CHHSM's commitment to issues of Race, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice, leadership will be examined and practiced through the lenses of anti-oppression and social justice. You can learn more about the curriculum here.
Faith and Poverty: A Biblical Response
Facilitator: Lindsey Lester-Brutscher
8 Consecutive Mondays Starting January 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
This program (offered via zoom) explores God’s call to respond to poverty in our local communities.
Participants explore these two questions:
1. What tools does my faith have to offer regarding huge questions around poverty and injustice?
2. In light of poverty and other forms of human suffering, what is the Good News of the Gospel? Click here to register.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference

From UCC General Council - Proving Your Church’s Tax-Exempt Status, and Your Church’s EIN: What Local Churches Need to Know. Do you know about the United Church of Christ’s group exemption for 501(c)(3) status? Do you need to prove that your Local Church is tax-exempt? Do you know the difference between “nonprofit,” “tax-exempt,” and “501(c)(3)?” These terms, while often used interchangeably, have distinct meanings under the law, and come with different legal obligations. This post explains how these terms apply to your Local Church, how to prove your church’s tax-exempt status, and the importance of maintaining your church’s federal Employer Identification Number, or EIN. Read more…

Getting Started with Messy Church - On Jan 21, 2023, the first Training Event for Messy Church will be presented at Waterloo St. Paul UCC from 9 am to 3 pm (lunch is included). Click here for registration, pricing, & further Information. Click here for a flyer.

Region 5 - Celtica Christmas: FaceBook Link - On Thursday, Dec 15 at 7 pm Troy Friedens UCC is hosting a Christmas with Celtica Concert! Everyone is invited to join us for Celtica, cake, coffee & cocoa! You will hear beautiful music and taste delicious sweets. It is open to the public and free to all.

Region 9 - Smithton St. John's UCC will present A Classical Christmas Concert on Dec 17 at 7 pm at the church. Ring in the season with a festive holiday concert featuring Jordan Provest on organ and piano, Dawn Striker on oboe, and Dr. Phil Willhelm on harp and keyboards. The concert is free. A free-will offering will be taken during the concert. A dessert reception will follow the concert.

Belleville Trinity UCC will present a Christmas Cantata on Dec 18 at 9:30 am with a performance by Joyful Singers and Joyful Ringers. All are welcome to attend.

Christmas Morning Church Service - If your local church does not have a Christmas Day service, Belleville Trinity UCC invites you to its worship service Christmas, Dec 25, at 9:30 am.

Belleville St. Paul UCC will hold its Crafty Mania on Sat, Jan 21, 2023, from 9 am - 4 pm. Ticket includes all day crafting, lunch, snacks, crafting space, attendance prizes, and vendors in the afternoon. Tickets for raffle items will be available for purchase. Cost for the
day is $35. Register online (addition $3.77) or send the form here. Registration with payment deadline is Jan 7.

**Job Opportunities - Granite City St. John UCC is seeking a passionate, part-time Director of Music**

able to consistently provide a holy experience for our congregation and to reach new people through live music at worship services. The Director of Music will develop and lead the music ministries of our church year-round, providing live music throughout the year along with direction for our choir. The new director must have high proficiency in playing organ and piano. To support you, both our state-of-the-art Allen Bravura digital organ and our grand piano are recently installed in the sanctuary, along with a new top-of-the-line sound system. Our worship services are made more vibrant and motivational through music, and we rely on our Director of Music to lead the way. This part-time position will entail an average of 10-12 hours per week, with the inclusion of Sunday morning worship, Wednesday evening rehearsals, and occasional special services, funerals and weddings. The position’s salary will be commensurate with the individual’s past work experience. In Christ we live, celebrate and serve. Our church’s mission statement embodies who we are: Empowered by the Holy Spirit, living our faith in Jesus Christ, and celebrating the promises of God, we welcome all to unite in loving and serving God. We hope you are called to be part of our historic church. Candidates may apply by submitting a resume and references to stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com.

**Friedens UCC in Marissa seeks part-time organist and/or pianist.** Duties include playing organ and/or piano on Sundays for our 10am worship services as well as Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, mid-week Lenten services, and our Pre-Lenten breakfast. Position includes 4 paid Sundays off (except for Easter) for vacation time. Services normally consist of a prelude, 2-3 hymns, some short, sung responses, and a postlude. To apply or for more information please contact Rev. Brett Palmer at marissafriedens@gmail.com or call the church office 618-295-2004.

**Troy Friedens UCC is looking for a Nursery Attendant.** If interested, call 618-667-6535 or email friedens@friedensucc-troy.org.

**St John UCC in Fairview Heights seeks a part time Church Secretary.** Duties include answering the phone, process and distribute email and regular mail and ordering supplies as needed. Preparing the Sunday bulletin, the annual meeting reports, newsletter, coordinate the church calendar, keep Member contribution files updated in Church Windows and providing support to the Pastor and other ministries of the Church. A full job description will be provided at the interview. 9-12 hours weekly and should be familiar with Word and Excel. Contact the Church office at 618-660-8894 or email stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com.

**Music Ministry Director at Evangelical UCC in Highland,** this position will promote leadership in developing and implementing the music ministries of the Church, and actively engage the congregation in worship through music. The Director serves as a resource to support, foster and coordinate the worship life of the congregation through congregational, choral, and special music. This is a part time position, averaging 15 hours per week. Scheduling is flexible and offers competitive compensation. Candidates can apply by sending their resume to office@evucc.org. Click here for details.
Pinckneyville St. Paul UCC is in search for a Part-time Music Leader. 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 Wick's two-manual pipe organ with pedals and piano. Good vocal skills are a plus but not required. The church does not have a choir but occasionally has special instrumentalists and vocalists. Church services are currently 10 am - 11 am on Sundays. Special services include Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and two Easter services. Contact the church secretary at 618-357-8075.

CONTACT US - YOUR OCWM MONIES AT WORK
Please call (618-654-2125) before coming to the Conference Office or make an appointment with a staff member using the emails below.
For the work of Conference teams and committees or 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 program information, contact Rylee Bernhardt at 618-787-2202 or program@DuBoisCenter.org.
For DuBois Center registration for upcoming events and camp sessions or ISC program registrations, contact Julie Riechmann at 618-357-1809 or jriechmann@iscucc.org.
The ISC Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson, will be on a short limited medical leave after surgery on December 9 to the end of the year. Please get in touch with her via email sjohnson@iscucc.org or text 618-882-8247 if you have a question or an emergency.

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.