



Wow! Years ago, I served a church with a daycare and a preschool. Each week I had the privilege of reading a story to the four- and five-year-olds.

On the week of Easter, I read them the Easter story. And one little boy in the group had not heard the Gospel narrative. He was rapt with attention, and he kept leaning in closer and closer as I continued to read.

I had chosen what I thought was a child-friendly version of the Easter story, but it illustrated the crown of thorns, which was placed on Jesus' head and Jesus on the cross.

As I saw this little boy's eyes flooding with tears, I wanted to stop and say, "Oh, don't cry. It all works out in the end."

But I knew he needed to hear the rest of the story and experience the Good News for himself. When I finished reading, the little boy spoke up.

In a somber and surprised tone, he said, "Wow. I didn't see that coming."

When it comes to the resurrection story, we know the end of the story, and we take the ending for granted. We know death does not have the final say, and the stone cannot entomb the power of the Risen Christ. We know that if God was able to raise Jesus from the dead, nothing is impossible for the One who is the author and creator of our lives.

But we do not know the endings of our stories, and we don't always know that things will work out. And like those walking on the road to Emmaus, we do not often recognize Christ even when he is in our midst.

Yet, as an Easter people, may we know and remember that the power of God can still transform our lives in surprising ways. Whatever you are dealing with now, remember that your story is still unfolding. God is not finished yet. God is still walking alongside you. And I imagine that as you experience

Prayer list for April 23-29, 2023 Church & Pastors

-Smithton St. John's UCC (right)



-Saint Jacob UCC, Rev. Philip (Kate) Barbier (left)

Retired Pastor

-Rev. Wesley and Doris Bornemann. St. Louis, MO

People with Life Concerns

-Please pray for **Marilyn Paul** who is dealing with health issues. Marilyn is the widow of the Rev. Dr. H. J. "Jack" Paul, who served at St. Paul UCC in Edwardsville, St. John UCC in Fairview Heights, and the Well UCC in Glen Carbon, and mother of Rev. Tim (Rev. Janet) Darmour-Paul, who serves as pastor at Grantfork UCC. Cards may be sent to Marilyn at 200 S. Station Rd #9330, Glen Carbon, IL 62034.

-Keep **Kevin (Rev. Nancy Spier-Lee) Lee** in your prayers as he deals with illness at Barnes Hospital. Rev. Spier-Lee served as pastor at Waterloo Zion UCC St. Joe until she retired in 2018. Cards may be sent to 309 Kroeger Ave, Dupou, IL 62239.

-Pray for **Rev. Karla (Rev. Charles Preston) Frost**, Pastor

the hope and grace of our Lord, you too will be able to proclaim, "Wow, I didn't see that coming."
Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson,
ISC Conference Minister

Closing Service –Centralia St. Peter United Church of Christ (1863-2023) will hold its closing service on May 7, 2023.

The closing service will celebrate St. Peter UCC's 160 years of service, missions, and dedication to God by sharing tears, laughter, memories, and the acknowledgement of new legacies going forward in the Centralia community and beyond. You are invited to join them at 2 pm on May 7, 2023, at 316 West Third St., Centralia, Illinois, for this closing service.



Earth Day Summit - April 22, 2023

"What's Possible: Earth Day Stories of Hope

In the faces of environmental crises that can make one feel helpless, there is a particular power in stories that show another way is possible. For this reason, the theme for the first ever UCC Earth Day Summit is "What's Possible? Earth Day Stories of Hope." During this two-and-a-half-hour event on Saturday, April 22 at 10 am CDT, stories will be shared in a variety of formats. As a longtime, trailblazing climate leader, [the Rev. Jim Antal](#) will deliver a keynote address. A panel of grassroots organizers will share their success stories. The Dollie Burwell Prophetic Action Award will showcase the stories of those who have embodied prophetic ministry at its best. A new video will present the uplifting story of Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis. Finally, we will celebrate the Climate Justice Fellows, Creation Justice Churches, and green teams across the country that have been making a difference this past year. There is no cost, but you must register. Register [here](#).

This event is cohosted by the National Setting of the United Church of Christ, the United Church of Christ's Council for Climate Justice, Mayflower United Church of Christ, and the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Mayflower United Church of Christ invites attendees of the Summit to also join them later in the day for a Readers' Theatre presentation entitled "*Stories of*

& Teacher for Granite City St. John UCC, as she recovers from surgery. Cards may be sent to her at 2901 A Nameoki Rd, Granite City, IL 62040.

-Pray for the family of **Pastor Dennis Gilbert** as they mourn his death on April 13, 2023. Dennis served as a licensed pastor for Evansville St. John UCC from 2010 - 2015 and as pulpit supply throughout the Conference until 2017. He also served on various ISC teams. No service is planned at this time. Memorial donations can be made to Poverty Law Center, ACLU or the United Church of Christ Benevolent Fund. Cards of condolence can be sent to his wife, Claudette Gilbert, 268 N Main St, Waterloo, IL 62298.

-Keep **Rev. Bob (Doris) Utke** in your prayers as he deals with health issues which have caused a hospital stay. Rev. Utke was the pastor at Stone Church St. Peter's UCC prior to retiring. Cards may be sent to him at Rev. Robert Utke, 1840 University Ave W, Apt. 305, St. Paul MN 55104.

-Please pray for **Rev. P. Jerry Bennett** as he recovers from surgery. Rev. Bennett is the Pastor and Teacher at Hookdale St. Peter's UCC. Cards may be sent to him at PO Box 39, Highland, IL 62249.

-Keep the **mother of Pastor Norma Patterson** in your prayers as she struggles with health issues. Pastor Norma Patterson is the Pastor and Teacher for East St. Louis Good Shepherd of Faith and has served on several teams for ISC. Cards may be sent to Norma at 5310 DePaul Drive, PO Box 4235, Fairview Heights, IL 62008.

Hope from the Front Lines!" From 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm CDT, one can watch via this YouTube [livestream link](#).

Mental Health First Aid Certification

On July 15 from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Belleville Trinity UCC will host a Mental Health First Aid Certification class for the first fifteen people who register for the class. The cost of the program is \$75 per person which covers the cost of the books, supplies, and certification. Please send an email to Pastor Tim Powers-Reed at illinitchr@gmail.com to register. By June 25, payment must be completed by a check payable to Trinity UCC Belleville. The certification class is offered as part of Trinity's WISE covenant, and they hope that members of the Conference will take advantage of this opportunity!

-Please pray for **Rev. Ken (Jean) Knobloch** as he recovers from surgery. Rev. Knobloch served Irvington Friedens UCC and Red Bud St. Peter UCC before retiring, as well as serving on several ISC teams/committees. Cards can be sent to 1518 Mill St, PO Box 76, Maeystown, IL 62256.

-Please hold **Rev. Jim & Lelynna Langdoc** in your prayers as Lelynna improves with her battle with memory loss. Good news...Jim reported that he is still in remission. Cards can be sent to them at 16640 Cagan Orchard #122, Clermont, FL 34714.

Facing Hunger in Your Community - The Hunger Action Team of the ISC asks you to share the ways (and photos) of how you are helping to address hunger in your communities. Summer is coming soon; students who qualify for free school breakfast/ lunch will not have access to their free meals during summer break. Please share how your church is helping combat hunger for local families in need. Reminder: Children need the proper nutrition for their learning, development, and growth.

From the ISC Justice and Mission Committee: General Synod Service Project: Feminine Hygiene Kits. The UCC and Church World Service hope to collect and assemble 1,000 feminine hygiene kits at General Synod. Attendees are invited to bring assembled kits or hygiene items to donate to this project. Please support this service project at General Synod in Indianapolis on June 30-July 4. Providing hygiene kits is an easy way to help others. Be a blessing to individuals who lack access to necessary feminine care supplies. Shopping list and assembly instructions [here](#).

National Volunteer Week

Hoyleton Youth and Family Services is celebrating their volunteers this week during National Volunteer Week. They have several churches, individuals and youth groups that support their mission throughout the year and are thankful to each. On behalf of Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, they thank you for your willingness to serve their organization. Thanks to your efforts and generosity, Hoyleton continues to meet the needs of your community by providing an array of multiple services. Your support of Hoyleton allows them to fulfill their mission of serving youth and families within our communities each year. They love their volunteers!

† DuBois Center News

The second "Meet and Greet" for Noah and Rylee will happen on Sunday, April 23 from 3 pm to 5 pm at DuBois Center. It



will be more spring-like weather for this opportunity. You may meet Noah for DuBois Center, enjoy the more spring-like weather, AND tour the facility. There have been so many improvements to the space through your generosity in donations to DuBois 6.0. This is your chance to see the space and its caretakers. We hope to see you at DuBois.



Join us for our spring **Camp Cleanup Day on Saturday, April 29th!** There will be tasks for all ages and abilities AND lunch will be provided. Click [here](#) to fill out the volunteer form.



Call of the Wild

(Musings from the DuBois Herd)

Join the new monthly DuBois Center Newsletter to stay up to date on the latest DuBois Center news, events, and musings. Different than the Weekly Connection, the DuBois Center Newsletter will include a message from the Director, upcoming schedule, news

about DuBois 6.0 projects, and sneak peaks for the summer camp season. [Click here to subscribe now!](#)



CHHSM News

Council for Health and Human Service Ministries

Hoyleton Youth & Family Services has multiple employment opportunities available. To see the list, click [here](#).



Stress-busting for Family Care-Givers-St. John's Community Care holds sessions every Monday from 10 am - 11:30 am for 9 weeks. The next session will be from May 1- July 3, 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.

Dining Out for St. John's Community Care-On Thurs, April 20, you may take your pick of participating restaurants to help with raising funds for St. John's Community Care. Restaurants include: Mungo's Italian Eatery in Collinsville; Sloan's Pub in Collinsville; Old Herald Brewery & Distillery in Collinsville; or El Maguey's in Edwardsville. Join the SJCC community after dinner for drinks, desserts, raffles, and socializing at Sloans Pub. Proceeds will benefit programs at St. John's Community Care. When you go, let them know you're there for Dining Out for St. John's. For more information, contact 618-344-5008.



Swords into Plowshares-The Ecumenical Days 2023 will hold a virtual conference on Tuesday, April 25-27 beginning at 9 am CST to worship, educate, and advocate for the innovative and courageous policies needed to

realize the prophet Micah's vision: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." All worship, plenaries, and workshops will be recorded for later viewing.

Young Adults, 2023 Leadership Immersion Opportunities

UCC has new leadership immersion opportunities for young adults in 2023. Click [here](#) for a list.

2023 Volunteer Work Trips

UCC Ministry Opportunities has work trips available. Check it out [here](#).

Surviving Caregiving Conference: Practical Strategies for Family Caregivers, scheduled on April 22 in Faith Hall of St. John's UCC in Collinsville, is an opportunity for caregivers to gather for more ways to reduce the stress of caregiving. Featuring: Heidi Dodd: Legal Information for Caregivers; Jill Cigliana: Communicating with People with Dementia; and Chris Fulton: How to Choose Housing Options. Complimentary breakfast and lunch vouchers are provided for all attendees. It is free to attend, but you must register at 618-222-2561. Sponsored by **St. John's Community Care**, AgeSmart, and Hospice of Southern Illinois, Inc.

Hoyleton Youth & Family Services Fundraiser-Marine UCC will host a Trivia Night on April 29 beginning at 7 pm.(Doors open at 6:30 pm.) Prizes will be given to the 1st and 2nd place teams. Door prizes. Proceeds go to **Hoyleton Youth & Family Services** to support their mission in our communities. Cost is \$12 per person with up to 8 people to a table. To register, call 618-887-4465. If after hours, leave your name and number of people attending.

Hike, Bike & Run for Hoyleton Youth & Family Services - You may choose between **5K & Half-Marathon OR 5 Mile Hike/Bike on May 13**. The 5K & Half-Marathon begins at 8:30 am and the 5 Mile Hike/Bike goes from 9 am - 11 am. Both courses begin and end at Maeystown St. John UCC. T-shirt & mile-marker sponsorships are available. For more information or to register, click [here](#). 5K \$35; 5 Mile Hike/Bike \$30; 1/2 Marathon \$60; T-shirt only \$20. Event is sponsored by Maeystown St. John UCC and Zion UCC, St. Joe. Proceeds benefit Hoyleton Youth & Family Services.

Caregiver Coffee Talk, sponsored by **St. John's Community Care** is scheduled every Monday from 9 am - 10:30 pm at Verona Coffee Company in Collinsville. Caregiver specialist, Keanna Gibson, will help caregivers come together offering information, resources, and strategies specifically for caring for someone who may be disabled or have other health-related concerns. Share space and life experiences over a nice hot cup of coffee provided by St. John's Community Care.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference



Imagine being in the perfect place for an astronomical wonder.....again!

**SAVE THE DATE - April 8, 2024
GREAT NORTH AMERICAN ECLIPSE**

2023 Hunger and Health Illinois Regional Conference! - Registration is **NOW OPEN**

University of Illinois Extension and SNAP Education staff are excited to announce the second Hunger and Health Illinois Conference held on May 5, at the Salvation Army in Springfield, IL from 10 am - 3 pm. Informational booths will provide opportunities for attendees to learn about SNAP-Ed resources, food pantry set-up, [Find Food IL](#) food locator map, and more. Participants will also select two breakout sessions to attend during the workshop. Topics include the Healthy Donation Initiatives, Find Food Funds, Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP), and Trauma and Food. The conference will conclude with a keynote speaker and will have awards presentations for Illinois food pantry champions in these categories: Exceptional Food Pantry Manager, Healthy Pantry Innovations, Outstanding Health Equity Leader, and Volunteer of the Year. The cost for the event is \$10 per person and a noon meal will be provided. Fee waivers are available. For questions regarding the conference, contact Louise Hyneman at lhyneman@illinois.edu. Register [here](#).

Vacation Bible School Schedule

May 30 - June 2; Waterloo St. Paul UCC; *Cokesbury Hero Hotline*.

June 5-7 from 6 pm - 8 pm; June 8 from 6 pm - 7 pm; Trenton St. John UCC with co-host First United Methodist Church; *Food Truck Party-On a Roll with God*.

June 5-9; Okawville St. Peter's UCC; *Hero Hotline*.

June 5-9 from 9 am - 12 pm; Highland Evangelical UCC; *Stellar: Shine Jesus' Light*.

June 12-15; Dupo Christ UCC; *Hero Hotline*.

June 12-15; Central City Zion UCC & Centralia St. Peter UCC (in covenant with Redeemer Lutheran Church, First Christian, Presbyterian Church, and First Methodist Church) at First Methodist Church in Centralia; *Hero Hotline*.

June 13, 14, 15 from 5:30 pm - 8 pm; Plum Hill St. John UCC with co-host Nashville St. Paul UCC; *Dinosaurs*.

June 19-23 from 8:45 am - 12 pm; Mascoutah St. John UCC; *Stellar: Shine Jesus' Light*.

June 19-22 from 6 pm - 8 pm; Belleville St. Paul UCC & Belleville Trinity UCC (held at St. Paul UCC); *Hero Hotline*.

June 25-29; Granite City St. John UCC; *Food Truck Party-On a Roll with God*.

July 10-14 from 9 am - 12 pm; Collinsville St. John UCC; Cost is \$15/person; *Hero Hotline*.

July 10-14; Red Bud St. Peter UCC; *Hero Hotline*.

July 24-28 from 9 am - 11 am; New Baden Zion UCC; *Food Truck Party-On a Roll with God*.

August 6, 13, 20, 27, and September 3 at 9:15 am; Alhambra Salem UCC; *Food Truck Party-On a Roll with God*.

Boundary Awareness Training - For those pastors who are due for **Boundary Training** this year, the next session for both active and retired will be **on Tuesday, May 16 from 8:30 am - Noon**. Contact Debbie at dkesner@iscucc.org to register and get the zoom meeting info. Cost: \$20 for retired pastors, \$25 for active pastors, \$25 for non-ISC retired pastors, and \$30 for non-ISC active pastors.

Region 2 - Dupo Christ UCC will hold its Wurstmarkt on Sat, May 20 from 11 am to 3 pm while supplies last. Menu is pork sausage, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, corn, applesauce, and cake. Carry-out or dine-in. Outdoor seating available. Adults \$13 per plate; Children 5 - 11 years \$6 per plate.

New Hanover Zoar UCC will hold its 12th Annual Car-diac Car Cruise & Health Fair on Sat, April 22 from 9 am - 2 pm at the church to benefit the Zoar UCC's Parish Health Ministry. Free health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and oxygen saturation; Peoples' Choice Awards for the car show; Dash Plaques for the first 50 cars; BBQ and drinks available for purchase; Cake Walk; 50/50 Drawing; Kids' games; Attendance prizes. Rain date: Saturday, May 6. Donation of \$15 per entry.

Region 3 - On April 29th, St. John UCC in Granite City will host a FREE concert of Contemporary Christian music featuring the band "Unbroken." The concert will start at 6 pm and will be preceded by a casual dinner at 4:30 pm. The cost for the dinner is \$15.00; reservations are required and need to be made through the church office (618-877-6060) no later than Monday, April 24. Payment is required at the time the reservation is made. You do NOT need to attend the dinner in order to attend the concert. Both the dinner and concert will be held at Granite City St. John UCC. Contact 618-877-6060 or stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com.

Region 4 - "All You Can Eat!" Spaghetti Supper will be held at Wood River St. John UCC on Thurs, May 4 from 4 pm – 7 pm. Menu includes spaghetti, salad, Italian bread, dessert, and drink. Adults \$12; Children 6 – 12 yrs \$6; Children under 5 yrs Free (dine in only). Carry-outs available. Handicap accessible. Cash, checks or credit cards.

Region 5 - Troy Friedens UCC will host its Coffee & Dessert Speaker Series on the Third Thursday of the Month at 7:00 pm. Speakers scheduled are:
April 20 "Lessons from the Master Gardeners" Speakers: Bob and Judy Smejkal
May 18 "The 60s Chicks Show Choir"

Job Opportunities - Looking for a Part-time job? Retired? Looking for some way to use your skills 9-12 hours a week and get paid for it? Perhaps you're a college student needing a flexible job to help finance gas in your car or pizza in your tummy? St John UCC in Fairview Heights seeks a part time Church Secretary. Preferably, someone who is familiar with the life of a church. Must be comfortable using a computer and familiar with Word and Excel. A full job description will be provided at the interview. 9 -12 hours weekly depending on the needs of the church. Contact the Church office 618-397-6323 (leave a message) or pastor at 618-660-8894 or email stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com.

St. John United Church of Christ in Granite City, Illinois 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. Our Director of Music/Musician will provide live music throughout the year along with potentially offering leadership for our choir. Our new director must have proficiency in playing piano and/or organ. To support you, both our state-of-the-art Allen Bravura digital organ and our grand piano were 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 include Sunday morning worship, occasional special services, and potential rehearsals with our choir. This position's expected gross salary range is \$12,000-\$15,000. 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.

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. Their music skills include the ability to play a Wicks 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 Executive Director, contact Noah McCarn at director@DuBoisCenter.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.

For **Rev. Shana Johnson**, ISC Conference Minister, contact her at sjohnson@iscucc.org or 618-882-8247.

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.

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[Eden Theological Seminary](#) [Emmaus Homes](#) [Hitz Memorial Home](#)

[Hoyleton Youth & Family](#) [LIFE Program](#) [Unleashing Potential](#)

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