

February 20, 2024



Our Conference Minister Reflects on Discovering God's Blessings



A Lenten Spiritual Practice of Fasting and Feasting to Become More Like Christ

During the season of Lent, giving up something or adding something to our lives is seeking to become more like Christ. Imagine if we were to do both. Imagine if we chose to fast from the things that become barriers to loving others as Christ did and decided instead to feast on the things that would allow us to embody Christ's love and compassion toward others fully.

So, in this Lenten season, I invite you to...

Fast from complaining and feast on gratitude.

Fast from impatience and feast on serenity.

Fast from bitterness and feast on kindness.

Fast from rudeness and feast on civility.

Fast from anger and feast on composure.

Fast from worry and feast on wonder.

Fast from judgment and feast on acceptance.

Fast from apathy and feast on curiosity.

Fast from hard-heartedness and feast on compassion.

Fast from the things of this world and feast on the eternal things of Christ.

If we do, we will discover the life and blessings God imagines for us.

-Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister



Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



**-Addieville Zion
UCC Rev.
William
Groennert**



**UCC Rev.Jeremy Wood
& Pastor John Mindrup**

**-Retired Pastor
Rev. Michael
Krewson, Edwardsville,
IL**

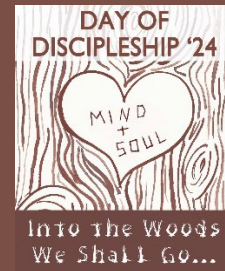
**-
Alhambra
Salem**

**-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.

Illinois South Conference News & Events

Day of Discipleship

Join us at Illinois South Conference's own DuBois Center for the Day of Discipleship event entitled *"Into the Woods We Shall Go...to care for our minds and nourish our souls"* to be held on Saturday, March 9th, 2024, from 9:00am to 12:15pm with optional Friday evening Self-Care Retreat.



[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR DAY OF DISCIPLESHIP](#)



THERE'S STILL TIME TO FILL OUT YOUR YEARBOOK INFO!

The deadline for the national level of the UCC yearbook is fast approaching. The website for **online reporting will close on March 6, 2024 at 11pm**. If you have already done the online reporting for your church –

Thank you! If you haven't there is still time to get that reporting done. Thank you! If you have question regarding the reporting, please email dkesner@iscucc.org.

YOUTH JOY RALLY SERIES

The Joy Rally Sunday program is specifically designed to support youth and their families in their faith journey. Through engaging activities and lessons drawn from the Illustrated Ministry curriculum, we aim to provide a nurturing environment where young minds can explore, learn, and deepen their connection with God.

We cordially invite the youth groups of your congregation to join us for this meaningful initiative. Our program will be divided into two sessions: First through fifth graders will meet from 2 to 3 pm, followed by 6th through high school from 4 to 5:30 pm, every fourth Sunday of the month. Our kickoff date is scheduled for February 25th.

We believe that by working together, we can create a supportive network where our youth can thrive spiritually and socially. Your partnership in promoting this initiative among your congregation would be greatly appreciated. Contact St Paul UCC for more information (618)233-3303.



👉 Freewill Offerings for The UCC ONA Coalition & AllianceQ will be taken all day! 👈



*A Hybrid
Event at
Parkway
United Church
of Christ*

Gateway Open & Affirming Convocation

*Saturday
March
2, 2024
9am - 3 pm*

ONA: NOW. MORE THAN EVER



Please bring a canned food item for Doorways

JOIN US AT THE GATEWAY ONA CONVOCATION SATURDAY, MARCH 2nd

Our own Rev. Tim Powers-Reed and Rev. Michelle Torigian will be presenting a workshop on "Harmony in Diversity: Crafting Inclusive Worship. Click on the image below to learn more and to register.

GATEWAY ONA
CONVOCATION



INFO +
REGISTRATION

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS BY THE MINISTERIAL, EXCELLENCE, SUPPORT, AND AUTHORIZATION (MESA) MINISTRY TEAM OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

To register, please click the highlighted title of the event. Also, please note these offerings are in the Eastern Time Zone, not the Central Time Zone, so you will need to make this adjustment on your calendar when registering and participating in an event. These courses are approved by our COM.

--[Monday, March 4, 1:30 – 4:30pm ET, Retired Minister Boundary Training with Rev. Tara Barber](#)

--[Wednesday, March 13, 4:00 – 5:30pm ET The Interim Time: What Do We Do? with the Rev. Jeff Nelson](#)

THE IN-PERSON
ECCLESIASTICAL
COUNCIL OF
JOSIAH ACCOLA



ALL UCC-authorized pastors and delegates from each ISC congregation, please mark your calendars and plan to attend **THE IN-PERSON ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL of Josiah Accola on Sunday, March 17 at 3 pm** at Salem United Church of Christ, 1117 W. North Street, Alhambra, Illinois 62001



April 23rd-24th, 2024

ISC MINISTRY LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Ready to **Open Your
Eyes?**

All current and retired pastors and lay ministry leaders are invited to participate in the retreat to be held at Toddhall Retreat Center* on Tuesday, April 23rd (noon) through Wednesday, April 24th (noon).

[CLICK HERE FOR RETREAT INFO AND REGISTRATION FORM](#)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE FOR RETREAT](#)

Show the Pastors of the Illinois South Conference Some LOVE.

Our Local Church Ministries Team is hoping you will be able to help them again this year by donating ~40 items for the Pastors' Retreat Goody Bags. (Request is not intended for retreatants.) Examples are homemade treats or crafts, pens, journals, handwritten thank you notes or \$ to help purchase items. Bring/send items to either St Paul UCC, Columbia or the ISC Office by April 8th. Alternatively, you can bring items to the [Day of Discipleship](#) on March 9th. Click [here](#) for info or reach out to Denise Johnson at christianed@stpaulcolumbia.org. Thank you in advance!!

Project Angel Gowns: Crafting Comfort for Precious Lives

What is Project Angel Gowns?

Project Angel Gowns is a ministry dedicated to bringing comfort to families with infants in the Rankin Jordan Pediatric Hospital *Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)*. We are seeking talented and compassionate volunteer tailors to join us on this meaningful journey. Our vision is to repurpose wedding gowns into beautiful christening gowns for the little warriors in the

NICU, offering solace and a tangible keepsake to families during challenging times.

Why does this matter?

The NICU journey is an emotional rollercoaster for many families. Project Angel Gowns aims to provide a ray of hope, creating gowns filled with love and memories. Whether these infants grow up to lead remarkable lives or their time is brief, we strive to offer families a cherished memento to hold onto.

How can you get involved?

If you possess the skills of a talented tailor or know someone who does, we invite you to join us in making a difference. Your expertise can bring comfort to families when they need it most. Additionally, if you have a wedding gown that is gathering dust but still holds sentimental value, consider donating it to our cause.

For further details and to express your interest in joining Project Angel Gowns, please reach out to Rev. Tim Powers-Reed at 636-248-6468 or via email at trinityuccpastor@gmail.com.

Heartland Community Chorus in Concert

The Heartland Community Chorus, based in Highland, will be in concert at St. Paul UCC, Lebanon IL, on Saturday, March 23 at 7:00 pm. The theme of this concert is "Music of the Heart", a musical exploration of the heart's deepest emotions. The chorus, now in their 11th Concert Season, has singers that come from Breese, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Highland, Marine, Maryville, Mascoutah, Pocahontas, St. Jacob, St. Rose, Trenton, and Troy, IL. A number of singers are from the UCC faith family. The chorus performs three sets of concerts yearly. Tickets are available in advance or at the door on concert day. Visit the group website: <https://heartlandcommunitychorus.org> for more information. Please come & support this local group and enjoy some beautiful music.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CONGREGATION TO SUBSCRIBE TO WEEKLY CONNECTION

Would you please consider adding a short announcement in your bulletin and/or newsletter to increase UCC engagement and education?

Such as...

"Did you know you can receive the Illinois South Conference UCC Newsletter, *WEEKLY CONNECTION*, in your email inbox? You will experience UCC news and events on a church, conference, national and world level. It only takes a couple of minutes. Go to <https://iscucc.org/weekly-connection-registration/> to sign up."

SETTING INTENTIONS TOGETHER

" **February is Black History Month.** Over the course of these 28/29 days, it is my annual practice to intentionally learn something new, expand my knowledge base regarding my ancestors, including, but not solely focused upon, America's darkest chapter, it's original sin: chattel slavery and the long history of racial injustice. **Origin is not a revolutionary movie**, and still it (and the book which inspired it) offers a lens through which people of all ethnicities can come together and intentionally begin to deconstruct the toxic issue of "race hatred" in America. Is it possible that people who see **Origin** become open to the possibility that America has a caste system of its own that continues to go unexamined and unchecked? Will they join in a cause to dismantle it? Can anyone see that it hides in plain sight? **During my years of employment at the United Church of Christ's (UCC) denominational headquarters**, multiple resources have been developed to assist congregations find an entry point into often uncomfortable conversations regarding race, racism, and reconciliation from biblical, theological, anthropological, and sociological frameworks. Join the Movement toward racial justice (JTM) is a UCC campaign designed to grow our capacity as human beings for interdependence and to nurture connections that value difference and promote equity for all through a faith lens. **To conclude, I encourage you to visit the JTM homepage** to learn more about this groundbreaking initiative. Furthermore, I urge you to see **Origin** or read the book. At a minimum, it may change your perspective. Lastly, I invite you to join me and set an annual intention to learn more Black history, no matter your ethnic heritage.

" **Black History is American History.**

Click HERE to read the entire article

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bentley deBardelaben-Phillips is Executive Associate and Team Leader of the Education for Faithful Action Plus (EFA+) Team in Love of Church unit for the United Church of Christ.

*****SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2024 REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT*****

Thursday, July 17 through Friday, July 19

Augustana College, Rockford, Illinois

The Many (who were our keynote musicians at our 2022 ISC Annual Meeting) will be the music and worship leaders for the event. To keep the registration fee for each participant minimal, the Conferences and the National setting of the UCC will offset much of the event's costs.

REGISTRATION WILL OPEN AT THE END OF FEBRUARY (more information to come)

-Early Bird Cost: through March 15, is \$200

-Regular Registration Cost: March 16 to May 15: \$250

-Late Registration Cost: May 16 to June 15: \$300

Please note registration will close on June 15.



The ISC Hunger Action Team would like to recognize:

St. John, Maeystown's "Backpack Project" that works with other churches and community organizations to collect food donations and fill backpacks so that children have enough to eat every weekend and holiday break. Families in need reside in Waterloo, Valmeyer, Red Bud, and Prairie Du Rocher. Students who qualified for free school breakfast/lunch will not have access to their free meals on weekends or while on spring break. Reminder: children need proper nutrition for their learning, development, and growth. **The program currently feeds over 120 children 52 weeks a year!** Thanks, St. John, for supporting this much needed mission project - under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Rev. Patrick Poole - such a blessing!

[Click here and share your food insecurity outreach stories with the ISC HUNGER ACTION TEAM!](#)

News from DuBois Center



Does spending your summer at DuBois Center sound like a dream come true? Then, consider applying as a cabin counselor for our 2024 Summer Camps. You can share the camp spirit with a cabin full of kiddos while creating amazing camp memories. Required training begins May 26th. For more information--> duboiscenter.org/employment/summer-camp-staff

Father/Son Retreat Registration is Open

Help us in spreading the word to all the "Dads" and their "Sons". Click on the image below to learn more and register today!



Spring Retreats

AT DUBOIS CENTER

Father-Son Retreat: March 15-17

Mother-Daughter Retreat: March 22-24

Adult Horse Retreat: April 6-7

Women's Retreat: April 26-28

Youth Horse Retreat: April 27-28

For more information visit
duboiscenter.org/retreats/dbc-retreats



**Register for a DuBois
Spring Retreat**

**BE A SPRING EVENT
VOLUNTEER!**

Council for Health and Human Services News

CHHSM 86th Annual Gathering

CHHSM hopes you will join them at the Live by Loews Hotel in St. Louis for CHHSM's 86th [Annual Gathering](#) March 12-14, 2024! The theme of the 86th Annual Gathering is "Collaboration as the Gateway to Innovation." The focus scripture is: "It's better to have a partner than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps" Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (MSG). With collaboration taking center stage, we will explore how working together can spark innovation that changes lives.



Emmaus

EMMAUS HOMES GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Emmaus Golf Tournament is once again set to take place at the scenic Bear Creek Golf Course on April 26th.

This event, now in its fourth year, continues to champion the cause of supporting adults with developmental disabilities. This year we are aiming to surpass \$65,000 to benefit over 200 individuals in the local community. Early bird registration, available until March 15, offers a discounted rate, encouraging teams and individuals to sign up early and secure their spot in what promises to be a memorable event. There are also volunteering opportunities available for those who wish to contribute their time and skills to ensure the success of the event. Click [HERE](#) for more info and to register. Tee it up for a great cause!

Our ISC Churches News & Events



Zion UCC New Baden Fish Fry Friday, February 23rd 4:00pm-6:30pm [414 W. Hanover St, New Baden](#). \$15/dinner includes cod tail, catfish or shrimp, mac & cheese, hush puppies, coleslaw, fries and dessert. Drive-thru only. Accommodating large orders! -Call (618)588-4135 for info.

St Peter UCC Fish Fry-Two days to enjoy! Come on into St Peter UCC-Red Bud, IL **Fri, February 23rd & Fri, March 8th from 4pm-7pm** for indoor dining or enjoy curbside pickup. Menu featuring cod, catfish, shrimp and chicken strips--sides include German and American potato salad, french fries, macaroni & cheese, slaw, stewed tomatoes, baked beans and cucumber salad. Call 618-282-2417 for carry-outs.

Concordia UCC of Millstadt, IL Pancake & Sausage Breakfast Join us for and ALL YOU CAN EAT Pancake and Sausage Breakfast with Buttermilk, Oatmeal and Gluten-Free pancake varieties on **Saturday, February 24th 7am-10am**. Adults- \$9, Ages 5 to12- \$6, Under 5- Free. There will also be Baked Goods for sale! Proceeds go to Youth Programs. Concordia UCC, [7600 State Route 163 \(Corner](#) of 163 and Concordia Rd) Belleville, IL 62223

Irvington /Addieville UCC PUZZLE PARTY Sunday, February 25th 2:00pm-4:00pm at the St Peter's UCC Okawville Educational Building. PARTY LIKE YOU'VE NEVER PARTIED BEFORE to benefit area food pantries! Each team gets the same 500 piece jigsaw puzzle. The 1st team to complete the puzzle is the winner! Also, 50/50 raffle-Heads/Tails game. Max of 12 teams, \$80/team (max of 8 players/team) Call Melinda Albers & reserve a table (618)792-6218.

Chili and Beef Vegetable Soup at St John UCC Trenton, IL St. John UCC, 21 N. Walnut Street, Trenton, IL will have a Drive-Thru Chili & Beef Vegetable Soup Lunch on **Saturday, February 24th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM** (or until chili and soup are gone). Enjoy a delicious, hot soup just \$10 per quart! To access the drive-thru, enter the west side of the alley between the church and the Shell Station.

Zion UCC, New Baden Chicken Dinner on **Saturday, March 2nd 4:00pm-7:00pm**. Dinners are \$15 and include a half a chicken, a variety of sides, and a dessert and can conveniently be picked up in their DRIVE-THRU. For more info contact their office at (618)588-4135.

11th Annual Redneck Trivia Night: Redneck Country Western Style Saturday March 2nd at 5:00pm at St. Mary's Parish Center, Valmeyer. To Reserve a table, email Tammy Netemeyer at skaer68@yahoo.com or call (618)910-3185. Proceeds go to St. John UCC Valmeyer Church and Camp DuBois.

Hamel Immanuel UCC CHICKEN DINNER on **March 10, 2024 11:30am-4:30pm** - [5838 Staunton Rd. Edwardsville, IL](#) (1.5 miles South of Hamel). \$12.00 DRIVE - THRU Carryout only. Menu-Fried Chicken, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, applesauce and coleslaw. Quilt, Smart TV and gift card raffle, too!

Opportunities and Resources

Godfrey Evangelical UCC is in search of a Nursery Worker for Sundays from 9:45 am to 12:00 pm during the months of September thru May; In June, July and August from 9:45 am to 10:00 am. The children needing care are ages infant through 2 or 3 years. Pay rate is \$25 per hour, which will be paid every 2 weeks. Please contact Pam Kasten at pkasten59@gmail.com with questions or to express your interest.

Part Time Organist/Pianist - Friedens United Church of Christ in Marissa, IL is seeking a part-time organist and/or pianist. Duties include playing organ and/or piano on Sundays for our 10 am 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, contact Rev. Brett Palmer at (618)295-2004 or marissafriedens@gmail.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.

Grantfork UCC Seeks Assistant Organist or Pianist to play for their 10:15 am worship service once or twice a month. Prelude, Postlude, and two or three hymns. Please contact Grantfork UCC at (618)675-2595 if interested.

New Baden Zion UCC -Part-time Organist/Pianist/Music Director

Seeking a part time musician to fill several different roles. The person who fills this position will play at weekly services, along with various special services such as Ash Wednesday, weekly Lent services, etc. Additional possible responsibilities include selecting weekly service music and hymns, directing an adult choir, coordinating special vocal and/or instrumental music, and serving on the worship team. Keyboard skills and church choral experience as a singer or director are preferred. To apply or for additional information, contact council president Rodney Washburn at rodneywashburn1@gmail.com.

St. Paul UCC, Lebanon, IL- Part-time Organist

St. Paul UCC Lebanon, IL, is praying that God will bless the search for a part-time organist willing to share their love of music through worship services (two per Sunday morning) including special services, accompanying the choir, & collaborating with Music Ministries. Specific details regarding pay & benefits can be discussed by calling Patty Cornell (618)920-3661. A video can be sent to office@stpaullebanonil.org.

St. John's UCC of Smithton, IL is seeking a part-time Music Director for 10-15 hours per week. The Music Director will select, play and lead music for worship services. They will collaborate with the worship committee and pastor, and also establish opportunities for other music-related activities within the church. St. John's has a new Boston upright piano and new Rogers Imagine 235 Digital Organ, as well as 3 octaves of Suzuki hand chimes and an established chancel choir. Organ and piano experience are required, & vocal experience is preferred. To apply or for additional information, contact the church at sjohnsucc@att.net.

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 **Missy Loyet** at mloyet@iscucc.org.

For DuBois Center Executive Director, contact **Noah McCarn** at director@DuBoisCenter.org.

For DuBois Center registration for upcoming events and camp sessions or ISC program registrations, contact **Julie Riechmann** at jriechmann@iscucc.org or (618)357-1809.

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.

[Illinois South Conference](#) [Back Bay Mission](#) [CHHSM](#)

[Deaconess Foundation](#) [Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#) [DuBois Center](#)

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

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

[Pension Board-UCC](#) [St. John's Community Care](#) [UCC Insurance Board](#)

[Uplands Village](#) [UCC Campus Ministry](#) [Uni-Pres Kindercottage](#)
[UCC Newsletter](#)

