

Illinois
South
Conference



Weekly Connection

Diverse Minds,
Covenant Hearts,
Made One in the Body of Christ

January 23, 2024



Look Full in His Wonderful Face

In the first
chapter of
the Gospel of
Mark, verse
15, we read

Jesus' first word as he begins in public ministry, *"The time has come, the kingdom of God is near."* The Message, a modern translation of the Bible, says, *"The time is fulfilled,"* which is essentially a way of saying, *"Time's up."* Another way of reading this is, *"Quit your waiting; now is the time. The world God designed and desires for humanity can happen now."*

How? How can the world God designed and desires for humanity happen now? The first action Jesus demands of humanity to usher in the kingdom of God is repentance. Now, I realize that when most people hear the word repent, they think confess as if Jesus is demanding that we drop to our knees and recite a laundry list of all our sins. And while confession is good for the soul; confessing, admitting our mistakes, and admitting we have a problem can be the beginning of taking action, yet this is not necessarily what Jesus means.

The Greek word in Mark 1:15, translated into English as repent, is

Prayer list for
Jan 28 – Feb 3, 2024
Church & Pastors
**-Staunton St. Paul
UCC (below)**



**-Stone Church St.
Peter's UCC (above)**

Retired Pastor
-Rev. Jerry Bennett,
Highland, IL

Prayer list for
Feb 4 - 10, 2024
Church & Pastors
**-Summerfield St.
John UCC, Rev. Philip
(Kate) Barbier (below)**



metanoia, which is better translated to mean turn around or change. The first action Jesus asks his disciples then and now to take is to change. We must change our thinking, actions, focus, and lives from this world to the world God desires us to create.

In his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul summarizes Jesus' call to bring forth the kingdom of God. As Paul says in Romans 12:2, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world yet be changed (transformed) by the renewing of your mind."*

The beginning of belief and living out one's faith begins with changing one's focus from worldly values to Godly values. God became flesh in the one we call Emmanuel, God with us, the one we know as Jesus Christ so that we would know what God values through Christ's example.

Feeding the hungry.
Clothing the poor.
Caring for the sick.
Freeing those who are oppressed.
Loving your neighbor.
Loving your enemies.
Loving all people.

And dear friends, we only need to look at the top news stories, Google searches, Facebook shares, Instagram follows, YouTube, and TikTok video downloads to realize the algorithms that draw us in are not the things God values.

Jesus calls us to repent. To change our focus from the worldly things that capture our attention. To set our feet towards following in the footsteps of Jesus, we must first change the direction of our hearts, minds, and spirits from this world. When we follow Jesus, we will discover a more abundant and free life for ourselves and those around us.

As the classic hymn, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus," proclaims,



**-Tower Hill St. Paul
UCC, Pastor Neil
Kaiser (above)**

**Retired Pastor
-Rev. Robert E. Lee,
Swansea, IL**

**Prayer list for
Feb 11 - 17, 2024
Church & Pastors
-Trenton St. John
UCC, Rev. Christy
Smith (below)**



**-Troy Friedens UCC,
Rev. Tim (Danielle)
Harrison (above)**

**Retired Pastor -Rev.
Robert (Doris) Utke,
Falcon Heights, MN**

**People with
Life Concerns
-Keep the mother of
Pastor Norma
Patterson in your
prayers as she
struggles with health**

“O soul, are you weary and troubled, no light in the darkness you see? There’s light for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free! Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

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.

Prescription Drug Affordability Board

The Illinois South Conference is partnering with others in Illinois to make sure our elected leaders listen to us about the moral injustice of people not being able to afford life-saving medications. If you want to participate in the movement to ensure the Prescription Drug Affordability Act passes, don't hesitate to contact our Conference Minister or our Justice and Mission team for more details



Pictured are our partners who joined our press conference January 16, 2024. We are so grateful to have such a supportive coalition behind the creation of a Prescription Drug Affordability Board. Thank you to our sponsors State Rep. Nabeela Syed and Senator Dave Koehler, Dr. Anthony Douglas II, AARP Illinois, Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ, Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, FSCME Council 31, Shriver Center on Poverty Law, and Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living. Check out our [PDAB website](https://www.pdab.org) to see a full list of our coalition.

Praxis Cohorts Training Session

With the 2024 election less than a year away, the Walker Leadership Institute in partnership with the Bridge Alliance is launching the Praxis Cohort program. This program's focus is on training and supporting lay and clergy faith leaders to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly as they lead in the contentious election season ahead. This training is especially suited for those who are

in purple spaces, whether those are in your congregation, community, or family.
Working in Rural Communities: Session 3 of the Praxis training features conversation with [The Daily Yonder's](#) Sarah Mellote and our own Pastor Patrick Poole - St. John's UCC- Maeystown, Illinois.

PRAXIS COHORTS INFO AND SIGN UP



Online training begins with a virtual workshop on Saturday January 27th, followed by the launch of a network of support through the Praxis Cohorts

Training Workshop Presenters:



Sarah Melotte

Geographer and journalist based in the rural Western North Carolina mountains. She is a staff writer for the Daily Yonder, the online source for rural news.



Rev. Patrick Poole

The pastor of St. John United Church of Christ in Maeystown, a farming community of 150 in Monroe County, Illinois.



The training features religious and community leaders skilled in maintaining their commitments to justice and peace work in the challenging 2024 election season.

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.

[Monday, January 29, 6:00 – 9:00 pm ET, Boundary Awareness Training for Ministers in Specialized Settings, with Revs. Tara Barber and Anissa Glaser-Bacon](#)

[Wednesday, January 31, 3:00 – 5:00pm ET Pastoral Support Committee Training with Rev. Tara Barber](#)

[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](#)



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).

The costs for the retreat are:

\$110 (incl. all retreat programming, meals, and a private room)

\$85 (incl. all retreat programming, meals, and a double room)

\$35 (incl. all retreat programming and meals w/ NO overnight stay)

Be on the lookout for registration information in the coming weeks!

*ToddHall is located at 320 Todd Center Dr, Columbia, IL

**UCC Disaster Ministries
2024 Kentucky and Indiana
Mission Trip and Work Camp
Opportunities**

Priscilla Self, our ISC United

DISASTER MINISTRIES



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Church of Christ Disaster Ministry Recovery Coordinator, submitted the information from Rev. Greg Denk, the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Disaster Response Coordinator. Contact Rev. Denk at

gdenk5258@att.net for more

information and/or the Indiana Kentucky Conference [webpage](#) to set up your group's upcoming Workcamp/Mission Trip. Disaster transformation is an example of how working together can have a great impact. It takes the cooperation of many, who freely give of their time, to accomplish the task. There is a tremendous amount of work that is yet to be done in western Kentucky, eastern Kentucky, and central Indiana.

Facing Hunger in Your Community

The ISC Hunger Action Team would like to recognize St. Peter UCC, Red Bud for their "Community Blessing Box"

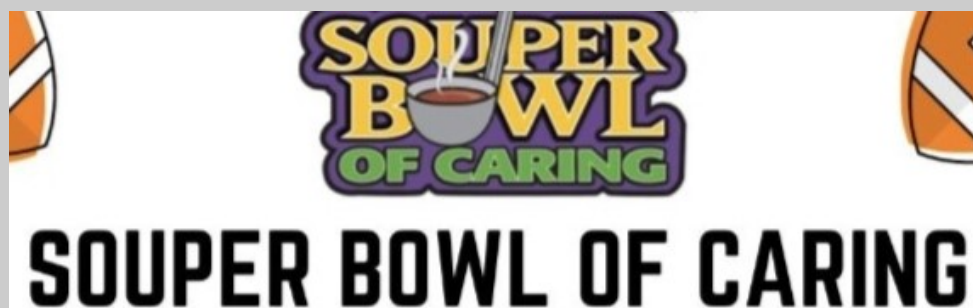
It's a 24 hour

Mini Food Pantry, stocked with non perishable food. St. Peter members are invited to donate to this much needed mission project. With freezing temperatures, dry/packaged food items are requested. Thank you, St. Peter, for helping local families in need; such a blessing-under the leadership of Pastor and teacher, Cory Hartz. The Hunger Action Team invite ISC Churches to share the ways (and photos) of how you are helping combat hunger in your community.

Changing seasons call for different items to fill blessing boxes



Share stories here with the HUNGER ACTION COMMITTEE!



The Hunger Action Team would like to recognize St. Paul, Columbia

for their upcoming "Souper Bowl Of Caring". The youth group is sponsoring a fundraiser on Sunday, February 11th to support local food charities. Thanks, St. Paul; under the leadership of Pastor and teacher Rev. Jonathan Bangera.

The Amazing People of Illinois South Conference...



Youth Engage in Compelling Art Production at Frostbite Event

On January 13 through 14, ISC youth and adults braved the elements to attend **Frostbite Fun at DuBois Center**, hosted by our ISC Local Church Ministries team. One of their activities was creating a moveable art installation that will be featured at upcoming Conference events. Thank you to Rev. Jennifer Sowell-Glover for your leadership of this event.

Celebrating the Annual Mitten Tree of St. John UCC Valmeyer

Members of St. John United Church of Christ in Valmeyer donated, during the month of December, to the annual Mitten Tree for those in need. New games, gloves, hats, mittens, scarves, socks and toys collected were delivered to the House of Neighborly Service and Monroe County Western Egyptian Outreach Center in Waterloo. Pictured with donations are St. John Cabinet of Ministry Board members, from left, Janet Garleb and Lucille Ohms.



SAVE THE DATE

Day of Discipleship -- Into the Woods We Shall Go...
to care for our minds and nourish our souls

Saturday, March 9th, 2024

9 am to noon at DuBois Center

The Gatherings Team is planning the Day of Discipleship event 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 am to noon at DuBois Center - which will include a Friday evening Self-Care Retreat. Please save the date and look for more information to come.

DuBois Center News

Friends of the DuBois Center Horses

We are looking for volunteers to help with off-season rides. If you are interested, please fill out the Google Form below and we will contact you about upcoming training and ride days.





Click here:

**[HORSE
VOLUNTEER
INTEREST FORM](#)**

HORSE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for volunteers to help with off-season rides.

Horse volunteers help by ...

-  Arriving early to feed, groom, and tack horses
-  Before rides: help fit helmets and boots, assign horses, prepare riders, and line up the horses
-  Go on the ride to assist
-  After the ride: untack and turn out horses then help clean up the barn



Save the date for our Barn Volunteer
Training Day on **Sunday, March 3rd!**

**March
3rd**



CHHSM News
Council for Health and Human Service Ministries

~HOYLETON YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES HONORS NIGHT~



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

**THE REGENCY CENTER
BANQUET BALLROOM**

imagine



Hoyleton Youth & Family Services

Deaconess Foundation Is Now Accepting Funding Proposals

Deaconess is accepting funding proposals for the 2024 Policy Campaign Grant. These are one-year general operating grants for

up to \$100,000 to advance an organization's efforts to advance public policy change efforts. The deadline to submit a funding proposal is Thursday, February 1, 2024. Learn more [here](#).

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](#) from March 12-14, 2024! [Early bird registration is now open!](#)

The theme of the 86th Annual Gathering is "Collaboration as the Gateway to Innovation." The focus scripture is Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: "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" (The Message). With collaboration taking center stage, we will explore how working together can spark innovation that changes lives.

What's Happening in Illinois South Conference

Salem UCC Alhambra, IL Hosting 76th Annual Sausage Supper

Saturday, January 27th-Drive thru 1pm-7pm. All meals will be in carry-out containers and separate parking for those that wish to Dine-In. Fresh, homemade pork sausage and five sides for \$13 donation. Sponsored by Salem Churchmen's Fellowship.

Friedens UCC of Troy, IL Celebrating 150th Anniversary

FRIEDENS UCC

150TH

COME JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

KICK OFF SUNDAY IS JANUARY 28TH AT 10:00AM

150-year History in review during worship

A self-guided tour of the building

A light luncheon will be held after worship

Come for the history,

Stay for the fellowship!!

****Keep an eye out for more 150th celebrations each month in 2024!!***

THE WAY-Youth Faith Journey Opportunity

St. Paul's UCC, Freeburg is hosting THE WAY on February 2 - 4, 2024. We begin Friday at 7:30 pm and conclude Sunday morning around 11:30 with lodging at St. Paul's Church. The weekend is open to 8th - 12th grade students of all faith backgrounds AND their adult chaperone. This is a unique experience designed to help you grow in faith and understanding of the teaching of Jesus Christ. The weekend provides an opportunity to recognize Christ within a loving community where you can be yourself and come to know the joy that arises from living your life for God. The cost is \$20 to help cover food. You can register online at stpaulsfreeburg.org before

1/28/24. Please call Donna at 618-219-0139 if you have questions or need more information.

Job Opportunities

Godfrey Evangelical UCC is in search for a Nursery Workerfor 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

Grantfork UCC is looking for an assistant organist or pianist to play for our 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 -Organist/Pianist/Music Director

New Baden Zion UCC is 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.

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 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.

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

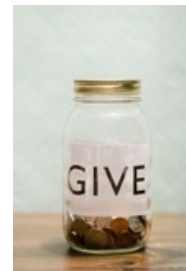
[Deaconess Foundation](#) [Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#) [DuBois Center](#)

[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](#)
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