

April 9, 2024



## Weekly Connection

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

### Our Conference Minister Reflects God's Unending Love



In the past few weeks, there have been many news stories about high-profile actors and musicians who suffered abuse as children by those whom they entrusted into their care. While reading an article online about one situation, I noticed the comment thread where someone asked, *"What was the worst thing someone ever said to you?"* I found the comments from countless people reflecting on the hurt they experienced as children equally as chilling as the news story itself.

What struck me was how one cruel comment or act has shaped this person's perspective about themselves and the world so negatively that it was almost like a darkness fell over their entire life for years. Yet, the common thread for those who spoke about discovering healing was discovering people (whether that was a teacher, coach, pastor, therapist, or friend) who were able to hear their stories (as hard as those stories were to hear), acknowledge the suffering they had experienced, and affirm that their experiences did not have to define them.

More importantly, those who discovered healing encountered people who helped them see their value by declaring they were worthy of acceptance, belonging, and love. Those who helped them discover healing helped them to discover a new story about themselves.

That comment thread stuck with me for days as it was a painful reminder of the hurt so many carry. It was an aching reminder that the stories others have told us that we hold as truth and the stories we tell ourselves have the power to hurt or heal. Dear friends, this is why the story of the Risen Christ is so important to tell.

The world needs to know there is One who saw and experienced the pain of this world and chose to respond not with bitterness, violence, or revenge. There is One who suffered in mind, body, and spirit at the hands of those who could not see His value, worth, or Divine purpose. There is One who suffered to the point of death but did not allow this to be the end of His story or ours.

The Risen Christ conquered death and rose so that we, too, might rise even from those things which seem to threaten to destroy or kill us. The story of the Risen Christ reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God. The story of the Risen Christ affirms that our painful experiences



do not have to define us because they are not the end of our story. We are made new through the power, grace, and love of the Risen Lord. Hope and healing can come through the One who reminds us that we are God's beloved—known, seen, valued, and loved—regardless of what we have experienced.

So many in this world need to hear this story and experience the power and grace of the Risen Christ. May you be the reason others know the story of Christ as you embody the message and mission of the Risen Christ. May you be the reason someone feels welcomed, seen, heard, valued, and loved.

*-Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister*

## Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



**-Carlyle Immanuel UCC**  
Rev. Ken (Barbara) Schafer

-Please keep **Rev. Pamela Smith**, who served in the Illinois South Conference prior to her retirement, in your prayers. Rev. Smith has recently been hospitalized, is undergoing tests, and is awaiting a diagnosis.

-Please pray for an outpouring of God's healing mercies upon **Rev. John Pawloski**.



**-Central City Zion UCC**  
Rev. Nancy Peebles

-Please 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



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## Boundary Awareness Training

ISC has scheduled training for **Tuesday, April 16th, via zoom from 8:30 a.m. to Noon.** This training will be for both active and retired clergy.

We are also planning a Fall training session on **September 17th - 8:30am to Noon**, also on Zoom and also for both active and retired clergy. Please register for the fall session if the April date does not work with your schedule.

Please contact me (Debbie) at [dkesner@iscucc.org](mailto: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. Checks may be mailed to the conference office. Payable to Illinois South Conference.

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**WE ARE  
HIRING**

 DuBois Center

DuBois Center seeks an Interim Executive Director who is an experienced leader to train, supervise, and empower staff to offer transformative experiences for all ages and work with leadership to prepare the stage for the next chapter. The work will also include leading an intentional review and visioning process for the future of the program. Beginning immediately, this two-year contracted position will be offered with the possibility of the candidate being considered for the permanent role. This beautiful setting in southern Illinois provides overnight summer camps, retreats, and horseback riding events throughout the year for groups from across the region. DuBois Center is a long-standing ministry of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ.

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Email your letter of interest and resume to  
[DuBois@kaleidoscopeinc.com](mailto:DuBois@kaleidoscopeinc.com) to learn more!

## UCC National and Regional News & Events

**Join Us to Learn More About How Congregations Can Build an Ecology of Community Safety** that is rooted in care, investing in each other, believing in each other, and trusting each other and the rhythms and cycles around/within us. With our guest thought leaders and faith practitioners, we explore the “Ecology of Community Safety” guide to offer practical skills, psycho-social care practices, planning tools, and analysis of current conditions, all towards practicing new ways of creating safety within our own congregational contexts. Register to join us live April 11th at 3:30 PM Eastern (and receive the recording afterward): <https://ow.ly/KC2Q50R83aN>



**NURTURE THE SOUL**

**BUILDING  
CONGREGATIONAL  
COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Thursday, April 11 | 3:30 PM Eastern

 Rev. Ellie Hutchison  
Minister of Congregational  
& Community Engagement

 Rev. Anne Duulap  
Pastor, organizer  
Educator/trainer & herbalist



**Second Annual UCC Earth Day Summit** online event will take place on **Saturday, April 20th at 1 PM ET** featuring celebrated author and activist Bill McKibben to deliver the Jim Antal keynote Lecture with the title, "Energy from Heaven or Energy from Hell?" This two and a half hour summit will feature a panel waging war on the pollution of Formosa Plastics, one of the world's largest plastics producers. and environmental justice along with much more. [Register now!](#) Even if one cannot make the event at its scheduled time, all those who register will receive a link to a recording of the event.

MAY 19, 2024

MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY



Dear friends of the UCC Mental Health Network,

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and the [UCC MHN](#) wants to make sure you have resources to best equip you for a Mental Health Sunday! We are sending our [PDF for Worship Resources for your Mental Health Sunday](#) created by the UCC, UCC MHN, and United Church of Canada, as well as two videos to use during this time.

[One video by our chair, Bishop Allyson Abrams](#) can be used to make an appeal to support the MHN and to become WISE congregations or organizations. [The other video by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund can be used to show the importance of caring for our youth and understanding their mental health needs.](#) Please consider using both of these powerful videos during your worship services this month as we raise awareness about mental health challenges and mental wellness.

Thank you,

Bishop Allyson D. Nelson Abrams, PhD  
Chair, UCC Mental Health Network



[Click Here to Download the Mental Health Survey Worship Guide](#)



## ISC Hunger Action Team



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# Operation Food Search

## Drive-Thru Distribution

Everyone is welcome.  
First come, first served!

Interested in supporting these events and others? Please consider donating food to our food pantry or making a monetary donation.

First Friday of every month || 10am  
Lineup begins at 9:45am

414 W Hanover St  
New Baden, IL 62265

The ISC Hunger Action Team would like to **recognize:** Zion UCC, New Baden for their monthly “Drive Through Food Distribution” Mission Project. Thanks, Zion UCC for your continued support of local families in need -under the leadership of pastor and teacher Rev. Stephen Stark. Such a blessing!

Click here and share your food insecurity outreach stories with the ISC HUNGER ACTION TEAM. Your stories are the tools that stir interest in people by exemplifying and celebrating Christ's Love.

## News from DuBois Center

**DuBois Center will be hosting an open house April 28th from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

There will be live music, opportunities to tour the campsite, see the cottages, meet some of the summer staff, and get some of your summer camp questions answered. Come on over!

### DuBois Center ‘Wishlist Wednesday!’

Our social media accounts will highlight this ongoing promotion every week with an explanation on some of the items needed for our summer season.

Specifically, we will start by asking for donations of personal hygiene products, as these are items that are sometimes forgotten at home when arriving for camp. We hope to have a full stock of basic needs to give to those who would rather not go without!

For example: deodorants, soap, shampoo, bug spray, sunscreen, hair ties, and more are all included on the list! While these items seem little, we know they will be appreciated!



Help us provide campers with commonly forgotten personal hygiene items

Use our Amazon link to purchase supplies and have them delivered directly to DuBois Center or email [DCinfo@duboiscenter.org](mailto:DCinfo@duboiscenter.org) to find out which local churches are serving as donation collection points.



To help, we have curated an [Amazon wishlist](#) for anyone to purchase from and deliver directly to camp. We will also accept mailed check donations with 'Wishlist Wednesday' in the memo—or online donations through our PayPal or Campwise platforms.

If you'd rather purchase similar items on your own, we will also gladly take physical donations of new personal hygiene products (similar to what are found on our existing wishlist, please)! If you are in the Highland area, you can drop off at Highland Evangelical UCC—please call their office (618-654-7459) prior to delivering to arrange a proper time.

If your church or office will be willing to be a dropoff location for any of these donations, please email [DCInfo@duboiscenter.org](mailto:DCInfo@duboiscenter.org). We will be sure all donations are transported to camp!

As time goes on, we may start adding other non-hygiene items to our list, so be sure to keep up with our social accounts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to hear more!

View the wishlist here: <https://a.co/7ZWgnu6>

Our online giving links are here\*: [https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted\\_button\\_id=CG7CX3MFDTTDN](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=CG7CX3MFDTTDN)

Through your existing Campwise account at [www.duboiscenter.org](http://www.duboiscenter.org).

\*Note: If choosing to donate electronically, please add a note to the Campwise donation, or email [DCInfo@duboiscenter.org](mailto:DCInfo@duboiscenter.org) to alert our staff of the PayPal delegation, as everything is flagged only for 'general fund.' Additionally, with the cost of online processing, we would appreciate any covering of the processing fees added to your donation, up to an additional 10%.

DuBois Center's physical address for check donations and/or deliveries:

Wishlist Wednesday  
DuBois Center  
**2651 Quarry Road**  
**DuBois, IL 62831**



**DuBois Center Volunteer Work Days** On **April 14th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** all volunteers are welcome to come for the whole day or part of the day to help start getting DuBois Center ready for summer camps by clearing and marking trails, organizing our activity supplies, and more! Wear things you don't mind getting a little messy. We have things for people of all ages and abilities. A wonderful opportunity to help DuBois Center prepare for the summer fun ahead!

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**DuBois Center is looking to fill the following 2024 Summer Staff positions:** male-identifying cabin counselors ages 18+, a Waterfront Coordinator age 20+ with lifeguard experience, and a Summer Camp Co-Coordinator age 20+ with camp experience. If you are interested, please reach out to our Program Director, Sarah Harding, at [program@duboiscenter.org](mailto:program@duboiscenter.org).



## Council for Health and Human Services Ministry News



Location :St. Paul United Church of Christ  
115 W B St, Belleville, IL 62220

Water and soda provided.  
Mulligans: \$3 or 2/\$5  
50/50  
Silent auction  
Bring your own snacks.

"Table Decorating Contest: Win Big with Your Creative Table Design!"

<b>MAY 18th</b>	<b>6PM -10PM</b>	<b>DOORS OPEN AT 6:00, TRIVIA STARTS AT 7:00 NONE ALCOHOLIC EVENT</b>
\$20 per ticket or table of 8 for \$160 Payments can be made by checks to Uni-Pres Kindercottage or cashapp: \$Uniprekindercottage		

### Kindercottage Holds Trivia Night Fundraiser

For more information, call Aimee Hart or Antron Rose at (618) 874-6505. Please note-- the address to mail checks is: [564 Veronica Ave, East St. Louis, IL 62205](mailto:564_Veronica_Ave@eaststlouis.org) attn: Trivia Night.

## Our ISC Churches News & Events

**St. Paul UCC Lebanon 28th Annual Chicken Dinner Sunday, April 14th 11:00am - 3:00pm** Your \$15 chicken meal will include 1/2 fried chicken (pieces), green beans, corn and coleslaw, mashed potatoes and gravy, and dessert of your choice (Texas Sheet Cake or Goopy Butter Cake). Drive-thru only. [123 E. Dee St., Lebanon, IL](mailto:123_E_De_St@lebanonucc.org) (618) 537-4991.

**Christ United Church of Christ Chicken & Dumpling Dinner Sunday, April 14th 11:30am - 3:00pm** (or until they run out). Includes green beans, carrots, coleslaw & dessert. Dine-in (cafeteria style) & carry outs available at [200 S. 3rd St, Dupo, IL](mailto:200_S_3rd_St@dupo.org). Call (618) 286-4211 if you require a delivery.





**BBQ at Concordia United Church of Christ Saturday, April 20th 11:00am - 2:00pm.** Pork Plate \$13 (with 3 sides), Bratwurst Plate \$13 (2 brats and 3 sides), Slab of ribs \$25 (no sides). Drive-thru/Carry outs only. For more info (618) 476-3377.

**Crafty Mania at St. Paul UCC Belleville Saturday, April 20, 9:00am-5:00pm** All day crafting! Cost is \$40 and includes lunch, snacks, attendance prizes, and vendors in the afternoon. At 10am there will be a card making class with a Stampin' Up rep - 2 cards/\$10. Raffle tickets will also be available. Register by sending check with your name, phone # and email to: St. Paul UCC, 115 W. B St., Belleville, IL 62220. Seating is first come basis. Call (618) 222-1123 for more.



**Chicken & Dumpling Dinner Monroe County Fairgrounds Saturday April 20th, 5:00pm to 7:30 pm**, hosted by Zion UCC at St. Joe Waterloo. Proceeds go toward Christian Education. Live Music by: Dos Amigos 6 to 8:30 p.m.

### **YOU ARE INVITED Friedens UCC Reunion**

Join us to gather as friends and family of Friedens United Church of Christ as we reunite to celebrate this year of our 150th anniversary at the **Sunday, April 28, 2024 – 10:00** worship with reception to follow.

You are encouraged to share this invitation with all who are extended family and friends of Friedens. If you are unable to attend and would still like to share your thoughts with us, please send them to- Email: [friedens@friedensucc-troy.org](mailto:friedens@friedensucc-troy.org) Or Friedens UCC; Attn: 150 Anniversary, 207 E Center St., Troy, IL 62294  
For more information: (618) 667-6535

## **Opportunities and Resources**

**Godfrey Evangelical UCC Seeking 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](mailto: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](mailto:marissafriedens@gmail.com).

**Pinckneyville St. Paul UCC in Search of 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:dkesner@iscucc.org).

For communicating within the Conference, the Conference website, Facebook page or Weekly Connection, contact **Missy Loyet** at [mloyet@iscucc.org](mailto:mloyet@iscucc.org).

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

For **Rev. Shana Johnson**, ISC Conference Minister, contact her at [sjohnson@iscucc.org](mailto: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**

