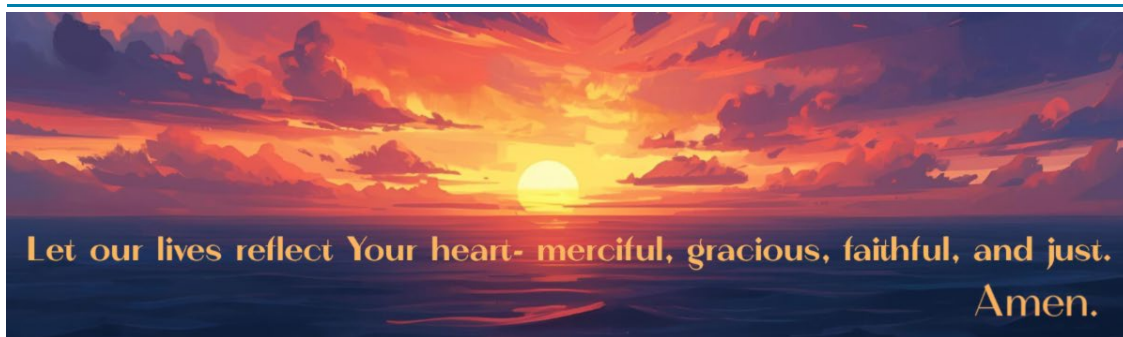




Reflections From Our Conference Minister

"The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.'"

—Exodus 34:6 (NRSV)

This morning, I received a text from a friend that simply said, "I am SO ANGRY!" While I needed more context, considering all that he is facing in life and the turmoil swirling around us in this country and the world, his words resonated deeply.

Anger.

We can see it in the grimaces and clenched jaws of strangers passing by us.

We can read it in social media posts filled with outrage.

We can hear it in the rising tone of tense conversations at coffee shops and the fever-pitched reporting of every news channel.

We can feel it in the surge of raw energy around us and in the dysregulated nervous systems of our bodies.

We can notice it in ourselves—in how quick-tempered and negative-focused we've become.

Anger.

It can exhaust us or energize us.

It can build slowly, or it arises fast and furiously.

It can overwhelm us, or we can transform into something redemptive and life-changing.

But too often these days, anger is not a fleeting emotion; it becomes a wild, unyielding wrath.

Anger arises when we face a loss,
when we grieve what was and what may never be again,
when we feel we lack control over what is happening around us,
when we have been dismissed or disregarded,
and when fear and uncertainty tighten their grip.

In Exodus 34:5-6, we read of how God described God's true nature as one who is *"merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."* Imagine if we modeled our response to life, to people, to injustice after God's own nature.

Yes, anger can be a justified response. But if we don't slow down and examine it, it can control us--instead of us using it for positive change.

So, dear friend, may we — as people created in God's image—pause for a collective breath. Take a deep breath in...and out.

Then breathe again:

Inhale God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

Exhale the losses, fears, and uncertainty pressing on your spirit.

And when we are still—when our minds, bodies, and spirits are settled—may we seek the Spirit's guidance to respond with mercy, grace, and steadfast love in our thoughts, actions, and decisions as we strive to create a just and loving world for all of God's people.

Gracious God,

May we remember that You call us to be slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.

Help us to breathe Your love deeply today—

to release our fears, our frustrations, and our need for control.

Fill us with Your peace,

a peace that passes all understanding.

Let our lives reflect Your heart- merciful, gracious, faithful, and just.

Teach us how to channel our anger into holy action

that builds us instead of tearing us down.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*-Rev. Shana Johnson
ISC Conference Minister*

Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



Zion UCC, Central City

Rev. Nancy Peebles



Immanuel UCC, Carlyle- Pastor Ken (Barbara) Schafer

Retired Pastor-

Rev. Elmer (Linda) Bowman

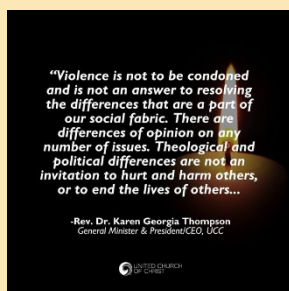
HOLDING THESE PASTORS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN PRAYER

Over the weekend, Rev. Tarrah Vaupel, an authorized minister of our Conference, and her family experienced a devastating fire at their home. O'Fallon UCC, the church where Rev. Tarrah grew up, and her mom and sister are members, and Trinity UCC, Biddleborn, and Holy Ghost UCC, Darmstadt, the churches she serves as pastor, have rallied around the family with care and support. As recovery efforts continue over the coming months, the needs of her family will change; feel free to contact the Conference office for more information on how you can best support the Vaupel family. Please keep the Rev. Tarrah, her husband Jason, their children, and Tarrah's mother, who has also been living with their family, in your thoughts and prayers.

On September 15, Rev. Jean M. Carmean died peacefully at Barnes Hospital, surrounded by her family and friends who loved her dearly. Rev. Carmean served many of our churches as a beloved interim pastor, lovingly caring for them in their times of transition. There will be no public services.

Please keep Jean's family and dear friends, Rev. Jane Hillman, Rev. Dr. Martha Thierheimer, Rev. Jan Dashner, and Rev. Carol Lange, in your thoughts and prayers.

[Submit prayer requests here](#)



A Response to Violence: UCC GMP Releases Statement on Recent Events

by [Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson](#) | published on Sep 11, 2025

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, UCC General Minister and President/CEO has released a statement and prayer addressing the recent incidents of violence in the United States. She calls the church to pray for the families and communities who have experienced grief and loss, and to pray for those dealing with the aftermath of these events. Her full statement is [HERE](#).

61st ISC Annual Meeting

Saturday,
October 18, 2025

St. Paul UCC
Belleville, IL



Annual Meeting Checklist:

~Register one of three ways:

- Scan the QR code
- Go to online [online registration link](#)
- Or- Click [HERE](#) for mail-in registration form



Registration will close at noon on Friday, September 26th. Please register by that date so that we can know how many attendees the caterer will need to prepare for.

~Share Share the information with all those you would like to invite to register and attend.

- [Church Bulletin Insert](#)
- [Flyer](#)
- [Graphic for Posting](#)

~Look for meeting reports and materials at [iscucc.org](#) this week.

~Get ready to make some waves as we go **INTO THE DEEP** !

SCHEDULE OF THE DAY:

8:30 am	Doors Open and Check-in Begins
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Opening Session
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Break / Visit the MarketPlace
9:45 am – 11:00 am	INTO THE DEEP Worship in the Sanctuary
11:00 am - Noon	Updates and Celebrations
Noon – 1:30 pm	Lunch / Visit the MarketPlace
1:30 pm – 1:45 pm	State of the Conference Address
1:45 pm – 2:45 pm	Business Session
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Break / Visit the MarketPlace
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	Resourcing Sessions
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Break / Visit the MarketPlace
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Closing Worship



*****Please note new time of our Friday Meet and Greet Event**

Our 2025 Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker Rev. Shari Prestemon is the Associate General Minister and Co-Executive of [Global Ministries](#). Her role includes overseeing [Global H.O.P.E.](#), [Gender and Sexuality Justice Ministries](#), [the Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington, D.C.](#), and the [UCC presence at the United Nations](#), as well as serving as Co-Executive of [Global Ministries](#), the shared witness of the UCC and the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#). We look forward to joining Rev. Prestemon in common witness!



INTO THE DEEP: Poetry & Arts at Annual Meeting

Deadline September 26th!

This year's Illinois South Conference Annual Meeting invites you to wade *Into the Deep*—where worship meets the creative spirit.

Join **Rev. Tim Powers-Reed** for a breakout session exploring the power of **arts and poetry in worship**. Together, we'll discuss how words, images, and creative expressions can breathe new life into our liturgy and community.

We are also seeking poets, spoken word artists, painters, sketchers, photographers, and other creators to share their masterpieces with the Conference.

- One poetry/spoken word submission will be chosen to be featured during worship at the Annual Meeting.
- Five other written submissions will be shared during the breakout session.
- Visual art—paintings, sketches, photography, sculpture—will help create a sacred atmosphere in the worship space and breakout room.

Submission Deadline: September 26, 2025

Please send written works and/or photos of visual pieces (paintings, sculptures, etc.) to illinitchr@gmail.com by the deadline for consideration.

Come share your gifts. Come inspire. Come create space for God to speak in ways that words alone cannot.



World Communion Sunday Resources

World Communion Sunday is the first Sunday in October (October 5th, 2025). We invite you to use some or several of these resources in your virtual or in-person worship. This year's World Communion Sunday resources highlight three powerful scriptures that remind us of our unity in Christ. From **1 Corinthians 12:12–27**, we learn that the church is like one body made of many different parts, each important

and needed. **Psalm 133:1** celebrates how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in harmony. And in **John 17:21–23**, Jesus prays that all believers may be one, just as He and God are one. Together, these passages invite us to celebrate our differences while remembering the unity we share at Christ's table. [Read More>>](#)



Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering October 5th is the [Neighbors in Need offering](#) which supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. While many of our churches collect the offering on part of World Communion Sunday, contributions to this offering can be collected on any Sunday during the calendar year. Thank you for your support and generosity!



Lead Organizations, Not Just People.

We are thrilled to share the launch of the reimagined Walker Leadership Institute (WLI), a facet of Eden that gives you the hard skills to lead a successful organization, from budgeting to human resources, and helps you connect these skills to your values and your faith.

WLI's offerings are designed for leaders and communities aligning with the progressive Christian movement who are engaged at the intersection of faith leadership with business and government, congregational life, and community organizing. A variety of programs, from free Lunch & Learns to All-Day workshops are available for those in ministry and community leadership looking to build their professional skillsets.

[See What WLI Has To Offer](#)



Insurance Board Presents:

Safeguard Your Congregation: Active Shooter Training Tuesday, October 14th 1:00 pm CT

Our active shooter training equips ministries to respond effectively in an emergency. It covers recognizing potential threats, understanding evacuation routes, practicing lockdown procedures, and communicating with law enforcement while assisting others. *Registration is limited. A recording will be available on our website after the event.

[Register HERE](#)



Love of children ministry debuts new website and opens up 2026 cohort application by [Renee DeLuca](#) | published on Sep 16, 2025

One of the major goals of the [Love of Children](#) ministry this year was to put together a new website to offer a user-friendly site with easy-to-find resources. The Rev. Trayce Potter, minister for Children & Youth Engagement at the United Church of Christ, said she is pleased with the recently launched website that was funded by a 2023 grant from the [Lilly Foundation](#). [Read More>>](#)



Global Ministries and Disciples Women on the Move by [Marcy Gansler](#) | published on Sep 10, 2025

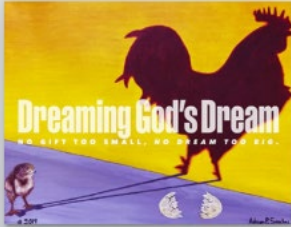
A delegation of 14 women from Global Ministries and Disciples Women's Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada is on a two-week visit to Kenya to listen to and learn from women in Kenya about how we live out what it means to be the body of Christ with women in Kenya and the whole world. [Read More>>](#)

EMERGING STRATEGIES TO FIGHT AI DATA CENTERS



'A time to form unlikely allies': Experts urge response to AI Data Centers in Creation Justice webinar by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Sep 16, 2025

As massive data centers are being built or proposed [across the country](#) to accompany the rising use of AI programs, the burden of running these facilities is creating an impact on the surrounding people and land. [Read More>>](#)



ORDER YOUR 2025
**STEWARDSHIP
THEME MATERIALS**

Coordinated stewardship materials for your congregation's annual stewardship efforts.

"Dreaming God's Dream" helps people understand the impact our congregations can make in our communities if we generously support them. Order [HERE](#)

ISC Hunger Action Team - Facing Hunger in Your Community



September is Hunger Action Month. There is enough food for everyone-the problem lies in access. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate yourself. Educate others. Host a drive. Wear orange. AND...Visit the ISC Justice and Mission Resources link below!

ISC
JUSTICE
& MISSION
helping to be the good

ISC Justice and Mission Resources

When the Justice and Mission survey results were analyzed, hunger concerns overwhelmingly were identified as a priority within the ISC churches that responded. Once again, we thank you for your responses. The ISC Justice and Mission Team researched, and found links that we think you may find interesting and useful. [>> ISC J & M Bible Study Resources](#)

BACKPACK ITEMS NEEDED

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!
TIME TO START PACKING THE BACKPACK CABINETS
FOR THE WEEKENDS!

Individual servings of:

Juice - 100% Juice

Oatmeal

Granola Bars

Cereal Bars

Applesauce

Fruit Cups

Cheese/Peanut Butter Crackers

Chips

Rice Krispy Treats or Cookies

Pudding

Tapioca

Macaroni and Cheese

Cup of Soup

Ramen Noodles



The Hunger Action Team would like to recognize ST. PAUL, COLUMBIA for their "WEEKEND BACKPACK" mission project. St. Paul members are invited to share nonperishable food items for local students in need. Kids who qualify for free school breakfast and lunch don't have access to these meals on weekends and holiday break. Heartfelt thanks for this ministry of love and compassion for our neighbors in need. Serving others as faithful stewards of God's grace. Under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Rev. Jonathan Bangera.

In sharing your stories of being in service to others, you shine God's Light to all of us in the ISC and beyond!
Click below...

[...to share stories of fighting hunger in YOUR community](#)



Less than 1 month until DuBois's Fall Fest **October 5**, so be gathering those items for your Silent Auction baskets! Be creative with your themes this year--as always--and put together those unique baskets, large or small, to benefit our wonderful ISC camp and retreat center. Baskets can be dropped off at St. Paul UCC, Waterloo 9:00am - 4:00pm Monday through Thursday or DuBois Center or brought to DuBois the **morning before or day of**. Contact Audrey Hicks 618-939-8673 or audhicks@hotmail.com with any questions.

FALL FESTIVAL DuBois Center

Sunday, Oct 5
from 11-5



Family-Friendly Event FREE Parking FREE Admission



Great Food Trucks!

Tater Headz Fry, Dizzy's Wheels, and more!
Plus local non-profits with Kettle Corn, Spiral Potatoes, & Sweet Treats!

Activities for EVERYONE!

Pony Rides, Hay Rides, Crafts @ the Kids Korner,
Pontoon Boat Rides, Rope Making, Silent Auction, and...

Over 40 Crafters & Artisans



Live Music

1:00 Sheltered Reality (on the BB Court)
2:15 Emery Bass (on the main stage)
3:30 Venedy Band (on the BB Court)

No ATM on site! Cash only for DuBois Center activities
We love pets, but only service animals are welcome



2651 Quarry Rd. DuBois, IL

www.DuBoisCenter.org



VOLUNTEER AT FALL FESTIVAL!



JOIN US SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

Support DuBois Center by volunteering at Fall Festival! Join us on **Sunday, October 5** to help with boat rides, hayrides, horses, Sweet Treats, Kidz Corner, and more.

Sign up to volunteer by **Friday, September**

26: <https://www.signupgenius.com/.../10C084DA4AD28A2FCC34...>



Dear UPK Families,

Welcome back to a new school year at Uni Pres Kindercottage! September is always such a special month as we welcome our little learners, reconnect with families, and prepare for a year filled with growth, discovery, and joy.

This year, our focus is on developing young learners through a fun learning curriculum and building stronger partnerships to help support our mission. At UPK, we believe education begins with relationships – between teachers and children, families and staff, and our center and the wider community. Together, we can ensure that each child feels loved, supported, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

We are excited about the learning opportunities and special events planned this fall, including our pumpkin patch field trip, family literacy night, and fall health screenings. Please keep an eye on our monthly

calendar for updates and important dates.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your children. Your partnership means so much to us, and we look forward to walking alongside you this school year.

With gratitude and excitement,

Aimee Washington-Hart
Executive Director
Uni Pres Kindercottage



Deaconess Nurse Ministry Plays Vital Role for CHHSM Partner St. Andrew's in East St. Louis, IL

September 11, 2025 | [CHHSM-Member Ministry Contribution](#)

Rush Senior Gardens, an affordable senior community of St. Andrew's.

CHHSM members in the St. Louis area often partner with each other in outreach. For example, at [Rush Senior Gardens](#), part of St. Andrew's Senior System in East Saint Louis, Ill., [Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#) provides compassionate, consistent care through the dedicated service of one of its faith community nurses.

Rush is an independent living community that supports low-income seniors aged 62 and older—many of whom face complex health conditions and limited access to care.

Deaconess Nurse Ministry's nurse plays a vital role in promoting resident health and independence... [Read more>>](#)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Receptionists
Program Assistants
Craft Assistants

You choose a time, we'll find a place.

If interested, please call
St. John's Community Care
618-344-5008



Volunteers Needed at St John's Community Care

Call us now to see how you can assist us - helping in the Adult Day, answering phones and helping with admin work, assisting with events, or maybe something we don't even know we need yet! Talk to Becky and make a difference in someone's life.

St John's Community Care in Need of Donations

Call For Donations!

Stickers, Sticker Books, Coloring Books, Glue, Gel Pens, Acrylic paint, Paint brushes, Blocks For Building Like Lincoln Logs, K'nex, Or Basic Wooden Blocks, Doll or Barbie Heads With Hair And Hair Accessories For Sensory And Reminiscing, Playdoh, Pretend/Play Food For Reminiscing

Or call us if you have something you think might be useful for us at
618-344-5008!

Our ISC Churches News + Events

REGISTER TODAY!

Illinois South Conference
presents

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

NOVEMBER 14TH-15TH

AT DUBOIS CENTER
OVERNIGHT & DAY ONLY
OPTIONS!

Saturday Only Retreat (incl. lunch)	\$30 (per participant/adult)
Saturday Only Retreat (Incl. 2 meals breakfast & lunch)	\$45 (per participant/adult)
Overnight (Friday - Saturday Afternoon)	\$85* (per participant/adult)

Horseback Riding available as add-on option. \$25 for trail ride.

* Contact the Illinois South Conference Office if scholarship assistance is needed.

TEAM-BUILDING . LUNCH . OPTIONAL OVER NIGHT

DISCOVER WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FEARFULLY AND
WONDERFULLY MADE!

Confirmation Retreat 2025 Registration will open
August 1, 2025.

Questions?
Contact Jill Mayer
(jill@stpaulonline.org or
618.978.7123)

GriefShare® SUPPORT GROUP

Consider joining us or passing along the information to someone you know who is grieving a loss.

Mondays - Sept. 22 - Dec. 22

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Evangelical United Church of Christ
2520 Poplar Street, Highland

Join us for a safe, compassionate space where healing begins. Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one or supporting someone who is, our GriefShare group offers comfort, understanding, and hope.

The group will meet on Mondays starting **September 22, from 6-8 pm**. The group will convene weekly at the Parsonage located at 2520 Poplar Street (look for signage). This 13-week session includes an additional meeting in November titled "Surviving the Holidays". To register, please contact the church office at 618-654-7549. We kindly request a \$10 registration fee, if possible, to offset the cost of workbooks. We look forward to welcoming you.

VENDOR FAIR AT ST. PAUL UCC

SEPTEMBER 27 - 12-5 PM

Our vendors include:

- THREADS OF HOPE QUILTERS
- LILLA ROSE
- CARDS BY DEBBY
- SO SEW FUN CREATIONS
- SUGAR RUSH EXPRESS
- SCENTSY
- WASTE NOT, WANT NOT
- KIMS CREATIONS
- PAMPERED CHEF
- STAMPIN' UP
- AND MORE!



stpaulucc.org

618-233-3303

115 W. B. Street, Belleville, IL

FALL FESTIVAL

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 11, 2025

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**CHRIST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
200 SOUTH 3RD STREET, DUPO IL**



Crafters & Vendors Wanted - Table space \$20
For more information, please call 618-286-4211

St John UCC Wurstmarkt

Sunday, September 28th
301 S Market St, New Athens, IL

Dine in: 11:00am-2:00pm
Carry-Out: 11:00am-1:30pm
Drive Thru: 11:11am-1:00pm

**Fresh Whole Hog Pork
Sausage, Sauerkraut,
Mashed Potatoes,
Gravy, Green Beans &
Dessert**

Adults \$15
Kids 10 & Under \$7



WURSTMARKT DINNER & COUNTRY STORE: Saturday, October 4, 2025 from 9:00 AM to 12 Noon St. John UCC, 21 N. Walnut Street, Trenton, IL will have a Country Store with homemade applesauce, pork sausage and quilt raffle tickets for sale. Applesauce will be \$5 a pint and \$10 a quart, pork sausage will be \$5 for 1 pound, raffle tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. On **Sunday, October 5, 2025 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM** we will have a drive-thru Wurstmarkt dinner of pork sausage, roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, sauerkraut, green beans and pie. Price per dinner is \$15. Drive thru will have two lines - one through the alley and the other through the city parking lot. Follow signs for directions.

St. Paul Fine Arts
CONCERT SERIES

SHANNON GOMEZ

More than Wonderful

GARY HUMPHREY

In Concert

OCTOBER 5, 2025

3:00 PM

St. Paul UCC
200 N. Main St.
Waterloo, IL 62298
www.stpaulonline.org

Benefits go toward
St. Paul Fine Arts
Concert Series

Free Concert
A free-will offering
will be accepted.



[Click to submit your EVENTS + NEWS to the Weekly Connection](#)

Opportunities + Resources

[Part Time Organist/Pianist - Friedens UCC Marissa](#)

[Part-time Music Leader - St. Paul UCC Pinckneyville](#)

[Part-time Church Office Clerical Secretary- St. John UCC Granite City](#)

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 Co-Interim Executive Directors, contact **Jason Petry** or **Leah Petry** at director@DuBoisCenter.org or (618) 787-2202 ext. 2 for Jason or ext. 3 for Leah.

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](#)

