

November 25, 2025



Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



Grantfork UCC, Grantfork-
Rev. Nancy Brooks



Immanuel UCC, Hamel-
Rev. Paul (Rev. Cherie Hambleton) Burden

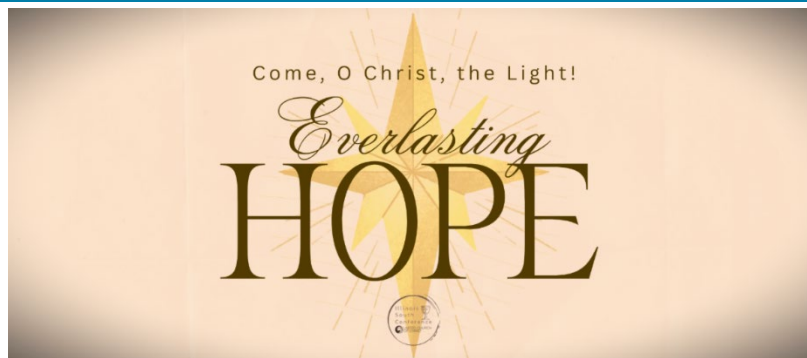
Retired Pastor-
Rev. Hugh (Bo) Fitz

It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of Rev. Gus Kuether on Monday, November 17. Rev. Gus was not only a pastor and leader in our Conference for many years, but also active in the wider Church of the UCC. Gus and his wife, Suzanne, served for many years as commissioned missionaries in Honduras. He then served on the United Church Board for World Ministries in St. Louis. He was also an interim Associate Conference Minister in the Illinois Conference before coming to the Illinois South Conference, both interim and settled positions; his last settled ministry was at St. Paul UCC in Belleville. Please keep the family of Rev. Gus Kuether in your prayers.

The funeral service of Rev. Gus Kuether will be held on Sunday, December 14, at 3 pm in the sanctuary of St. Paul UCC, Belleville. There will be no visitation. However, there will be light refreshments after the worship service to give people a time to connect with the family, offer their sympathies, and share stories. <https://rennerfh.secure.tributecenteronline.com/obituaries/Rev-Gustav-Kuether?obId=46472055>

John Mier, spouse of retired ISC Minister Joan Mier, had his 2nd knee replacement surgery. Requesting healing prayers for a speedy recovery.

[Submit prayer requests here](#)



**"When they saw the star, they were filled with joy."
—Matthew 2:10**

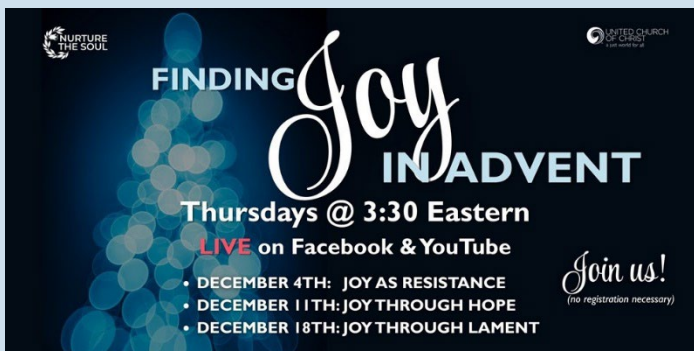
The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

Christmas Fund Resources



Advent 2025 resources offer paths for 'awaking and preparing, expecting and dreaming'

As the 2025 Advent season nears, new United Church of Christ resources invite people to engage with past prophets, abolitionists, and wisdom in order to make a way forward – carrying hope and expectation through difficult times. Below, find worship resources and devotional offerings from Sermon Seeds and Worship Ways, Racial Justice Ministries, Pilgrim Press, the Pension Boards' Christmas Fund, Bread for the World, and UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity. [Resources](#)



Nurture the Soul

The season of Advent invites us to embody joy. Yet, the times in which we live may challenge joyful experiences, practices, and encounters.

Worship helps bridge recognition of the current reality with hope for the future...making space for JOY. NO registration necessary, this program will run LIVE on our Facebook and YouTube channels (a recording will be available after the event date.)

YouTube channel: <https://ow.ly/39jA50Xxw6t> (direct link coming soon)

Longest Night Service

Sunday, December 21, 2025

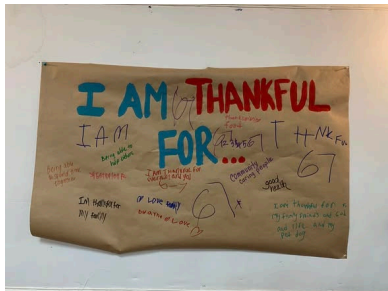
4:00-5:00 p.m.

St. John United Church of Christ
307 West Clay Street
Collinsville, IL 62234
www.stjohnucc-collinsville.org

This quiet, contemplative time of reflection and perspective offers a safe haven, a holy space for those who participate to find support, care, and compassion in the embrace of Christ.

Leading this service are Rev. Dr. Don Wagner,
Rev. Jennifer Sowell, Carolyn Catalano,
and musicians Christine Brewer (soprano) and Jennifer King (piano/organ).

Please plan on joining us in this Longest Night Service.
You are welcome here.



Salem Church provided a Thanksgiving Dinner for the children, staff, parents, and friends of Hoyleton Youth and Family Services.

This was the first Thanksgiving Dinner they've had since before Covid, and it was the largest in their history. We expected about 80 people, but we had plenty of delicious food for the over 130 that showed up. Hoyleton is an amazing ministry, and the Hoyleton kids are beautiful and gifted and gracious and simply brimming with potential. We left last night with full bellies but even fuller hearts.



Family Bunco Night 2025 to benefit DuBois Center

We had a great attendance at our bunco night for DuBois Center. Thank you for all coming! The ISC Region 2 churches raised sixteen hundred dollars for DuBois Center.

-submitted by Nancy Prather



Spring 2026 Ministry Cohorts Are Open!

We're excited to announce the Spring 2026 Ministry Cohort Themes:

- [How's My Preaching? Check-In and Level Up](#)
- [Intergenerational Faith Formation](#)
- [Creative Conflict Resolution](#)
- [The Body of Christ and the Body Snatchers](#)
- [Making Strangers Neighbors](#)

[>>Learn more and sign up for the Cohort that intrigues you most!](#)



Start Your Degree in January 2026

Have you been considering a [Master's program](#), [Doctor of Ministry](#), or a [graduate certificate](#)? You can start your program in January 2026! Learn more and talk to an admissions officer about your options today! [Learn More](#)



Together Beyond the Storm

by [Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson](#) | published on Nov 25, 2025
I visited Jamaica in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, a solidarity visit with the [United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands](#) (UCJCI) in my role as President of the [World Communion of Reformed Churches](#) (WCRC) along with the Interim General Secretary. This visit

was welcomed by these partners at a time when they are contending with the devastation on the island following the impact of Hurricane Melissa.

This was a time of prayer and listening, hearing the stories of communities where people are living in a new reality as relief is being brought to those still struggling to meet the basic needs for themselves, for their families, and for their communities. On October 28th, Hurricane Melissa... [Read More](#)

The church cemetery, which also suffered significant damage from Hurricane Melissa. Photo by Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson.



Global Ministries
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
and the United Church of Christ

Job Opening: Global Engagement and Logistics

Manager Global Ministries is seeking a dynamic and detail-oriented Global Engagement and Logistics Manager to oversee the administration of the People-to-People Pilgrimage program, coordinate interpretation for

staff, mission co-workers, and international partners throughout the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ and provide logistical support for organizational events. [Download job description](#)



Mission Moment :

Throughout the long-lasting partnership of UCC, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through Global Ministries and CEOSS, all the organizations sought to achieve God's will on earth. In this regard, Global Ministries was eager to achieve its mission of "United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all" through supporting CEOSS to work with the poor and marginalized communities. One of the beneficiaries is a woman named Amal Mohamed Abdel-Aal. Amal came to the Egyptian Society in Kom El Baraka, Kafr El Dawar Center, Beheira Governorate, seeking assistance with a small project.

When asked about her financial and social situation, she stated that she is a woman supporting two children in different educational stages, her husband is bedridden and unable to work due to severe illness, suffering from heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and several other ailments. She is not sufficiently educated and has no money, as all her funds were spent on her husband's treatment. She saw the brokenness in her children's eyes due to extreme need, so she decided to come to the local NGO for help to start a small project for herself and her family to cope with the difficult life circumstances she lives in.

The Egyptian Society NGO, through the Natural Resources and Water Management project funded by CEOSS and UCC established a small project for her. This involved providing her with one goat, a few packs of feed, and a treatment card. Upon following up on the project and Amal, it was found that the goat gave birth to two young goats. When asked, she decided to buy another goat to expand the project and help overcome life's difficulties. Thus, she was able to change her situation for the better, secure food and drink for her children, stand by her sick husband, and ensure his treatment. This is the rural woman who is working hard to achieve her goals.

-Written by: Nardeen Raouf, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Specialist Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS)

[Prayer for Egypt](#)



ISC Hunger Action Team - Facing Hunger in Your Community



The Hunger Action Team would like to recognize St. Paul, Waterloo for their "Thanksgiving Blessings Bags" mission project. One hundred and twenty Thanksgiving dinner bags were delivered to the Monroe County House of Neighborly Service. Each bag included a \$25 grocery gift card to purchase meat and dairy products. Recipients are families in need from Waterloo, Columbia, Valmeyer, Hecker and Prairie Du Rocher. Thanks, St. Paul - under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Rev. Kyle Timmons. Neighbors helping neighbors. Such a blessing!

By 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.

Summer Camp Registration is open!

2026 SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE		
Registration Opens November 24 th Early Bird Registration ends February 14 th		
MAIN CAMP		
June 14-19	*Discovery (1 st - 3 rd) Settler (3 rd - 5 th) **Quest (1 st - 3 rd) Leadership in Training (11 th - 12 th)	Horse Play (5 th - 7 th) Outback (7 th - 9 th)
June 21-26	Settler (3 rd - 5 th) Art Explosion (5 th - 8 th) Base Camp (6 th - 8 th)	**Rustic Sampler (4 th - 6 th) Splash (5 th - 7 th) Saddle Em Up (7 th - 9 th)
June 28-30	Just You & Me (Ages 5-8 & adult) Main Camp Cabins & Hickory Lodge	
July 5-10	High School Week Drenched (9 th - 12 th) - Wrangler (9 th - 12 th) - X-Plore (9 th - 12 th) All camps are on Rustic	
July 12-17	*Discovery (1 st - 3 rd) Settler (3 rd - 5 th) **Quest (1 st - 3 rd)	Trekkin It (5 th - 7 th) Giddy Up (6 th - 8 th) Dunk'd (7 th - 9 th)
July 20-22	Just You & Me (Ages 5-8 & Adult) Main Camp Cabins & Hickory Lodge	
August 7-8	Rainbow Camp ALL Ages Welcome! Main Camp Cabins & Hickory Lodge	

The grade listed next to each camp is the grade campers have completed.
* Partial-week camp: Sunday-Tuesday / ** Partial-week camp: Wednesday-Friday

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT DUBOISCENTER.ORG

Do you know which week works best for your schedule? Do you know what session your camper wants to do? Are you READY?!

<https://duboiscenter.org/summer-camps/>



We have ONLINE MERCH!!!

Just in time for the holidays, you can spoil everyone with exclusive DBC merch!

Shirts & Hoodies available now—including our OG iconic retro design! Get yours today at <https://www.bonfire.com/store/dubois-center-merch/>

Spring Events

Join us at one of our spring events or retreats!
Registration opens January 1st, 2026

MARCH 7 Service Saturday
Everyone is invited to lend a helping hand as we prepare our facilities for the spring season. We'll provide lunch!
RSVP at duboiscenter.org/support-dubois/work-days/

MARCH 13-15 Women's Retreat
Get the girls together or come on your own and make new friends! This retreat is all about relaxation and self-reflection! Choose a short getaway (Fri-Sat) or a longer stay (Fri-Sun).

APRIL 11 Father-Daughter Day
Dads and Daughters - spend the day at DuBois Center! Enjoy camp fun - one on one, brunch, horses, crafts, canoeing and worship!

APRIL 24-26 Father-Son Retreat
Join us for our annual Father-Son Retreat. Boating, horses, archery, fishing, games and plenty of guy time! Fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles, nephews are welcome!

MAY 9 Ride Day
Sign up for a ride time that fits your schedule best!
10:30 am: Arena Ride for ages 3-7 with parent walking alongside. \$18 per child.
1:00, 2:30, 4:00: Trail Ride for ages 8+. \$30 per rider.

MAY 9 Service Saturday
Everyone is invited to lend a helping hand as we prepare our facilities for the summer season. We'll provide lunch; please RSVP at duboiscenter.org/support-dubois/work-days/

For information or to register,
visit duboiscenter.org/retreats/dbc-retreats.

NOTE: RETREATS MAY BE CANCELLED IF FEWER THAN 15 PEOPLE REGISTER.

2026 DuBois Center Spring Event offerings announced so you can start your planning!!

[More Info Here](#)



Hoyleton's Hope for the Holidays

Interested in giving a child in need a brighter holiday season?

You can drop off gifts at any of our donation bin locations!

Find the one closest to you

here: <https://hoyleton.org/events/2025-hope-for-the-holidays/>



Emmaus Homes What's in the Box is BACK — and bigger than ever!

Mark your calendars! December 10 to 14, we are launching a week-long edition of our popular 'What's in the Box?' contest — and this year, we are switching things up with a brand-new format to keep the fun going all week long.

Every day, you will get a new hint and a chance to play along as you try to guess what's hiding inside the box. One lucky winner will take home the prize... and we will gift the same item to one of our Emmaus homes!

Follow <https://www.facebook.com/emmaushomes>, turn on

notifications, and share with your friends so you are ready when the first clue drops on December 10!



Hitz Home Christmas Tasting Bee Friday, December 5th at 1:00pm

Bring your favorite Christmas appetizer, dish, or dessert (a variety of meats will be provided). Silent auction, entertainment, and Christmas raffle to include a quilt and gift certificates! Full flyer

<https://www.hitzhome.com/>



The 2026 Mission Trip Calendar is officially open!

Wondering which dates are open?

[Click to view calendar](#)

Look for "Schedule your mission trip today!"

To reserve a date, please contact our volunteer coordinator using the button below!

Reserve Your Trip Here!>>volunteercoordinator@thebackbaymission.org



Excitement for The Gathering: Many Gifts, One Spirit is building as a plethora of workshops are formulated for attendees. Thirty-five workshops will take place across the three days, including eight presenters CHHSM participants will find familiar. In addition, some of the 35 workshops will be led by staff from all five health and human service organizations. [ABOUT THE GATHERING](#)

Holiday Gift Giving for UPK



🎁 Holiday Gift Giving at Uni Pres Kindercottage 🎁

The holiday season is a time of joy, generosity, and giving—and at Uni Pres Kindercottage, we're once again preparing to share that joy with the children and families we serve.

If you are able to bring some holiday cheer to our little ones this season, here's how you can give:

Contact Aimee Hart at aimee@unipreskindercottage.org or text 618-799-1417.

If you would like UPK to shop on your behalf, please send your contribution by Thursday, December 12th. We accept gift cards to Amazon, Walmart, and Target. Please note E- Card to the

email listed above is a very safe and easy way to secure the cards instead of the postal service. Bringing it to the center is also a preferred option. If you prefer to purchase the gifts yourself, please plan to drop them off by Wednesday, December 18th.

This year, we are serving twice as many children as last year, and your kindness will help ensure that every child feels the joy and magic of Christmas. Your generosity makes a lasting difference for families most in need—thank you for helping us make this season brighter for them all.

With heartfelt gratitude,

The Staff and Board of Uni Pres Kindercottage



CAREGIVER RESOURCES

Join others caring for loved ones with dementia or other disabilities to receive support and encouragement. All support groups are free of charge thanks to funding from AgeSmart Community Resources.

COFFEE TALK

Make new friends while learning about resources and strategies to support your caregiving.

Mondays, 9-10:30 a.m.
Verona Coffee Company,
101 E. Main, Collinsville

Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m.
Jan's Naturals,
2929 N. Center, Maryville

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

First and third **Tuesday**,
1:30-3:00 p.m.
St. John's Community Care,
Collinsville and on Zoom

First and third **Monday**
1:00-2:30 p.m. (Starts Oct. 1)
Glen Carbon Senior Center,
157 N. Main, Glen Carbon

Second **Thursday** of every month
10:30-11:00 a.m. (Starts Sep. 11)
Edwardsville YMCA,
1200 Esic Drive, Edwardsville

*Affiliated with the Alzheimer's
Association*

MEMORY CAFE

A relaxed gathering for caregivers and their loved one with dementia focused on cognitive stimulation through reminiscing.

Tuesdays, 1:15-2:15 p.m.
Main Street Community Center,
1003 N. Main, Edwardsville

Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
St. John's Community Care,
Collinsville and on Zoom.

EVENING ZOOM GROUP

Second and fourth **Wednesday**
on Zoom, 6-7:30 p.m.

Follow us to find out about special events: [Facebook.com/stjohnscc](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnscc)

[STJOHNSCC.ORG](https://www.stjohnscc.org) | [INFO@STJOHNSCC.ORG](mailto:info@stjohnscc.org) | 618-344-5008

Our ISC Churches News + Events


ST JOHN UCC
EXTENDING GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Faith Hall at St. John UCC | 307 W Clay St | Collinsville, IL

Winter Wonderland Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, December 6th
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sunday, December 7th
10:30 am - 2:30 pm

Christmas Decorations & Vendor Fair, Crafts, Handmade Gifts &
Everything you need for Christmas!



RAISE SOME DOUGH
Help support us!

30% of sales will benefit
Trinity United Church of Christ

December 4, 2025
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm
3120 Green Mount Crossing Drive
Shiloh, IL

In Cafe Drive-Thru
Pick-Up Delivery
Enter promo code FUND4U at online checkout.



Christkindlmarkt

Sunday, December 7, 2025
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
St. John UCC, Maestown

Get in the Christmas spirit and join us for our annual Christkindlmarkt on Sunday, December 7th 11:00am - 4:00pm.

St. John UCC, 1301 Franklin St, Maestown, IL

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 Bookkeeper - St. John UCC Fairview Heights](#)

[Part-time Facilities Manager - St. Paul UCC Belleville](#)

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](#)

