



Reflections From Our Conference Minister

AN ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER

based on Joel 2 and Psalm 51

O Holy One,
amid the clamoring voices that distract and divide us,
we strain to hear Your voice calling,
"Return to Me with all your heart."

We wonder:
Is it too late?
Can we truly make lasting change?
And if we face the truth,
can we still face and trust one another?

Yet believing that You can help us create the world

You intend for all Your beloved children,
we come before You in need of grace.

Have mercy on us.
Forgive us, O Holy One.

Forgive us
for confusing faith with politics,
for choosing loyalty to power and party over loyalty to Christ,
for dividing ourselves into "us" and "them,"
for preferring comfort to costly discipleship,
for wounding with our words and our policies,
for remaining silent when truth required courage,
for allowing fear to eclipse our faith.

In Your presence, we humbly stand.
Create in us clean hearts, O God.
Renew steadfast spirits within us.

In division, sow unity rooted in truth.
In deception, raise up integrity.
In unrest, plant peace.
In fear, awaken courageous righteousness.

Call us back to humility, to prayer, to obedience,
and to Your steadfast love.

Revive Your Church.
Awaken Your people.
Guide our leaders.
Protect the innocent.
Heal all that is broken.

Hear us.
Forgive us.
Restore us.
In Your Power and Holy Name, we pray. Amen.

*-Rev. Shana Johnson
ISC Conference Minister*

Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



St. Paul's UCC, Ohlman-
Rev. Dr. Steve (Debbi) Nance



St. Paul UCC, Okawville

Retired Pastor- Rev. Nancy Spier-Lee

[Submit prayer requests here](#)

Rev. Lisa Hart- prayers for
a swift and complete recovery
following recent knee surgery.

Rosemary Oglesby- healing
blessings for continued
progress in recovering from
knee surgery.



Please join us as we celebrate the

INSTALLATION SERVICE

OF
Rev. Debby Harness

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND @ 3PM

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST | 303 S. SMITH STREET | SMITHTON, ILLINOIS 62285
Fellow clergy are invited to arrive at 2:45pm to robe and wear their favorite stole.
Light reception immediately following.



STRONGER TOGETHER

All who believed were together and had all things in common

-Acts 2:44



Drawing inspiration from Acts 2, this year's Day of Discipleship serves as a profound reminder that, as disciples of faith, we are Stronger Together through sharing our distinctive talents, worshiping collectively, engaging in prayer and fellowship, song and Word. Workshop offerings will encompass a variety of areas, including worship, programming, leadership, and outreach. This shared journey in faith and community illustrates the remarkable power of unity and underscores how each of us contributes to uplift the Church.

Saturday, March 21, 2026 St. John UCC, Mascoutah

Don't wait to get registered! Register online via the QR Code, by clicking [HERE](#), or by completing and forwarding this fillable and printable [REGISTRATION FORM](#).

Registration will close Friday, March 6th.



Schedule-

8:00 am to 8:45 am Check-in and Continental (light) breakfast
9:00 am to 9:15 am Opening Devotion
9:15 am to 9:45 am Introduction of Workshop Leaders and Workshops
-Break-
10:00 am to 11:00 am Worship with Keynote Speaker, Rev. Dr. Jeff Moore
11:00 am to Noon Lunch
Noon to 12:45 pm Workshops
12:45 pm to 1:00 pm Gathering Back in the Sanctuary for Closing Time

Workshop Offerings-

- Strengthening Local Church Governance and Communication Practices

Rev. Dr. Jeff Moore, Senior Pastor, Webster Groves Christian Church

- Strengthening Youth Programming

Dr. Jill Mayer, Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation, and Andy Mayer, Youth Leader, St. Paul UCC, Waterloo

- Strengthening Outreach Through Community-Based Programs

Rev. Jennifer Sowell, Senior Pastor, and Amanda Voegelé, HHH Director, St. John UCC, Collinsville

- Strengthening Praise and Worship Through Contemporary Music

Evan Bosaw, Musical Director and Praise Band Leader, Friedens UCC, Troy

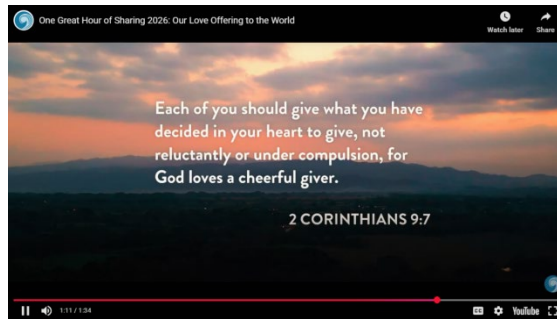
- Strengthening Creative Worship Through Liturgy and Poetry

Rev. Tim Powers-Reed, Pastor, and Eileen Hoag, Lay Leader, Trinity UCC, Belleville

Meet our Day of Discipleship Keynote Speaker - Rev. Dr. Jeff Moore

An ordained United Church of Christ Minister with partner status in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Jeff has been pastor of Webster Groves Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since March of 2008. Jeff has a Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Leadership from Aurora University, Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Eden Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. His Doctor of Ministry work focused on the question of "Christian Connectedness," and explored this from biblical and liberation standpoints in conversation with the poetry of Guatemalan poet and theologian, Julia Esquivel. Jeff's PhD dissertation focused on Theological Education in the Lesotho Evangelical Church as it relates to the church's vision and commitment to "abundant life" (John 10:10), and presents a descriptive study following a three-year program of ethnographic and theological research in Lesotho, southern Africa. [Read full bio at iscucc.org](#)





Click to watch [One Great Hour of Sharing \(OGHS\) video](#)



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response.

2026 Suggested Offering Date: March 15th

[Order Print Resources](#)

[Download Leader's Guide](#)

[Download Resource Bundle](#)



Rev. Jennifer Sowell nominated to serve as next Associate General Minister, Love of Church by [Charles Jefferson, Jr.](#) | published on Feb 9, 2026

The Rev. Jennifer Sowell, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ with more than two decades of pastoral leadership experience, has been nominated to serve a full term as the next Associate General Minister, Love of Church. If confirmed by the General Synod of the UCC, Sowell would fill a role that has been vacant since the [December 2023 departure of the Rev. Traci Blackmon](#).

The search committee was relaunched right after the conclusion of General Synod 35, [when the original search committee, which began its work in August 2024 came up short in identifying a candidate](#). The search committee unanimously voted to choose Sowell as their nominee. The United Church of Christ Board, at a special meeting on January 12, 2026, voted to nominate her for election by the General Synod. The next step is a special meeting of the General Synod in May.

Sowell, who currently serves as senior pastor of [St. John United Church of Christ in Collinsville, IL](#), says this call to serve the national church is deeply personal.

"I still believe the church is the first place of resistance to and healing from the brokenness of our world," Sowell said. "It is where we celebrate the rainbow of God's diversity, repent when we fall short, and offer real healing to those who have been rejected. A thriving church can transform both lives and communities." [Read](#)



Special Meeting of General Synod 35 to take place in May by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Feb 10, 2026

To accompany [the announcement of a candidate for Associate General Minister for Love of Church](#), the United Church of Christ General Synod 35 has been called for a Special Meeting.

The meeting is planned as a virtual gathering on May 9, 6-9:00 p.m. ET.

Delegates to the Special Meeting will be the same delegates who served at the regular General Synod meeting in 2025.

"This will be the first time a special General Synod was called for decision-making purposes," said General Minister and President/CEO, the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson. "To be able to bring the General Synod back together for this important decision in the life of the church, affords the church to live into the governing documents and allows the wider church to elect and affirm the ministry of the AGM."

The search committee has presented the Rev. Jennifer Sowell, who currently serves as senior pastor of [St. John UCC in Collinsville, Illinois](#), as the candidate. [Read](#)



Love of Children

FEBRUARY 2026



Monthly
Newsletter

UCC Love of Children Newsletter and
Resources

*Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't
Have to Heal From Review*

Mission

To strengthen the faith of the next generation by partnering with congregations to build dynamic and holistic Children's Ministry initiatives.

Vision

To strengthen the faith of the next generation by partnering with congregations to build dynamic and holistic Children's Ministry initiatives.

Why we do this work

The Love of Children program is rooted in our deep appreciation for Jesus urging his disciples and onlookers to let the little children come to him. Protocol and barriers were removed so that the youngest in the crowd would be able to see and experience Christ for themselves. We want to model for others that embodied belief-that ALL are welcome. And so we are working to create a network of support for children, caregivers and ministry leaders that equip all to center children in their midst so they can see Christ and God at work in the church and the world. We want to nurture a generation of disciples to be deeply rooted in their faith, clear in their commitment to Jesus and change the world and Church for the better.

New website and resources being offered- [Children's Ministries - United Church of Christ](#)

[Read the February Newsletter](#)

[Access the Resources](#)

[Watch the Video](#)



Upcoming Boundary Training for Active or Retired Authorized UCC Ministers

~Next class- March 3rd and 4th~

Click [HERE](#) to view a listing of
dates, times and registration links.



Lent 2026 resources invite deepening practices for collective liberation, vulnerability, growth by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Feb 17, 2026

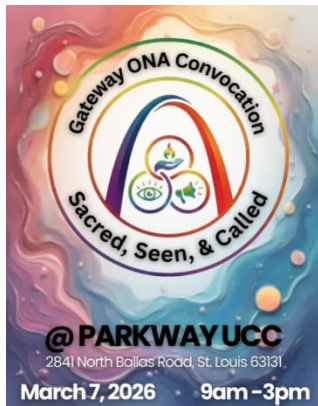
Lent begins this year as movements of protection and protest have emerged in cities across the country in Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, Maine, and elsewhere.

Some of the learning arising from these movements "is that the more we have built community and laid the groundwork for collective action, the more capacity we will have to respond in moments of crisis," said Sharon R. Fennema.

Fennema created this year's [UCC Racial Justice Ministries resource of small, daily practices for collective liberation](#) for the 40 days of Lent.

"Working to build those skills and capacities for collective liberation over time helps us bring others into the movement when they are ready and the need is great. What better way to spend our Lenten season this year than deepening our practices of collective liberation so that we can live into our callings as followers of the One who knelt and washed his friends feet, reminding them to 'love one another as I have loved you,'" Fennema said.

The [Practicing Collective Liberation Lent Resources](#) invite people into doable and meaningful practices like, on day 20, helping a neighbor with a small task, or on day 11, putting the local immigration rights hotline number in your phone. Each daily practice suggestion is accompanied with Scripture. [Read](#)



Gateway ONA Annual Convocation

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Doors open at 8:00 AM and light breakfast food available; Worship will begin at 9:00 AM. Ending at 3:00 PM

Place: Parkway UCC on Ballas Road, St. Louis, MO

Theme: "ONA: Sacred, Seen, and Called"

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Derek Terry, Interim Executive Director of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ

[2025 General Synod - Derek Terry Full Speech](#)

Workshops for 2026

Gender Inclusivity; Leader: Jordan Braxton (she/her/hers)

ONA 101 The ONA Process; Leader: Barb Biedenstein (she/her/hers)

The Sacred Honor of Parenting our Trans Kids; Leaders: Lisa Brennan (she/her), Kyle Friels (he/him), Rene Friels (she/her), Karen Rudolph (she/her), Nancy Slusarski

(she/her)

Trans in StL - My Experience; Leader: Krissy Avis-Rouse (they/them/she/her)

ONA 201 Living into Your ONA Covenant; Leaders: Rev. Richard Oberle (he/him) and Ashley Ramirez (she/they)

Legislative Issues; Leaders: Katy Erker-Lynch (she/they) & Atem Richardson (they/them)

The Wide Wonderful World of Advocacy: Be Not Afraid; Leader: Jeanette Mott Oxford (ze/zir/zirs)

Purple Sundays A Unique Way to Support Brain Health and Connection; Leader: Sarah Lovegreen (she/her)

Finding My Place; Leader: Beth Boemler (she/her)

Seeds for the Resistance?; Leader: Rev. Monty Jackson (he/him)

Joy at the Crossroads: Intersectionality, Faith, and Resistance; Leader: Rev. Derek Terry (he/him)

Biblical "Clobber" Texts: Leader: Rev. Dr. Deb Krause (she/her)

Rejecting the Christian Nationalist Homophobic Bible and Reclaiming the Heart of Our Faith; Leader; Rev. Dr. Deb Krause (she/her)

Having Difficult Conversations; Leader: Rev. LaVetta J. Ross (she/her)

The Eden Seminary Bookstore will again be on site with lots of resources.

Registration Link: <https://www.zeffy.com/.../open-and-affirming-annual...>

Any questions, contact Lorin Cope at buckeyeohio@hotmail.com or 314-772-4772



ISC Pride March Meeting

Our next ISC Pride meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm via Zoom**. During this gathering, we will be spending time discussing Rainbow Camp, which ISC Pride assists in organizing in partnership with the Illinois South Conference. With camp dates set for August 7–8, 2026 at the Dubois Center, this meeting will be an important opportunity for those interested in supporting, planning, and promoting this vibrant ministry to get involved. If possible, I would appreciate including the meeting date and time, along with a brief note that we will be focusing on Rainbow Camp planning and coordination. This is a meaningful collaboration between ISC Pride and the Conference, and we are eager to broaden engagement.

The next ISC Pride meeting will be held **March 15, 2025, at 7:00 pm** via Zoom. The meeting link can be received by contacting Rev. Tim Powers-Reed at illinitchr@gmail.com.



year!

St. John UCC Fairview Heights 2025 Donation/Challenge

St. John UCC, Fairview Heights, as a UCC Open and Affirming congregation, is trying to live out their commitment to the LGBTQ plus community. We are happy to say that in 2025 we raised over \$1300 for the UCC Open and Affirming coalition. It can be a challenge for us and other churches to do the same or better this

-Submitted by Judy Schmitt of St. John UCC, Fairview Heights



**THE UCC'S 2026 CLIMATE
HOPE ART CONTEST
NOW OPEN!**

The 2026 Climate Hope Art Contest!

The theme this year is "A Future with Hope." Children and youth are invited to draw, paint, or color works of art that bring this theme to life. We will have winners for different age groups and an overall winner who will receive an all-expense paid trip to visit Washington, DC with a parent or guardian.

[Register your congregation now to participate!](#)

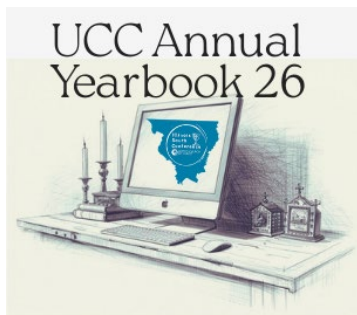
We'll accept art submissions from February 6th to March 20th.



New HANDBOOK FOR VISITATION with CHILDREN AND YOUTH from UCC Wellness Ministries

Visiting a child or youth with one or more family members present differs from visiting adults. Meeting the needs of these two distinct age groups simultaneously can be challenging.

Pediatric chaplains and faith formation leaders are the primary contributors to this Handbook. Some visits will occur in a hospital, while others will take place in pediatric rehabilitation, and many more will happen in their family homes. **[Read more and order](#)**



UCC Database is open for Yearbook information entry as of January 26th

Emails with instructions for Yearbook Reporting were sent to the churches on Friday, January 23rd. We are so grateful for your efforts in helping us to keep records up to date. Thank you!

Questions- reach out to Debbie at **dkesner@iscucc.org**.





Global Ministries

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



“Jerusalem’s Old City: A Future in the Balance” – A WCC Fact Sheet

by [Middle East and Europe](#) | published on Feb 17, 2026 This fact sheet is a product of the work of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI) under the EU-sponsored project entitled “Maintaining a Lively Palestinian and Bedouin Presence in EAST Jerusalem Through Protective Presence, Monitoring, Documenting, and Advocacy.”

Introduction: A Call to Conscience

Jerusalem’s Old City, a place of profound spiritual significance to Christians, Jews, and Muslims worldwide, is more than a historical treasure. It is a living city, home to a vibrant and resilient Palestinian community that has stewarded its heritage for centuries. In line with its mandate to seek peace and justice in Israel and Palestine and to advocate for vulnerable communities globally, the World Council of Churches (WCC) presents this fact sheet as an educational tool for church leaders, policymakers, and the international public. It shows the pressing challenges facing the Old City’s Palestinian residents, advocates for a sustainable and just future where its unique cultural and religious identity can thrive, and provides options that can be pursued from a developmental perspective.

[Click here to access the whole document.](#)

Global Ministries Job Openings:

-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](#)

-Accounting Clerk The Accounting Clerk supports the financial operations of the organization by performing routine accounting tasks, maintaining accurate financial records, and assisting with reporting and compliance requirements. This position plays a vital role in ensuring the financial integrity and transparency expected of a nonprofit organization. **Location:** Indianapolis, Indiana **Status:** Exempt, Full-time (hybrid) [Download job description](#)

ISC Hunger Action Team - Facing Hunger in Your Community



The Hunger Action Team would like to recognize ZION UCC, MARION for their “SOUPER BOWL” MISSION PROJECT. The big winner of this “Souper Bowl” was the MARION MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE FOOD PANTRY and local families in need. Zion members were invited to donate non perishable food and cash donations. Their goal was to collect \$500 and 500 food items. This goal was exceeded - \$541 and 638 food items were donated to the local food pantry. To all who donated - thanks for being a Game Changer and “Tackling Hunger”. Heartfelt thanks to Zion, under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Reverend John Holst. Neighbors helping neighbors!

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...

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

News from DuBois Center



MORE than just another SUMMER JOB! Energetic, child-focused, fun-loving with a heart for ministry – sound like you or someone you know? Consider whether an amazing summer at DuBois Center might be the opportunity you have been looking for. We are looking for dedicated individuals ages 18+ to be cabin counselors/activity leaders! FAITH. FUN. HARD WORK. GREAT FRIENDS. LONG HOURS. AMAZING MEMORIES. Gain practical experience, build your resume and make a difference in the lives of hundreds of kids! Job descriptions and application packets are available at duboiscenter.org/summer-camp-staff/.

Season runs May 26 – July 24. Questions? Contact us at director@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202

More Summer Camp sessions filling or closed!
267 Campers registered to date! Hurry and get signed up!

For more info on summer camp sessions: <https://duboiscenter.org/summer-camps/>
To register: <https://cwngui.campwise.com/apps/onlineereg/pages/Index.html?AppID=DuboisCtr!d8b2c5&LocCde=CA0000&CustRes=Customer/DuBois>



2026 Summer Camp Schedule Updates

Camps are filling up quickly!
Register soon at **DuBoisCenter.org**

The grade listed next to each camp is the grade campers will have completed as of Summer 2026

	Main Camp	Rustic Village
June 14-16	Discovery (1st-3rd) GIRLS: Almost Full	
	Settler (3rd-5th) GIRLS: Almost Full BOYS: Full	Horse Play (5th-7th)
June 14-19	LIT Camp (11th-12th) Leadership in Training	Outback (7th-9th)
June 17-19	Camp Quest (1st-3rd)	
	Settler (3rd-5th)	Splash (5th-7th)
June 21-26	Art Explosion (5th-8th)	Saddle 'Em Up (7th-9th)
	Base Camp (6th-8th) GIRLS: Almost Full	
June 24-26		Rustic Sampler (4th-6th) GIRLS: Almost Full
June 28-30	Just You & Me ALL: Almost Full (Adult & Child ages 5-7)	
July 5-10	High School Week on Rustic (9th-12 th grades)	Drenched GIRLS: Almost Full Wrangler GIRLS: Almost Full X-Plore GIRLS: Almost Full
July 12-14	Discovery (1st-3rd) ALL: Full	
		Trekkin' It (5-7th) BOYS: Full
July 12-17	Settler (3rd-5th) ALL: Full	Giddy Up (6-8th) GIRLS: Full Dunk'd (7-9th) BOYS: Full
July 15-17	Quest (1st-3rd) GIRLS: Full	GIRLS: Almost Full
July 20-22	Just You & Me (Adult & Child ages 5-7)	
August 7-8	Rainbow Camp (all ages)	

DuBois Center is the Camp & Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ.

DuBois Center needs your TLC! TWO Service Saturdays- March 7th AND May 9th

Youth and adult fellowship groups, families, individuals, everyone is invited to lend a helping hand as we prepare our facilities for the busy spring and summer season. Projects vary, depending on the skills of workers and the weather, but a tired muscle or two and a great sense of satisfaction are guaranteed. There is wood to be stacked, leaves to be raked and buildings to be cleaned and painted. There are carpentry projects, as well as others requiring special skills. The work may not be glamorous, but it makes a BIG DIFFERENCE!

We'll provide lunch, so please [RSVP here](#) so we can make sure we have enough food for everyone! Check out the links below for more information:

- [Typical Schedule and What to Bring](#)
- [Directions and Map to DuBois Center](#)

DuBois Center 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 Events

REGISTRATION OPEN !

[More Info Here](#)

Council for Health and Human
Services Ministry News



Join us for the
43rd Annual

Hoyleton Honors

130 YEARS:
A Legacy of Care

FEBRUARY
27
2026

REGENCY CONFERENCE
CENTER BALLROOM

400 Regency Park
O'Fallon, IL 62269

*Please join us in celebration
of our legacy and the future.*

6:00PM- Cocktail Reception
7:00PM- Dinner, Program, and Auction
9:00PM- Music and Dancing

Honorees

Mission Champion Salem United Church of Christ of Alhambra
Community Partnership Computype
Community Impact The Maschhoffs
Hoyleton Enthusiast Donna Davis
Empowerment Champion Tom Benedick

Purchase tickets at
hoyleton.org/events



Contact us at philanthropy@hoyleton.org or
618-688-4742





With Grateful Hearts

We extend our sincere appreciation to our church family for the incredible love you have shown to our little learners and their families. During this special month where love is celebrated, your kindness, generosity, and prayers have truly been felt throughout our center. Because of your support, our children are nurtured in a safe, joyful, and faith-filled environment where they can grow, learn, and thrive. Many of the families we serve are



navigating challenging seasons, and your compassion makes a meaningful difference in their lives.

As we continue to grow and care for those most in need, we humbly ask that you keep Uni Pres Kindercottage in your prayers. If you feel led to further bless our precious little ones, we invite you to visit our website wish list to see how you can partner with us in supporting their continued development.

With gratitude and appreciation,
Aimee Hart
Executive Director
Uni Pres Kindercottage



Five Years of Growth: Young Boy thrives in Early Childhood Education at Unleashing Potential February 12, 2026 | CHHSM-Member Ministry Contribution

In 2018, Vanessa* welcomed the birth of her only child, Henry*. When it was time to return to work, Vanessa dreamed of finding an early childhood education (ECE) center that provided an environment where Henry was well cared for, that focused on quality education, and where Henry would be prepared for kindergarten.

She researched and found [Caroline Mission](#), the ECE center at [Unleashing Potential](#) (UP) in St. Louis. She liked that UP was recommended, accredited, high-quality, affordable, close to work, and that during lunch breaks, she could spend quality time with Henry and be on-site to feed him. Vanessa remembers that the ECE Director sat down and talked with her about any question she had. The director showed Vanessa the center and explaining what would happen in his daily schedule. Vanessa felt reassured that Henry was in good hands. [Read](#)



For Emmaus Homes and St. John's UCC, Intentionality Builds Friendships February 12, 2026 | CHHSM-Member Ministry Contribution

Sometimes big changes begin with the simple things. A plate filled with food. A laugh shared between neighbors. A picnic area at the local park. That was the scene one day in January 2026, when [Emmaus Homes](#) clients and members of [St. John's UCC](#) in Weldon Spring, Mo., came together. At first glance, it looked like any other picnic, with food and conversation. But this was more than a picnic. It was the first step in a new partnership: a Bible Study

between neighbors.

The idea started with Emmaus' Chaplain, the Rev. Andrea Asselmeier, who has long believed that inclusion grows out of relationship. She wanted a space where Emmaus clients and neighbors from St. John's could truly get to know one another on a personal level—not just through formal programs, but through friendship. [Read](#)

The Gathering to Feature Consecration of CHHSM's Nollau Institute Class as Diakonal Ministers February 12, 2026 | [Barb Powell](#)

One of the highlights of [The Gathering: Many Gifts, One Spirit](#)—which takes place March 24-26, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis—will be the recognition and consecration of this year's graduating class of CHHSM's Nollau Leadership Institute.

The culminating event of the year-long Nollau program takes place Wednesday evening, March 25, at 5 p.m. at [St. Peter's UCC in Carmel, Ind.](#), a suburb of Indianapolis. A reception will follow this special worship service. The Rev. Chad Abbott, conference minister of the UCC's [Indiana-Kentucky Conference](#), will preach.



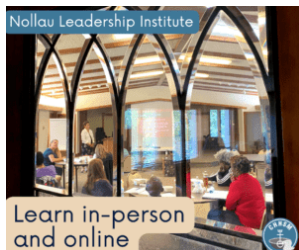
MARCH 24-26, 2026
INDIANAPOLIS

During the consecration litany of the service, Nollau class members will receive basins and towels, which represent their call to be one in health and human service leadership.

Each Nollau classmate creates a final capstone project. The capstones help Nollau graduates express what they believe serving leadership to be. The projects will be on display Tuesday, March 24, from 4:45 to 6:45 p.m. during a Gathering reception at the Indianapolis ArtsGarden. The Nollau graduates will be on hand to talk about their capstones during the reception.

The Gathering also will have short worship services March 24 and 25 at 8:30 a.m., and a closing worship March 26 at 11:15 a.m. The services will include prayer, a scripture reading, a time for reflection and conversation, and a hymn. An offering will be taken to benefit a local faith-based charity.

Unique to The Gathering, there will be a silent reflection space open to all attendees during the event. That space will be the location of a Friends (Quaker) worship service on Wednesday to which all are invited. The Friends service will be a silent worship experience that will allow attendees to reflect on the conference scripture and theme. [Read and register](#)



Nollau Institute Class of 2026-27

Enrollment is currently open for the next class of the Nollau Leadership Institute. CHHSM's signature health and human service leadership program has graduated some 300-plus participants as Diakonal Ministers in the past 20 years. [Read more](#)





Medical Equipment Loan Program

Equipment Loaned

- Wheelchairs
- Transport Chairs
- Rollators
- Raised Toilet Seats
- Bed canes
- Bath benches
- Walkers with and without wheels
- Canes - straight or 4-prong base
- Commodes
- Knee scooters
- Shower stools
- Crutches

We are open to loan and accept equipment returns and donations Monday-Friday, 9am-4:30pm.
Please call 618-344-5008 before coming to determine if we have the equipment needed available. We hold the equipment in your name until the next scheduled day.
Email info@stjohnscc.org for more information or to reserve equipment. Voice calls will be returned within one business day.

ST. JOHN'S
COMMUNITY CARE

222 Goethe Ave,
Collinsville, IL 62234
www.stjohns.org

SJCC is in dire need of medical equipment!

This icy Winter season has the community needing medical equipment, and our resources are depleted! If you have wheelchairs, rollators, knee scooters, or any of the items on this list that are not in use, please don't hesitate to drop them at our Collinsville location Monday - Friday, 9 AM-4:30 PM. Reach out to 618-344-5008 or stjohns.org.



St. John's Community Care Volunteers Needed!

St. John's CC is in great need of volunteers to serve as receptionists, program assistants, and/or to assist with craft activities, and craft clean-up. Call 618-344-5008 to volunteer!

Our ISC Churches News + Events



Christ UCC Dupo Wurstmart

Sunday, March 15th 11:30 am - 3:00 pm while supplies last \$15/plate, Kids ages 5-11 \$6

Carry-out or Dine in: outdoor seating available. 220 S. 3rd St., Dupo, IL



Fish Fry

DINNER



Friday, Feb 20th

414 W Hanover St
New Baden, IL 62265

4:00 PM - 6:30 PM

\$15/Dinner

Dinners Include: Cod Tail, Catfish, or Fried shrimp, mac & cheese, hush puppies, coleslaw, fries, and dessert

Drive Thru only.
Questions or large orders,
call 618-588-4135

www.facebook.com/NBZUCC
www.zionuccnb.net

Bowls of
Goodness

4TH ANNUAL
SOUP AND CHILI
COOKOFF



SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 21,
2026
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Adults - \$12.00
Kids - 12 & under - \$6.00
Includes unlimited soup & chili tasting,
drink (water, tea, coffee, or lemonade),
AND dessert
Hog dogs available for purchase separately



St. John UCC
2901 Nameoki Rd
Granite City IL
618-877-6060

Come join us...

Concordia United Church of Christ
7600 State Route 163
Corner of 163 & Concordia Road
(Millstadt)

PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST
(Pancakes: Buttermilk, Oatmeal or Gluten-Free)

February 21, 2026
7:00 am to 10:00 am

PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST
(Pancakes: Buttermilk, Oatmeal or Gluten-Free)

February 21, 2026
7:00 am to 10:00 am

Adults - \$10.00
Children - \$6.00
Under 5 - Free

All You Can
Eat!!



Baked
Goods
For Sale



Are you interested in Pulpit Supply?

Reach out via email to the
ISC Committee
on Ministry Co-chairs.

Rev. Lisa Hart- lisa@revhart.net
Mark Walz- mewalz5925@hotmail.com



If you are reading a print version of the ISC *Weekly Connection*, consider scanning the QR code or click [HERE](#) and subscribe to receive upcoming issues straight to your email inbox. Not only does this ensure you won't miss an issue but it gives opportunity to click on the links to full articles, webinar registration sites, and more. It only takes a minute to sign up. Reach out to Missy at 618-654-2125 or mloyet@iscucc.org with any questions or with news for the *Weekly Connection*.

[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](#)

[Contemporary Band Leader - St. Paul UCC Waterloo](#)

[Contemporary Keyboard Musician - St. Paul UCC Waterloo](#)

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-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](#)

