

April 21, 2026



Illinois South Conference

# Weekly Connection

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



Affirming Our W.I.S.E. Covenant



NURTURE THE SOUL

# LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

Thursday, April 23rd | 3:30 PM Eastern



**Abbie Chronister, MDiv**  
*Chair, UCC Mental Health Network & Campus Ministry Associate at ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries*



**Rev. Sean Witty**  
*Vice-Chair, UCC Mental Health Network, Ordained Minister in the UCC & American Baptist Churches USA, founder of Unhurried Minds*



**Rev. Stephanie Niemela**  
*Michigan Conference, Alumni of the United Theological Seminary Twin Cities, & licensed counselor*



Register



### Mental Health Sunday

Reports from SAMHSA and CAHMI in recent years have shown that approximately 1 in 4 Americans have had a diagnosable mental health condition. With this prevalence in mind, discussing mental health experiences in a way that normalizes conversation and care—particularly from the pulpit—is vital to healthy and holistic spiritual care. **The UCC annually recognizes the third Sunday in May as Mental Health Sunday, and this year it lands on May 17, 2026. But what even is Mental Health Sunday, why should you host one, and how do you go about planning a worship service dedicated to mental health?** You are invited to join Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund (UCC National Staff) and members of the UCC Mental Health Network's Board of Directors as they discuss implementing Mental Health Sunday in your own ministry context.

Register: [https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_IJ8vG-CKTvaUINocvn3r9Q#/registration](https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IJ8vG-CKTvaUINocvn3r9Q#/registration)

Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



**Zion (St. Joe) UCC, Waterloo-**  
Rev. Patrick (Kathy) Poole  
Pastor Tim Burns



**St. John UCC, Wood River-**  
Rev. John (Jackie Gordon Pawloski) Pawloski

**Retired Pastor-**  
Rev. Jane Hillman

[Submit prayer requests here](#)

UCC Global, National, + Regional News



**THE UCC'S FOURTH ANNUAL**  
**EARTH SUMMIT**  
*A Future with Hope*  
**SATURDAY, APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> @ 1:00 PM ET**



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**REV. DR. KENNETH SAMUEL**



**Dr. Shalanda Baker,**  
former Director of U.S. Dept  
of Energy, Office of Energy  
Justice & Equity



**Brionté McCorkle**  
Executive Director of Georgia  
Conservation Voters




**Chandra Farley**  
Chief Sustainability Officer,  
City of Atlanta

### April 25th: Earth Summit

An inspiring keynote speaker, leading practitioners in advancing just and affordable energy, amazing artwork from children and youth... These are just a few of the highlights for the UCC's Earth Summit on **Saturday at 1 pm ET/10 am PT**. The Jim Antal Keynote Address will be delivered by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel, a renowned advocate and organizer for justice in the Atlanta, Georgia area.

**[Register now to join us!](#)**

This two-and-a-half-hour summit will also include a slide show of our children and youth art contest finalists as well as a panel discussion entitled "Power to the People: Energy Justice for an Equitable Future," featuring Dr. Shalanda Baker, former Director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Justice and Equity; Chandra Farley, Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Atlanta; and Brionté McCorkle, Executive Director of Georgia Conservation Voters.



**Dedication  
Ribbon Cutting  
Light Refreshments  
April 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm**  
930 W Cherry St, Marion IL,  
North Parking Lot  
A time to celebrate our contribution to  
a more resilient future for our church,  
our community, and our shared world.  
Progress – Stewardship – Hope

### Zion UCC, Marion: Celebrating a Milestone in Environmental Stewardship

"We are thrilled as a congregation to witness this project reach completion and see our kiosk display show our congregation the impact it is having on our energy consumption. Welcome to Green Energy. Today, we2 are at 50% capacity for our solar panels and already meeting 75% of our electricity needs. I can not wait to see when the Earth rotates enough for us to get a full gift of direct sunlight.

Grateful to all the folks who have been praying for us through this long process! We have arrived! We Care, We Share, We Serve."

-Rev. John Holst



## Strengthen the Church

### The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC.

The theme for 2026 is "Sent Forth in Love." Congregations are invited to participate in a scripture study, share announcements in your newsletters or bulletins, and display a poster to promote the offering. Participating in the offering helps foster connections with the wider church and create possibilities for the church of tomorrow.

Grab your materials [HERE](#).



**MEET THE NOMINEE**  
**April 16<sup>th</sup> @ 5:45 PM Eastern**  
Join us for an opportunity to meet the nominee for the position of Associate General Minister, Love of Church-  
**REV. JENNIFER SOWELL**  
Rev. Sowell will offer her remarks, with time for Q&A.

### Meet the Nominee Q&A gives church glimpse into vision, priorities of AGM Nominee by [Charles Jefferson, Jr.](#) | published on Apr 21, 2026

As the United Church of Christ prepares to gather for a special call to the 35th General Synod, a first in the denomination's nearly 69 year history, a special 'Meet the Nominee' webinar was held on Thursday, April 16 to give the wider church an opportunity to be in conversation with the nominee for Associate General Minister for Love of Church, the [Rev. Jennifer Sowell](#). Click to [Read](#) full article.



**CONVERSATIONS WITH  
REV. DR. KAREN GEORGIA THOMPSON  
& REV. JENNIFER SOWELL**  
Wed., April 29<sup>th</sup> - 6:00 PM ET  
Thurs., April 30<sup>th</sup> - 1:00 PM ET

### A Conversation with Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson and Rev. Jennifer Sowell

Leaders who come together to nurture community often discover a shared vision rooted in how they live the values and mission they serve. This April, Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, warmly welcomes Rev. Jennifer Sowell, nominee for Associate General Minister for the Love of Church to have a conversation and lean into the Programmatic Priorities of the NMUCC in a two-part series.

- **Wednesday, April 29, 2026 05:00 PM CT**
- **Thursday, April 30, 2026 12:00 PM CT**

[Learn More and Register](#)



**HITZ HOME**  
My Life. My Choice. My Home.

### Hitz Memorial Home Celebrate Commemorative Stone Garden and Retirement of Debt

You are Invited!!

Hitz Home would like to invite you to celebrate two milestones, the dedication of our Commemorative Stone Garden and the retirement of the Hitz debt. Please join us at Hitz Home on Saturday, May 9th at 2:00 pm to help celebrate both this accomplishment and the new addition to the Hitz Home entrance.

As you may be aware, many years ago, Hitz faced a large debt to repay, which has been quite cumbersome to the finances of the home. By the grace of God, through many donors and friends who have made generous contributions, we are pleased to announce that the long term debt has now been repaid.

To celebrate that milestone, at this ceremony, we will also hold a "note burning" after which, you are all invited to join us for refreshments in honor of these accomplishments.

Although Hitz is now debt free, future donations through the Commemorative Stone Garden will be used to support the ongoing needs of Hitz.

We are looking forward to celebrating with you all, on this incredibly special day and may God bless each and everyone of you for your devoted support in the past, present, and future.

Hitz Memorial Home  
Board of Directors



### More than just another summer job! Give Dubois Center a look-

The most impactful piece of our summer camp programming is our staff. Year after year, young adults dedicate the bulk of their summer to providing the best experience possible for the children and youth in their care – from time in the lake to vespers around the campfire. Campers look to their counselors for guidance, safety, inspiration, leadership, and fun. Counselors spend long hours in hot weather cultivating "camp magic," and in return they build life skills and lifelong relationships with their fellow staff members.

Camper numbers this summer have already surpassed last year, and we still have time for kids to sign up. In order to provide the best experience for our campers, we need your help to recruit additional counselors. If you or someone you know is a responsible, caring, fun-loving young adult in search of a fulfilling and exciting summer job, please email us at [director@duboiscenter.org](mailto:director@duboiscenter.org) or visit [duboiscenter.org/summer-camp-staff/](http://duboiscenter.org/summer-camp-staff/) for an application.



**Help us restock our shelves.**



### Special Church World Service Kit and Bucket Drop Off Location in St. Louis

-A message from Priscilla Self, ISC Disaster Recovery Coordinator

There will be a local site receiving CWS kits. The special drop off location and event date is:

**Sharefest at the LifeWise location at 1321 South 11<sup>th</sup> in St. Louis, MO 63104**

**Saturday, October 10, 9:30- 11:30 am**

Susan Kendrick - Sharefest Coordinator

[skendrick@moumethodist.org](mailto:skendrick@moumethodist.org)

(573) 473-6850

Your support helps CWS put hope into the hands of families recovering from disaster. From hygiene items to clean-up tools, your generosity fills the kits that help communities rebuild. Our warehouse shelves are running low. Help us stock up and stay prepared: <https://cwskits.org/>

[Matching grant through the Global HOPE office](https://www.ucc.org/post-disaster-resources-for-churches)

[https://www.ucc.org/post-disaster-resources-for-churches/](https://www.ucc.org/post-disaster-resources-for-churches)

Contact Priscilla if you need more info or have any questions.

**Priscilla Self, ISC Disaster Recovery Coordinator**

618/318-0083

[pjj48@hotmail.com](mailto:pjj48@hotmail.com)

**Spring is here—time to refresh and renew!** As you tidy up church spaces, don't forget your website deserves a little spring cleaning too.

A vibrant, up-to-date website helps your church shine and makes it easier for new friends to find you:

- Swap out old photos for fresh ones
- Keep your events page current
- Check that all links work smoothly

Ready for a website that's easy to update and truly reflects your community? The UCC Everywhere Program is here to help! Request a demo and see how simple it can be: <https://ow.ly/xy5G50VXgMv>

**'TIS THE SEASON FOR  
SPRING  
CLEANING!**

While you are cleaning out church classrooms and spaces, don't forget to clean up your church website too!

- Remove old photos
- Remove out-of-date events, language & links
- Add fresh new photos
- Update your events page
- Make sure links are working
- If you need a new, clean, easy-to-use, website, we can help!

UCC EVERYWHERE [ucceverywhere.org](http://ucceverywhere.org)



## Boundary Awareness Training

### Training through Enkei Resolutions

September 8 & 9, 2026

Registration cost: \$65

To register, please use the link below: <https://enkei-resolutions.com/2026-boundary-training-registration/>

### Trainings through Southern New England Conference via Zoom

- Thursday, May 7, 2026, (3.0 level) - Registration closes 4/30/26
- Wednesday, June 3, 2026, (2.0 level) - Registration closes 5/27/26

Cost for the training is: SNEUCC Clergy - \$65.00; all other Clergy - \$85.00

<https://www.sneucc.org/clergy-boundary-awareness-training>



## U.S. of Kindness 250 acts of kindness initiative kicks off this week

by [Renee DeLuca](#) | published on Apr 21, 2026

The United Church of Christ has partnered with the [Values in Action](#) foundation to encourage everyone in the U.S. to join the [United States of Kindness](#) (USK) movement, and commit to completing 250 acts of kindness, celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States. While the movement has been underway already, it officially launches on Friday, April 24, when there are 250 days left in 2026—meaning one would only need to do one small act of kindness once a day to complete this mission. [Read](#)



## Upcoming Nurture the Soul Webinars

Thursday, April 23, 2:30 pm CT - [Let's Talk About It | Mental Health Sunday](#)

Thursday, May 7, 2:30 pm CT - [Proclaiming "Love Knows No Borders": Moving from Desolation to Action](#)



Join us the first Tuesday of each month at 2pm to learn more about what the UCC does at the United Nations! Hear updates from the UCC Main Representative to the UN, Donna Bollinger, on program updates, our interfaith and ecumenical partners, and upcoming events.

Tuesday, May 5, 1:00 pm CT - [This Month at the UN](#)



## Are you looking for VBS materials or to share your VBS resources?

The exchange of VBS materials can help elevate your program or another church's program. Click [HERE](#) and send in the following info and we'll add it to this section of the Weekly Connection: **(Church name)** will be hosting the **(insert name of the VBS curriculum)** on **(insert dates)** and is looking for churches to partner in sharing resources. If you are interested, please contact **(insert name)** at **(insert contact information)**.



## Are you interested in Serving as Pulpit Supply?



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

Rev. Lisa Hart- [lisa@revhart.net](mailto:lisa@revhart.net)  
Mark Walz- [mewalz5925@hotmail.com](mailto:mewalz5925@hotmail.com)



## Global Ministries

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



**Child and Elder Sponsorship Program** Supporting children and elders with the love and services they deserve is one of the greatest gifts of kindness you can share. Through your support, the Global Ministries Child and Elder Sponsorship Program partners with churches and agencies all over the world to provide services that create opportunities and affirm dignity. [Visit](#)

### Now Hiring: Development Officer (Hybrid – Indianapolis, IN)

Global Ministries is seeking a relationship-driven Development Officer to help grow fund development efforts and connect generosity to global impact.

In this role, you'll cultivate donor relationships, lead campaigns, and support work advancing justice, reconciliation, and peace in partnership with Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ.

Learn more: <https://ow.ly/yjPe50YviGV>

### Now Hiring: Controller (Hybrid – Indianapolis, IN)

Disciples Overseas Ministries is seeking a skilled and mission-driven Controller to lead financial operations and support global ministry work.

In this key leadership role, you'll oversee budgeting, financial reporting, audits, and internal controls while collaborating with partners like United Church of Christ. This position plays a vital role in ensuring strong stewardship and advancing impactful work around the world.

We're looking for someone with strong accounting experience (CPA preferred), a deep understanding of nonprofit financial practices, and a commitment to collaboration, equity, and the mission of the Church.

Learn more and apply: <https://ow.ly/PAJs50YvlmY>



The ISC Hunger Action Team would like to recognize CHRIST UCC, DUPO for their "Backpack Angels" Mission Project. Partnering with First Baptist Church and Sacred Heart Church to provide non perishable food items for weekends and holiday break. Participating children are discreetly given these backpacks to take home. Enabling them to come back to school on Monday with the good nutrition and focus they need to achieve academic success. This mission project was more important than ever during Spring Break. Students who qualify for free school breakfast and lunch didn't have access to these meals during weekends and holiday break. Church members were invited to share nonperishable food and monetary gifts to support this vital mission project. Heartfelt thanks to CHRIST UCC for their continued support of local

families in need. Under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Reverend Todd Muschaney. 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...**

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

## News from DuBois Center

### DuBois Center needs your TLC! Service Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>

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:



DUBOIS CENTER  
**SERVICE SATURDAY**  
MARCH 7 & MAY 9, 2026



RSVP at [duboiscenter.org/support-dubois/work-days/](https://duboiscenter.org/support-dubois/work-days/)

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



## FALL FESTIVAL DuBois Center

Folks, it is not too early to start thinking about those creative baskets you donate for the Silent Auction at DuBois's Fall Festival **October 4**. Take advantage of end-of-season sales, which combined with your imaginative spirits will yield good returns from those baskets Fest participants cannot resist. Again, we appreciate your support of DuBois in this way and look forward to seeing you in a few months.



### WISHLIST WEDNESDAY is here!

As always, THANK YOU to those who have already contributed to our list of summer camp needs!

### For this week, we will highlight **Camper Essentials!!**

Our Amazon list has **shower poufs, multi-pack socks, and small canvas bags to be used as hygiene care kits** and ships directly to us. If you purchase online anywhere else, simply add our address as the shipping address. If you purchase in person, just reach out to arrange drop off or pick up! Monetary donations to the cause are also welcome!

Our current Amazon Wishlist is found at: <https://a.co/0gHfHUGc>



**There's still time to sign up!!**

**Ride Day - Saturday, May 9th**

Our spring ride day is two months from today. Sign up for a ride time that fits best with your busy schedule!

Arena Ride: 10:30am. Ages 3-7 with an adult walking alongside the horse.

Trail Rides: 1:00pm, 2:30pm, 4:00pm. Ages 8+.

For more information and to sign

up: <https://duboiscenter.org/retreats/dbc-retreats/>

Mark Your Calendars  
**AUGUST 7-8, 2026**  
**RAINBOW CAMP**  
 An LGBTQIA+ Friendly, Family Camp Experience!  
 At the DuBois Center in DuBois, Illinois

For more information  
<https://duboiscenter.org/retreats/rainbow-camp/>

**Summer Camp 2026**

**357 campers now registered!**

**See graphic below update April 21, 2026**

**Hurray - get your camp registration secured.**

[MORE INFO](#)

[REGISTER](#)



**2026 Summer Camp Schedule Updates**

Camps are filling up quickly!  
 Register soon at [DuBoisCenter.org](http://DuBoisCenter.org)

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

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

## Strengthened by the Spirit—Unity in a Time of Complexity

April 13, 2026 | [Jamar Doyle](#)

Over the past several weeks, I have found myself returning again and again to the experience we shared at **The Gathering** this past March. Something powerful and sacred took place as we came together across organizations, across ministries, and across denominational expressions to learn, worship,



*Jamar Doyle*

and fellowship together united under the theme **Many Gifts, One Spirit**. It had been a long time since we had witnessed this kind of collective, ecumenical presence among faith-based human service organizations, and the collective energy was inspiring. In a time that is marked by complexity, uncertainty, and fragmentation, The Gathering offered something different. It reminded us of what is possible when we bring our individual gifts together to share in the work of creating a more equitable and just world. [Read](#)

## The Gathering Experience Leaves Participants Connected, Inspired, Thankful

April 13, 2026 | [Barb Powell](#)

For participants at this year's ecumenical [The Gathering: Many Gifts, One Spirit](#), the event was a three-day, spirit-filled opportunity to form bonds and partnerships with colleagues from other health and human service ministries. Held March 24-26, 2026, in Indianapolis, The Gathering drew almost 500 people from Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, and United Church of Christ agencies and their partner organizations. [Read](#)



*The 2026 Nollau class of diakonal ministers after the service.*



*Chris Cox, president and CEO of Hoyleton, and the Rev. Mary Schaller-Blaufuss, vice president for advancement & strategic partnerships at UCC-related Eden Theological Seminary.*



## Nollau Institute Class of 2026-27

**The Council for Health & Human Service Ministries (CHHSM)**

**1st Retreat: May 18-22, 2026**

**2nd Retreat: October 5-9, 2026**

**CHHSM Annual Gathering: March 15-19, 2027**

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.

### **Details:**

The program consists of two in-person retreats at Bellwether Farm, online interactions in between the retreats, and an additional day of programming at the 2027 CHHSM Annual Gathering, which includes the commissioning of the class as [Diakonal Ministers](#).

### **2026-27 Schedule:**

1st Retreat: May 18-22, 2026

2nd Retreat: October 5-9, 2026

CHHSM Annual Gathering: March 15-19, 2027

### **Location Information:**

Retreat Center: [Bellwether Farm](#), 4655 SR-60, Wakeman, OH 44889

Annual Gathering: Location to be announced in March 2026.

[Read more](#)

## Uni Pres Kindercottage Spring Newsletter Highlight

This spring season at Uni Pres Kindercottage (UPK) has been filled with joy, generosity, and community spirit. Our annual Easter Egg Hunt was nothing short of amazing, thanks to the outpouring of support from local churches and children's ministries who gave so generously of their time, resources, and love.

Because of these meaningful partnerships, our children experienced more than just a day of fun—they felt the warmth of a community that truly cares. From beautifully prepared Easter baskets to hundreds of colorful eggs filled with treats and surprises, every detail reflected intentional giving and kindness. The laughter, excitement, and smiles shared across our playground were a direct result of these blessings.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each church and ministry that contributed. Your commitment to uplifting children and families aligns with our mission to provide enriching, joyful experiences that support the whole child. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected community where every child feels valued and celebrated.

With gratitude,

**Uni Pres Kindercottage**

Aimee Hart, Executive Director  
618-874-6505( work)  
618-799-1417 (cell)



222 Goethe Avenue | Collinsville, IL 62234-3306  
(618) 344-5008

### St. John's Community Care Names Kayla Abbott as Executive Director

**Collinsville, IL** - St. John's Healing Community Board of Directors is pleased to announce the promotion of **Kayla Abbott** to Executive Director, recognizing her servant leadership, compassion, and commitment to the organization's mission of caring for others.

Abbott joined St. John's Community Care in 2023 as Adult Day Program Director, where she has strengthened program quality, enhanced participant experiences, and supported staff development. Her leadership has helped foster a culture rooted in dignity, respect, and compassionate care.

With more than six years of experience in senior care and therapeutic programming, Abbott previously served as Center Director at Active Day of Fort Wayne. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy from Western Illinois University and practiced Music Therapy for 4 years working directly with people of all ages living with various disabilities.

"Kayla brings both professional expertise and a heart for service," said Kevin Weinacht, Board President of St. John's Community Care. "Her faith, compassion, and leadership make her the right person to guide our organization as we continue our mission of serving others with excellence and love."

"As Executive Director, I am honored to continue the work God has called us to do at St. John's Community Care," said Abbott. "I look forward to strengthening our community, expanding our reach, and serving individuals and families with compassion and purpose."

In her new role, Abbott will focus on growing community engagement, expanding services, and continuing to build on the organization's strong, faith-centered foundation to meet the needs of those they serve.

#### About St. John's Community Care

St. John's Community Care is dedicated to serving individuals challenged by aging or disabilities through compassionate, high-quality adult day services and community-based support, guided by a mission of faith, dignity, and care for all.



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**  
 Add fulfillment to your life.  
 Come join our team helping aging and disabled adults. We are in need of:

Receptionists  
 Program Assistants - help with games/crafts  
 Craft Assistants

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

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

**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



**News from the Happy Quilters of St. John UCC, Mascoutah from their Annual Quilt Show**

The winning ticket for the I SPY Quilt was drawn April 11, 2026 at the end of the Quilt Show. Julie Edwards from New Baden won the quilt. She bought the winning ticket when the Happy Quilters visited Zion UCC in New Baden. This was one of the first churches the Happy Quilters visited. There is a lesson here: next year buy your tickets early!

The Happy Quilters appreciate your support of our mission to support DuBois Center. **Total tickets sales were \$1974.00. The quilt show was a great success, and the Happy Quilters will add to the ticket sales for a total donation of \$2500.00 to DuBois.** We thank everyone who generously purchasing tickets when we visited your church.



**Garage Sale at  
 EvUCC Highland  
 Friday, April 24  
 5:30pm to 7:30pm  
 Saturday, April 25  
 8:am to Noon  
 2520 Poplar St, Highland, IL**

Marine UCC  
**Trivia Night**

**April 25  
 7pm**

Doors open at 6:30pm \$15 per person with up to 8 people at a table.  
 Prizes for first and second place teams.  
 To register, call 618-887-4465.  
 If calling after hours, please leave your name and number of people attending.



Proceeds will go to Hoyleton Youth & Family Services to support their mission in our communities. HYFS has been committed to building stronger communities and enabling all people to realize the wholeness of life that God intends since 1895.

111 North Center St. | Marine, IL

ST. PAUL UCC PRESENTS

*Christian Illusionist*

**JARED HALL**

Kids 10 & under: Free (ticket required)  
Adults: \$10

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 7:00 PM**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 3:00 PM**



For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact the church office or scan the QR code.

**618-939-7123**



TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Tickets can be picked up at the St. Paul UCC church office in advance or held at Will Call on the day of the show.

200 N Main St | Waterloo, IL | 618-939-7123 | [www.stpaulonline.org](http://www.stpaulonline.org)



**ST. JOHN UCC CEMETERY**

**BINGO NIGHT**

**St. John UCC Granite City Glo Bingo**

**Saturday, April 25th** at the Fraternal Order of Eagles, 2558 Madison Ave, Granite City. Doors open at 6:00pm, bingo starts at 7:00pm. Tickets \$25.00 in advance, \$30.00 at the door. Admission includes Glo Bingo hat, dauber, and 10 game cards. There will also be a 50/50 Drawing and Silent Auction. Bring your own snacks. All beverages must be purchased through the venue. Proceeds to benefit the Historical Preservation of Nameoki Road Cemetery Site. For more info contact Nina Jackson 618-407-2101 or St John UCC Cemetery 618-876-5811.

Saturday, May 2, 2026

**SPRING BBQ**

11:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.



St. John UCC  
2901 Nameoki Rd  
Granite City IL

Pork Steak Plate with 2 sides \$14.00  
Brat Plate with 2 sides \$14.00

SIDES: POTATO SALAD, GREEN BEANS, OR BAKED BEANS  
HOT DOGS, DESSERTS, AND DRINKS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



**Community Music**

Join us for an afternoon of music from local churches!

Sunday, May 3rd • 2 pm  
Evangelical United Church of Christ  
2520 Poplar St.  
Highland, IL

A love offering will be collected to benefit Hamel Alhambra Ministerial Alliance and Highland Area Ministries  
Light refreshments will be served afterwards

**Evangelical UCC Highland Music Event**

**Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026**  
**at 2:00p.m.**

We will gather in song at EvUCC Highland. Along with the joy of voices, music, and togetherness, we will have the opportunity to share in a free will offering to benefit the Hamel Alhambra Ministerial Alliance and the Highland Area Ministries. All are welcome!

If any of your ensembles, choirs, or bell choirs would like to participate, please contact Joan Schuetz at 618-975-2704.

**St John UCC, New Athens**  
**Fried Chicken Dinner**



**May 3rd, 2026**

**Adults \$15**  
**Children \$8**

Accepting Cash, Check, Venmo,  
Credit/Debit Card

1/2 Fresh Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Corn, Slaw, & Dessert

**ST. JACOB**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

*Strawberry Festival*

**May 17th 11am-3pm**

Crafts   Activities for ALL AGES   Live Music

*Sweet Strawberries!!*

**Brats   Pork Burgers   Hot Dogs**

Township Park  
139 W Main  
St. Jacob, IL



If you are reading a print version of the ISC *Weekly Connection*, consider scanning the QR code 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](mailto: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](#)

[Part-Time Secretary/Bookkeeper- Friedens UCC Irvington](#)

[Part-Time Behavioral Health Nurse - Hoyleton Youth & Family Services](#)

[Part-Time Faith Community Nurse - Deaconess Nurse Ministry](#)

[Part-Time Administrative Assistant - St. John's UCC Smithton](#)

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Contact Us - Your OCWM Monies at Work

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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 Co-Executive Directors, contact **Jason Petry** or **Leah**

**Petry** at [director@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto: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](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](#)

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