

May 19, 2026



Reflections From Our Conference Minister

Pentecost highlights how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to communicate in various languages: *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”* (Acts 2:4).

Yet the Book of Acts, chapter 2, also tells us something equally important: the crowds were “utterly amazed” because they could understand the message. *How is it that each of us hears them in our native language?”* (Acts 2:7).

Speaking is the easy part. And how quickly we are to speak. We fill almost every silence with words, theories, opinions, explanations, and advice. Words. Words. And more words.

What is far more difficult is speaking in a language that another can truly hear and understand. A language shaped by their traditions, experiences, culture, communal influences, fears, hopes, and families of origin. To speak another’s language is not simply about translation, but it is about loving and honoring who they are. It requires patience, humility, and compassion.

This connection—the breaking of barriers through understanding—may be the true miracle of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit did not just give words but created bonds, crossing divides through God’s love. The gospel met people where they were, and its message was heard.

Today, the Spirit continues this work by teaching us to listen deeply before we speak. Through listening, our words become bridges, creating connection, understanding, and relationship.

To speak another’s language is first to love, then to learn, and finally to speak in ways that connect.

Let us commit to listening deeply and speaking words that inspire hope, healing, and transformative love. Embrace the Spirit’s work by actively reaching out to connect and understand those around us.

A PRAYER FOR LISTENING

O God of Pentecost,
You poured out Your Holy Spirit so that every person gathered could hear
Your love in a language they understood.

In a world so full of noise and endless words,
teach us to speak with love, wisdom, and grace.

Slow our impulse to speak quickly and remind us to listen first.

Help us hear the stories, hopes, and experiences
that shape the lives of all those we encounter.
Give us hearts open and willing to learn
from one another rather than speak over one another.

Let our words create peace and connection, reflecting Jesus’ language of love.

Empower us, Holy Spirit, not just to love and listen more,
but to actively share Your hope and good news in ways that can truly be received by all.

Help us become agents of healing and bridge-building led by the power of Your Spirit.
In Christ’s name we pray,
Amen.



-Rev. Shana Johnson
Conference Minister

Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



St. Paul UCC, Belleville



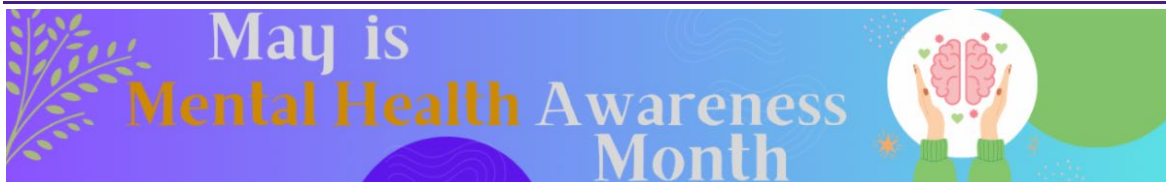
Trinity UCC, Belleville-

Rev. Tim (Shae) Powers-Reed

Retired Pastor- Rev. Chris (Lena) Edwards

[Submit prayer requests here](#)

UCC Global, National, + Regional News



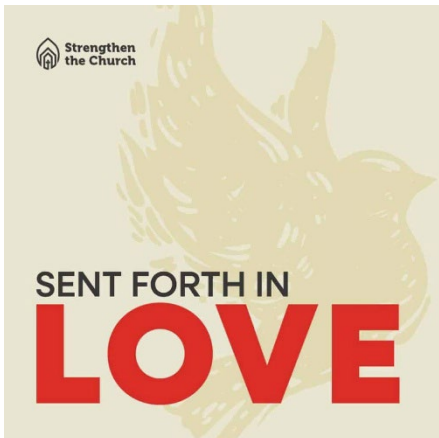
Find a therapist, psychiatrist, support group, treatment center, hotline, crisis line and [resources](#) for caregivers.

[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)

ONLINE 988lifeline.org

CALL, TEXT, CHAT **988**

Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Hearing Loss 988lifeline.org/deaf-hard-of-hearing-hearing-loss/

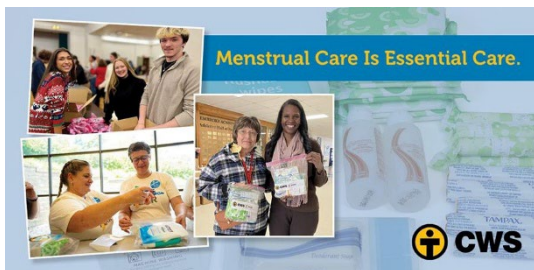
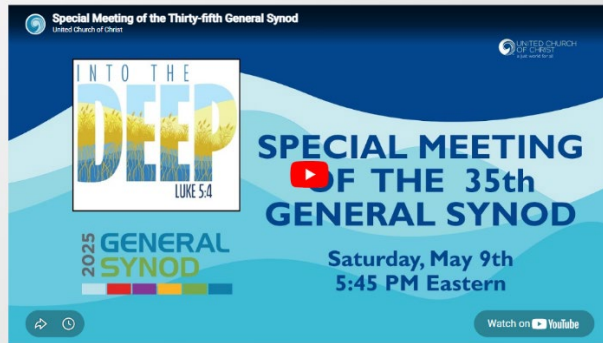


**Strengthen
the Church**

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing

congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. Suggested Giving date is this Sunday, May 24th.**

Watch the Special Meeting of General Synod 35 Livestream



Church World Service (CWS) Period Packs: Plan Your Packing Event for International Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28, 2026

CWS Period Packs are shared with people facing difficult times in the U.S. and around the world—through trusted partners, community organizations and emergency response efforts.

If you're wondering how to begin, you can order a CWS Kits Party Pack to simplify the process. When you order a Party Pack, we send the supplies, instructions, boxes and return shipping labels — you gather your group and

assemble.

Perfect for youth groups, mission committees and service days.

[Get started here.](#)



Hope begins with the right tools.

When congregations come together through CWS Tools-families receive seeds and tools that help them grow food, strengthen their communities and build more secure futures.

From hands in the soil
to seeds carefully planted
to crops nourished with water —
these practical tools become blessings that help grow a Harvest of Hope.

[Learn how your congregation can help grow a Harvest of Hope](#)



UCCMA NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

United in Spirit: Diverse in Sound

July 8 – 11, 2026

First Community Church

Columbus, Ohio

CONFERENCE INFORMATION: [START HERE](#)

REGISTRATION: [GO HERE](#)

Local Singers & Ringers Choir Tracks Only: [GO HERE](#)

UPDATES

Early Bird Deadline extended to May 31, 2026

New Interest Session Added

"Music She Wrote" with Dr. Yu Gian

Thursday at 5 PM

SATURDAY SHARING
 May 30, 2026
 12 NOON • EASTERN TIME
 9 AM • PACIFIC TIME
 VIA ZOOM
FREE
IMPROVING CONGREGATIONAL SINGING: BEST PRACTICES
 Brian Hehn, Director
 The Center for Congregational Song

UPCOMING SATURDAY SHARING CONVERSATIONS

May 30 -- [Improving Congregational Singing: Best Practices](#) with Brian Hehn

Saturday Sharing is a series of free, once-a-month, one hour conversations on topics of interest to church musicians and others. Open to all. Register to receive the Zoom link.

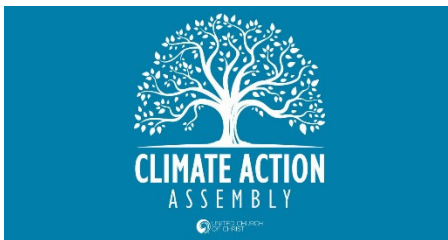


Upcoming Nurture the Soul Webinars

(All sessions times are 2:30pm CT)

Tuesday, May 26 - [Youth Lead: Faith, Identity, and Calling with Raven Trammell](#)

Thursday, June 4 - [Defending Dignity: Addressing Policy Attacks on the LGBTQIA+ Community](#)



The next UCC Climate Action Assembly will feature two presentations. First, members of Wellesley Village Church will share about how they replaced their oil-fired HVAC system with a geothermal system as they strive for net-zero emissions. Second, we will hear about a program of international solidarity centered around the climate leaders in the Mayan communities of Belize. [Register to join us on Wednesday, June 3rd at 12pm CT](#)

The United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada invite you to:
THE GREAT LAKES COLLABORATIVE RETREAT 2026
At Waters' Edge: Sacred Relations
 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of "the fierce urgency of now." With deep divisions in this moment -- political, racial and historical -- guided by Indigenous wisdom, a group from the United Church of Canada and United Church of Christ will gather at the edge of the Grand River near Paris, Ontario, to build sacred relations around the common waters of our Great Lakes region.
 This is the moment to **cross boundaries and come together**, caring for one another and all of God's creation.
 With Adrian Jacobs, Senior Leader for Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation, Christian Reformed Church in North America
TUCC connecting resources
SUNDAY, AUGUST 23RD 4:00 PM - TUESDAY AUGUST 25TH 11:00 AM 2026
 Five Oaks Retreat Centre, 1 Bethel Road, Paris, Ontario, CANADA, N3L 3E3 <https://liveoaks.on.ca/>
 COST \$150 CDN double occupancy OR \$250 CDN single occupancy (limited availability)

The Great Lakes Creation Collaborative Retreat 2026

At Waters' Edge: Sacred Relations
United Church of Christ & United Church of Canada
August 23 at 4 pm to August 25 at 11 am, 2026
Five Oaks Retreat Centre
1 Bethel Rd, Paris, ON, CANADA N3L 3E3

The Great Lakes Collaborative (GLC) is a network of people from all of the UCC Conferences that touch on a Great Lake, as well as our partners in the United Church of Canada.

The focus is on creation care, especially the sustainability and care of the Great Lakes and other bodies of freshwater. This is the GLC's 4th Annual Event and the first one hosted by the United Church of Canada.

For more information:

Kathy Douglas, kathymdouglas@hotmail.com, cell: 519 441 0656 (Canada) or Lisa Hart, Lhart@wcucc.org, cell: 608-438-1571 (US)



desk calendar and plan book
July 2026-December 2027 

The popular 18-month UCC July 2026 - December 2027 calendars are now available to pre-order and will begin shipping June 2026!

Click [HERE](#) to order.



ISC VBS X-CHANGE

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

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)**.

-St. John UCC, Maeystown is having their VBS early – May 26-29 and are willing to share their extra supplies and puppets after their event – They are offering items from: **Snowball Mountain Challenge – by Cokesbury** If you are interested call the church at 618-458-6940



This Month at the UN

Join us 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.

There will be time set aside during the meeting so that we can hear from YOU on these topics and how we can help to amplify the work our local congregations and partners are doing in the community. [Register](#)



Global Ministries

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



30 Years-250 Partners and nearly 90 countries around the world-One Body, One Hope, One Spirit

The past 30 years are just the beginning.

As we celebrate this milestone, we look ahead with hope and commitment to the next chapter of global partnership and shared ministry.

Walk with us this year. <https://ow.ly/1Jss50YCiCg>



Global Ministries

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



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>

ISC Hunger Action Team - Facing Hunger in Your Community



The ISC Hunger Action Team would like to recognize ST. JOHN UCC, VALMEYER for its continued support of families in need.

St. John members were invited to donate CHEF BOYARDEE PIZZA KITS to share with ST. JOHN MAEYSTOWN'S BI-COUNTY BACKPACK PROGRAM. Recipients are students in need from Valmeyer, Waterloo, Red Bud and Prairie Du Rocher. Children who qualify for free school breakfast and lunch don't have access to these free meals on weekends and summer break. Kids need the proper nutrition for their learning, development and growth. St. John's goal was to donate 60 pizza kits. The congregation donated 75 kits plus a basket full of peanut butter and jelly! Heartfelt thanks to St. John, their generosity will make a difference for local families. St. John Church is more than a building. It's people caring, loving, and serving others in the community and beyond. We are grateful for a congregation

that continues to live out its faith in such meaningful ways. Under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Rev. Steven Boorsma.

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!
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 or visit duboiscenter.org/summer-camp-staff/ for an application.



ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

EVERY YEAR IS DIFFERENT AND NEW!

A handful of camps still have room but they're filling up fast! The updated summer camp schedule is shown below—check it out and sign 'em up! Click below to register

TO REGISTER, VISIT [DUBOISCENTER.ORG](https://duboiscenter.org)

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/>

REGISTER

Summer Camp 2026

INFO



2026 Summer Camp Schedule Updates

Camps are filling up quickly!
 Register soon at [DuBoisCenter.org](https://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 BOYS: Full	
June 14-19	Settler (3rd-5th) ALL: Full	Horse Play (5th-7th) ALL: Full
	LIT Camp (11th-12th) Leadership in Training	Outback (7th-9th) BOYS: Full
June 17-19	Camp Quest (1st-3rd) GIRLS: Full BOYS: Almost Full	
	Settler (3rd-5th) ALL: Full	Splash (5th-7th) ALL: Closed
June 21-26	Art Explosion (5th-8th) ALL: Closed	Saddle 'Em Up BOYS: Closed
	Base Camp (6th-8th) ALL: Full	GIRLS: Almost Full
June 24-26		Rustic Sampler BOYS: Almost Full
June 28-30	Just You & Me ALL: Full (Adult & Child ages 5-8)	GIRLS: Full
July 5-10	High School Week on Rustic (9th-12 th grades)	Drenched GIRLS: Full
		Wrangler GIRLS: Full
		X-Plore ALL: Full
July 12-14	Discovery (1st-3rd) ALL: Full	BOYS: Full
July 12-17	Settler (3rd-5th) ALL: Full	Trekkin' It (5-7 th) GIRLS: Almost Full
		Giddy Up (6-8th) ALL: Full
		Dunk'd (7-9th) ALL: Full
July 15-17	Quest (1st-3rd) GIRLS: Full BOYS: Closed	
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.



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.

Council for Health & Human Services Ministries News




3rd Annual Tropical Trivia


June 6, 2026

Doors open at 5PM, Trivia begins at 6PM
Belleville/Swansea Moose Lodge #1221
2425 N. Illinois St., Swansea

Proceeds from this event will go to Puentes de Esperanza, a trusted resource in the Hispanic community for more than 20 years. Funds will be used to support Spanish-speaking members of our community with interpretation and translation, bilingual therapy, case management, resource linkage, and educational workshops on healthcare, finances, family engagement, and nutrition.

Scan here to purchase tickets





Puentes de Esperanza Tropical Trivia Inviting You to Join the Trivia Fun We are also looking for sponsors, silent auction items and volunteers who would like to help with the event. To learn more about those opportunities please reach out to Mario McCart at mmccart@hoyleton.org or call 618-688-7092
To purchase a table online visit - <https://hoyleton.org/events/3rd-annual-tropical-trivia/>



We are Stronger When We Unite Gifts and Voices Across Vocations, Denominations

May 13, 2026 | Jamar Doyle

Last month, I had the chance to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2026 in Washington, D.C. Being in the room with faith leaders, advocates, organizers, and ministry partners from across the country—people committed to justice and human dignity—left me thinking about something simple but powerful: we are indeed stronger when we unite our gifts and voices across vocational and denominational lines. [Read](#)



MINISTRY COHORTS

Expand Your Range Eden Ministry Cohorts

Ministry cohorts allow you to sample many theological themes, offering peer learning with your ministry context in mind. Scholars have chosen a specific lens on a particular topic and share their expertise through digital content you watch on your own time. Four monthly online meetings are interspersed, where you and your cohort members gather for facilitated discussion with an experienced church leader.

Cohorts support lifelong learning and are for anyone- authorized clergy, chaplains,

Christian educators, lay leaders and anyone interested in the topic. UCC members will recognize the Marks for Ministry woven throughout the cohorts, though anyone from any denomination, or no denomination, is welcome to attend.

Completion of each Ministry Cohort provides 9 contact hours of continuing education, subject to approval by the participant's credentialing body.

Summer 2026 Themes

Who are the "We" We're Becoming?

The Big Reveal: Reading and Responding to Revelation

Public Spiritual Care

Spiritual Care Basics for Lay People

6+ Makes a Cohort – Bring a friend!

Multi-Cohort Bundle- Choose three Cohort themes over the next two years for yourself or purchase 3 seats in a single Cohort for members of your group. Save \$100 over purchasing them individually.

Visit: <https://www.eden.edu/ministrycohorts/>

Please contact Dr. Jill Baker with questions. jbaker@eden.edu



Press Release - Emmaus Homes Appoints Ryan Gruhala as New President and Chief Executive Officer

By Emmaus Homes | May 13, 2026 | [Emmaus, Who We Are](#)

Emmaus Homes, a leading nonprofit provider of services for adults with developmental disabilities, announced the appointment of **Ryan Gruhala** as its new **President and Chief Executive Officer, effective July 1, 2026**. Gruhala brings more than 20 years of executive leadership experience across hospice, senior living, skilled nursing, and the broader post-acute care continuum, with a proven record of driving operational excellence, cultural alignment, and mission-centered growth.

“Ryan is a mission-driven leader with the operational expertise and relational leadership style that aligns perfectly with the future of Emmaus Homes,” said Ann Ficken, Chair of the Emmaus Homes Board of Directors. “His record of transforming organizations while honoring their core values makes him the ideal leader to guide Emmaus into its next chapter.” [Read](#)



MEMORY CAFE

A relaxing place for caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia to reminisce and receive cognitive stimulation.

**Wednesdays
1:30-2:30 p.m.**

IN PERSON
AND ON ZOOM

St. John's Community Care
222 Goethe Ave., Collinsville

Call 618-344-5008 or
email info@stjohnscc.org
for the Zoom link.





St Peter's UCC, Red Bud BBQ

Sunday, June 7th 10:30am-?

Drive thru and walk up Carry-out
Pork Steaks and Brats!

Call 618-282-2417 to order.

415 Madison St., Red Bud, IL 62278



TRINITY U.C.C.

47 N. Douglas Ave. • Belleville, IL 62220 • 618-233-2941

Saturday, June 6, 2026 from 6 to 8:30 pm.

All proceeds will benefit Trinity's Annual Holiday Food Basket Program serving over sixty families throughout the Metro East and St. Louis area.

Menu

All you can eat spaghetti with meat sauce, (vegetarian or gluten free noodles available) salad, garlic bread with choice of a delicious dessert. Tea, lemonade, and coffee provided or BYOB.



Prices

\$15.00 per adult
\$5.00 per child (5 - 12)
4 and under free

BONUS: Each advance adult ticket includes four Raffle Basket tickets! Additional Raffle Basket tickets available for purchase.

Join us for an evening of

"Sauce and Song"



with Live Music
provided by members of the
Gateway Men's Chorus of St. Louis



Advance ticket sales available by scanning the qr code above! Questions contact Eileen Hoag (618)444-3030.



Concordia UCC Belleville Annual Chicken Dinner

Dine-in or Carry-out chicken dinner **Sunday, June 7th 11:00am-3:00pm.**
Also, \$5/ticket Quilt Raffle, limited to 200 tickets-drawing held when tickets sold out.

7600 State Route 163, Belleville, IL (3 miles north of Millstadt) Questions?
Call 618-476-3377

[Click to view Full Flyer](#)



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
Mark Walz- mewalz5925@hotmail.com



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 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](#)

[Part-Time Administrative Assistant - Church of the Good Shepherd Carbondale Flyer](#)

[Summer Youth Activities Coordinator - Church of the Good Shepherd Carbondale Flyer](#)

[Youth Aide- Church of the Good Shepherd Carbondale Flyer](#)

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](#) [CHSM](#)
- [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](#)

