

August 11, 2026



Reflections for Our Conference Minister

A Prayer reflecting on Psalm 133

O Holy One, we echo the psalmist's declaration:
"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity."

And yet...there seems to be so much discord,
so much division, and so much distrust among your people.

There are patches of our lived life together
which have been stretched, torn, and worn at the seams.

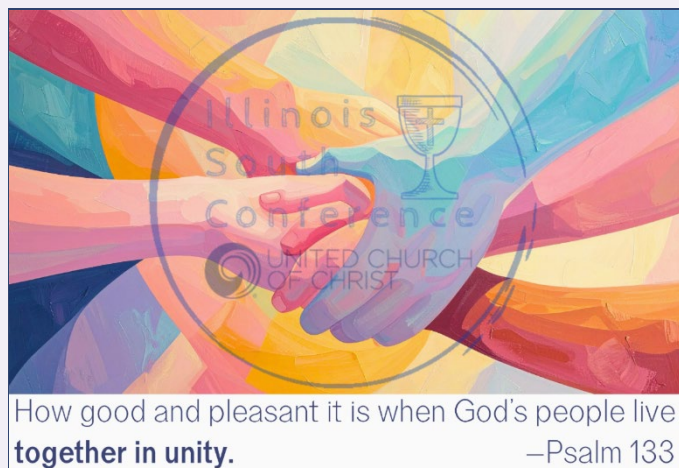
Help us to untangle the knots
of misunderstanding, fear, and mistrust

Holy One, show us where we can braid together
the broken strands of our relationships.

Teach us to mend the worn places
with patience, compassion, and grace.

Knit us once again together
by helping us recognize the beauty of diversity
you have woven into us.

May your Spirit soften our hearts,
expand our minds,
and fill our spirits
with the desire to create a world
where your people can live together in unity. Amen.



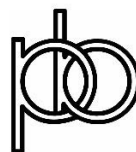
-Rev. Shana Johnson
Conference Minister

Please Remember in Your Prayers this Week...



Evangelical UCC, Godfrey-

Rev. Tim (Rev. Janet Darmour-Paul) Darmour-Paul
Pastor Tim (Suzie) Sandifer



The Pension Boards
United Church of Christ, Inc.
WHERE FAITH AND FINANCE INTERSECT

Pension Board-UCC National Staff-
Rev. Krista Betz

Retired Pastor-

Rev. Jack (Barbara VanAusdall) Spratte

Monday, August 10th, we received the heartbreaking news that Rev. Derek Terry, the recent Executive Director of the Open and Affirming Coalition, has passed away. Rev. Derek also served as the pastor of St. Peter's UCC in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Please hold Rev. Derek's family, the Open and Affirming Coalition, and the members of his congregation in your prayers during this difficult time. May they find comfort, strength, and peace in the days ahead.

[A joint UCC-ONA statement on the passing of Rev. Derek Terry](#)

[Submit prayer requests here](#)

UCC Global, National, + Regional News

On Sunday, August 9th, Rev. Miranda Moeller was installed as St. John UCC's Associate Pastor. Congratulations to Rev. Miranda and St. John UCC Collinsville on this exciting next chapter together!



Congratulations, St. John UCC Fairview Heights, on your 75th Anniversary!





Upcoming Celebrations & Events



Happy Retirement, Rev. Bev Kahle!

Special Farewell Celebration

Join us as we honor Rev. Beverly Kahle for her outstanding service and dedication at St. Paul UCC. After almost 12 years of devotion, Pastor Bev is retiring! The celebration will be held on Sunday, August 16th, which is her final service with us. Service will be held at 9:00am.

St. Paul United Church of Christ, 330 N. Buhrman St. Nashville, IL 62263

Save the Date
 Sunday, August 30, 2026 10:00 am



Friedens United Church of Christ
 207 E Center St., Troy, IL

Join us as we celebrate the retirement of our beloved pastor after years of faithful service, leadership, and care for our church family. Following the worship service, please stay and join us for a retirement reception as we celebrate Pastor Tim's ministry, share memories, and wish him God's richest blessings in this new chapter of life..

*Farewell & Best Wishes
 Pastor Tim & Danielle!*

Join us to Celebrate



Pastor Bob

On September 13, 2026 Pastor Bob will lead his last worship service at St John UCC. After 37 years of faithful service to our congregation and the village of New Athens, we would like to invite family, friends, and the community to join us in an open house to help us celebrate his retirement.

September 13, 2026 Worship 10:00am St John UCC
Open house to follow till 4pm The Bullpen Bar and Grill

Music from The St Louis Stampers

Appetizers, tea, coffee, & cake provided
Questions, please call Susan in the Church office 618-475-2947
St John UCC
301 S Market St
New Athens IL 62264
The Bullpen Bar And Grill
101 N Van Buren
New Athens IL 62264

St. John UCC
New Athens
invites you
to join in
celebrating the
retirement of
Rev. Dr. Robert
Koch

Clergy Workshop on Christian Nationalism

featuring Rev. Hannah Kardon

Monday, September 14th
4 pm to 5:30 pm
via ZOOM

hosted by the ISC
Justice & Mission Team

Register by September 10th
email dkesner@iscucc.org

ISC
JUSTICE
& MISSION
helping to be the good

Dear ISC Clergy,

The Justice and Mission Team has created a unique opportunity for us to gather as colleagues for a timely and important workshop exploring how the principles of Christian Nationalism often stand in direct contradiction to the core teachings and witness of Jesus Christ.

Our presenter, Rev. Hannah Kardon, a United Methodist pastor with roots in the United Church of Christ, will offer valuable insights into how churches can clearly distinguish themselves from messages of hate and exclusion that are driving many people away from the church. Together, we will explore how we can instead embody the welcoming love and transformative message of Jesus found in the Gospels.

This free workshop, originally scheduled for Monday, August 10, has been rescheduled for **Monday, September 14, from 4:00–5:30 p.m. via Zoom.**

Because this workshop will be interactive, with opportunities for participants to ask questions and reflect on their own experiences in ministry settings, we will not record our time together. This will help us create a braver space for honest conversation and sharing.

I encourage you to join us for what promises to be an engaging time of learning, conversation, and reflection—one that I hope will strengthen and enrich your ministry.

Because we will not be publicly sharing the Zoom link, and our presenter would like to know how many people will be attending, please **email Debbie Kesner at dkesner@iscucc.org by noon on Thursday, September 10**, to let her know that you plan to attend. Debbie will then send the Zoom link to everyone who has registered.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me directly at sjohnson@iscucc.org.

I hope you will join us, and I look forward to seeing you online on Monday, September 14.

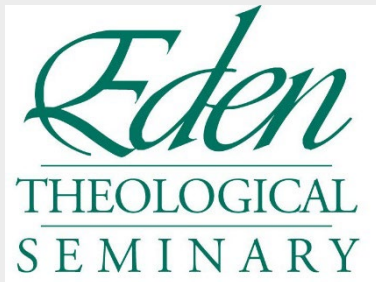
Rev. Shana Johnson



September 20th: Just Peace Sunday

Each year, the United Church of Christ recognizes the Sunday before International Day of Prayer for Peace as Just Peace Sunday. We take this Sunday to renew our commitment to our Just Peace vision. This year, we gather around the theme "God's Economy: People Over Profit". Stay tuned for more worship resources [here](#).

Upcoming Boundary Trainings approved by Illinois South Conference Committee on Ministry



Beyond Don't Sleep with the Sheep: Boundary Training for Clergy
Friday, September 11 9:00AM - 3:00PM CT via Online Together, we'll look at power and positional authority, historical impact, and our roles as leaders within congregations and the communities we are called to serve. [Register](#)



A boundary awareness training for members in discernment and authorized ministers of the UCC. **Thursday September 24, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM CST** via Zoom and the Damascus Project Learning Network. [Register](#) by September 22nd.



Led by the UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support & Authorization Team (MESA)
This training is recommended for retired clergy and for pastors who are preparing for retirement. **Thursday, October 15, 1:00 – 4:00pm CT**, Boundary Training for Retired Clergy; register [here](#), with the Revs. Tara Barber and Melanie Oommen.



Boundary Training for Authorized Ministers Registration closes when limits are reached. All trainings are spread out over two days and take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. CT each day. **November 5 & 12, November 17 & 18**
Links for more [information](#) and to [register](#).

August is national "Make-A-Will" month!

Create your will for free at:

FREEWILL

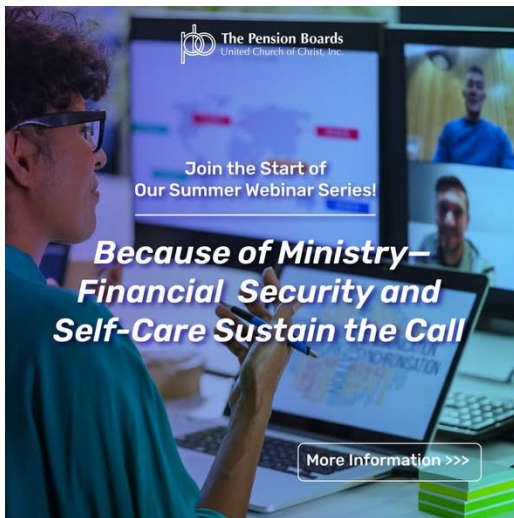



freewill.com/ucc

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Last month of

August is National Make-a-Will Month

Create a free and legal will with Freewill for National Make-a-Will Month. The Pension Boards and Rev. Dr. [Paul Leon Ramsey](#), Director Church Relations and Philanthropy, is pleased to partner with the [United Church of Christ](#) in its Together for Tomorrow shared legacy campaign, which offers FreeWill, an estate planning tool to create your, free and legal will. Observe National Make-A-Will Month and secure your legacy today at FreeWill. Visit <https://freewill.com/pbucc>.



The Pension Boards
United Church of Christ, Inc.

Join the Start of
Our Summer Webinar Series!

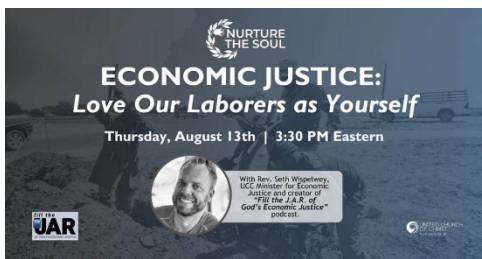
**Because of Ministry—
Financial Security and
Self-Care Sustain the Call**

More Information >>>

Money, Ministry, and Meaning: Financial Wellness as an Act of Pastoral Self-care

Aug 19, 2026 02:00 PM Central Time

Financial wellbeing is inseparable from pastoral wellbeing. When clergy build healthier relationships with money, they reduce stress, expand capacity for spiritual leadership, and strengthen their ability to serve without fear or scarcity. Retirement readiness becomes an act of stewardship—of self, vocation, and community—reframing financial planning as an essential component of sustainable ministry. [Register](#)



NURTURE THE SOUL

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:
Love Our Laborers as Yourself

Thursday, August 13th | 3:30 PM Eastern

With Rev. Seth Wapleswey,
UCC Minister for Economic
Justice and creator of
"For the J.A.R. of
God's Economic Justice"
podcast.

JAR

Economic Justice: Love Our Laborers as Yourself

Aug 13, 2026 02:30 PM Central Time

We all feel a call to "do what you love." Parents, teachers, pastors and culture all reinforce the message. Most importantly, the call comes from the Spirit within. To work and play freely, without shame or exploitation, is to feel integrated and alive internally - and within community and society. Tragically, our dominant, oppressive economic system deprives almost everyone of realizing this freedom to thrive. [Learn and Register](#)

Cybersecurity Awareness & CISA's
No-Cost Resources for Your Ministry



INSURANCE BOARD
Partners in Protection

Insurance Board Cybersecurity Awareness Webinar

[Cybersecurity Awareness & CISA's No-Cost Resources for Your Ministry](#)

Learn how to access free tools, assessments, training, and guidance designed to help organizations of all sizes reduce risk, improve resilience, and stay protected against today's evolving cyber threats. Watch Now Additional Resources:

- [Cyber Threat Briefing \(2026\)](#)
- [Contact Your Regional CISA Office](#)
- [Additional Cybersecurity Resources](#)



CLIMATE HOPE AFFILIATES A Webinar Introduction

Climate Hope Affiliates 101

Interested in learning more about Climate Hope Affiliates and exploring how to start one in your community? Two Climate Hope Affiliates 101 webinars will be offered. [Join on August 18th at 1 pm CT](#) or join on [August 19th at 7 pm CT](#).



Lunchtime Film Series on Caring for the Earth

Join Blessed Tomorrow for 6 lunchtime screenings of the film series: Caring for the Earth: Stories from Faith Communities! Created for pastors and faith leaders of all ages. We will watch each film over the 6 weeks and then hear directly from the powerful faith leaders featured in the films. **Wednesdays from September 2nd through October 7th 12:00 pm- 12:45 pm CT.** Register [here!](#)



ONA Coalition Help—Preserve Our Stories

The Open and Affirming Coalition is assembling the founding editorial and creative team for *Human and Hopeful: An Anthology of LGBTQ+ Stories, Creativity, and Practices*. Rooted in faith, justice, and community, this project will preserve the stories, creativity, and practices that sustain LGBTQ+ people and inspire future generations.

If you're interested in serving on the founding team, click below to learn more and complete our interest form. [Learn more & join the founding team here.](#)



Global Ministries

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



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

GLOBAL MINISTRIES 30TH ANNIVERSARY WEBINAR

CONGREGATIONS DOING CHRIST'S WORK

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026 AT 7:00PM ET



REV. DR. CHRISTAL WILLIAMS
REGIONAL MINISTER
CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN INDIANA
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST



REV. DR. CHAD ABBOTT
CONFERENCE MINISTER
INDIANA KENTUCKY CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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

NEXT WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 19th

How can your congregation deepen its connection to the global church? Join Rev. Dr. Christal Williams and Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott for the second webinar in Global Ministries' 30th Anniversary series as they explore how congregations have built meaningful relationships with global partners and how your church can do the same.

Discover inspiring stories, practical ideas, and new opportunities to connect in faithful partnership across the world. We hope you'll join us! Register at: <https://ow.ly/pxJX50ZIKQg>

ISC Hunger Action Team - Facing Hunger in Your Community



The Hunger Action Team would like to recognize **ZOAR UCC New Hanover, for partnering with St. John, Maeystown's "BI-COUNTY BACKPACK PROJECT"**. Vacation Bible School students and volunteers were invited to donate non perishable food items for families in need. Recipients are students from Waterloo, Red Bud, Valmeyer, and Prairie Du Rocher. Delivering food directly to homes, schools and even workplaces - wherever needed - to ensure that kids have access to nourishing meals. This mission project was more important than ever. Students who qualify for free school breakfast and lunch don't have access to their free meals during summer break. Heartfelt thanks to Zoar UCC for serving others as stewards of God's Grace. Under the leadership of pastor and teacher, Rev. R.J. Morgan. 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



Rainbow Camp 2026

This weekend DuBois Center hosted Rainbow Camp, sponsored by the Illinois South Conference and ISC Pride!

Lots of fun: campfire with smores, horseback rides, canoeing/kayaking, crafts, labyrinth walks and some introspective journaling throughout the weekend!

Thank you all who attended!





Fall Ride Day – September 12, 2026

A day to bring the family out or get a group of friends together for a horseback ride at DuBois Center. Sign up for a ride time that fits your schedule best. Feel free to bring a picnic lunch for your group to enjoy!

*10 riders max per ride

Arena Ride: 4:00pm. Ages 3-7 with an adult walking alongside the horse. \$18 per child.

Trail Rides: 10:30am, 1:00pm, 2:30pm. Ages 8+. \$30 per rider.

Click [here](#) to register. Registration closes August 29.

DuBois Center Reflects on 2026 Camp...



THANK YOU summer program staff!

The days are LONG, the work is HARD, but these young adults were dedicated to giving our summer campers a safe and FUN DuBois Center experience!

We can't thank them enough!



THANK YOU Red and Hoss (our co-directors Leah and Jason)!

Behind every campfire, silly game, worship service, crazy jam, craft, and unforgettable memory are two people who work tirelessly to make it all happen. Red and Hoss pour so much time, energy, creativity, and heart into summer camp at DuBois Center, and the impact they have on campers, counselors, and families is impossible to measure.

Summer camp is more than just a week away—it's a place where kids grow in confidence, make lifelong friends, try new things, and experience God's love in meaningful ways. That doesn't happen by accident, and we're so grateful for the leadership and dedication they provide.

FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, Oct 4
from 11-5

DuBois Center

Family-friendly event!

Admission & parking are free, and there's something for everyone to enjoy. Gather your friends and family!





Food Trucks, Live Music, Rope Making,
Kids Korner, Pony & Hay Rides, Silent Auction, and
OVER 40 CRAFTERS & ARTISANS!



2651 Quarry Rd. DuBois, IL



www.DuBoisCenter.org



DuBois Center
The Camp and Retreat Center of the Illinois South
Conference of the United Church of Christ



Fall Festival Auction Baskets Drop Off! Come Out & Bid!

Folks, we hope your congregations and church boards will be putting together an auction basket this year! Donations of baskets for the Silent Auction at DuBois's Fall Festival **October 4** which, combined with your imaginative spirits, yield good returns Fall Fest participants cannot resist. Again, we appreciate your support of DuBois in this way and look forward to seeing you in just a couple months! Thank you!!!!

Council for Health & Human
Services Ministries News



Hoyleton Back to School Collection

A new school year represents a fresh start—and thanks to the generosity of donors, volunteers, businesses, churches and community partners, 315 youth receiving services through Hoyleton Youth & Family Services began the year with backpacks filled with the supplies they need to succeed.

Hoyleton's annual Back to School Supplies Drive brought together 52 donors who contributed school supplies or financial gifts and 37 volunteers from several community partners including Hospice of Southern Illinois, Scott Credit Union, The Maschhoffs, Auffmanberg Dealer Group, and Place of Grace who gave more than 130 hours of service to collect, organize and prepare supplies for youth.

Together, their efforts filled 315 backpacks for young people receiving services across Hoyleton programs. More than 100 of those backpacks were distributed during Hoyleton's Back to School Bash on Friday, August 7, at St. Paul United Church of Christ in Belleville. [Read](#)



Back Bay Mission is proud to announce that we have been awarded \$25,000 in grant funding from the MGM Resorts Foundation to strengthen two critical areas of our work: our Health & Wellness Program and Emergency Assistance Program!

The MGM Resorts Foundation has awarded Back Bay Mission \$10,000 to support our Emergency Assistance Program and an additional \$15,000 for Health & Wellness!

This life-changing funding will be providing vital resources to individuals and families across South Mississippi who are facing some of life's most difficult challenges. Check out more about these grants and the impact they're ALREADY making in our recent blog post—>> [Read](#)



Kindercottage Fun and Fellowship Day at St. John UCC Maeystown

Children's Fun and Fellowship Day with St. John UCC The children and families of UPK enjoyed a wonderful Fun and Fellowship Day with St. John United Church of Christ in Maeystown, Illinois, under the leadership of Pastor Poole and the church's dedicated congregation.

The day was filled with laughter, water play, delicious food, and an exciting visit from the local fire department. Families raved about the activities and shared how deeply they felt the love, fellowship, and unity shown throughout the day.

We are grateful to St. John UCC for helping us create joyful memories while living out the mission of serving others as disciples of God's love. Thank you, St. John UCC, for your generosity and hospitality. We hope to fellowship together again next year!





WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Be part of the action and help make this year's Golf Classic a **hole-in-one!**

Hoyleton Golf Classic '26

September 18
Tamarack Golf Course
800 Tamarack Lane, Shiloh

Volunteer Shifts Available:

9 AM – 12 PM	12 PM – 4 PM
Event Setup	Tent Support on the Course
Guest Registration	Dinner Service Support
Tent Support on the Course	Event Clean-Up

We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help make this year's Golf Classic a success!

Interested in volunteering? Contact Mario McCart at mmccart@hoyleton.org to sign up or learn more.



Supporting Growth at Every Age, is happening on September 13th 2026 at 10:45am, and we'd love for you to be part of it.

This fun and inclusive .1K event is designed so that everyone can participate, whether you walk, run, roll, cheer from the sidelines, or simply come out to support the community.

We're also thrilled to partner with The Learning Tree for this special event, bringing together two organizations committed to supporting individuals and families across the Metro-East community.

Proceeds from the event will help strengthen programs and services that support students, older adults, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and families throughout our region.

Whether you've participated in one of our events before or are simply looking for a meaningful and lighthearted way to support the community, we hope you'll mark your calendar now.

Registration details can be found [here](#) and on our website coming soon!

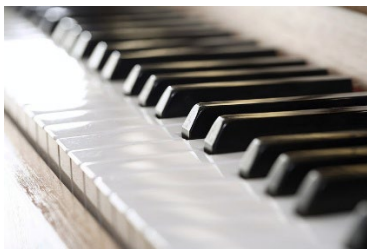
Thank you for helping us continue building a more supportive, connected community for all ages and abilities.

Our ISC Churches News + Events



Dear God,

As the students of the Illinois South Conference and beyond embark on a new school year, we seek your blessings upon each one of them. Instill in them a sense of curiosity, courage, and kindness. Safeguard them during their journeys to and from school. Provide guidance to their teachers, school staff, friends, and families as they support these young learners on their paths. May their backpacks symbolize that they possess all they need to learn and flourish this year, and may Your love and wisdom accompany them every step of the way. Amen.



Summer Music Series Immanuel UCC—Hamel

5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025

Saturday, August 15, 2026 Sheafor & Simes

Doors open at 5:00 pm

Music Begins at 5:30 pm

No admission charge. A free will offering will be received. Refreshments available for purchase. All Are Welcome! Celebrating and Supporting Local Music!

150 YEARS
Shining Brightly
O'FALLON UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PART 2!
The story continues...
Brian returns to continue his historical account on the impact our church had and still has in the community.

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS WHAT'S NEXT!

AUGUST 19, 2026 • 6:30 PM
IN THE SANCTUARY

OUR PAST. OUR IMPACT. OUR FUTURE.
Celebrating 150 Years of Faith in Action!

150 YEARS
1876-2026



O'Fallon United Church of Christ Craft & Vendor Fair



206 W. Adams
O'Fallon, IL 62269
**Saturday,
August 29, 2026
9am - 2pm**

For more info contact:
oucc@sbcglobal.net
618-632-3496



RISE: Break of Day Retreat

ISC Winter Youth Event

Save the Date!

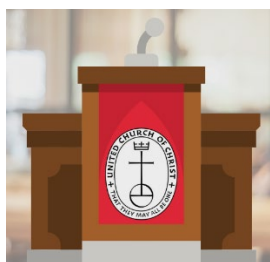
January 15 - 17th, 2027

All youth in 6th - 12th grades are invited to attend this ISC youth event at our camp, DuBois Center (2651 Quarry Rd., DuBois, IL.)

The night is over. The horizon is waiting. There is a universal magic in the sunrise—that specific moment when the darkness finally pulls back, the air clears, and suddenly, everything feels possible again. In January, we'll be heading into the woods to experience that reset for ourselves.

RISE: Break of Day is about stripping away the noise of everyday life to find some much-needed clarity. Whether you're a middle schooler navigating who you are or a high schooler looking at what's next, the sunrise meets you exactly where you are.

If inclement weather causes us to postpone this event, it will be held on February 13th -15th



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

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](#)

[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](#)



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, videos 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*.

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](#)

