



From the Acting Conference Minister

Your Voice Matters!
 A few days ago, I was immersed in song, story, and dialogue at the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event held at Elmhurst College. Three hundred youth and adults focused on *Your Voice Matters*. We heard stories -- biblical and contemporary -- of how young people have made a difference in the lives of other people.



Char Burch

Those present were urged to consider where their voice was needed. I am grateful for the leadership of Emily Davis and Kim Whisler-Vasko from our Conference, who co-chaired the Planning Committee.

In today's challenging times, with loud voices that may seem to overwhelm civil dialogue and diverse perspectives, we may wonder sometimes whether our voices do make a difference. But God keeps calling forth voices -- both loud and quiet -- to witness to God's love. And it does make a difference!

Voices are also important within the Illinois Conference, particularly during these leadership transitional times. Not only is there transition in the position of Conference Minister, but there is also transition as new people join the Conference Council and Associations Councils. It is a good time to ask: why do we do what we do? How do



QUICK LINKS

[Illinois Conference UCC](#)

[Chicago Metropolitan Association](#)

[Eastern Association](#)

[Fox Valley Association](#)

[Western Association](#)

[Prairie Association](#)

[Pilgrim Park Camp](#)

[Tower Hill Camp](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Church Revival
 each Sunday in August.
 Guest preachers, worship
 10:30 a.m.
 The Congregational Church
 of Park Manor UCC
 7000 S. Dr. Martin Luther
 King Jr. Drive,
 Chicago,
 Rev. Dr. Terill N. Murff,
 Pastor

we do things and is this the best way? Is God doing something new in our midst and how can we be open to it? Are we listening to each other's voices, the voices in our local churches, and the voice of God?

In the midst of the warmth of summer, the laughter and excitement of children (there is a community pool outside my office window so I definitely hear the laughter), may we be attentive to God's voice and may we be aware of times and places where God is reminding us that each of our voices matter. Therefore, speak up!

Blessings,
Char Burch
Acting Conference Minister

Report from the Interim Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Church Vitality

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" Mt. 5:9

Violence has pervaded our nation, our communities, even our souls. The only way to confront violence and effect change is to understand it as a system of cultural values, economic practices and the willingness to tolerate injustice. Systemic violence is more than gun control, it is an entire way of life that we, the church, need to address because we the church, are the conscience of our nation and the best hope for the world.

At our Illinois Conference Annual Celebration, June 8 and 9, we overwhelmingly approved one step in a systemic approach to violence. This resolution, "That the Illinois Conference UCC requests the 32nd General Synod of the United Church of Christ to call upon the Congress of the United States to conduct formal hearings to discover systemic and proximate causes of civilian violence in America, and to receive testimony as to changes in American society that may be undertaken to alleviate the effects of violence on the American people" can be a clarion call for all of us to begin the conversation and engage those around us.

Rev. Anthony Williams, Pastor of First Congregational Church UCC in Berwyn, has been leading a community stakeholder effort by calling for: local organization; building collaborations; and living civility with one another. Anthony knows the long struggle for peace through nonviolence, and he knows personally the horrific loss of his adult son Nehemiah to gun violence on Feb. 21. I have been privileged to work with Rev. Anthony and to be part of (along with Rev. Dr. James J. Olson and Bill McCarthy) a press conference on July 3 with three state representatives, two Chicago aldermen, and one Cook County Commissioner. Our small group was there to call attention to the need for a systemic

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders

Aug. 6 - 10, 2018
St. Mark's Episcopal
Church
393 N. Main Street
Glen Ellyn, Ill.

[Click here for more info](#)

Spanda Clergy Retreat

Aug. 14 - 16, 2018
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
1834 IL-2,
Oregon, Ill.

[Click here for more info](#)

2 Stewardship Workshops with Local Church Best Practice

Saturday, Aug. 25, 2018
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Rev. Eugene Grimm
"Essentials of Effective
Stewardship Campaigns"
Zion UCC

1521 6th Street, Peru, Ill
and

Rev. Michael Piazza
"21st Century Stewardship
Technology and Millennial
Generosity"

Westchester Community
Church
1840 Westchester Blvd.
Westchester, Ill.

[Click here for more info](#)

Family Peace Fest

Aug. 25, 2018

Speaker: Maudlyne
Ihejirika,

Urban Affairs columnist for
Chicago Sun-Times and
author of autobiographical
account "Escape from
Nigeria."

Morton Grove Civic Center
6140 Dempster St.
Morton Grove, Ill.

[Click here to more info](#)

8th Annual Women's Retreat "Biblical Women of Power, Persistence and Perseverance"

Sept. 28 - 29, 2018

Pilgrim Park Camp
26449-1340 N. Avenue
Princeton, Ill.

[Click here for reg info](#)

27th Annual Conference Association of Trained Intentional Interim Ministers (ATIIM)

Oct. 10-11, 2018
Starved Rock Lodge and

approach to violence in Chicago and Illinois. Ironically, the press focused their questions on politics and stirring up disagreement and controversy. They did not echo the push for local and congressional hearings on the causes of and remedies for violence.

We, the UCC Body of Christ in Illinois, need to help have the conversations that will begin to change the way we relate with one another, as well as work for justice alongside those that are disenfranchised. As Pope Paul VI reflected, "If you want peace, work for justice." We in our churches can:

- Raise the issue of peace and living non-violently in sermons, classes and conversation;
- Build the awareness that this menace of violence is a system-wide problem and needs system-wide responses of all kinds;
- Partner with each other in neighboring churches, clusters, Associations and Conference, building collaborative efforts that amplify the impact of peace for this world;
- Explore strategies for non-violently changing economic policies, media values, cultural language, and political division.

It all begins by being "peacemakers" ourselves. To quote Gandhi, ... "nonviolence is a life style that one has to adopt" and to quote Pogo, "We have met the enemy; and they is us." Let's begin a conversation about working non-violently for peace. Let's start looking at how we can remove violence from our lives and our culture.

Faithfully,
Rev. Dr. David Russell
Interim Associate Conference Minister
for Stewardship and Church Vitality

Conference Center
Utica, Ill.

[Click here for more info](#)

**ASSOCIATION FALL
MEETINGS**

***Chicago Metropolitan and
Fox Valley Association***

Saturday, Oct. 20, 2018
Save the date;
more info will follow.

Eastern Association

Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018
St. John's UCC,
Kankakee, Ill.
Save the date;
more info will follow.

Western Association

Saturday, Oct. 20, 2018
St. John UCC,
Minier, Ill
Save the date;
more info will follow.

What a wonderful Annual Celebration we had

Our time together included powerful messages provided by Bishop Yvette Flunder, Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers, Rev. Kathy Lawes and Rev. Tom Norwalk; uplifting music orchestrated by Jim Molina; informative Energizers and various displays providing participants with ideas and information; and the banquet recognizing special people and churches. There was a spirit of fellowship and community throughout our business sessions, led by President Mike Linder, as resolutions were considered and decisions made. The gathering was an uplifting experience!

There were [4 Emergency Resolutions](#) passed: three of them were sent to General Synod for consideration.



Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers preaches at Annual Celebration.

These address issues of violence, privatized prisons, and the current practice of separating immigrant children and families. There was also a last minute Resolution addressed to the Illinois Conference as follows:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Illinois Conference UCC, through appropriate ministries of the Conference, support and encourage congregations of the Conference in educating their members around the issue of separating minor children of immigrant families from their parents, and to advocate with them to the appropriate governmental departments and agencies to end this practice.



Passing of the Home Church banner from Michael Linder to new president Rev. Kim Wood.

The full text of the 4 Resolutions can be accessed on the Conference website (www.ilucc.org). The delegates also voted to ratify the amendments to the UCC Constitution that were passed at the last General Synod.

The [Annual Report and Recognition Book](#) are also available on the website. This provides a picture of the work of the Conference Committees over the past year, as well as ordination recognitions, etc. If you were not at the Annual Celebration, please take the time to read and celebrate the mission and ministry that had been happening through the Illinois Conference.

The Planning Committee, under the leadership of Jana Chwalisz, the many volunteers, Elmhurst College and Conference staff, all worked diligently to create a welcoming and uplifting event. Thank you to all involved!

Mark your calendars for next year's Annual Celebration: June 7-8, 2019; Elmhurst College.

To view more pictures taken at the Annual Celebration visit the [Illinois Conference Facebook Page](#).

Chalice Awards Celebrated

During the Friday evening banquet at the Annual Celebration, the following individuals received Chalice Awards, recognizing their exemplary leadership and significant impact on the ministry and witness of the Illinois Conference: Rev. David Bateman (designated pastor, St. John's UCC in Hampshire/Harmony); Diane Herr (member of First Congregational Church of Naperville); Rev. William Nagy (retired minister, member of Congregational UCC, St. Charles); Harlette Washington (member of The Congregational Church of Park Manor UCC, Chicago); and Rev. Timothy White (pastor, Trinity UCC, Quincy). Congratulations to these amazing leaders! The Illinois Conference has been blessed by their talents and commitments.

For a copy of the Chalice program [click here](#).

[Click here](#) to view pictures of the Annual Celebration and of Chalice award recipients.

Conference Council Installed

The new Conference Council was installed at the Annual Celebration. The Conference website is in the process of being updated with the names of Council members, as well as members of all Conference Committees. Check the Conference website (www.ilucc.org) and look for the tab called "Ministries."



The new Conference Council.

Interim Search is underway

The Illinois Conference is in the process of searching for an Intentional Interim Conference Minister. Following the retirement of long-time leader, the Rev. Dr. Jorge Morales, the Rev. Char Burch joined staff as Acting Conference Minister for a short term, pending the placement of the intentional interim. The Intentional Interim Conference Minister is anticipated to be with us for 18 to 24 months. An Intentional Interim Minister has special training and/or experience in interim ministry, and comes, not only to do the work of Conference Minister, but to guide the Conference and its leadership to making the way clear for a new settled Conference Minister.

The intentional interim process helps leadership to deal with history, what went well and what didn't go so well, and what parts of our organizational setup hindered or help success. They will also help explore the identity and direction of the Conference. We have a task force working on this, but the Interim Conference Minister will help us to focus our work with the information we have already gathered and will continue to gather. We will also be guided to look at our leadership set-up, to see if there are better ways to deploy staff and volunteer leaders. Renewing links to our partners in ministry, to our congregations and members is another important step. And, finally, leading us to commit to new leadership and direction, and the search for a settled Conference Minister. This is not only a lot of work for the Intentional Interim Conference Minister, but for the staff, elected and appointed leaders and other members.

The position of Interim Conference Minister for the Illinois Conference was posted to the UCC Opportunities web page on June 15, after the search committee determined they were ready to begin receiving profiles, and indeed, profiles have come in. The committee has been reading profiles and preparing to interview candidates. It is hoped that a candidate will be identified in time to present her or his nomination to the Conference Council, which has the power to engage an interim conference minister, at its mid-August meeting.

The search committee for the Intentional Interim Conference Minister has 7 members: Juanita Bradley (CMA), Rev. Tom Ewing (EA), Frank Figueroa (FVA), Rev. Charlene Hill (CMA), Mary Newcomb (WA), Rev. Kim Wood (PA) and Mike Linder (FVA, Chairperson.) After the intentional interim is in place and the process is well underway, a new search committee will be appointed by Conference Council on recommendation of the President. A settled Conference Minister is brought to a full meeting of the delegates of the Conference to be elected to a four-year term. If all goes well, the ideal time to do this will be the Annual Celebration in June 2020.

Prairie Association has savored recent celebrations

On June 10, the congregation of The Big Red Church (First Congregational UCC) in Sterling, celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Pastor Jeff Coester's ministry with them. The congregation was joined by the Macedonia Baptist Church of Sterling in worship, offering special music and their own gratitude for Jeff's ministry. A wonderful chicken dinner followed the worship service.



Pastor Jeff and Mary Coester enjoy fellowship and luncheon in honor of Jeff's 10th anniversary.

The Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell was recognized by the congregation of Mayfield Congregational Church in rural Sycamore, and the Prairie Association, on June 17, on the 40th anniversary of her ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the United Church of Christ. Martha was ordained in upstate New York on June 10, 1978, and she has served several UCC congregations as pastor and teacher. Additionally, she has been an adjunct faculty member at Eden Theological Seminary and the Aquinas Institute of Theology. Martha is a retreat leader and has served as a hospice chaplain in several settings. As the congregation also marks the fifth anniversary of Martha's call to ministry at Mayfield, they continue to collect plastic bottle caps which will be recycled to build benches for the Mayfield Monarch Butterfly Waystation.



Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell is surrounded by the Mayfield congregation in celebration of the 40th anniversary of her ordination to Christian ministry.

Our westernmost church in Prairie Association is the Community UCC in Savanna, a small town right on the Mississippi River. On July 1, Pastor Niel Shoffner was honored by the congregation on the third anniversary of his call to this ministry setting. Niel offered a beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace" on the Native American flute, as part of the worship service, and Moderator Mary Shaw received the Illinois Conference's recognition of the congregation's 2017 OCWM support and the church's "5 for 5" certificate.



From right: Pastor Niel Shoffner, Moderator Mary Shaw, and Darlene Shoffner display the congregation's OCWM and "5 for 5" certificates, as they to celebrate Niel's third year as Community's pastor and teacher.

The Shabbona Congregational UCC is preparing to participate fully in the events of the July 21 Summerfest in neighboring Waterman. A Farm Breakfast is served from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. at the United Neighborhood Center (UNC), a ministry of the congregation located directly across the street from the church; the proceeds will fund the ministries of UNC. The congregation works hard to support the Tractor Pull, which starts at 10:00 a.m. and runs until 4:00 p.m. or so. The congregation donates the proceeds from the Tractor Pull to the Foods

Resource Bank, an international agricultural mission.

Illini Congregational celebrates 150th anniversary

The members and friends of Illini Congregational UCC in Warrensburg have been celebrating the 150th anniversary of their founding during 2018. Several special events are being held throughout the year and one of those was held on July 15, where the morning worship led by Pastor Dennis Hughes was dedicated to remembering charter members and the many changes that have occurred during the church's ministry. Later in the afternoon, church members again reassembled to enjoy a pageant that had been written to highlight the historical significance of the church's ministry, focusing on the mission of the women of the congregation. The pageant was followed by a church dinner and a closing which featured the youth of the congregation as they spoke to the church's future. It was a wonderful day of celebration. A highlight of the day was also featuring a quilt that honors the 150th anniversary which was made lovingly by members of the congregation.



Illini Warrensburg Quilt honors the church's 150th anniversary.

Great Lakes Regional Youth Event gathers at Elmhurst College

Once every four years, United Church of Christ teens from across the Midwest converge on a single college campus for four days of fun, fellowship, discovery, service, and play. This year it all happened on the campus of Elmhurst College, right here in the Illinois Conference!

This summer's Great Lakes Regional Youth Event was attended by nearly 300 teens and their adult leaders. Over the course of four days, students in attendance encountered speakers and performers like storyteller Valerie Tutson; Simply



Youth gather at Elmhurst College for Great Lakes Regional Youth Event.

Smiles founder Bryan Nurnburger; musicians Andra Moran, Christopher Grundy, Bryan Sirchio, and Richard Bruxvoort Colligan; plus representatives from the wider church and service organizations across the country. The event focused on the empowerment of youth voices under the theme "Your Voice Matters." And all in attendance could feel it: at worship, in workshops, through plenaries, and all over campus. The Spirit was indeed present and at work.

Congratulations to Rev. Emily Davis (First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake) and Rev. Kim Whisler-Vasko (St. John's UCC in Lyons) from the Fox Valley Association for co-chairing a wonderful event!

[Click here](#) to view pictures taken at the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event.

Forty-five Minutes Impact!

At the fantastic Great Lakes Regional Youth Event, our greater church's future leaders were tasked to assemble 100 Cleanup Bucket Kits for Church World Service.

Fox Valley Association Justice & Witness Committee had a big idea to engage the youth in a hands-on mission project to connect to current environmental justice issues at the GLRY Event and asked Roger Dart of Illinois Conference Disaster Ministries to supervise.

Beginning in January, FVA placed numerous call-outs asking FVA churches to provide the necessary items ranging from sponges to concentrated disinfectant cleaner, dust masks, and clothespins. Twenty-six churches, including UCC Lombard, CMA participated with supplies and dollars to assist in the project. First Congregational Church of Elmhurst, and Rev. Michael Daly, graciously provided a place where we could collect and store the items, as they were delivered. In addition, John Holst and the Southern Illinois Conference brought supplies for an additional 10 buckets to the assembly area.

On Saturday afternoon, 250 young people came bounding into the gym lobby to take up the challenge. Youth leaders drew numbers from a white plastic buckets (!), that established the order in which each team would go through the assembly line. McKenna, a teen volunteer from Ivanhoe UCC, reviewed the assembly process for the group. They were to work in pairs, one carrying the bucket, the other picking up the items and loading the bucket. A separate group of participating youth was selected to be the table distributors.

When the signal was given to start assembly, the teams jumped to work and for the next 45 minutes, the room was filled with waves of chatter and laughter, along with the clatter of buckets being filled with all the items people need when cleaning up their homes after a flood, a hurricane, a tornado, or a fire.

By 4:30 p.m., all that remained in the gym lobby were two large stacks of buckets - 70 complete buckets and some 30 partially complete. We were missing several items and even with last minute shopping fell short of supplies to complete all 100 buckets the 70+ will be a great help. Many thanks to the FVA Council for coming to the aid with additional funds to assist with last-minute purchases and truck rental.

Roger Dart will be coordinating delivery of the buckets to the Church World Service Disaster Assistance Center in either in Elgin or Little Rock, Arkansas, this November. If you would like to contribute additional supplies or funds to complete the remaining



Great Lakes Regional Youth Event participants.



Onsite Bucket Brigade Team.

buckets give Roger Dart a call at (847) 274-2626.

Meet a Chicago Metropolitan Association/Off the Pews emerging youth

Tagline: It takes a village to support a community

Instead of complaining about how few youth there are in the congregation, Avalon Park Community Church got "**Off the Pews**" and into the community in search of an Ira. What is an Ira? A youth with an abundance of visible spiritual gifts and the graciousness to share them.



Ira J. McDowell Jr. (center) and teen participants. Photo credit: Kimberly Armstrong.

In the summer of 2017, Avalon Park found an Ira J. McDowell Jr., 17. His first project was teaching a nine-week entrepreneurship series. Several members of the congregation wrote an Illinois Conference LEEAP grant (Local Evangelism, Envisioning and Planting) to cover the cost of the creation of this intergenerational ministry. One of the outcomes was the involvement of a set of 14-year old twins. Although they were not members of the congregation, they responded to the invitation to join the class. Influenced by both the curriculum and the hands-on work alongside the elders, they learned the basics of entrepreneurship. This first venture netted over \$300. The class required an understanding and practice of earning, saving, sharing/giving/tithing and investing money. In 2018, the fruits of this experience gave them the courage to launch their own tee shirt clothing line.

Another example of the gifts of this emerging leader was seen in two consecutive presentations on Friday and Saturday, July 6-7, at the 2018 Great Lakes Regional Youth Event. His audience was 6th-8th graders. The event's theme was: *A Just World for All: Your Voice Matters*. It is apparent that his spiritual gifts are ripening before our eyes. He has the insight of a budding educator and the vision of a person who is grounded. At the same time, he is persuasive in his efforts to get young people to see the value of their voices. He appears to be older than his chronological age, yet he is a playful and reachable adolescent. He approaches leadership with the gift of inclusion, e.g., cultural, racial, age and gender.

Ira has developed several music-related businesses that showcase his creative and business proclivities. His **way of being** comfortable in his skin allows youth the freedom to share their pain without feeling denigrated in the process. There were six adults in the space on Saturday, but the youth turned their attention to Ira. They shared very personal experiences in what was transformed into sacred space.

Ira will go far and encourage others to travel the path to leadership that is intended for them.

Thank you, Rev. Lillian Barrett for introducing Ira J. McDowell Jr. and his parents, the Rev. Ira J. McDowell, Sr. and Mrs. Aline Watson-McDowell to the UCC.

Illinois Conference Angola Partnership Update

What is a trip to Angola like? Well, it includes choirs that prompt tears of joy, bumpy rides that prompt headaches and sore necks, faith that prompts admiration, and

personal relationships that prompt transformed lives.

From May 24 to June 4, three members of the Illinois Conference visited and worked with our partner church in Angola: the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA). Angola Partnership Team (APT) members Zuberi Badili, Mary Sue Honigschmidt, and the Rev. Mike Solberg, attended IECA's 5-day national General Assembly. IECA is a growing denomination, now exceeding 1.5



Paltestina church welcome in Angola.

million members, in about 2,500 congregations. Their highest priorities are training more pastors and expanding their work in education and health. In education, they are opening a university and a language school, along with doing much other work for young people. In health they are building capacity at their six hospitals and starting a church-based prepaid health financing plan.

From June 8 to July 6, two other APT members went to teach English at the new language school in Huambo. Jen Melberg and Louisa Mitchell taught about 70 teens and adults and helped IECA get the language school off to a strong start.

Our delegates frequently heard people express their great desire for new hymnals, an important resource for personal devotion and corporate worship. Our Illinois Conference hymnal project is helping with this need. After our donation, proceeds of the hymnal sales in IECA could be as much as \$400,000, which will support the opening of the new university!

We still need to raise about \$75,000, so please check to see if your church is paying attention to this great opportunity to support our international partners in Angola. Go to www.AngolaHymnals.org for more information, or contact Tom Norwalk (815) 768-5511, ilconfom@gmail.com or APT chair Lisa Mitchell (630) 399-7271, mitchell.lisaanne@gmail.com for more information. May God bless our partnership!

[Click here](#) to view pictures taken during the Angola Partnership Team visit to Angola.

Welcome Teamous and Barbara!

On Thursday, July 5, we were happy to welcome Teamous and Barbara Newberne for a visit to the Illinois Conference office. As you know, the happy couple has retired to Belize, in Central America. They have been in the area for several weeks visiting their children and families, but will soon head back south. David Russell, Bill Serritella, the Newbernes and I enjoyed a fantastic lunch and discussion together at an area restaurant. Upon return to the Conference office, we presented a recognition gift to them as thanks and appreciation for their generous



From left: Rev. Dr. James J. Olson, Barbara Newberne, Teamous Newberne, and Rev. Dr. David Russell.

donation to the Major Gifts Initiative last year.

Make no mistake, they remain deeply connected to the UCC here in Illinois via Facebook and the web pages, and are involved locally with a Methodist church in their community. We thank them for their continued prayers for us, we pray for them, and we are grateful for their work and witness for Christ, no matter where they are!

The Rev. Dr. James J. Olson, OCC
Acting Associate Conference Minister
Fox Valley Association and Chicago Metropolitan Association
Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ

3rd Annual Family Peace Fest, August 25

The 3rd Annual Family Peace Fest for Hope and Harmony will be held on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2018, from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m. It will be located at Harrer Park, 6140 Dempster in Morton Grove, in cooperation with the Morton Grove Farmers' Market.

Pre-Fest events and activities for all ages start at 10:00 a.m., next to the Civic Center and at the Farmer's Market. There will be rock painting, bubble-blowing, peace crane folding, a traveling Peace Mural from St. Paul's UCC Church in Downers Grove, a book table from the Morton Grove Public Library with books on peace, and more. Amateur artists are invited to create chalk drawings of peace on the (Side)Walk of Peace outside the Civic Center.

At the Peace Fest, the line-up includes speakers from different houses of worship, a Peace Poem, and our keynote speaker Maudlyne Ihejirika, Urban Affairs reporter with the Chicago Sun-Times. Ihejirika says, "As a child of war, I very much look forward to sharing my dreams for the peace we all wish for our communities, city, nation and world." We will close with a community Dance of Peace called by the Glenview Squares square dance group.

Why all this talk about Peace? Because ... we all need peace. Peace, hope, harmony, and wholeness. Making our neighborhoods peaceful? Of course. Encouraging our families? Yes! Providing hope and harmony for our diverse neighbors and friends? Certainly. As one of the coordinators of this wonderful Peace Fest, I invite everyone from our local communities and all of our friends to come to this event for the whole family and learn more about peace, hope and harmony.

What a wonderful opportunity to act as a peacemaker in our local neighborhoods. Not only will we bless others by our efforts, but we will be richly blessed ourselves, for being faithful and acting as a peacemaker. Everyone is encouraged to come out and attend this Family Peace Fest. God willing, we can bring about more peace, hope and harmony in the diverse communities where we live and work.

[For more information](#), contact Rev. Elizabeth Jones at elizajon@aol.com or Khaula Chaudhry from the Muslim Education Center at khaulac@gmail.com.

Rev. Elizabeth Jones
Pastor, St. Luke's Christian Community Church
9233 Shermer Road
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

LEEAP Announces 2019 Funding Cycle

Our Conference Local Evangelism, Envisioning and Planting/LEEAP extends to our churches and associations an opportunity to request funding for new church starts and the revitalization of existing congregations.

If you and/or your church wish to submit a request, please contact the Illinois Conference at (708) 344-4470; e-mail ilconfdavid@gmail.com. The application can be downloaded by going to the Illinois Conference website (www.ilucc.org). **The deadline for a request for calendar year 2019 is October 1, 2018.**

MissionInsite information

EMBRACING OUR NEIGHBORS: Enrollment is open for local churches that are ready to use technology to embrace their local community residents. [MissionInsite](#) is a Church Demographic Program that provides information about local residents from a variety of sources. The enrollment fee to participate in this program is \$15.00 annually. Contact our Conference office, Carmen Torres, at (708) 344-4470 or ilconfcarmen@gmail.com for more information and to enroll your church.

Clergy Day Away is back!

Save the date: Nov. 7, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Pilgrim Park

Our leader-facilitator will be Still Speaking author Rev. Emily Heath, Senior Pastor of the Congregational Church UCC in Exeter, NH. She is also the author of *Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity*. Those interested, may come Tuesday afternoon Nov. 6 for shared community, supper, evening vespers, campfire and overnight lodging. Breakfast will be provided on Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 8:00 a.m. Total cost \$84.

For those coming just for Wednesday, Nov. 7, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. the cost is \$48.

Getting ready for your Fall Stewardship Campaign? Come August 25!

- Two simultaneous workshops at Westchester Community UCC with Michael Piazza and at Zion UCC in Peru with Eugene Grimm.
- Get the latest thinking about Stewardship Technology in the 21st Century and Millennial Generosity (Westchester) plus Essentials for Effective Campaigns (Peru)
- Follow-up panels of successful stewardship from local churches
- [Click here](#) to download registration information or contact ilconfcarmen@gmail.com to register

UCC Conference Disaster Ministries updates

The effects of global warming threaten to only increase the scope, scale and number of disasters worldwide. UCC Disaster Ministries is a program of the United Church of Christ that responds to natural and human caused disasters all over world and is well positioned to respond in most events. Through our volunteers, congregations, Conferences and partnerships, UCC Disaster Ministries seeks to serve the most vulnerable populations that require spiritual, physical, financial and psychological support. In times of domestic disaster, UCC Disaster Ministries office provides a platform and facilitation for much of this work while collaborating with and through UCC Conferences and a network of [Conference Disaster Coordinators](#) (download map [here](#)). Internationally, UCC Disaster Ministries maintains direct relationships and partnerships with organizations and faith communities able to appropriately and effectively respond to emergency and long-term needs.

[Click here](#) to read updated stories of recovery volunteer work sites.

Spanda Retreat Summarized Agenda

Spanda Clergy Retreat to be held Aug. 14, at 4:00 p.m. until Aug. 16, at 12:00 p.m. at Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center, 1834 IL-2, Oregon, Ill.

Day 1: Meet, greet, become familiar with the retreat center and comfortable with the space so that we can get started on the journey. Build camaraderie with fellow clergy and, by the end of the retreat, you will have a cohort of clergy that will journey with you offering support and accountability.

Day 2: Introduction to True Self/False Self. Engage in spiritual practices and exercises that will help you to identify your True Self. This will lead to a deconstruction process of your False Self as you face what is holding you back from being YOU. You will choose a new name for your Self and shed the name that you have given to your False Self.

Day 3: Intentional Life/Vocational Plan. Now that you have identified who God made YOU to be, you will begin creating life goals that reflect who you are. You will write a letter to your future self that you will open in six months to gauge your progress of living into your True Self.

This is only a SUMMARY of the transforming practices and exercises that we will do. Past retreatants have walked away feeling REFRESHED, CENTERED, and finally having a sense of agency over their own lives. Join us and begin your intentional journey now!

www.revcoachbrandynsimmons.com/spanda-retreat-registration

About the retreat center:

LOMC is a gorgeous setting on 460 acres of rolling hills, relaxing ponds, and beautiful prairies. There are hiking trails as well as a prayer labyrinth that you can take advantage of as there is time set aside for such solitude.

Summer Camps are operating

Put together laughter, water, games, singing, worship, nature, new friends and what do you have? Summer camp, of course! July means our summer camps have been in full swing at both Pilgrim Park and Tower Hill. New physical additions (deck at Pilgrim Park and new cottages at Tower Hill) have added to the enhancements of the camps. We are grateful to our regular camp staff and summer staff for providing and supporting the life-changing experience of summer camp! Check [Pilgrim Park Camp](#) and [Tower Hill Camp](#) Facebook pages for updates!

Employment Opportunities

To view employment opportunities within the Illinois Conference [click here](#).

Conference e-mail and website information

Listed below are the e-mail addresses and the website information:

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Please visit the Illinois Conference website at www.ilucc.org.

The Illinois Conference now is on [Facebook](#); look for us.

Also, [online giving](#) now is available on the website.

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