Message from the Interim Conference Minister

On behalf on the ACM Search Committee, I am thrilled to announce that we have discerned that the Rev. Kimberly (Kim) Wood be called as an Acting Associate Conference Minister for the Illinois Conference. She will be assigned to the Eastern & Western Associations. She will resource parts of the Western Association. The Western Association will be covered by both Rev. Kathy Lawes and Kim. We may also change which ACM covers what parts of the Western Association. This is all in discussion so stay tuned as we live into this.

Likewise, please do not assume that Kim will do what the Rev. Tom Norwalk did or in the way that he did it. She is extremely gifted and creative in her own way. I ask that we embrace her and the gifts and graces she brings to the table.

Some of you have recalled with me that prior to Tom arriving the word on the street was that “NO ONE” would be able to do what that individual did. Then, after getting to know Tom, it became clear that he was special in his own way. He brought himself and his ability to connect with others. Now, I hear the same thing, “I don’t know what you’re going to do without Tom? NO One will be able to replace him. That is True because no one can be Tom. They can only be who they are and bring the gifts and graces they possess. That is why I fully expect Kim to be Kim and to not try to imitate Tom.

Tom is amazing and special. I’ve been honored to get to know him over these last five (5) months. He is a gift the Illinois Conference. He has served above and beyond the call of duty. I honor him and am grateful that he’s been with us but he’s earned his next Viking Cruise and we must bless him in the next phase of the journey.

And Kim is wonderfully gifted and will bless you in her own unique way. I’ve worked very close to Kim, Council President, and I have found her to be amazingly gifted. She’s going to be wonderful as part of the associations and conference teams.

She is not Tom, I trust that you will be kind, graceful and champion her as she grows into this new ministry. You will fall in love with her as you did with Tom. When you disagree, I ask that you take a step back and breathe. Let her lead. Give her the grace to simply be herself as she lives into mutual ministry with you. Rather than expecting her to do it, “the way we’ve always done it,” dare to risk to do things differently. She may surprise you. I also expect that you’ll love her as you get to know her.
She is a gift to your associations and the new Conference Team that We are developing that will consult with you as we live into God’s intended desire for the Illinois Conference. We, the conference, are committed to listening more, talking less and creating intentional relationships of mutuality and respect.

I am honored to serve among you,

Rev. Justo González, Il
Interim Conference Minister
Ministro de la Conferencia Interino

P.S. Read details about Kim and the journey that has led her to this new ministry.

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Illinois Conference UCC Annual Celebration 2019

Registration is now open! Remember, a credit card payment is required at the time of registration this year. No banquet tickets will be available on site. Buy your banquet ticket NOW!

REGISTER HERE!

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LAST CHANGE... for churches, clergy coaches and clergy group facilitators

Interested in resources for your church and your pastor for: support, vitality and encouragement to thrive?

"Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations" (TPIRC) funded by the Lilly Endowment has a few openings left for Pastors and Congregations. Check the Illinois Conference website and click on "Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations"!

The last deadline is May 1st for applications to come to Rev. Dr. David Russell at ilconfdavid@gmail.com

LAST CHANCE! MAY 1 DEADLINE

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MESA Training for Committees on Ministry and the Fitness Review Response Team

MESA (Ministerial Excellence and Support and Authorization) from Cleveland is planning two training sessions in the Illinois Conference. On April 12 and 13 they will provide an overview of the Manual on Ministry (MOM). One session will be held in Chicago, one session will be downstate. The times and locations are still being determined. This training is aimed at members of the Committees on Ministry.

On Thursday June 6, training specific to the Fitness Review Response Team is being planned. The class will take place at Elmhurst College. The date is the day before the Illinois Conference Annual Celebration, also at Elmhurst College.

The Conference is excited by the support being provided to these active ministries by the national office. We hope that the members of these functional groups will make every effort to attend.
Watch here for further information as it becomes available.

Disaster Ministries Urgent Appeal

You may have heard the news about very serious flooding in communities in Stephenson and Winnebago Counties in our state. There is also flooding in the Quad City area and in communities in Iowa along the Mississippi River.

More flooding is anticipated in the next month.

Click here to see how you can help>>>  

Resilience in Leadership Initiative

In an effort to support new clergy in their first 5 years of ministry after seminary graduation, the Chicago Theological Seminary announces an innovative national program specifically curated for early career clergy who are from and/or serving economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities. This Resilience in Leadership Initiative closely aligns with CTS’s long-standing commitment towards developing religious leaders who are already transforming the world towards greater justice and mercy.

The Resilience in Leadership Initiative gives particular attention to first appointments, especially those serving as solo or bi-vocational ministers.

Apply to become a Resilience in Leadership Fellow

One of several service projects planned in observation of First Congregational UCC in Des Plaines 150th anniversary

As part of First Congregational UCC in Des Plaines sesquicentennial celebration this year, 150+ pairs of new men's and women's socks were individually packaged and donated to the Self-Help Closet & Pantry of Des Plaines and other social service organizations.

See other service projects planned >>>

Evanston church continues impacting beyond their community

Superemos (we will overcome) is a community co-op in Nicaragua. First Congregational Church of Evanston UCC first connected with Superemos almost 30 years ago through Rev. Ted Miller. The co-op continues to thrive, providing classes in ceramics, dance, and instrumental music as well as a central community kitchen and
classroom open for all to use.

St. Peter’s UCC annual adult mission trip brings hope to Texas

A group of 22 parish members of St. Peter’s UCC in Elmhurst traveled to Port Arthur, Texas, for their 16th annual adult mission trip. Building and repairing houses affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Read article on St. Peter’s recent mission trip by Elmhurst Patch.


A day of celebration on March 17, as the Western Association installed Rev. Bob Sherman as Pastor and Teacher of St. John’s UCC in Minier.

A wonderful celebration on March 24 at St. Peter’s UCC in Grant Park as the Eastern Association installed Rev. Kyle Timmons as Pastor and Teacher.

Congratulations to the newly installed pastor of the historic Lincoln Memorial Congregational United Church of Christ the Rev. Jamie D. Hawley, Chicago Metropolitan Association Cluster 6 Dean Sue Ladd gave the installation prayer on March 24.

Churches in the Media

Union Church installs 2 co-pastors as new leaders

How An Inclusive Chicago Church Works To End Black Queer Violence

Shout Out: Rev. Dale Susan Edmonds, a new pastor at Trinity United Church of Christ in Deerfield
Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III Educates Congregation on African Diaspora

Life stories — not sermons — guide Gilead Church in Chicago

Chicagoans contemplate path forward after anti-LGBT church vote

From the pulpit: Courage in the struggle for justice and peace

Plainfield church to host Spring Musical Concert

Employment Opportunities

Click links to view Ministerial opportunities and lay employment opportunities within the Illinois Conference.

Conference Calendar for March

March 30: Western Association Spring Meeting at St. John UCC, Lincoln.

Upcoming Events

April 6: Eastern Association Spring Meeting at St. Paul's UCC, Monee.

April 6: 11 Annual El Pueblo Canta at Wellington Avenue UCC, Chicago. All proceeds will go to support the immigrant justice work of Centro Romero, CRLN, and Wellington Avenue UCC in Chicago.

April 14: ROCK MEETS GOD CONCERT at First Congregational Church UCC in Lockport.

April 27: Fox Valley Association Spring Meeting at St. Peter UCC, Lake Zurich.

April 30 and May 1: Boundary Training 101 and 201 by Faith Trust Institute.

May 4: Chicago Metropolitan Association Spring Meeting at Bethany UCC, Chicago.


May 13-17: Clergy Coach Credentialing Intensive Training, Location: TBA.


May 19: Rev. Tom Norwalk's Retirement Celebration at 4:00 p.m. at St. Luke Union, Bloomington.


June 18-20: National ONA Gathering in Milwaukee. Rev. Justo González II, Interim Conference Minister, will be one of the Keynote speakers.
June 21-25: United Church of Christ's Thirty-Second General Synod at the Wisconsin Center, located in the heart of downtown Milwaukee.


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THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UCC E-BLAST is published by the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1840 Westchester Blvd., Suite 200, Westchester, IL 60154. The Rev. Justo González II, Interim Conference Minister; Carmen Torres, Editorial Assistant. Copy may be sent to: ilconfcarmen@gmail.com.

This communication is made possible by your contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission

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