



E-NEWSLETTER



From the Conference Minister

I greet you in the name of Jesus the Christ, head of the Church.

I want to thank the people of the Illinois Conference for allowing me the privilege of serving as your Illinois Conference Minister for the past eight years. This ministry has in many ways been a blessing and a satisfying journey in my life.



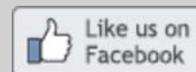
Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales

The ministry, health and future of our Conference are not charged to the care of its Conference Minister, but are charged to its churches, elected leaders and general membership. Our Conference has very capable and able leaders who are presently discerning the future that God is calling us to. When I was called in 2010, it was around the theme "Building Trust in Changing Times" (from the search Conference profile) and following the adoption of "A New Conceptual Framework for Staffing."

The time has now come for the Conference to have new Conference Minister leadership. Our Conference, being in the midst of discerning sustainability, its mission and structure, lends itself to the opportune time for significant and important change.

I am currently ending a second four-year term as Conference Minister and will not be seeking a third term. At the Conference Annual Celebration 2017, I stated the importance of discerning the right time to "step up or to step aside". My role as Conference Minister will come to an end on May 31, 2018, including taking some vacation, prior to the end of May.

My ministry with you has been done with much dedication and great love for our Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ. It has been greatly rewarding to



QUICK LINKS

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CAMP UPDATES

Pilgrim Park Camp and Conference Center
[2018 Facility Rates](#)

Tower Hill Camp and Retreat Center
[2018 Facility Rates](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETINGS

Western Association
Saturday, April 21, 2018;
Bethlehem UCC, Sutter
Theme: "God's Love of Creation!"

have worked with beloved, capable colleagues, the Ministry Leadership Team, administrative staff and wonderful local church pastors and lay Conference leaders. I am deeply grateful for the love and support I have received from so many servants of Christ and the Church, while with you in Conference Ministry.

Throughout my ministry in the Illinois Conference, I have been blessed by working with many gifted, talented and generous persons. I shall hold you and our Conference, its ministry leadership, and all clergy and local churches in prayer. To all with whom I have shared this time, I want to express my deepest gratitude, as I embark on a new path and journey. My prayers for all, and particularly our elected Conference and ministry leadership, in God's continued guidance.

With you, serving The Christ,

Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales
Conference Minister



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

On Feb. 2 and 5, the LEEAP ministry sponsored two workshop-conversations with churches receiving "New Start" and "Revitalization" grants, plus a few other churches interested in renewal. Rev. Dr. Chris Davies (local church development) from the National UCC setting led 25 participants representing 12 churches. Many felt it was one of the most helpful, energizing and encouraging workshops for local church development. *But that is the point isn't it for our Illinois Conference to work with the local church? My job and the Conference resources are here to support local churches and pastors.* I have networks and resources... for revitalization, renewal and revisioning... and will travel.

One of the realities that we faced at these workshops is that most of our 257 Illinois Conference churches have fewer than 100 in worship. For some that is sustainable, while for others sustainability is an uphill challenge. With the predominant reality of small churches, Below is a slide we saw that identifies the 9 essential strengths of a thriving small church. If you don't feel your church is thriving, or you want to look at revisioning and renewal, please contact me at ilconfdavid@gmail.com. Together

[Click here for more info](#)

Prairie Association

Saturday, April 28, 2018;
Woodside Congregational
UCC, Rockford
"Drawing on Deep Wisdom"
Speakers: Kirsten Peachey
and Nancy Sayer

[Click here for more info](#)

Fox Valley Association

Saturday, April 28, 2018;
Congregational UCC,
St. Charles
Theme: "Love in Action-
Disciples at Work"
Keynote address:
Rev. Dr. James J. Olson
[Click here to registrar](#)

Chicago Metropolitan Association (CMA)

Saturday, May 5, 2018;
Epiphany UCC
2008 W. Bradley Place,
Chicago
[Click here for more info](#)

Eastern Association

Saturday, May 5, 2018;
Zion UCC, Gilman
Theme: "We Are Alive"
[Click here for more info](#)

"Women in the Pulpit,": observing National Women's History month;

female ministers on
staff will preach;
each Sunday in March;
10:30 a.m.

The Congregational Church
of Park Manor, UCC
7000 S. Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Drive, Chicago
Rev. Dr. Terrill N. Murff,
Pastor

German Chamber Choir (youth) in concert United Protestant Church of Grayslake

54 S. Whitney St.,
Grayslake
Sunday, March 18, 2018,
3 p.m.

Rev. Joane Patton-Seaton,
Interim Pastor
[For more info click here](#)

Guest Palm

**Sunday speaker,
Phyllis Richards,
Program Associate,
UCC Global Sharing
of Resources**

Sunday, April 9, 2018,
9 a.m.
Congregational Church
of Algonquin
[Click here for more info](#)

we are all the body of Christ, and I believe with shared resources and partnerships we can enhance the spiritual vitality and the commitment to mission of our Illinois United Church of Christ.

I believe that "God is still speaking" and that the Holy Spirit is emerging in new forms of church in our Illinois Conference and everywhere! We living are in a time of opportunity and challenge to work with the Spirit and rebirth the church of Jesus Christ!

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



**135th Anniversary & Awards Ceremony
"Building the Beloved Community"
Community Renewal Society**

Thursday, April 12, 2018,
6 p.m.
Chicago Teachers Union
1901 W. Carroll Ave.,
Chicago
Guest speaker,
Rev. Dr. Eboni Marshall
Turman, Yale Divinity
School
[Register here](#)

**Installation of the
Rev. Sean Weston,**
Senior Pastor and Teacher
Sunday, April 15, 2018,
3 p.m.
Lyonsville Congregational
United Church of Christ
6871 Joliet Ave.,
Indian Head Park
[Click here for more info](#)

**Women of Bethel present
A Spring Tea and author
Jenny Riddle**
Saturday, April 21, 2018,
12:30 p.m.
Bethel UCC
315 E. St. Charles Road,
Elmhurst
[Click here for more info](#)

**WISE Congregations for
Mental Health Conference**
Friday, May 4, 2018,
8:00 a.m.
St. Paul's UCC
5739 Dunham Road,
Downers Grove
[To register click here](#)

**An Inspiring Model
of Ministry:
Spiritual Life Teams**
Presented by UCC Faith
Formation Team &
Glenview Community
Church
Saturday, May 19, 2018,
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Glenview Community
Church
1000 Elm St., Glenview
[Click here to register](#)

Fox Valley Association Spring Meeting to meet in St. Charles

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Fox Valley Association,

Online registration is now open for the 2018 Fox Valley Association Spring Meeting, which will be held Saturday, April 28. We will begin with registration and a light breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at the Congregational United Church of Christ in St. Charles, Rev. Dr. David Pattee, host pastor.

The theme this year is "Love in Action - Disciples at Work". I will be giving the keynote address, a "State of the Association" message.

Please note that we will not be sending out a paper registration this year; all registrations will be online. Each attendee must fill out a separate registration, but churches may send payment for all registrants with one check. There will be child care (for children who are potty trained) available. If you have a flyer you want included in the packet, it must be sent to me or Naomi by March 23.

Please make every effort to attend this year. It would be wonderful if we had 100% representation from every church in the Association.

[Click here to view meeting information and to register online.](#)

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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

Eastern Association holds Spring Meeting

Eastern Association Churches will gather at Zion United Church of Christ in Gilman for their Spring Association meeting on Saturday, May 5, 2018. The theme for our meeting is "We Are Alive" and will feature two sessions of Panel presentations from our Association congregations on ways our congregations are engaged in community ministry and involvement. This is meant to be a time of practical learning from one another and to encourage a vision of faithful ministry within our churches no matter our size! Participants will come away with details of how a ministry meets a need, the process of learning how to seek the resources to meet the need, and how to recruit the person power needed to fulfill the need.

The annual meeting of the Association will also be a part of our day's agenda and we look forward to the hospitality of our friends at Zion UCC! Registration materials will be sent after Easter to our congregations with a deadline of April 27.

News in the Eastern Association

Illini Congregational United Church of Christ in Warrensburg shared an opening worship service to begin the celebration of their 150th year of ministry on Feb. 18, 2018. Rev. Tom Norwalk was invited to be the Preacher for this worship service and other events are being planned throughout the coming year! Happy Birthday, Illini Church!

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ in Lockport, Ill., shared in a celebration service on Sunday, Feb. 25, after recently covenanting to become an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. Local congregational members along with representatives of the Association and Conference joined in this time of recognition and vision for the congregation's welcome of all. First Congregational became the sixth congregation of the Eastern Association to become Open and Affirming.

First Congregational UCC in Dwight and



Rev. Dr. James J. Olson (center) presenting certificate to members of First Congregational UCC in Lockport on becoming an Open and Affirming congregation.

Emington Congregational UCC will officially install Rev. Grant Speece as their Pastor and Teacher on Sunday afternoon, April 15 at 3:00 p.m. We look forward to this important time of connection with our Association churches.

The KWIL Woman's group of the Eastern Association will hold their annual Spring Meeting at St. John UCC in Peotone on Monday, April 30, with registration beginning at 9:00 a.m. followed by a morning mission program and an afternoon music program.

Western Association Spring Meeting is in Sutter

Bethlehem United Church of Christ in Sutter has extended the invitation to host the Western Association Spring Meeting, which will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2018. Holding our meeting the day before "Earth Day" led the planning team to choose the Theme: "God's Love of Creation!" Following the lead of our National UCC Three Great Loves emphases, we will focus this year on Creation care and nurture. Morning and early afternoon panel presentations will share a variety of ways we can be focused on the care and love of God's gifts to us and the ways that we act as stewards of those creation gifts in our lives.

The Annual Business Meeting of the Association will also be held with reports of our mission and ministry in this past year as well as choosing leaders for the Association and Conference committees. Annual grants from the Leonhart Fund will also be announced. More details will soon be available as registration information will be sent to our churches in a few weeks with a registration deadline of April 13.

Western Association News

We welcome Rev. Laurie Hill as the newly-called Designated Pastor at St. John UCC in Lincoln, who began her ministry on March 1, 2018. A service of covenanting was held on March 4, welcoming her into her new role.

St. John's UCC in Minier will be presenting Portuguese Bibles to the Angola Partnership Team of the Illinois Conference during their morning worship service on March 11, 2018. This has been a project of the Youth of the Congregation to support the ministry of our Partner Church in Angola, Africa.

The Western Association will be hosting a Clergy Ethics Training session, which will be held at Good Shepherd Community Church in El Paso on Wednesday, April 18, 2018. The session will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude by 2:30 p.m. This session is open to anyone in the Conference and will be led by Trainer Rev. Laurie Hill. More details will be forthcoming through Association e-mail networks.

News from the Prairie Association

Rev. Dr. Adam Webber was installed as pastor and teacher of Open Prairie UCC, Princeton, on Jan. 21. Heavy fog prevented some out-of-towners from attending, yet the gathering was spirited and faithful. There was warm hospitality, and a generous offering was received for the Prairie Association Clergy Development Fund. Alongside his pastoral leadership, Adam is a musician, composer, author, and retreat leader. Prior to his ordination at Open Prairie, Adam served Clare Congregational UCC in Clare, Mich., for five years.

Thirty-five of 38 churches in the Prairie Association participated in OCWM giving for 2017; our thanks to ACM Rev. Dr. David Russell for his presence, teaching and challenging.

A variety of Bible studies are being offered through Lent in our Prairie churches. The annual tradition of joint midweek Lenten services in the Illinois River Valley is shared once again by the congregations of Trinity, LaSalle; Zion, Peru; UCC, Spring Valley; and UCC, Hollowayville, along with nearby ecumenical partners. Additionally, Rollo Congregational Church UCC will delve into a study on Complaint Free, a resource and reflection guide on attitudes and faith.

The Spring Association Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 28, hosted by Woodside Congregational UCC, Rockford. The program will build on the presentation, "Drawing on Deep Wisdom" offered at the Fall 2017 Meeting by speakers Kirsten Peachey and Nancy Sayer.

First United Church UCC, Sheffield, has started to receive ministerial profiles as their search process continues.

Mayfield Congregational UCC, in rural Sycamore, continues to collect plastic bottle caps, with a goal of 800 pounds total, for two recycled benches for their Monarch Waystation. Clean recyclable plastic lids from water bottles, pill bottles, shampoo bottles, laundry detergent, peanut butter jars, whipped cream tubs, mustard bottles, bottled tea, etc., will be appreciated. For more information, or delivery/pick-up assistance, please contact Rev. Martha Brunell at marthabrunell@gmail.com.

God Is Still Speaking Theology and Outreach

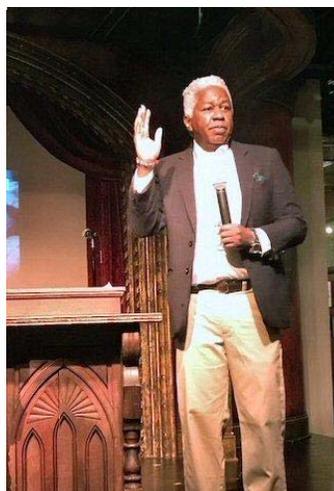
CMA's Congregational Life Committee sponsored an event with guest speaker Rev. Ron Buford, former director of the UCC's Still Speaking Campaign and Pastor of Congregational Community Church UCC of Sunnyvale, Calif. The event was held Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018, and was entitled "God Is Still Speaking Theology and Outreach: Aligning Mission with Message."

We gathered at Uptown Underground and were hosted by The Lighthouse Church of Chicago. Pastor Jamie Frazier led worship. He was assisted by his extraordinary worship team and musicians. We were truly welcomed and blessed.

Rev. Buford led us in a spirited discussion of God Is Still Speaking Theology, which is founded on the truth taught us by our ancestors that "there is still more truth and light to be shed on God's word." Our scripture for the day was Luke 15, the stories of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the Prodigal Son, which show us how God will go to ridiculous lengths to restore us and how we need to be equally obsessed.

In our time of discussion and sharing, those gathered learned how to get over congregational "failure of nerve" by dreaming and visioning on a large scale and then living into our dreams and vision at the same time we're paying attention to the numbers (attendees at events and programs as well as worship). No formula works all the time, but Rev. Buford instructed his church that, if they wanted to increase their Sunday worship numbers by 300, then at least 2,000 people have to come into the church for programs and events. The edgier (and more promotable) the event, the better.

We learned about successful programs at his church in California: (a) Mardi Gras Sunday (now as big as Easter) where someone is assigned the task of "keeping the alleluias" during Lent; (b) Racists Anonymous, a 12-step program designed by their church and now marketed beyond the church, and (c) "Party Theology," where your congregation's "party animals" keep track of visitors and introduce them into congregational life.



Rev. Ron Buford

We ended with a powerful communion service led by Rev. Buford and Rev. Benjamin Reynolds, Interim Associate Conference Minister serving the CMA.

-- Rev. Wayne MacPherson

Rev. Benjamin Reynolds is Interim CMA Associate Conference Minister

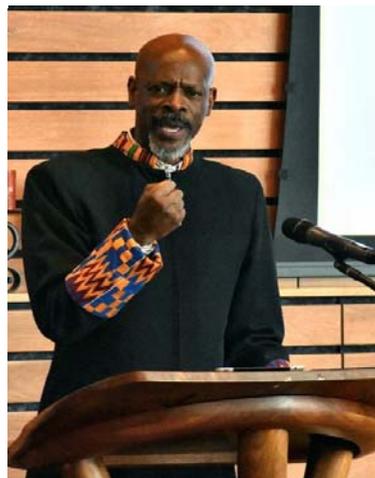
While Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers is on sabbatical through the end of April, Rev. Benjamin Reynolds is serving as Interim Associate Conference Minister serving the Chicago Metropolitan Association. He will be "on the road" serving the committees, churches and clergy of the CMA but is available for meeting at the CMA offices in Chicago Theological Seminary. His e-mail is ilconfbenjamin@gmail.com.

With churches in the search process, he is sharing duties with Rev. Dr. James Olson, Associate Conference Minister serving the Fox Valley and Chicago Metropolitan Associations.

A native of Colorado Springs, Rev. Reynolds is currently a Ph.D. student in the areas of Theology, Ethics and Human Science at Chicago Theological Seminary and serves as Dean of Students at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston.

Benjamin has served as Interim Pastor at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Oak Park and First Church of the Brethren on Chicago's West Side. He also served as Director of the LGBTQ Religious Studies Center at CTS and as Director of Faith Communities for the Illinois Unites for Marriage Equality Campaign.

If you have questions or concerns during Rev. Power's sabbatical contact either Rev. Reynolds or Rev. Wayne MacPherson, CMA Administrator, at e-mail ilconfwayne@gmail.com.



Rev. Benjamin Reynolds

Invitation to Great Lakes Regional Youth Event

Greetings, beloved in Christ!

We are so thrilled today to be writing you about an amazing opportunity for every youth in the Illinois Conference-not to mention their parents, pastors, and volunteer leaders.

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, and play. And this year, it's happening right in our own back yard! Known as the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event, this gathering is an awesome experience full of music, worship, interest-classes for teens and adults, plus-bonus!-an opportunity to meet hundreds of other UCC teens from the Great Lakes region. This is not a work tour or mission trip; instead, this is an event designed for teens to gather, grow, and have a good time.

This summer's Great Lakes Regional Youth Event is scheduled to take place from **July 5-8**, on the campus of **Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill.** For a full four days,

we will celebrate the ways in which young people shape our denomination and world by allowing them to grow their passions, discover new skills, and lift their voices-all under this year's theme: **A Just World for All: Your Voice Matters!** We are excited. We are energized. And we are hopeful that this year we will flood the campus with students from across the Illinois Conference.

GLRYE is open to all youth who are currently in 6th-12th grade. Early Bird registration is open through May 1 at a cost of \$300 per participant for a double occupancy room. Late registration will remain open through June 15 at a cost of \$350 per participant. More information can be found by visiting our website: <http://www.wcucc.org/event/glrye/>.

We hope you'll all make an effort to join us and to help spread the word, as we look forward to a four wonderful, Spirit-filled days.

See you in July!

Rev. Emily Ann Davis
Rev. Kim Whisler-Vasko
Co-Chairs, 2018 Great Lakes Regional Youth Event

2018 Illinois Conference Annual Celebration June 8 and 9

Save The Date!!!



REV. DR. YVETTE FLUNDER IS OUR KEYNOTE
SPEAKER FOR ANNUAL CELEBRATION!!

Bishop Flunder, Pastor of City of Refuge UCC, Oakland, CA, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and holds degrees in Ministry from the Pacific School of Religion and the San Francisco Theological Seminary. She is a trustee and adjunct professor at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. She is an active voice for the Religion Council of the Human Rights Campaign, as well as for the National Black Justice Coalition. She is the author of *Where the Edge Gathers: A Theology of Homiletic Radical Inclusion*.

****Friday's Events Include****

- Opening Celebration Worship at 1 p.m.
Led by Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers
- Afternoon Education Opportunities
Bishop Flunder leading one energizer!
- Celebration Banquet starting at 6 p.m.

****Saturday's Events Include****

- Keynote Address
by Bishop Yvette Flunder
- Conference Business
- Closing Celebration Worship
Led by Rev. Tom Norwalk and
Rev. Kathy Lawes

Watch your email for registration information!!

Deadline is Monday, May 21, 2018

Update from the Conference Environmental Task Force

The escalating assaults on the environment by forces of greed can drive us to despair when we consider our children's future.

Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die." Job 2:7-9



Walter Brueggeman tells us that in these times, the Church has three urgent prophetic tasks: to confront our society with the **Reality** of the current situation, to guide them through their **Grief** when confronted with the reality of our times and then to give them **Hope**.

In the midst of my utter despair, there's a quiet-quiet voice that comes to me in the darkest of hours and without words tugs at my heart and urges my soul to Arise and PERSIST insisting there is yet reason for hope.

Look, the voice without words says: There are signs all around you that this age of greed & violence is ending if you but persist in your efforts for justice.

Look at all the states and communities (and Kids!) suing Big Oil and the Federal Government demanding action to stop the destruction of God's Good Creation. Look at the huge Wind Farms being built around the Globe. Look at the escalating number of communities and countries declaring the end of polluting vehicles by 2030. Look at amazing gains in harvesting energy from the Sun. Just open your eyes and look at the hope arising when Faith guides our use of Technology rather than our greed.

Look, the voice insists, at all the people of ethics who are arising to insist that wanton violence against people and Creation is not Gospel. Look at the "Poor Peoples Campaign", "End the Fossil Fuels", "Immigration Justice", "Women's Movement" and the countless other movements who are insisting another way is possible.

Look, the voice without words insists, at all the signs both great and small, that the Spirit is alive and at work in the world calling us forth.

We offer free resources at www.SustainingCreation.org which will assist communities of Faith respond to the Climate Crisis with the necessary steps of Reality, Grief & Hope. "Sustaining Creation - A Faith Journey" is an 8-part series for small groups. "Come & See" is a series of short videos exploring hope for the future when Faith guides our use of technology. "48 Steps to Living Sustainably" provides actions that you can take right now to make a difference.

"Do you still persist in your integrity?" Then praise God, arise, and live.

Prayer: God of us all, help us to walk humbly with you to do justice with loving kindness in the saving of your Creation. Help us to do this soon Dear God, while there's yet still time, Amen.

A Pastoral Letter on Sexual Misconduct

*"Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan,
and the Lord will hear my voice." Psalm 55*

In recent months, there have been numerous stories of sexual misconduct by men of power in various settings of business, media, entertainment, and politics. In each case, it took the courage of one to name their experience of being sexually harassed or abused by someone more powerful than themselves in order for the sin of sexual abuse to finally be recognized.

We confess that the United Church of Christ (UCC) is not immune to these sins of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct. We repent when those in power at any setting of the UCC has acted inappropriately and violated others with their words, actions, or power. We, the Church, have sinned, and we ask for forgiveness from

those, who have been violated.

We recognize the stories of courageous women and men in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures who, when they were sexually assaulted by men of power, God provided them strength, courage, and love already within them because they were created in God's image. So, too, we honor that all are created in God's image and have the capacity for wholeness in the midst of sexual abuse and misconduct.

We, the leaders of the United Church of Christ, are committed to providing safe space for all, where sexual harassment, abuse, or misconduct is not tolerated. Our Committees on Ministry along with MESA (Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization) seek to ensure our churches, authorized ministers, and volunteers safe space from sexual misconduct of power.

May God's Peace be with us as we seek to create a Just World for All, which starts with safe space for all.

Faithfully yours,

The National Officers of the United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries

The Rev. James Moos, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries

**The Council of Conference Ministers of the
United Church of Christ**



LOVE OF NEIGHBOR: "100 Bucket Brigade"

Bucket brigades were an early form of community effort in fighting fires. A line of men would form between the water source, usually a well, and the fire. The first man in the line would fill the bucket with water, then hand it to the next person, which was then repeated all the way to the fire site. Too often, this approach was inadequate for the task and homes or barns or stores were lost to the fire.

Today, we're using the bucket brigade for another, equally demanding task. We're going to ask our young people to fill the buckets with things like sponges, work gloves, and other cleaning materials. When filled with the things Church World Service requires, these buckets will be used to clean up homes and businesses that have been flooded, inundated by hurricanes, or ripped apart by tornadoes.

The churches of the Fox Valley Association are being asked to provide the necessary ingredients for 100 Church World Service Cleanup Bucket Kits. The kit assembly will be done by the young people during their Great Lakes Youth Event being held at Elmhurst College on July 5-8.

On Sunday afternoon, at the Justice & Witness workshop, eight churches have signed up to provide some of the needed ingredients, but there are lots more things needed. The J&W Committee will circulate a list of the items still needed.

Please contact Rev. Roger Dart at dart.rc@gmail.com or (847) 274-2626 and let him know what your church will be providing.

Acts of Justice - Lenten Workshop

On March 4, the Fox Valley Association's Justice and Witness Team presented an

Acts of Justice Lenten Workshop at the First Congregational Church of Algonquin with approximately 50 participants representing at least 8 churches.

Speakers presented on the topics of Refugee Resettlement, Environmental Justice, The Transgender Experience, Gun Violence, and Issues of Church and State. This annual gathering brings churches together to focus on our call to Justice during a season of reflection.

The event also served as the kick-off to a "100 Bucket Brigade" for Disaster Ministries. If your congregation is interested in donating items for disaster buckets, to be compiled at the Great Lakes Youth Event this summer, please contact Roger Dart, Conference Disaster Coordinator at dart.rc@gmail.com.

This is the third year of the Lenten Workshop series.

Healthy Congregational Workshop



Everyone is welcome to attend the Healthy Congregations workshop on March 23-24, sponsored by the Fox Valley Association and St. Paul UCC in Barrington, Ill. Facilitated by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, the event is FREE and includes all materials, snacks and Saturday lunch. To register, e-mail St. Paul at stpauluccchurch@gmail.com. Registration deadline is Monday, March 19.

Healthy Congregations teaches us to be effective stewards of our congregation's emotional health. Churches that understand how communities function, can easily detect and avoid unhealthy habits of living together. The workshop will teach us techniques that help prevent destructive conflict so we can stay focused on our mission and purpose. These skills aren't limited to life in church community, they also help in our family, workplace and friend relationships.

The workshop leader is Bill Blank, Associate Director of Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) in Lombard, Ill. He is an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church and has served as a pastor and interim pastor. He has participated in the Postgraduate Program in Bowen Family Systems Theory and its applications at the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family in Washington, D.C. He has experience as a mediator, trainer and church consultant as well as providing coaching for pastors and church leaders

Giving Campaign through #ILGive



On May 3, 2018, the Illinois Conference is again participating in a 1-day giving campaign called **#ILGive**. This is a 24-hour campaign, organized by Forefront (formerly Donors Forum), that specifically supports Illinois non-profits in their communities.

When we first participated with **#ILGive** on **#GivingTuesday**, Nov. 28, 2017, we received donations of \$1,855. For our first-time effort in this arena, we were very thankful for those donors who responded! We are still seeking to support special programs for **Youth, Poverty and Hunger, and Social Justice** in 2018, and are asking your participation.

Please stay tuned to your email, and look to see updates on the Illinois Conference initiatives toward which we would like your donations on May 3, 2018!

SAVE THE DATE!!! May 3!!!

THANK YOU

Make a Difference in Angola

[Watch a video](#)...or read on.

For just \$3.00 you can make a difference for our church partners in Angola. The Illinois Conference-Angola Partnership Team (14 years strong!) is launching a Conference-wide fundraising campaign to help our partners (the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola - or IECA) buy 50,000 hymnals for their church. Hymnals are a critical resource



for worship and individual spiritual growth for IECA. With a rapidly growing church and difficult economic conditions, they have sought our help in purchasing the hymnals.

[Anyone can contribute directly through the Illinois Conference website at this link.](#) See the Angola Hymnals option under Special Offerings.

Perhaps every member of your church could be encouraged to give \$3.00 for one hymnal? Perhaps some members would give 10 hymnals or 50 or 100? Perhaps your church mission board would like to donate 500 or 1000?

Now, here's the really amazing thing about donating for these hymnals. The church in Angola is going to sell the hymnals to their members, and use the proceeds to open a church-based university they have dreamed of for 100 years! This will change the lives of students like Roberto, pictured above. You can make a difference in two wonderful ways with this one donation.

All sorts of additional information is available at www.AngolaHymnals.org. Or please feel free to contact Mike Solberg (msolberg@uchinsdale.org) at the Union Church in Hinsdale or Nancy Reed (nreed8603@yahoo.com) at University Church in Chicago for more information.

[Anyone can contribute directly through the Illinois Conference website at this link.](#) Or send a check to the Illinois Conference office, with "Angola Hymnals" in the memo line. Thanks, and God bless you!

-- Rev. Dr. J. Michael Solberg

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:

Illinois Conference general e-mail: ilconferenceucc@gmail.com
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Also, [online giving](#) now is available on the website.

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