

Illinois Conference UCC E-Newsletter



From the Conference Minister

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I trust you are well and preparing for the joy that comes with the approaching holidays.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?... You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-16 NIV)

Many in our citizenry are shocked by the results of the elections, others are relieved and pleased that they are over. It may seem that we have been engaged in the electoral process for far too long. The news media, TV commentators and late night comedians will now need to turn to something else with which to give attention, heighten and entertain.

Some commentators have stated that the religious sector did not play as much of a role in the elections as in previous times. We might remember that the church of President Obama was very much in the news during the previous two elections. The Evangelical and conservative faith groups were also not as much coveted as in previous elections. Some have suggested that the church was silent, voiceless due to far too many views and fragmentation -- that only marginal groups and some grass roots voices could be heard. The question arises how the light of faith communities shined, if at all.

We have elected a new president, and issues raised during the presidential race will still be with us. It will take a lot of time and some concrete actions to try and heal the nation, after the divisiveness, hurt and insults launched by candidates. We need to pray that we may be led in the unification of the country. Pray for courage as we wait to see if the hate, division, and exclusion voiced will be legislated; if the Congress will become functional. Pray that Congress can provide some checks and balances and get positive things done "that the divide can be bridged" and governing can take place.

Many, particularly the most vulnerable, feel that our nation elected a divisive racist, homophobic and self-centered leader.

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[Tower Hill](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THANKSGIVING DAY
Thursday, Nov. 24, 2016



CHRISTMAS
Sunday, Dec. 25, 2016

There is reason to be concerned about what can be expected, and some have taken to the streets using their only option and right to be heard by protesting. Dr. Miguel De La Torre (Baptist News Global) writes:..."I hear my white liberal friends, especially those who voted for third-party candidates or chose not to vote to prove how principled they are, take hope they have four years to regroup and return strong. But this is the privilege of whiteness -- they may be disappointed their candidate did not win; they need not fear for their lives (and no, I am not being hyperbolic). For them, it is just an election. For communities of color, the issue is one of life and death."

As Christians, we may have been reflecting, or may need to reflect now and in coming weeks and months, what we might have learned. What is the contrast between what we have held as our ideals as a nation and what we have seen and heard expressed. The fundamental issues and questions raised during the campaigns remain about us as a nation, what to do about racism and white privilege, how we will treat women, immigrants, gays, those that are different.

A colleague in Conference ministry states: "...we read the headlines and realized that our commission -- our role -- our calling -- remains unchanged".

Some may feel that these are political issues to be left to the political arena. Erroneously we want to ignore that they are issues in the church and prevalent in our own communities of faith, where we are called to build the beloved community. The Christian community is both challenged and given the opportunity to speak and act on these issues. If we in the Church cannot openly discuss these issues, create new consciousness, seek change, how can we expect those outside the faith community to hold the courage to do so? I pray that we in the faith community can be viable in setting examples, by living out our faith and values, by being prophetic voices for justice.

My colleague in Conference ministry continues stating: "For months the media has made clear that millions are angry. If hope and change describes the mandate of 2008, anger and a longing to restore what once was is this morning's headline. I believe that anger is rooted in grief - grief for a world that is no more; grief for a world to which we cannot return. Our God is a God of hope. Yet the prophets teach us that we get to hope only by facing reality and moving through our grief." (The Rev. Jim Antal, Massachusetts Conference, Nov. 9, 2016)

We must pray and witness, as disciples of the Christ, that we may be as light to the world and as salt of the earth. May we be a voice for the voiceless and those most vulnerable people. May the approaching Holiday Season bring new understanding, unity and peace.

In Christ,
Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales
Conference Minister



NEW YEAR'S EVE
Saturday, Dec. 31, 2016

NEW YEAR'S DAY
Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017



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

"...for in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith." (Galatians 3:26)

It is, Nov. 9, 2016, the day after the election and, perhaps like you, my heart is hurting, my mind reeling. Yet my faith has taught me that our God is with us, teaching us, reminding us to trust in the Word and the Will of the Holy One.

I believe our nation; our world needs a whole lot of reconciliation! And we need to be the hands and feet of Christ, reaching out and building relationships even with those with whom we disagree. We need to show the way of dialogue, of face-to-face opportunities for listening and sharing, of building relationships wherever it is possible.

Years ago, I preached a sermon about how God loves it when we build bridges across human divisions instead of building walls that further separate us. After that sermon, I suggested our congregation reach out to a Muslim congregation and meet at each other's "church" for: presentations; discussion; prayers; and of course, food. What resulted was face-to-face dialogue and plans to continue the relationship of learning about one another. We discovered our common humanity as children of God.

Recently, here at the Illinois Conference, along with some of our faithful folk (Visiting Disciples), we are reaching out to our churches to: reconnect; listen; learn what's happening at that church; offer support and possible resources; and pray. It occurs to me that this is another example of developing dialogue and building relationships through face-to-face encounters.

The "master" of crossing social barriers to others beyond the margins is our Jesus. He reached out to those who were "different" and he welcomed them with love. Following him, we can reach out, offering to create a sacred space for face-to-face dialogue. With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is possible that reconciliation can happen and that love can prevail.

As we enter our Advent season, we have a deep and genuine need to see the hope that Christ brings into our world, now more than before, we need to put our trust in the hope of God's gift to us.

God's peace to you and yours,
Rev. Dr. David Russell, Interim Associate Conference Minister

Environmental Task Force: Realizing what's now at stake

I like Clean Air, do you like Clean Air?

I enjoy Clean Water, do you enjoy Clean Water?

I appreciate my food being grown in un-contaminated soil, do you?

I want my grandchildren to grow up in a world not made incredibly hostile by wrecking our planet through Global Warming, how about you?

My youth was spent in a time with black skies, rivers catching on fire, DDT killing off Bald Eagles and Acid Rain killing off the trees. Let's not even talk about leaking hazardous waste dumps and a big hole in our Ozone layer giving us all skin cancer worries.

But then in my adult years, we founded the EPA and passed some really great Environmental regulations. As a result the air, water and land started to be cleaned up. Our local environments are not yet fully recovered but are certainly better than places like China and India where without environmental regulations to protect them, kids have to wear face masks and play in air filtered domes.

Some of our national political leaders are already crowing about their new found ability to roll back all regulations in the first month of the new presidency and new Congress.

No regulations sounds like a great idea until you picture the costs to God's Good Creation which, by the way, includes you and me and our kids/grandkids.

How did we turn back to caring only about short-term profits and not long term health of Creation?

If you are interested in protecting God's Good Creation, come join our efforts on the Environmental Task Force of the Illinois Conference.

- The Task Force is still seeking additional members who are passionate about Creation Care. Members serve on a "where you can and when you can basis" with all meetings being web based. Therefore, distance is should not be an issue for service on the Task Force!
- The Task Force is on Facebook -- Il Environmental Taskforce UCC -- and we invite you to "like" the page to discover posts which address the issues of climate change and environmental issues. There you will also find short videos addressing the "48 Steps To Living Sustainably" resource. Programs can also be accessed at: www.tellingitforward.org as well as on the Facebook page.
- Congregations are invited to be recognized as a UC Creation Justice Church and to develop Green Teams as a part of your Mission Committees to seek ways that you can become a more environmentally friendly church, advocate for the environment in the world and help members learn more about how they can live more environmentally friendly.

To request a resource, connect with the latest webinar or to join in the on-going work of the Environmental Task Force, contact its chair: Rev. Dr. Terry Gallagher at terrencegallagher@hotmail.com.

Recap of Fox Valley/CMA Fall Meeting

The Joint Fall Meeting of the Chicago Metropolitan Association and Fox Valley Association was held on Saturday, Oct. 15 at St. Paul UCC in Palatine. The Rev. David Mercer was the host Pastor, and we extend our deepest gratitude to him and the people of St. Paul for an excellent meeting.

The morning began with worship, with Rev. Mercer as the preacher. Acting Associate Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. James J. Olson, and Associate Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers, and Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales co-presided at Holy Communion.

The Rev. Jason Coulter (Ravenswood UCC) brought us through some very brief business. The Rev. Jesse Knox III (Church of the Good Shepherd UCC) introduced the day's featured speaker.

Our guest for the day was Fr. Michael Pflieger, priest and Pastor of St. Sabina Roman Catholic Church, where he has served since 1981. A noted speaker and civil rights activist, Fr. Pflieger stirred the gathered members of the two Associations to pay attention to the crime, violence, poverty and injustice present in many of the neighborhoods of Chicago, and anywhere that there is such suffering across the country.

His pointed criticism of "the church" fell on appreciative and responsive ears. The refrain through his remarks; "...the Church has been too silent..." rang a convicting note in the hearts of many. Let us hope that his words stir us to action.

We are fortunate that Fr. Pflieger's remarks have been recorded on video, and are available to view at <http://uccfn.org/pflieger>. You are strongly encouraged to view the recording as a way to stir interest and action in the congregations.

We are grateful for the many people who worked hard to make our Association meeting a success. Thank you to everyone who volunteered.

The Rev. Dr. James J. Olson, OCC
Acting Associate Conference Minister

Fox Valley Association and Chicago Metropolitan Association

To view more pictures taken at the Joint Chicago Metropolitan and Fox Valley Association Fall Meeting visit the [Illinois Conference Facebook Page](#).



Fr. Michael Pfleger, guest preacher.



Rev. David Mercer, host Pastor.



Serving Communion: Rev. Dr. James J. Olson (from left), Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales and Rev. Dr. Vertie Powers.



Rev. Jesse Knox III (from left), Shunion Shine, Fr. Michael Pfleger and Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales.

News from CUE (Chicago, United, Eden) Seminaries

On Sept. 22, 2016, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities installed Lewis P. Zeidner, Ph.D. as President of the seminary. Before becoming President, he served on United's board of trustees, most recently as chair. President Zeidner started his career as a psychologist treating families and was a hospital administrator for 15 years. Subsequently he founded, led, and sold three start-ups. Dr. Zeidner's remarks, "Our Kairotic Moment," addressed the challenges confronting theological education in the 21st Century and urged us not to "stand trembling before the empty tomb" but to discover the ways that God is bringing new life to the church and the world-and how United can be a part of that. Welcome, President Zeidner!



Lewis P. Zeidner, Ph. D.

Eastern and Western Association met in Pekin

The Eastern and Western Associations shared in a wonderful Joint Fall Association meeting held at St. Paul's UCC in Pekin on Friday, Nov. 11 and Saturday, Nov. 12. Our host church did a superb job of sharing warm hospitality with many volunteers who made our visit so very enjoyable.

Clergy from the two Associations gathered on Friday evening for dinner prepared by the ladies of St. Paul's, which was followed by a short presentation and question and answer period with our special guest, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. It was a significant time of sharing as well as a time of inspiration for the joint ministry we share through our settings in the United Church of Christ.

On Saturday, clergy and lay delegates and visitors gathered for a day-long opportunity for continued dialogue with our guest. Our morning was blessed with inspirational worship featuring wonderful music and uplifting moments of communion as a gathered body. Rev. Dorhauer again shared with us many stories of witness in his first 15 months as our General Minister and President. He dialogued with us about our Denomination's purpose: "to love God and one another." Many stories were shared of Association congregations and leaders who are about that very work in significant ways. He related that this is sacred work which when we see it as the fulfillment of our mission, we will always be vital to God's call upon us in all of our ministry settings. Following lunch, two workshops were held. One focused on the future of the United Church of Christ, led by Rev. Dorhauer, and the second shared ideas about the future of the Illinois Conference led by Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales, Rev. Dr. David Russell, Rev. Kathy Lawes and Rev. Tom Norwalk.

To view more pictures taken at the Eastern and Western Fall Association Meeting visit the [Illinois Conference Facebook Page](#).



Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales (from left), Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer and Rev. Dr. James J. Olson.



Special guest, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer (right) with Rev. Kathy Lawes.



Rev. Tom Norwalk addresses the gathering.



GREAT Time for Christian Educators in 2017

The GREAT Lakes Association of United Church Educators announces its 2017 Annual Conference to be Oct. 17-18-19 at Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park, Indiana. Featured will be a variety of workshops with emphasis on the practical, the useful, and the timely. The third day will share ideas from one of the most current programs, Messy Church.

The GLAUCE organization provides a network among churches, educators, and volunteers from Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. It offers support and information to those involved in faith formation. GLAUCE also brings connection with the national level--the Association of United Church Educators (AUCE). Check out these organizations through the web site www.auce-ucc.org. The site details membership benefits. Membership is not required to attend the annual conference.

Registration information for the fall conference will be available early next year. Watch this publication for updates. For information about Illinois Conference involvement in GLAUCE, contact the Illinois rep, Pat McCure at First Congregational UCC, 700 E. Ninth Street, Lockport, IL 60441, (815) 838-2091.

Patricia McCure
GLAUCE Secretary

Pastor installed at Trinity UCC, Westville

Members and friends of Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville gathered for the Installation service of their pastor, Rev. David Robberts-Mosser, on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 6. David's spouse, Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser, Pastor of Community UCC in Champaign, shared an inspiring sermon and clergy gathered to share the blessing of the Wider Church during the Installation liturgy. A reception was held following the service, sharing the hospitality of Trinity's members.



Installation Service for Rev. David Robberts-Mosser.

Calling all UCC Youth (Grades 9-12)

Help Refugees - Win Scholarships - Share your Creativity
ENTER the UCC's SYRIAN REFUGEE ACCOMPANIMENT VIDEO CONTEST
<http://www.ucc.org/SyrianRefugeesVideoContest>

The world today has more refugees and internally displaced people than at anytime since World War II. Be part of the United Church of Christ's "Still Speaking Voice" Initiative in December that will highlight ministries with Syrian Refugees.

Show your awareness of the response to the Syrian refugee crisis and highlight your local community's plan of action for awareness-raising and welcoming.

Selected videos from this contest will go public on



UCC media throughout December 2016. Three of these videos will win scholarship prizes: 1st \$2,000 - 2nd \$1,000 - 3rd \$500

Note: The UCC also will acknowledge contest winners by making donations equal to the amount of these scholarships to Global Ministries' (UCC/Disciples) partners involved in education with Syrian refugee youth. This \$3,500 is in addition to on-going support of Syrian refugees through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and designated donations for refugees.

Video Contest winners will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Videos must be between 30 seconds and 2 minutes in length.
2. Videos are accepted in the following formats: .MOV, .FLV, .AVI, .MP4, .WMV.
3. One submission per person.
4. Applicants must be in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 on December 1, 2016.
5. Videos must be creative and engaging.
6. Videos and action plans must demonstrate authenticity.
7. Videos must demonstrate awareness of the response of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the Syrian Refugee crisis.
8. Videos must demonstrate an understanding of the long-term crisis that has made Syrian people refugees and internally displaced.
9. Videos must present an action or plan of action that involves your congregation and/or community in accompaniment of Syrian refugees (awareness raising, education, welcoming, and/or fundraising).
10. Videos that promote donations for Syrian Refugees must designate through the UCC's Refugee Emergency Fund www.ucc.org/refugee_emergency_fund
11. Submit video October 1, 2016 through November 11, 2016; 5:00 p.m. EST.

Helpful Websites:

Global Ministries (UCC/Disciples) www.globalministries.org

Global Ministries Syria Crisis www.globalministries.org/syria_crisis

UCC Refugee Ministries www.ucc.org/refugees_index

One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC) www.ucc.org/oghs

Church World Service www.cwsglobal.org

ACT Alliance <http://actalliance.org>

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.

Bethel United, Elmhurst, hosts Annual Re-Deck the Halls Sale

It's time to Re-Deck the Halls with treasures from holidays past. Bethel United Church of Christ invites you to stretch your holiday shopping budget by purchasing items for your holiday decor or unique gifts at inexpensive prices. A sale of gently used holiday decorations and gifts will be held at the Bethel UCC Administration Center, 316 E. Huntington Lane in Elmhurst, on Friday, Nov. 18 and Saturday, Nov. 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Homemade baked goods and treats will also be sold. Proceeds will help fund the missions of the church, including local charities. Please call (630) 279-4040 for more information.

The Zoppé Circus Family Presents

1842 NINO!

and the Magical Holiday Adventure!

Zoppé, a 7th generation, Nationally Renowned Italian Family Circus partners with Wellington Avenue Church to bring you a Holiday Circus for children of all ages! Take a magical journey with Nino and his friends as they discover the true meaning of the holidays!

9th Annual

Please join us!
Saturday, December 10th
New Times! 3:00pm & 7:00pm

Tickets: <http://waucc.org/nino2016/>
 \$10 Advance Donation - \$12 at Door
 Under 2 years FREE

Box office, Group rates or Birthday Parties,
 please call 773-935-0642

Wellington Avenue UCC,
 615 W. Wellington Ave. Chicago
 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Concessions PLUS Italian dinner at 6:00 pm

www.zoppe.net

Conference e-mail and 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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This communication is made possible by your contributions to

Our Church's Wider Mission.



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