



### From the Interim Conference Minister

Buenos Días, Familia de Dios (Good day to you, my Family in Christ):



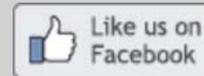
*Justo González II*

These are Days of New Beginnings in the Illinois Conference. I am very clear that **our NUMBER 1 PRIORITY is to SERVE YOU**, our local churches, associations and the People of God in Illinois.

It's been a wild two weeks and I love it. As I write, this is day 16 of my tenure as your Interim Conference Minister. Since my arrival, I have had the honor of attending 11 events across the Conference, where I have had the privilege of meeting you, the People of God.

During the presidential campaign of 1992, James Carville coined the phrase, "It's the economy stupid." Let me rephrase that to my personal understanding of ministry. No matter where we serve or what role we are presently in as pastors and laity, "It's all about sincere relationships based upon mutual respect and care for each other." Relationships matter!

When I met with the search committee, I stated to them that I will go where I am invited, because the only way that I know how to be in relationship to others is to show up, be present to others and get to know them by genuinely being curious about their lives and ministry. I would love to attend an event at your church, association or a community justice event in your community. I'm also booking preaching engagements for next year. Know that I will do everything possible to honor requests sent my way.



### BIG CHANGES IN 2019

To better serve you E-News will be publishing a smaller e-blast twice a month.

### 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

**125th Anniversary Celebration**  
**St. Paul's UCC**  
Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018,  
5:30 p.m.  
American Legion Hall  
4000 Saratoga Ave.,  
Downers Grove, Ill.  
Info: (630) 969-2783

Lastly, I want you to know that I pray for you, your communities of faith and our diverse young people. I am so grateful that each and every one of you and your communities are a faithful expression of the United Church of Christ within your context. I also want to thank you for your faithful contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM).

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



**Jubilee Worship Service**

First Congregational  
Church of Berwyn  
6500 W. 34th St.  
Berwyn, Ill.  
Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018,  
12:00 noon  
Rev. Dr. James Olson,  
Guest Speaker  
[Click here for more info](#)

**Service of Ordination  
for Dina Lauman**

Garden Prairie UCC  
10990 Hwy 20  
Garden Prairie, Ill.  
Sunday, Nov. 18, 2018  
3:00 p.m.

**Harvest of Thanks:  
Neighborhood Concert**

United Church of  
Hyde Park  
1448 E. 53rd St.,  
Chicago  
Sunday, Nov. 25,  
4-6 p.m.  
Thaddeus Tukes Quartet,  
plus others  
[Click here for more info](#)

**Serenata Mexicana**

Immanuel UCC  
9815 S. Campbell Ave.,  
Evergreen Park, Ill.  
Sunday, Nov. 25,  
7:00 p.m.  
[Click here to view invite](#)

**Sanctuary Re-dedication**

St. John's UCC  
4500 Prescott Ave.,  
Lyons, Ill.  
Sunday, Dec. 2,  
4:00 p.m.  
Info: (708) 447-0309  
Guest Preacher,  
Rev. John H. Thomas  
[Click here to view invite](#)

## An Introduction to the Lilly Grant

"Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations" (TPIRC)

Sept. 26 we were notified that the Illinois Conference UCC had been awarded a five-year (2019-2023) grant of \$1,000,000, designed to provide resources and support for pastors to thrive with excellence. The grant also provides that their congregations will benefit with resources for vitality.

Our TPIRC grant program will involve 45 pastors and 3-5 lay leaders from each of their churches in four strategic activities:

1. A trained **Clergy Coach**, meeting monthly with each pastor
2. A **Clergy Community of Practice** learning and support group for each pastor,

- meeting 10 months of the year
3. An **Annual Learning Summit** with high caliber keynote speakers and practical workshops all geared to the needs of the 45 pastors with lay leaders
  4. Two **Cohort gatherings**, annually, of groups of 5-7 churches sharing resources, networking and partnering

**Announcements** will be sent out to all our churches by the end of November for pastors and their churches, Clergy Coaches and for CCOP Facilitators. These announcements will describe in more detail the key elements of the grant and the participation expectations for Pastors, Clergy Coaches and CCOP Facilitators. In early January, all of our churches will receive **applications** for participation, including a description of the application process. We will also have a process and applications for Clergy Coaches and CCOP Facilitators.

Three important characteristics about this program are:

1. Pastors eligible to participate in TPIRC will be: new to ministry; or bi-vocational; or serving a "declining" church (decreasing attendance, diminished financial resources, an aging congregation).
2. Pastors and churches commit to a five-year involvement with TPIRC.
3. Churches who participate will contribute \$500 annually as part of the covenant of involvement.

I am very excited about this ministry that I believe can have significant impact with 45 of our churches and concomitantly with all 241 churches in the Illinois Conference. The learning experiences and hopeful duplication of resources for other churches as well as an expansion of this program for years following the 5-year grant period are a hopeful vision of spreading the good news of this ministry's capacity to help build God's Kingdom.

May you have a blessed Advent and Christmas,

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

## **Fox Valley Association and Chicago Metropolitan Association gathered to celebrate**

On Saturday, Oct. 20, the churches of the Fox Valley Association and Chicago Metropolitan Associations gathered to celebrate "The Fruits of the Spirit - From the Valley to the City!" This joint gathering of two Illinois Conference Associations was focused on the gifts that our churches have to offer the greater church. The first gift was shared in worship. The UCC new church start, Lighthouse Church of Chicago, shared praise and prayer and Pastor Jamie Frazier laid a challenge before the UCC (echoing the words of Hosea) to make the church of tomorrow even greater than the church of the past.

After greetings and announcements, four feature presentations were shared with the participants. Rev. Cyndi Gavin, St. John's UCC in Aurora, talked about how to connect church to community as a good neighbor. Rev. Lucas King, Hope UCC in Naperville, shared the experiences of a second-wave church start and how they have evolved over the years. Rev. Sarah Garcia, St. Pauls UCC in Chicago, presented on the creative youth and children's ministries their church has constructed. And lastly, Rev. Terrill Murff described how The Congregational Church of Park Manor used a community garden to connect their youth to the community.

The day was a resounding success and gratitude goes to our presenters, the planning team from CMA and Fox Valley, as well as our most gracious hosts, The Union Church of Hinsdale and Rev. Mike Solberg. In 2019, we look forward to another joint gathering, for we know that we are better together!



*Fox Valley Association and Chicago Metropolitan Association worship led by the Lighthouse Church.*

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

## Ordinations and Installations in the Chicago Metropolitan Association

The fall has been a busy time for ordinations and installations in the CMA. On Sept. 16, Rev. Kim Shelton was installed as Pastor of Good News Community Church. On Sept. 23, Rev. Rebecca Anderson was installed as Co-Pastor of Bethany UCC in Chicago. Rev. Jacki Belile was installed as Pastor of Eden UCC in Chicago on Sept. 30.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray was installed as President of Chicago Theological Seminary on Oct. 12 and Rev. Jeffrey Phillips as Associate Pastor of Winnetka Congregational Church on Oct. 21.

Rev. Pamela Stallings was ordained on Sunday, Oct. 21. She was installed as Covenant UCC's Associate Pastor for Children.

On Sunday, Nov. 4, Rev. Megan Dalby-Jones was installed as both Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and Family Ministry at Epiphany UCC in Chicago, as well as Pediatric Staff Chaplain at Advocate Children's Hospital.

On that same Sunday, Rev. Jason Carson Wilson was ordained into Christian ministry and installed as Minister for Social Justice Advocacy and Education at University Church in Chicago.

### Upcoming Ordinations:

Friday, Nov. 9, 6:00 p.m., Tangie Gray-Purvis will be ordained into Christian ministry and installed as Chaplain at Vitas Healthcare. The ordination will be at Trinity UCC, 400 W. 95th St., Chicago.

Saturday, Nov. 24, 10:00 a.m., Duan Anita Hale will be ordained at Advocate UCC, 10259 S. Avenue L, Chicago Ill. She will be installed as Staff Chaplain at Unity Hospice of Chicagoland LLC.

## Eastern Association gathered for Fall Meeting

The Eastern Association gathered for their Fall Meeting at St. John UCC in Kankakee, Saturday, Sept. 15. We had the special honor of hosting Carrie Newcomer, a Grammy-winning songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. Carrie led an afternoon "mini-retreat" entitled *"The Beautiful Not Yet: Hope, Hard Times, Faithfulness and Possibility."* Members of the Association and visitors shared in some reflection time and created a song which expressed the vision we have for hope in the future.

Our host church and Pastor, Barbara Lohrbach, shared a warm welcome and provided a bountiful meal prior to the evening concert, shared by Carrie Newcomer and Gary Walters. We were treated to many of Carrie's wonderful stories and songs which made for a beautiful ending to our day together.



*Carrie Newcomer Concert.*

## Eastern Association News

It has been a season of celebrating new ministries in the Eastern Association, as several of our Clergy have been installed in their newly-called positions:

Rev. Ken Kline was installed as Pastor and Teacher of St. John's UCC in Mokena on Sunday, Sept. 23, in an afternoon service. Ken's sister shared the sermon of the day and challenged the congregation and her brother in their new relationship with each other.



*Ken Kline Installation.*

Rev. Cyndy Ash was ordained and installed as the called Pastor for Jubilee Farms UCC on Saturday, Sept. 29 at 4:00 p.m. on location at the Farm in Clinton. It was a joyous celebration of this unique ministry within the Eastern Association as a working farm church dedicated to food sustainability and justice.

Rev. Deborah Owen will be installed as the called Senior Pastor of St. Peter's UCC in Champaign on Saturday, Nov. 17 in a 3:00 p.m. service of worship. Deborah has served several of our Eastern congregations as an Interim Pastor and is now moving into this time of settled ministry with the folks of St. Peter's.

## Western Association held Fall Meeting in Minier

The Western Association Fall Meeting was held at St. John's UCC in Minier on Saturday, Oct. 20. The meeting centered around the theme of "The Best Of..." The morning began with meaningful worship with Rev. Char Burch, our Acting Illinois Conference Minister, as our Preacher. Two sessions of workshops for attendees were presented on topics such as: Mission Trips, Stewardship, Great Reads and Media, Faith Formation and Curriculum Selection, and Budget Planning and Financial

Practices. After lunch, there was a time for the whole group to share "The Best Of..." practices in our local churches. Our host church, St. John, was well prepared to share warm hospitality, wonderful worship music, a delightful lunch and snacks, and a day of strengthening our relationships.

A highlight of our meeting was to recognize the 30-year anniversary of our Western Association Administrative Assistant, Connie Owens, on her faithful and dedicated service to the Association and the Conference over those years. We also shared our warm thanks and best wishes with Rev. Char Burch upon the completion of her work as Acting Conference Minister during this transition time.

To view pictures taken at the Western Association Fall Meeting visit the [Western Facebook Page](#)

## Western Association News

A service of installation was held at Morton Community United Church of Christ for Rev. Leah Kabira as their newly called Pastor. Rev. James Olson was the preacher for the day and Revs. Yvette Eber and Tom Norwalk shared a charge to the Pastor and congregation. A delicious dinner followed, prepared by the members of the congregation. We are excited for this new relationship between Pastor and people.



*Leah Kabira Installation.*

First Congregational UCC in Springfield continues to share a long-standing tradition through their Congregational heritage. On Sunday, Nov. 4, they shared a Forefathers' Day Dinner remembering the Pilgrims arrival in a new land and the dinner they shared in thanksgiving to God for their safe arrival and blessing as they fled England for religious freedom. Pastor Dan Dexter shared some of its history with the congregation prior to our enjoying the meal in their fellowship hall.



*Springfield Forefathers' Day.*

Union Congregational in Moline has determined that their ministry will soon be coming to a close but have been in joyous conversation with Hope UCC in Moline, where members from Union will be joining their ministry. We give thanks for the gifts of those from Union who will bring new energy and vitality to the ministry at Hope under the guidance of their Pastor, Santina Poor.

We congratulate Rev. Bruce Bergthold of First Congregational UCC in Geneseo who just celebrated the 33rd anniversary of his Ordination on Oct. 18.

Connie Owens would like to share her thanks with those in the Associations and Conference who have remembered her 30th anniversary of service to the Illinois Conference which occurred on Nov. 1. She is grateful for the opportunity to support the ministries of the Western and Eastern Associations as well as her work with churches

and Clergy as the Search and Call Coordinator of the Conference.

## Congregation Raises Funds, Awareness, Hosting CWS Crop Hunger Walk

Pastor Duayne Meyer of Northfield Community Church thought he might hold the record in his congregation for participating in Church World Service Crop Hunger Walks the longest, having first joined the effort as a youth 45 years ago. As it turns out, fellow clergy and church member Carol Ann Munro participated in her first Crop Hunger Walk 49 years ago at New England Congregational Church in Aurora, Ill. But it's a younger member of NCC who has the distinction of never missing the annual event. Fourteen-year-old Zehme Vakili was just six weeks old when she participated in her first Crop Hunger Walk; 2018 marks her 15th consecutive year. Zehme was among 37 children, youth and adults from the congregation who marched five kilometers through the Village of Northfield on Oct. 21 to raise hunger awareness.



*Northfield Community Church Crop Hunger Walk volunteers.*



*Youth from Northfield Community Church participate to raise hunger awareness during Church World Service Crop Hunger Walk.*

More than 100 children, youth and adults from seven area congregations showed up to volunteer, raise hunger awareness and to raise funds for various missions and programs supported by CWS; 25% of all the monies donated are used locally. In 2017, NCC ranked sixth among all congregations nation-wide, raising nearly \$20,000. This year, the congregation has received more than \$26,000 in donations.

While the walk took place on a sunny fall afternoon, the event kicked off at worship that morning as NCC welcomed Mina Lukic and Marko Tasic, directors of the Center for Youth Integration, a drop-in shelter for street involved children in Belgrade, Serbia. The CYI, which serves children from the Roma and immigrant communities, is supported by Church World Service.

NCC Coordinators Jim Hutten and Christy Bobart are both enthusiastic and organized in their efforts to garner congregation-wide support for Crop Hunger Walk. The two lay

leaders are already making plans for 2019 with the goal of enlisting more local congregations in this ecumenical effort to end hunger and poverty close to home, across the country and around the world. To learn more, go online at [www.crophungerwalk.org](http://www.crophungerwalk.org).

Northfield Community Church  
The United Church of Christ  
400 Wagner Road, Northfield, IL 60093  
[www.northfielducc.org](http://www.northfielducc.org)

## In Memoriam: Minister Shelley J. Taylor-Haynes

With great sadness, CMA notes the passing of Minister Shelley J. Taylor-Haynes on Wednesday, Oct. 31, 2018.

Shelley was a Member in Discernment with the CMA. She was long-time member of Trinity UCC in Chicago, a minister in training and a member of the Trinity Choral Ensemble. She was a chaplain with Access Community Health Network for many years.



*Shelley Taylor-Haynes*

Rev. Kirsten Peachey, Co-Director of Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation, said of Minister Taylor-Haynes, "She was a thoughtful, wise and dedicated presence in her ministry and in the CMA."

Services were held at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago on Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2018.

We ask for your continued prayers for her entire family and her church community.

We are grateful to God for the life and ministry of Minister Shelley Taylor-Haynes. Peace to her memory.

## United Church Educators met in October

The Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators (GLAUCE) met in mid-October at Techny Towers for their Annual meeting. The keynoter presenter for this year's event was Rev. Tracy Blackmon of our UCC National staff. Educators gathered from the Conferences of the Great Lakes region (Illinois, Illinois South, Indiana-Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin) to share resources and to be inspired for the work of Christian Education in our churches.

This year's event featured the presentation of the Robert L. Johnston Award to one of our Illinois Conference educators, Ronda Bower, who serves on the staff of Northfield Community Church. Rev. Carol Currier-Frighetto, of St. Paul's UCC in Manhattan, made the presentation to Ronda, celebrating her diverse gifts and significant dedication to making Christian Education a vital ministry for many years. We share our warm admiration and special affirmation of Ronda upon the receiving of this special award.

## UCC Hurricane Response and Recovery

Dear Friends in Christ,

Hurricanes and disaster events keep coming. You are responding through UCC Disaster Ministries to the needs of people affected by 2018 hurricanes within the United States and around the world.

The UCC's 2018 Hurricane Recovery Appeal puts you at the heart of the response to 2018 hurricanes now and in long-term recovery.

Hurricane Michael slammed into the Florida panhandle on October 10th as a Category 4 hurricane with winds of 155 mph. The winds and rain continued across Georgia and the Carolinas with widespread flooding. These areas were impacted last month by Hurricane Florence.

Hurricane Florence roared ashore in the Carolinas in September. Communities experienced mass flooding. The environmental and economic impacts of the storm's damage are vast.

Super Typhoon Mangkhut (AKA Ompong) devastated parts of the Philippines and wreaked havoc in Hong Kong, China and other parts of Asia.

**DONATE** now to [Hurricane Response and Recovery](#) to deepen the impact of immediate response and long-term recovery work.

**PRAY** Use [this hymn and bulletin insert](#) in worship.

**VOLUNTEER** Your service is needed now in Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Florida, recovering from 2017 hurricanes. Your service will be needed in long-term recovery in the Carolinas and Florida. Bookmark [UCC Disaster Ministries Volunteer page](#) for details.

One hundred percent of UCC disaster relief funds are used for direct service to individuals and communities, and rehabilitation programming. In addition, many employers match donations for disaster relief efforts. Check here to see if your employer is one of them.

Make a secure online donation, or mail your gift made payable to the United Church of Christ: 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115. Memo: 2018 Hurricane Relief

Stay up to date on the UCC response to hurricanes and other disaster events: Visit our disaster [website](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates.

## Position available

Part-time Administrative Assistant (Lilly Grant-"Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations") 2 days a week at the Illinois Conference office in Westchester, Ill.

Responsibilities include: Program records maintenance; communication/technology with program participants; assist arrangements for training, meetings, major events; maintain records and acknowledge financial payments; assist in preparation of grant reports; assist and report to Program Coordinator.

Submit interest and questions to Rev. Dr. David Russell, Program Coordinator at [ilconfdavid@gmail.com](mailto:ilconfdavid@gmail.com) or call (708) 344-4470.

## 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](mailto:ilconfcarmen@gmail.com) for more information and to enroll your church.

## UCC Church Building and Loan Fund offers resources

NEW services from Church Building and Loan Fund to help you with your church's mission, including stewardship and repurposing resources. Read more [HERE](#) or contact CBLF Regional Mission Interpreter Rev. Priscilla Bizer at [bizerp@ucc.org](mailto:bizerp@ucc.org)



## Seeking Assistance

Do you like to discover historical tidbits about churches? Maybe you can help!

The Conference office is seeking a volunteer to sort through files from closed churches and pull out documents for archives. The files are located at the Illinois Conference office in Westchester. If interested, please contact the Conference office (708) 344-4470.

## 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](http://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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## *Our Church's Wider Mission*

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