

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

May/June 2016

Vol 37, Issue 37

Illinois Conference UCC E-Newsletter



From the Conference Minister

Dear Friends and Servants of Jesus the Christ,

I pray that you are well and in God's abiding grace.

From the beginning of time, God has been our refuge and defense. God's people are under God's loving care. Our God brings order out of chaos and even to the end of a particular journey, a venture or occupation, God will provide for new beginnings.

"Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, You who have been borne by Me from birth and have been carried from the womb; Even to your old age I will be the same. And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you. Isaiah 46:3-4

The matter of retirement has been in the thoughts of some people lately, and even beyond thought, taking action. Two members of our Conference Ministry Leadership Team have taken steps to retire. Recently, we said farewell to Rev. Jonathan Knight, who, after 37 years of ministry (10 years on Conference staff), has transitioned into retirement.

Our Sister, Rev. Dr. Melbalenia Evans, will retire at the end of May. To her we will also say farewell as she transitions (as did Rev. Knight) into new beginnings. It is pleasing to God that one realizes the time to be less vocationally and occupationally bound - to be liberated to greater choice in calling and service.

Servants of Christ in Christian ordained ministry have demonstrated that to retire from full-time vocational church service is distinct from "retirement," the call to ministry.

We give thanks to God for those who have served our conference so faithfully and now make transitions into retirement. We honor their faithfulness and service. We are pleased that they can enjoy greater freedom in selecting how they will live into new beginnings of service to God in honor of

Click below to

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

QUICK LINKS

www.ilucc.org

[Like us on Facebook](#)

QUICK LINKS TO WEBSITES

[Chicago Metropolitan Association](#)

[Eastern Association](#)

[Fox Valley Association](#)

[Western Association](#)

[Prairie Association](#)

[Pilgrim Park](#)

[Tower Hill](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Radical Disciple Making

Saturday, May 21, 2016

United Church of Bryon

701 West 2nd Street, Byron

Presenters: Effective Church Group:

Bill Easum, Bill Tenny-Britin

and Scott Musselman

Info:

www.radicaldisciplemaking.com

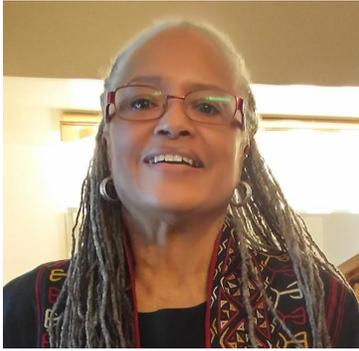
A Farewell Worship and Reception

their calling.

We offer our prayers and best wishes to our good and loving friends, Rev. Knight and Rev. Evans, as they enter this new time in their lives.

May God's grace, love and abiding guidance be with them and with all of us.

Rev. Dr. Jorge L. Morales
Conference Minister



Rev. Dr. Melbalenia Evans



Rev. Jonathan Knight

for Rev. Dr. Melbalenia D. Evans
Saturday, June 4, 2016
3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
Plainfield Congregational UCC
24020 West Fraser Road
Plainfield, Illinois
RSVP by May 27 at
ilconfamen@gmail.com
[Click here to view invite](#)

Illinois Conference
52nd Annual Celebration
Friday, June 17-
Saturday, June 18, 2016
"Changing Lives:
Unleashing the Mission"
Embassy Suites Hotel
& Conference Center
East Peoria, Illinois
Rev. Traci Blackmon, Keynoter
[Click here for more information](#)
[Register on-line here!](#)

UCC National Youth Event
July 26-30, 2016
Coronado Springs Resort Hotel
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
Chicago contact:
Rev. Sarah Lohrbach
(815) 370-0261 or
Sarah.lohrbach@gmail.com

Report from the Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Church Vitality

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing." Malachi 3:10 NRSV

Six months ago, I traveled to Angola, with the Illinois Delegation. We were guests of The Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola as they gathered to celebrate the 135th Anniversary of the arrival of missionaries in their country. While there, I was impressed with many things: hospitality, welcome rituals, joyous singing, worship, and generosity. During worship, congregants marched and danced down the aisle, bringing their gifts to the altar. Yes, more time was spent receiving the gifts of the people than any element in the service. In Angola, congregants brought to worship financial gifts, produce such as potatoes and onions, as well as animals. People bring an offering of whatever resources they have available to them. They joyfully parade their tangible gifts to the altar.

Upon returning home, I was delighted to learn that some of our members in rural settings engage in similar practices. Pastor Ed Sinclair, St. Paul's UCC in Minonk, reported that he knows of at least two families who fulfill their church financial pledge with the proceeds from their crops. "In the fall, after the crops are harvested, they are taken to a grain storage facility. Once there, the farmer tells the owner of the facility that a percentage of the crop belongs to the church. Once the church financial secretary is made aware that the crop has been put in storage, she calls the owner of the storage facility and instructs him to sell the portion of the crop belonging to the church. When the sale is complete, a check is sent to the church directly from the storage facility. And that is how it is done down on the farm!"

Earlier this year, Pastor Sue Harrington shared this testimony: "In November 2015, I sent a letter to

the members and friends of First Congregational UCC of Canton regarding our Annual Stewardship Campaign. In the stewardship letter, I asked everyone to consider tithing to Our Church's Wider Mission of the United Church of Christ in addition to the operating budget of the church for 2016. The response was overwhelmingly positive. In addition to the church's commitment of \$1,500 a year, individual members pledged an extra \$1,690. That more than doubles First Congregational UCC's pledge out of the operating budget! We are a small church community with big hearts and we believe in the mission and the important work of the United Church of Christ! God has blessed us and we want to bless others. We are truly grateful to God."

We wish to take this opportunity to recognize those congregations who were able to tithe in 2015, increase their gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) by 10% or more in 2015, and/or participate in our five offerings: OCWM; One Great Hour of Sharing; Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need; and The Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross. Thank you for partnering with us and sharing your blessings.

2015 Tithing Congregations

Advocate UCC, Chicago
Armenian Evangelical Church, Mt. Prospect
Church of the New Covenant, Elmhurst
Community UCC, Savanna
Peace United Church of Christ, Genoa
St. Mark UCC, Chicago Heights
St. Paul UCC, Pekin

2015 Congregations with 10% or more Increase in OCWM Gifts

Advocate UCC Chicago
Bethany UCC, Tioga/ Mendon
Bethlehem UCC-Sutter, Warsaw
Church of the Three Crosses, Chicago
Community Congregational of Elburn UCC, Elburn
Community UCC, Champaign
Congregational Church, Algonquin
Congregational Church of Batavia, Batavia
Congregational Church, Deerfield
Covenant UCC, South Holland
Eden UCC, Chicago
First Congregational Church, Cherry
First Congregational Church, De Pue
First Congregational UCC, Springfield
First Congregational of Forest Glen, Chicago
Lacon Congregational UCC, Lacon
Little Home Church by the Wayside, Wayne
New England Congregational UCC, Aurora
Rollo Congregational Church, Earlville
St. John UCC, Kankakee
St. John's UCC, Hampshire
St. John's UCC, Lyons
St. John's UCC, Minier
St. John's UCC, Waukegan
St. Mark UCC, Chicago Heights
St. Paul UCC, Fowler
St. Peter UCC, Lake Zurich
St. Peter's UCC, Grant Park
Stark Congregational Church, Princeville
Trinity UCC, Chicago
Trinity UCC, LaSalle

Trinity UCC, Quincy
Trinity UCC, Westville
United Church of Atwood, Atwood
United Church of Byron, Byron
United Church of Christ, Garden Prairie
United Protestant Church, Grayslake
Woodside Congregational UCC, Rockford
Zion UCC, Arthur
Zion UCC, Gilman
Zion UCC, Ursa

2015 Five for Five Congregations

Advocate UCC, Chicago
All About Jesus UCC, Monee
Bethany UCC, Chicago
Bethany UCC, Freeport
Bethany UCC, Tioga/Mendon
Bethel UCC, Elmhurst
Bethel Memorial UCC, Creve Coeur
Christ Church UCC, Des Plaines
Community Church of Richmond, Richmond
Community Protestant Church UCC, Mundelein
Community UCC, Champaign
Community UCC, Morton
Community UCC, Savanna
Congregational Church, Algonquin
Congregational Church, Deerfield
Congregational Church of Batavia, Batavia
Congregational UCC, Arlington Heights
Congregational UCC, Emington
Congregational UCC, Jacksonville
Ebenezer - Salem UCC, Pearl City
Edgebrook Community Church, Chicago
English Congregational UCC, Big Rock
Epiphany UCC, Chicago
Faith Community UCC, Bensenville
First Congregational Church, Dwight
First Congregational Church, Elgin
First Congregational Church, Moline
First Congregational Church, Wilmette
First Congregational UCC, Canton
First Congregational UCC, Decatur
First Congregational UCC, DeKalb
First Congregational UCC, Des Plaines
First Congregational UCC, Geneseo
First Congregational UCC, Geneva
First Congregational UCC, Huntley
First Congregational UCC, Lockport
First Congregational UCC, Marseilles
First Congregational UCC, Naperville
First Congregational UCC, Ottawa
First Congregational UCC, Pecatonica
First Congregational UCC, Springfield
First Congregational UCC, West Chicago
Fondulac Congregational UCC, East Peoria
God Can Ministries UCC, Ford Heights
Good Shepherd Community UCC, El Paso

Hope UCC, Armstrong
Hope UCC, Moline
Illini Congregational Church UCC, Warrensburg
Immanuel UCC, Bartlett
Immanuel UCC, Evergreen Park
Immanuel UCC, Streamwood
Immanuel-Bethel UCC, Dolton
Ivanhoe Congregational Church, Mundelein
Lake Fork UCC, Atwood
Little Home Church by the Wayside, Wayne
Lyonsville Congregational UCC, Indian Head Park
Mayfield Congregational Church, Sycamore
Open Prairie UCC, Princeton
Park Street Congregational UCC, Mazon
Peace Memorial UCC, Palos Park
Peace United Church of Christ, Genoa
Pilgrim Congregational Church, Oak Park
Pilgrim Faith UCC, Oak Lawn
Plainfield Congregational UCC, Plainfield
St. John UCC, Beecher
St. John UCC, Freeport
St. John UCC, Kankakee
St. John UCC, Lincoln
St. John's UCC, Belvidere
St. John's UCC, Hampshire
St. John's UCC, Minier
St. John's UCC, Mokena
St. John's UCC, Union
St. Luke UCC, Beecher
St. Mark UCC, Chicago Heights
St. Michael's UCC, West Chicago
St. Paul UCC, Barrington
St. Paul UCC, Elgin
St. Paul's UCC, Hinckley
St. Paul's UCC, Manhattan
St. Paul's UCC, Minonk
St. Peter Community Church UCC, Northfield
St. Peter UCC, Lake Zurich
St. Peter's Evangelical UCC, Kewanee
St. Peter's UCC, Grant Park
Salem UCC, Oak Lawn
Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church, Rockford
Trinity UCC, LaSalle
Trinity UCC, Quincy
Trinity UCC, Westville
Union Church UCC, Brimfield
Union Congregational Church, Moline
Union Congregational UCC, Somonauk
United Church of Atwood, Atwood
United Church of Byron, Byron
United Church of Christ, Granville
United Church of Christ, Spring Valley
Westchester Community Church, Westchester
Woodside Congregational UCC, Rockford
Yorkville Congregational UCC, Yorkville
Zion UCC, Arthur
Zion UCC, Gilman

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.

Beloved, as I look toward retirement, this is the final article that I shall offer for E-News. I thank you for being a treasure in an earthen vessel to me. Serving with you in the Illinois Conference has been a blessing in my life and to my ministry. Thank you for allowing my family to be beneficiaries of your love for the Lord, Jesus Christ. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do on behalf of our Savior and Redeemer!

With prayers for you and your ministry, I remain

Your Sister-in-Christ,
Rev. Dr. Melbalenia Evans

Ninth UCC General Minister and President is installed

The date was April 16, 2016. The place was Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago. The event was the Installation of the Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer as the Ninth General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. This was the middle installation - the first was in New York City, April 15, and the third was in Seattle, April 17.



Conference Minister Jorge Morales (left) and Trinity Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, brought greetings.

The service of installation began at 4:00 p.m. Illinois Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Jorge Morales, and the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Senior Minister, Trinity UCC, gave the Welcome. Participants and attendees represented the Illinois Conference and people from the middle of the country, including Ohio and Missouri. In addition to UCC participants, there were Interfaith and Ecumenical Greetings.

"Visioning" was a feature of the service, beginning with a song, Still Speaking (Allelula) by Mark A. Miller and performed by the Trinity choir, directed by Dr. Keith Hampton. Vision presenters included Raven Rowe, Chicago Theological Seminary student, and the Rev. Marilyn Pagan-Banks, Executive Director of A Just Harvest. In the Covenanting, the Rev. Dr. Alice Hunt, President, CTS, and member UCC Board of Directors, gave the Invitation and began the Installation Rite. Participants included Norman Williams, Church of the Good Shepherd, Chicago, and Co-Moderator, General Synod, and Moriah Johnson, Trinity UCC. The Rev. Paul Sherry and the Rev. John Thomas, former General Ministers and Presidents of the UCC, offered prayer and led the Laying on of Hands. Clergy and laity gathered around Rev. Dorhauer for this ritual.

The newly-installed General Minister and President of the UCC was joined at the podium by the Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk, the first African American ordained in the UCC, and a mentor to Rev. Dorhauer, and his mother.

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer is former conference minister of the Southwest Conference, UCC. He served as associate conference minister in the Missouri Mid-South Conference and served several churches in rural Missouri.

He earned his theological degrees from Eden Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary. He is a member of the First Congregational Church of Phoenix, Ariz. He has been married for 31 years and is the father of three children.

Rev. John Dorhauer was chosen by an 18-member search committee in February 2015. His candidacy was confirmed by the UCC Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote. He was elected at the 30th General Synod, June 2015, in Cleveland.

The installation theme was "All things new..." and was echoed by the words and songs. Special music, commissioned for the installation service, was by Mark A. Miller



Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk (from left), Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer and his mother.



Laying on of a Hands for Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer.

-Jacqueline Moore

Going to Conference Annual Meeting Celebration and want to save a few dollars?

Such a deal we have for you!

If you volunteer for one day, you'll receive \$5 off the cost of your registration, or if you volunteer both days, you receive \$10 off the cost of your registration!

We are most in need of stage assistants (Friday 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. to Noon, and 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.) meal ticket takers (Friday at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday at noon); ushers (Saturday 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

And though not a volunteer position, what's an Annual Celebration gathering without lots of delicious and yummy cookies. We need donations of your favorite cookies, plus sugar free, peanut free and gluten free in clearly labeled, disposable containers. Leftovers, if there are any, will be given to food pantries so that nothing goes unappreciated.

If you can volunteer or your congregation can bring cookies, please contact Carol Currier-Frighetto at ambsnana@aol.com. She will be able to give you the registration code so when you register online, the \$5 or \$10 will automatically be deducted from your total cost. Thank you in advance for your wonderful, needed, and valued help!!!

-- Carol Currier-Frighetto

It's time to RELEASE THE MISSION!

Get the word out! Sound the alarm! Call all your friends and pack your suitcase!

Would you enjoy a getaway with plenty of space to stretch and explore? Are the refreshing breezes whispering over the flowing waters of the majestic Illinois River calling your name? Does the thought of succulent sweet morsels all around you delight your taste buds? Then we have just the thing for you.

On behalf of the Illinois Conference Annual Celebration Planning Committee, you are invited to The Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in East Peoria, June 17 and 18 for the Illinois Conference Annual Celebration.

Registration is available online. Visit the Illinois Conference website at www.ilucc.org. Don't forget to register for your hotel room. Rooms are reserved at a hotel block rate until May 25, so don't delay!

This year's event features keynote speaker the Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ on Friday. Saturday's voices will come from our own Illinois Conference, including the Covenant United Church of Christ Youth and Children's Choirs and Covenant UCC youth Otisa Evans. We also look forward to commissioning our National Youth Event attendees. Throughout the weekend, we will be led in celebration and song by Guided Path from First Congregational UCC in Downers Grove.

Be sure sign up for Friday's exciting energizers (see additional article), and set aside time during Saturday's lunch to participate in [All-Conference Mission Project](#). We'll be packing clean-up buckets for the Disaster Relief Ministry. Monetary donations to purchase items for the buckets are welcome from congregations and individuals and may be sent to the Illinois Conference office. Additionally, Friday night's offering during worship will help purchase supplies.

Volunteers are still needed to help with a variety of tasks. Please e-mail Carol Currier-Frighetto at ambsmama@aol.com with your commitment to help. And don't forget the cookies. Please bring your favorite home-baked cookies in sealed plastic containers. We ask that cookies with nuts, and those that are gluten-free, are marked as such.

We can't wait for this event, and we can't wait to see you there!

Energizer sessions to be held at Annual Celebration

The Annual Celebration Planning Committee has been very busy working toward an exciting and meaningful gathering at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria on June 17-18, 2016. As a part of our learning experience, you are invited to share in the excellent Energizer sessions which will be held on Friday during the late morning and early afternoon hours of the event. Topics to be explored are: "The Different Shapes of Youth Ministry", "Tracking our Spiritual Lives", "Growing the Church Through Mission Partnerships", "Legacy Planning", "A Mission of Hope in the Midst of Crisis", "No Money-No Mission", "Justice Witness Ministries: A Call to Action", "Healing Wildness", "Mission/Narrative Budgets", and "Transforming the Local Church."

Several of our Conference committees will be leaders along with the Ministry Leadership Team and our Keynote speaker, Rev. Traci Blackman, of the National Church. We hope you'll join us early on Friday to take advantage of these great learning moments for our vital ministries in the churches we serve.

Special youth event at CMA Spring Meeting

On Saturday, May 7, 35 youth of the Chicago Metropolitan Association met separately in a special youth event featuring the Cluster Six Youth Initiative Program, "Off the Pews and Into the Street: A Faith-Based Community Response to Youth Violence." Youth ministers, Otisa Evans and Khary Armster, preaching and teaching the youth about balancing financial aid at the Chicago metropolitan association/off the pews youth annual meeting.



Echelle Mohn teaching the youth about financial literacy.



Khary Armster



Otisa Evans



Chicago Metropolitan Association/Off the Pews Youth Annual Meeting, experiencing the amazing music concert by John Wesley Trio and Mae Ya Carter Ryan.

Eastern Association gathered in Monee for Spring Meeting

The Eastern Association gathered at St. Paul's UCC in Monee for their Spring Association Meeting on Sunday, May 1, 2016. The members of St. Paul's UCC and All About Jesus UCC Ministries served as hosts for the day.

Rev. David Loleng served as our keynote speaker on the topic: "Unleashing our Mission: Disciple-Making." David serves as an Evangelism Associate with the



Presbyterian Church USA and Rev. David Loleng, keynoter. provided us an excellent challenge to be about God's mission in the communities in which our churches serve.

The business portion of the meeting celebrated the work and ministries of our Association committees, Church and Clergy Ordination Anniversaries, Stewardship awards, honoring the ministry of Rev. Dr. Melbalenia Evans upon her impending retirement, honoring the leadership of Rev. Pat Morton, our Moderator for the past three years, and the passing of the gavel to our new Moderator, Marva Campbell-Pruitt, member of Grace UCC in Sauk Village, Ill. Officers and elected committee members were installed in their respective offices, we shared together in worship and communion and we concluded the evening with a wonderful dinner together in St. Paul's fellowship hall.

Pekin was site for Western Association Spring Meeting

Members and Clergy of the Western Association met at Congregational UCC in Pekin on Saturday, April 23 for the Spring Association Meeting. The theme for the day was "Unleashing our Mission" and featured Rev. William Kyle, former Global Ministries Missionary, as keynote speaker and preacher.

As the body gathered to do its annual business meeting, we featured these items: Recognition of Church and Clergy Ordination Anniversaries; Conference Stewardship awards; reports of Association Committees and Associate Conference Ministers; Leonhart grants to eight congregations with nine proposed mission projects, Disaster Ministries report and invitation to Fall trip; celebration of the ministry of Rev. Dr.

Melbalenia Evans upon her planned retirement; and the passing of the gavel of leadership from retiring Moderator, Rev. Bob Sherman, to Ken Webster, member of St. Paul's UCC in Pekin. A box lunch and fellowship was enjoyed by the gathered body and we were grateful for the warm hospitality of the members of the host church.



Rev. Kathy Lawes and Rev. Tim White receiving certificate of recognition of their Ordination Anniversaries.

Western Association recent events

The Western Association shared a "busy" April with many special opportunities to join in celebrating ministry! On April 3rd, the Association gathered at Church of Peace in Rock Island for the Ordination Service of Rev. Christopher Marlin-Warfield. Chris serves on the staff of Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS and Church of Peace and the Western Association share as partners along with Back Bay Mission in our covenant together.

On April 10th First Congregational UCC in Moline hosted an Ecclesiastical Council for Member-In-Discernment Emily Davis, a daughter of the congregation, who was approved for Ordination. Emmy will be a graduate of Chicago Theological Seminary this spring!

April 17th was the date we joined with the members and friends of St. John's UCC in Minier to Install Rev. Katherine Beckett as Pastor and Teacher. Katherine came to the Illinois Conference from the Ohio Conference last November.

Rev. Matthew Hunt was installed as Pastor and Teacher of Salem Evangelical UCC in Quincy on Sunday, April 24th. Matt comes to the Illinois Conference following ministry in the Iowa

Conference.

An event held at Good Samaritan home in early May was the celebration of the 70th Wedding Anniversary of Rev. Dean and Betty Bauch, both residents at Good Samaritan. We congratulate them on this special achievement.



Installation service of Rev. Katherine Beckett at St. John's UCC in Minier.



Installation service of Rev. Matthew Hunt at Salem UCC in Quincy.

Eastern Association celebrates Monee Installation

The Eastern Association celebrated the Installation of Pastoral Staff at All About Jesus UCC Ministries in Monee on Saturday, April 9, 2016. A festive service was shared including the special musical leadership of Rev. Christopher Grundy of Eden Theological Seminary. Rev. Paula Comper, Rev. Keith Scott, and Rev. Mary Ann Dier-Zimmermann all were installed in their respective positions in the leadership of the congregation and each shared some moments of reflection and challenge for this new church start of the Eastern Association. A reception followed the service of worship and all celebrated the gifts of ministry shared in the leadership of this congregation.



Rev. Mary Ann Dier-Zimmermann, Rev. Paula Comper, Rev. Keith Scott installed in their respective positions in the leadership of the congregation.

Groundbreaking ceremony held in Kankakee

It was a special Sunday for the members and friends of St. John UCC in Kankakee on Sunday, May 1, when all gathered on the lawn to share in a Groundbreaking Ceremony for an addition to the church building. Plans have been in the works for additional space for the growing congregation including additions which will include accessibility options to



Groundbreaking ceremony at St. John UCC, Kankakee.

welcome all into the life and ministry of the congregation. A capital campaign is in full swing and as a part of the legacy of Congregational UCC in Kankakee; a portion of the sale of their former building is now being invested in this new project for future ministry at St. John. Rev. Barbara Lohrbach has served as Pastor of St. John and has led the congregation into a thriving Open and Affirming community where God has been at work in new

and exciting ways. City leaders, representatives of the architectural firm and church leaders participated in the "groundbreaking" ceremony!

Greetings from Tower Hill Camp and Retreat Center

Summer is indeed approaching and we are excited to get into full swing with our Camp and Retreat Seasons! And with that, we would like to share improvements made at Tower Hill. If you have had a camping experience as a youth, you may have found yourself inside of Marshall Hall. During the winter/spring, Jared James, Denis and Judy Kirscher, and the Puhrs lead a workgroup that pulled out insulation in two of the bedrooms and re-dry walled and insulated the bedrooms. We also stripped the main space of Marshall and painted the floors and the interior walls of Marshall. The Conference space in Marshall was also repainted and a new cabinet was installed. Tower Hill would like to give a Special Thank you to the Puhrs for their donations and to Pilgrim Faith for the donations to the Camp to see that these projects along with many others are completed.

We all know how special food is in our lives. Everyone that has come through Tower Hill has entered through the doors of Wales Dinning Hall. Throughout the years, Wales Dinning Hall has changed and transformed from the outside to the inside; becoming more efficient and remaining the heartbeat of the Camp as Tower Hill continues to grow. As of April 23, I decided to give back to those that have prospered and grown with Tower Hill with a renovated Dinning Hall. There are plants that surround the interior wall space of the Dining Hall, inspirational pictures, sayings, and décor along the walls adds to the melodic tone. Lovely white and blue cloths cover the tables that seem to come to life when our newly installed light fixtures shines.



Renovated Wales Dinning Hall.

Just outside Wales Dining Hall, is a wooden patio with a beautiful 13-foot Gazebo that provides that option to sit, eat, and enjoy the outdoor view of Tower Hill. We encourage you to come and stay a while. Build your experiences here at Tower Hill and enjoy the great tasting food and ambient dining experience that Wales Dining Hall offers. I am excited to

have provided this experience for our guests. Please continue to give in so that our ministry can continue and improvements can be made to our Camp. Donating towards special projects, and/or Century Club is vital for Tower Hill Camp and it really does make a difference!

--Douglas C. Pompey, Site Manager



D.C. relaxes on renovated patio.

Update from the Environmental Task Force, Illinois Conference UCC

So how did your Church celebrate Earth Month? Did you plant some trees or up the intensity of your recycle program? Did you gather the kids around and talk about God's call to us to "tend the earth"?

Some 30 churches of the Illinois Conference took the usual focus of Earth Day a step further by accepting the challenge to preach on our Faith response to the climate Crisis. That was a reasonable result for the initial year of our "New Awakening Campaign" to bring the awareness of the human-caused Climate Crisis to the active consciousness of all 250+ churches and their 71,000 members that constitute the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ. And to fulfill this task in such a way that "all people shall see it together".

Some highlights of this effort include:

At First Congregational Church UCC in Naperville, Pastor Mark Winters included an "altar call" for all interested in joining the congregation's Green Team to come forward and be blessed into their service. ETF member, Susan Greenwood reported being stunned when more than 40 members answered that call!

At First Congregational UCC in Downers Grove, Pastor Scott Oberle, in addition to preaching on the Climate Crisis, also devoted an entire internet radio program on the subject, featuring four pastors reflecting on their understanding of the necessary actions that our faith is calling us to implement in our lives in response to the Climate Crisis. The program was such a hit, that a faith and the environment internet radio program will be broadcast each month going forward on their very own "UCC Family Network" channel. The new program will be named "Telling It Forward" and will use the art of story-telling to help us recognize the need to respond to this crisis with an urgency and scope such that our kids have a future.

The good and faithful members of Wellington Ave UCC are dedicating their new Solar Panel installation at their worship celebration on June 19. Talk about being a visible sign of God's Spirit in the community!

Interested in doing more?

Join the Environmental Task Force by e-mailing sinclairgallagher@hotmail.com.

Follow the [Environmental Task Force Facebook](#) page to stay updated with the latest information.

Check out these additional "Telling It Forward" resources which are free and available by

contacting terrencegallagher@hotmail.com.

- Preaching by Rev. Dr. Terry Gallagher on the "Keep It in The Ground" -The Necessary Faith response to the Climate Crisis"
- In person presentations: Using the amazing resources of the Climate Reality Project to detail the science, current global effects, and the solutions to the Climate Crisis.
- On-line webinars available exploring various elements of this critical issue
- Blog posts: Rev. Gallagher posts extended reflections on the path forward to a sustainable future at his blog site: www.revgallagher.wordpress.com
- "Telling It Forward" monthly internet Radio broadcasts on the UCC Family Network

Deadline near for short term Medical and Educational Ministry in Angola!

The Illinois Conference - Angola Partnership Team is in its 10th year of building up the one body of Christ in two different place -- Angola and Northern Illinois. We are beginning a new aspect of ministry with our partner church, the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola: group visits focused on particular areas of partnership and ministry. Upon the direction of IECA, we will focus this summer on medical and educational joint ministry on site in Angola.

The Angola Partnership Team will lead a group to Angola from July 29 - Aug. 10 (roughly), and we invite anyone connected to the Illinois Conference (yes, that means the members of all our churches, and other partners) who may be interested in joining us to learn more by contacting Mike Solberg of Union Church of Hinsdale at jmichaelsolberg@gmail.com or (630) 590-6695, to indicate your interest or for more information. Thank you!

For this trip, we are looking for doctors, nurses, other health care professionals, as well as teachers and education specialists, who will have the skills needed to assess the partnership possibilities and plan future hands on work. Physicians can treat patients in a mission hospital for one week. We need firm commitments soon, so contact Mike right away.

Leadership re-imagining donation acknowledgements

The Illinois Conference is in the midst of updating our accounting processes, which includes the revision of our letters of acknowledgement for contributions sent to the Conference. We are grateful for every gift that is shared with us, and it is important to us that our acknowledgment accurately reflects our gratitude. Confirmation of your gifts can be provided by contacting either Bill Serritella, Conference Controller at (708) 344-4470, or Tracy Diehl, Conference Bookkeeper at ilconftracy@gmail.com. Thank you for your patience during this time of transition.

You can help climate change

Want to take a stand for climate change? If you need or want a new car, you can make a statement. Ray Chevrolet in Fox Lake is offering the Chevy Volt, part electric vehicle, or any other Chevy. I am now driving a Chevy Volt, 35-40 miles on a charge and getting an average with gas of 85 mpg! All you need to do is call the owner of Ray Chevy, Ray Scarpelli, at (847) 587-3300 and mention you are a member of the Illinois Conference United Church of Christ.

--David Russell

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

Conference Minister Jorge Morales: ilconfjorge@gmail.com

Associate Conference Minister (Stewardship and Church Vitality)

Melbalenia Evans: ilconfevans@gmail.com

Associate Conference Minister (Prairie\Western) Kathy Lawes: ilconfkathy@gmail.com

Associate Conference Minister (Eastern\Western) Tom Norwalk: ilconftom@gmail.com
Associate Conference Minister (Fox Valley): Vanessa Monroe: ilconfvanessa@gmail.com
Associate Conference Minister (CMA) Vertie Powers: ilconfvertie@gmail.com
Conference Controller Bill Serritella: ilconfbill@gmail.com
Tower Hill Camp: towerhillcamp@gmail.com
Pilgrim Park Camp: odmregistrar@gmail.com

Illinois Conference support staff:

Naomi Else: ilconfnaomi@gmail.com
Carmen Torres: ilconfcarmen@gmail.com
Wayne MacPherson (CMA): ilconfwayne@gmail.com
Tracy Diehl (Prairie): ilconftracy@gmail.com
Connie Owens (Western): ilconfconnie@gmail.com
Accounting (Conf.): ilconftracy@gmail.com

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.

THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UCC E-NEWSLETTER is published by the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1840 Westchester Blvd., Suite 200, Westchester, IL 60154. The Rev. Jorge Morales, Conference Minister; Jacqueline L. Moore, Editor; 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.