

April 14, 2018

Dear Church Family in the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ,

Conference staff and leadership, Pastors, local church members, mission partners and friends of the Illinois Conference, I bring greetings from the Illinois Conference Council.

The Illinois Conference is in transition as it seems to always be. Most of you are aware that Conference Minister, The Rev. Dr. Jorge Morales gave notice of his intent to retire from the Illinois Conference as of May 31 this year. Subsequently, we learned that he had accumulated vacation from this year and last that would allow him to utilize the entire month of May as vacation. So as dictated by our bylaws, a small team of leaders were charged to find someone to fill the vacancy by May 1, while calling a new settled Conference Minister would take much more time. Conference Council is considering next steps which will likely involve calling a longer-term Intentional Interim Conference Minister before a national search for a New Conference Minister.

I am very pleased to tell you that today, the Conference Council and the Rev. Charlotte Burch have entered into a covenant naming Rev. Burch as Acting Conference Minister on a short-term basis. It is anticipated that Rev. Burch will be with us for 3 to 6 months while leadership faces the next steps in the process of replacing a Conference Minister. Char will come onboard and be based in the Westchester office, beginning Tuesday, May 1. As we prepare for our Annual Celebration in early June, you can imagine the number of meetings already on her calendar, but she is as excited to be here as we are to have her. Please welcome Rev. Char Burch as an important member of our Church and Conference family.

May God's Peace be with us all,

Mike Linder
Conference President

Introducing the Rev. Charlene Brunt Burch

The Rev. Charlene Burch is no stranger to the Illinois Conference. She served as Interim Illinois Conference Minister from 1997 to 2000, leading up to the time the Conference called the Rev. Jane Fidler-Hoffman as settled Conference Minister. In fact, she is no stranger to stepping in to fill interim gaps as Conference Minister. In addition to Illinois, she has been Interim Conference Minister in the Penn West, Missouri Mid-South, and Pacific Northwest Conferences. She was Acting Conference Minister for the Northern California Nevada Conference.

Rev. Burch has served as Interim in at least half a dozen other conference and association level posts, served as Interim Pastor to several churches and had full time settled ministry positions as well. Throughout her ministry, she has actively engaged with committees and task forces of the UCC. Most recently she served on the UCC Task Force looking at the Search and Call Process and Ministerial Profiles and has recently joined a Task Force to look at the UCC Conference Minister search process.

She is a graduate of Davis & Elkins College in West Virginia. She received her MDiv from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and while in seminary also earned a master's in social work degree (MSW) from the University of Illinois/Chicago. She is an Ordained Minister with full standing in the United Church of Christ, her with standing held in the Southeast Conference. Her church membership is at Pleasant Hill Community Church (UCC) in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee.

Char and her husband moved to Uplands Village, a Life Plan Community related to the United Church of Christ, in Pleasant Hill Tennessee just over a year ago. She is active in her new local church, and in the Southwest Conference. She has also been doing occasional pulpit supply pastor work in another local UCC.

While slowly easing into retirement mode, Char welcomes the opportunity to work full-time with the churches, clergy, lay leaders, and members of the Illinois Conference on a short term (3 to 6 month) basis.