



NEW BEGINNINGS E-BLAST



 JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

Clear Windows and Bruised Heads

Rev. Brandyn Simmons

During my sabbatical, I have taken to asking myself daily what I am curious about. It's helped me to be aware of my thinking and to process some existential questions. It also serves to keep me present in each moment (well, usually) and to help me completely "be" right where I am.



As I sat down to journal yesterday and I was pondering what to journal about, I asked myself that question: "What am I curious about right now?" It didn't take long for me to find an object of intrigue as I sat on my friends' sun porch overlooking a flower garden and numerous bird feeders in an ornithological paradise.

Peering out the window, I could see squirrels running, blue jays swooping in to feed, and bees nestling into blossoms to receive their sweet nectar. But it wasn't these that most had me pondering. I could hear a steady thumping against the window and let my eyes readjust for seeing what was near when I saw a bee trying to get into the house. Six or seven times, it hurled itself into the glass to no avail. Apparently, it didn't realize that there was a clear window blocking its way.

Watching this futile display of unawareness, I wondered if the bee would have acted differently if it would have backed up and noticed that there was a frame, allowing it to have the realization that a window also existed. The intellectual capacities of a bee probably wouldn't allow for this epiphany, but what about us?

[Read more](#)

Please Welcome Our Newest ONA
Church in the Illinois Conference

**OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Please join us in welcoming Salem United Church of Christ in Oak Lawn, Illinois as a new Open and Affirming Congregation! We recently sent their pastor, The Rev. Steve Hoerger, and the church membership a message to confirm their certification.

Their ONA Covenant, adopted on January 24, 2016, reads: *"We, the people of Salem United Church of Christ, believe that all people are created in God's image and thus are loved and blessed equally by God. We welcome all who seek to follow Jesus, including persons of every age, gender, race, nationality, ability, faith background, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure. We invite everyone to join our community through participation and leadership in this congregation, and by fully sharing in the worship, rites and sacraments of this church."*



On behalf of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, we're proud to welcome them as ONA congregation #1705. Salem United Church of Christ is now part of the largest and fastest-growing LGBTQ-affirming church movement in the world! We're grateful for the leadership and hard work that led to this day. ...

And to the church members, may we share our blessings again as you continue your journey of faith, now as an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ!

Our best to all of you,

Andy Lang,
Executive Director

Kimi Floyd Reisch
Program Minister

A Letter From The Colectivo de Latinx Ministries UCC

Jon Gilbert Martinez, M.Div., Communications Consultant

As we get closer to Synod this July, The Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries asks for your help. The Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries is a regenerated body officially recognized by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in July 2019. A transitional Latinx leadership group created the Colectivo in response to historical events and emergent needs. The Colectivo is a diverse and ever-changing community that has come together to honor our rich history within the UCC while responding to the growing needs of our richly diverse UCC Latinx population. We have grounded ourselves in love, justice, and peace while living within a covenant of interconnection and inclusion.



The Colectivo de
Latinx
Ministries
United Church of Christ®

Our membership comprises individuals, congregations, associations, conferences, and nationally based ministries of the UCC. They endorse the values and goals of the Colectivo and agree to join in covenant to strengthen and support the mission and ministry of Latinx people in the UCC. We also welcome dialogue and connections with ecumenical partners and community-based organizations that share our values. We embrace God's vision as embodied in Jesus Christ and his message of love.

In this spirit of radical welcome, we invite you to join in re-igniting the Colectivo's ministry's work by having your conference, association, or cluster join our membership along with encouraging others in your area.

[Read more](#)



Thank you for your continued support as we move forward in 2021!

Season after season our **UCC camps** have provided an **extraordinary place to unwind and recharge** in a natural setting for **spiritual sustenance**. Today our dedicated staff and numerous array of volunteers **are working to ensure** children will have a camp experience **“out of the ordinary and into the sacred”**. Please consider a donation to support our camps, it is easily the **best investment** you will ever make.

3 ways to GIVE support to our camps

- 1. Donations**
Any, and all gifts are appreciated! Visit our websites for links.
- 2. Stay here**
Our camps have great rentals! Contact us for additional details.
- 3. Volunteer**
Plenty of work to be done! Contact us for potential projects.

Visit Illinois Outdoor Ministries

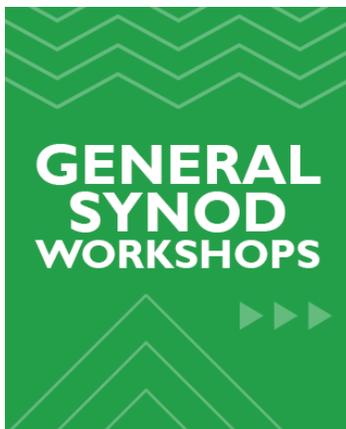
United Church of Christ 2021 General Synod

Register today and join us for General Synod 33 – a fully virtual event July 11-18, 2021. Registration provides you access to all aspects of General Synod, including worship, optional events, business, over 50 workshops, exhibit hall, keynote speakers and much more.



General Synod events will occur in the later half of the day to afford all an increased ability to engage. **Registration is more affordable this year than it's ever been!**

REGISTER TODAY

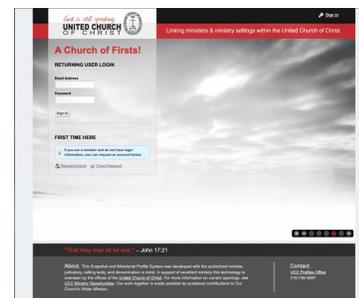


Training Opportunities and Resources

New online system for ministerial, church profiles to debut this year
Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Team

Authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ will soon be using a new system to create their ministerial profiles with the denomination. So will local churches.

The [Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Team](#) has selected Suran Solutions as the vendor to create the new [Ministerial Profiles Portal for Local Church Ministries](#).



The church portal will roll out at the same time. Much like the Ministerial Profile, “churches will initially need to register to receive a unique login to begin entering their information,” he said. “Designated individuals will then need to log in each time to update it.”

[Read more](#)

What Does it Mean to be a Spiritual Leader During Times of Crisis?

Advocate Aurora Health

A six-month series for religious and spiritual leaders began on May 25, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., and continues on the 4th Tuesday of the month (May 25, June 22, July 27, Aug. 24, Sept. 28, Oct. 26).

Let’s face it. It’s been a tough year. You may be questioning what it means to be a religious and spiritual leader during times of stress and crisis. You may feel like you are being asked to walk on water, lead through a wilderness and do the impossible.



This program will use the CPE model of action, reflection, and adjustment, but previous CPE experience is not required. [Download flyer.](#)

[Register here](#)

Interactive Course Offers New Ways to Examine Racism as a Public Health Crisis

CHHSM: [Diakonie, May 2021 \(Newsletter\)](#)

This summer, the UCC’s [Council for Health and Human Service Ministries](#) and [Council on Racial and Ethnic Ministries](#) is bringing a Synod Resolution of Witness to delegates of the biennial meeting calling on the church to declare and respond to [racism as a public health crisis](#). But even before delegates debate and vote on the resolution, an important new resource will be released to help all settings of the church deal with and process the harsh realities of systemic racism and its consequences on people’s lives, health and well-being.



[Read more](#)

Sunflowers & Thistles – words booklet and music book

United Reformed Church in the UK

A year after the murder of George Floyd, a new booklet of praise songs and protests has been published by the United Reformed Church in the UK. [Sunflowers & Thistles](#) is a collection of songs written by URC minister and hymn writer the Revd John Campbell and focuses on the Black Lives Matter movement and the coronavirus pandemic.



The free online resources include the booklet of songs, which can be sung to the tunes of well-known hymns, a full music version of all the hymns, PowerPoint presentations and slides, and videos.

[Click here to view online resources](#)

In the Media

['Progress Pride Flag' Back With New Welcoming Banner At Glenview Community Church](#)

Employment Opportunities

Click links to view [Ministerial opportunities](#) within the [Illinois Conference](#).

[St. Paul UCC, Belleville seeks Director of Faith Formation and Care](#)

[First Congregational UCC in Elgin seeks Administrative Assistant](#)

[Off the Pews seeks Executive Director](#)

[Christ Church UCC in Des Plaines seeks Church Administrative Assistant](#)

Conference and UCC Calendar for June

June 2: [Copyrights and the Church with CCLI and CCS](#), 2:00 p.m. Eastern (1:00 p.m. Central) via Zoom.

June 2: [Stronger Together as One Conference. The best conversations to learn from each other](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Pat Stein, Illinois Representative, Shawn Polzin, Risk Advisor, and Farnaz Ansari Berna, VP of Marketing and Sales from the Insurance Board will be our guest speakers.

June 6: [Service of Installation for Rev. Miranda Moeller](#), 3:00 p.m. Please join us in celebration of new beginnings at Millburn Congregational Church, 19073 W. Old Town Ct., Old Mill Creek, IL 60046.

June 8: [Both/And: Maximizing Hybrid Worship Experiences For Online and In-Person Audiences](#), 2:00 p.m. Eastern (1:00 p.m. Central).

June 9: [Stronger Together as One Conference. The best conversations to learn from each other](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Steve Welker, Moderator of the Association of Interim Ministers will be our guest speakers.

June 9-10: [Online Church Conference](#) hosted by Rev. Kim Keat with experts from many denominations who walk participants through the practical work of thriving in a hybrid church world. You can learn more [here](#).

June 12: [Annual CARE Meeting and Training](#), 11:00 a.m., This event will be held in person at

Hyde Park Union Church, and virtually over Zoom.

June 16: [Stronger Together as One Conference. The best conversations to learn from each other](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Jay Wittmeyer, Executive Director, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will be our guest speaker.

June 23: [Stronger Together as One Conference. The best conversations to learn from each other](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Rev. Michael D. Jones, CMA Committee on Ministry will be our guest speaker.

June 26: [Service of Ordination and Installation for Charing Wei-Jen Chen](#), 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

June 30: [Stronger Together as One Conference. The best conversations to learn from each other](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Illinois Conference Update.

Upcoming Events

July 8-10: [United Church of Christ Musicians Association Conference 2021: Brave New World](#), This conference will be offered in an all-virtual format. [Registration](#) is open!

July 11-18: [2021 General Synod 33 - Rooted in Love](#). Registration is open — be ready for this summer's Special Edition General Synod.

Sept. 23: [Strides for Peace Race](#), 6:00 p.m. Advocate Aurora Health is sponsoring the annual Strides for Peace Race Against Gun Violence held in Chicago and virtually this year.

Nov. 20: Illinois Conference Annual Celebration. Save the date!

Visit our website



DONATE NOW!



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