



# Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ

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January 6, 2019

TO: The Pastors and Congregations of the Eastern and Western Associations  
Members of the Association and Conference Committees I Staff

I have always been strengthened and comforted by the wisdom writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes and the familiar words shared in chapter three:

*"For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven... God has made everything beautiful in its time;"*

These words have been a place of refuge in the knowledge that God has set me on a journey by placing a call in my life and they have been a place of discernment as I have sought to live in faithful service through many seasons of ministry. In 2001, a new season of ministry began for me in the Illinois Conference as I was called to serve as the Eastern Association Minister. And in 2010, after an important time of discernment by the Conference, I was asked to share in joint ministry as an Associate Conference Minister serving in both the Eastern and Western Associations. I have also had the wonderful privilege of staffing several Conference ministries which has expanded my circle of relationships as well as grown my witness.

I have in recent months been in a time of discernment with God, my family and colleagues and have made the decision that as I approach my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday in May that it is clear that God is leading me to a new season in my life. I have decided in consultation with both Rev. Char Burch and Rev. Justo Gonzalez that I plan to retire as of May 31, 2019. In my consultation with Rev. Justo, we deemed it appropriate to share this plan now so that the Personnel committee could begin its considerations for new leadership to serve in this role. I have been honored to be a partner of the leadership team of this Conference for nearly eighteen years. I love this Conference and want to provide every opportunity for its continued success and I will pray for the future vision and vitality of the Conference as new leadership is called. I will work diligently to assure that this time of transition will be a blessing for all.

I am so very grateful for your strong confidence and support in these years of service and I look forward to the new purposes God has in store for me in this new season of my journey as well as the future vision for the Illinois Conference.

Blessings,

*Tom Norwalk*

Associate Conference Minister  
Serving the Eastern and Western Associations

God is Still Speaking 