Hosanna Preaching Project
Journeys Toward Justice - 2021 Cohort

The Hosanna Preaching Project is gearing up for its 2021 cohort, and you can still be a part of it!

Hosanna is an online professional development opportunity for preachers, educators, and advocates. Over the course of five sessions, participants will learn how to more effectively challenge and inspire believers to heed God’s call for justice and reconciliation in Palestine and Israel by raising a vision of God’s love that embraces all people - especially those who are oppressed and persecuted - and exposing the theological error of using biblical passages to rationalize injustice toward Jews or Palestinians, or their supporters. **The full experience costs $100, but no one will be turned away.**

Read More and Sign-Up

National UCC Facilities Update
Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer

Already there is anticipation and enthusiasm across the National Staff around the work in progress for our new workspace facilities since we announced plans to move several weeks ago.

Here are some recent updates:
- Timeline – We are very close to signing an agreement to lease floor space in what is known as the AECOM building at 1300 E. 9th Street in downtown Cleveland. We are targeting January 2022 as a move date.
- Move Preparation - Working groups are being organized and are already at work to accomplish all that must be done to keep the move on track:
  - Facilities Management Coordination; Logistics; Design and Layout; Amistad Chapel; Marketing, Communications and Signage
  - 700 Prospect - As of this week, our 700 Prospect building is on the market for sale.

Read John's Full Update

"Raising the Roof: Restoring Eden's Sanctuary and Song"
Sandy Bechtolsheim and Rev. Jacki Belile, Eden UCC, Chicago

Have you thought recently about
the beauty of your sanctuary? How it came to be? It is with this in mind that we would like to share with you the story of how God inspired our forefathers and foremothers in the 1940’s to make our sanctuary more beautiful.

We have put together a 27 page booklet entitled, “Light in the Windows”, which contains photos of each of our windows and discusses their religious significance. The booklet also discusses the background of Hans Muench and the Volga German immigrant heritage of our church.

We are selling these booklets for $15.00 as one of the fundraisers for “Raising the Roof: Restoring Eden’s Sanctuary and Song.” Click the button below to find out how to purchase your booklet today.

On behalf of Eden United Church of Christ in Chicago, I want to thank and honor the impact of our UCC family’s generosity over the last seven years. The investments of the Congregational Life Committee (CMA), LEEAP Committee, Neighbors in Need, and Genesis Grants have all had an interlocking effect on our revitalizing journey. - Rev. Jacki Belile

A Labor Day Reflection
Arise Chicago

Our worlds have been turned upside down in the last 20 months as we have adapted how we worship, work, educate our children, grocery shop, and so much more. This has also been a time when many of us more fully realized the stark injustice of income inequality and its suffocating impact.

As a nation we recognize that we are being kept safe and comfortable because of workers, from healthcare, to first responders, to farm workers and food production workers, to grocery workers. We have come to appreciate how essential their contribution is to our lives. Many of these workers suffered greatly and many are still suffering. And some workers are still waiting to be recalled so they can experience economic recovery. This Labor Day let’s honor all of these workers and re-commit ourselves to supporting them in securing their rights.

Can your congregation help our camps “keep our campfires burning”? We are reaching out to ask that as you create your budgets you earmark a portion of your Mission budget to be directed to our camps at Pilgrim Park and Tower Hill.
The support and activities for over 100 years have allowed us to preserve our camps for strength and spiritual sustenance. Imagine if our camps had not been there, if they had not been set aside to become our refuge.

Our camp budgets have been stressed through this extended pandemic, but we are working to ensure that in an uncertain future our guests will have a vibrant experience to bring them “out of the ordinary and into the sacred.”

The value of camp is a life changed and you can keep our campfires burning bright into the future. This investment by your congregation provides the opportunity of a guest encountering God in a natural splendor. Contact us to see where we can partner with your Mission goals. Call Pilgrim Park at 815-447-2390 or Tower Hill at 269-426-3881,

We prayerfully appreciate this consideration. - Michael Cusak, ODM Co-Chair

Visit Illinois Outdoor Ministries

TPIRC Churches are Full of Love and Innovation
Rev. Michelle Hughes, Project Director

The Thriving Pastors In Revitalizing Congregations Project is a bit of a misnomer. This program is not a “silver bullet” to move participants to revitalization, but rather, the idea of the program is twofold:

1. The more pastors are supported, the more their churches will thrive,
2. The more congregations share best practices, and share their learnings, it will create a climate of revitalization for all.

One of the great joys of meeting with TPIRC Cohorts is hearing about the projects each congregation is working on.

Read More

Let the Teams Die and End the Bullying
Rev. Brandyn Simmons

Having had the blessing and honor of working with many churches in our conference, I have come to see some recurring themes. Some of them are encouraging and some of them are disturbing. All of them are systemic.

It is not news to anyone who is willing to be honest with themselves that that are some things that churches do not do well. Two of these are transition and grief. These realities manifest themselves in various ways, but primarily they lead to perpetual hurt and illusory power. Let me explain what I mean.

Read more
Events and Training Opportunities

Celebration/Farewell for Rev. Kim Wood
Wednesday, Sept 8, 3 PM
Illinois Conference UCC, via Zoom

The September 8th “All Conference Chat” will be both a celebration and farewell for Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Kim Wood, as she leaves the Illinois Conference to join the Southeast Conference as the new Conference Minister! Join us on Zoom to celebrate Kim and her ministry with the Illinois Conference, and to send her off with our blessings and prayers. Details and Zoom Info.

Creation Justice Webinar
Wednesday, Sept. 8, 12 PM
United Church of Christ

The UCC’s next Creation Justice Webinar will feature one of the leading voices in environmentalism over recent decades: James Gustave Speth.

Even if you can’t make the scheduled time of 1:00 pm ET on Wednesday, September 8th, still sign-up, and we will send you a recording. Register now!

Clergy Boundary Training Opportunities
Sept 9 and 19
Sponsored by the Western Association Committee on Ministry

Clergy are invited to participate in one of our upcoming sessions of Clergy Boundary Awareness Training, hosted by the Western Association Committee on Ministry. The final session is geared specifically for retired pastors and pastors planning to retire within 12 months. All sessions will be offered on Zoom. Contact Naomi Else in the Conference Office with questions and to register.

Bridging the Divides, Tending the Gap
Sept 24 - 25, Online Conference
Congregation of St. Joseph with Fetzer Institute

With the awareness that we live in a world of painful and destructive polarities, this virtual conference will gather persons of various faiths, spiritualities, ages, and cultures who are longing to participate in the movement of unity and the healing of divisions.

Learn More/Register

Illinois Conference Women’s Retreat
Oct 1-2, 2021
Pilgrim Park Camp

A time to explore and renew our JOY IN THE LORD with biblical discussions, free time to relax in a beautiful camp, time with new friends and old, laughter, great food, fun activities, and more. Click the image to learn more.
Registration cost is $136, which includes: lodging Friday evening; 3 meals – Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch; and retreat materials. Register online or contact Carol Currier-Frighetto (815-277-6041) to have a registration form mailed to you. Register ASAP, but no later than Sept. 17, to ensure lodging and meal needs are met.

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**August Calendar At A Glance**

**Sept. 1:** [All Conference Chat](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Featured Speaker - Kent Siladi, UCC Director of Philanthropy on the 5 National UCC Offerings.

**Sept. 6:** [Labor Day Picnic](#), 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Sponsored by The People's Church of Chicago.

**Sept. 7:** [Property Committee](#) Meeting. 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**Sept. 8:** [All Conference Chat](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Celebration/Farewell for Rev. Kim Wood.

**Sept. 12-14:** [Faith in Place’s Green Team Summit](#) will be held virtually during the evenings of September 12-14th. Register for free online to access all of the Summit's workshops.

**Sept. 15:** [All Conference Chat](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Featured Speaker - Rev. Eric Fistler from the UCC Palestine Israel Network.

**Sept. 19:** [Ordination and Installation of Lindsey Hammond](#), 3:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church of Evanston.

**Sept. 21:** [FAB Committee](#) Meeting. 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**Sept. 21:** [Outdoor Ministry Committee](#) Meeting. 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Sept. 22:** [All Conference Chat](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Featured Speaker - Illinois Maya Ministries.

**Sept. 22-23:** [Partners in Building 2021](#). Virtual event sponsored by the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund.

**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 also virtually.

**Sept. 25:** [Conference Exec Committee](#) meeting. 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**Sept. 27:** [CMA Justice & Witness Team](#) meeting. 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**Sept. 29:** [All Conference Chat](#), 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Monthly Conference Update.

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**Upcoming Events**

**Oct. 1-2:** [Illinois Conference Women’s Retreat](#). “Choose Joy” is the theme for this year.
Oct. 6-7: Association of Interim Ministers invites you to the AIM Conference happening at the Starved Rock Conference Center. Click here for more information.

Oct. 8-9: Be the Healing Conference with Dr. Joy DeGruy. Rescheduled from August.

Oct. 30: Prairie Association Fall Meeting. 9:30-11:30 a.m. via Zoom.

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

Resources and More

Resources from Valarie Kaur

9/11 Educational Resources
It's time to see with new eyes. It's time to understand how our nation's actions since 9/11 have failed to make our world safer. And so let us show up to this 9/11 anniversary differently. With revolutionary love as our compass, I invite you to use our learning hub to reckon, heal, and repair. Imagine with me: What would the world look like 20 years from now if we chose policies and actions that affirm human dignity above all, if we chose to see no stranger?

9/11 Learning Hub

How to Show Up for Afghanistan
What if this was the moment we made America a safe home for all refugees? What if we turned America into a place where refugees were not banned or detained or caged at the border, but welcomed with support and solidarity? What if we began to reckon with the impact of our nation's actions globally - and chose consistent repair? Imagine America as a place that sees no stranger. It would be nothing less than revolutionary.

Showing Up for Afghanistan
The Center for Faith and Imagination at Memphis Theological Seminary is offering a certificate program in Community Engagement & Ministry for anyone interested in building their capacity and toolkit for authentic community engagement (both lay and clergy). More information.

The United Church of Christ Officers recently released a statement about the situation in Afghanistan: "We write with profound grief at the news of the Taliban takeover of Kabul and fall of the Afghan government."

Rooted in Love: 2021 Stewardship Theme Materials

New stewardship materials available from UCC Resources help congregations tell their story while also making a request for financial support. Options for purchase include both printed and download formats; prices start at $39.95.

COVID-19 Vaccination Updates and More

COVID-19 Vaccine
Getting vaccinated is safe, effective, and will help us beat COVID-19. We’re currently vaccinating anyone 12 and older in Illinois and Wisconsin.

COVID-19 Testing
We’re offering COVID-19 tests at our Advocate Immediate Care and Aurora Urgent Care locations – regardless of symptoms or exposure. Testing is available via walk-in or by appointment. You can expect to receive your results within 48 hours.

Click here to view the "Safely Reopening Our Doors" Toolkit.

Employment Opportunities
Ministerial opportunities within the United Church of Christ.

Belleville, St. Paul UCC seeks Director of Faith Formation and Care

Crystal Lake, St. Paul's UCC seeks PT Youth Director

Crystal Lake, St. Paul's UCC seeks PT Program Director

Des Plaines, Christ Church UCC seeks Church Administrative Assistant

Dundee, First Congregational Church seeks PT Director of Children & Youth Ministries

Evanston, First Congregational Church seeks Church Administrator

Park Ridge Community Church seeks PT Children's Minister

Westchester, Midwest Ministry Development seeks Contract Counselors

Winnetka Congregational Church seeks Interim Youth & Children Staff Person

Off the Pews seeks Executive Director

Please let us know if you have a job opening you would like shared, and also once the position is filled. Contact Sarah Lohrbach.

Church Newsletter Request

Please send us your newsletters so we can keep up with what's going on in your church.

Address for printed newsletters: Illinois Conference UCC, 1840 Westchester Blvd., Suite 200, Westchester, IL 60154. Electronic newsletters: Please add Sarah Lohrbach at SarahLohrbach@ilucc.org to your church’s mailing list.