

Annual Celebration and Meeting Planning Report

Theme: Embrace God's Imagination

Isaiah 43:19: *"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*

Overview

The 2024 Illinois Conference UCC Annual Celebration will be held at **First Congregational of Western Springs** on **November 1-2, 2024**. Our theme, "Embrace God's Imagination," encourages participants to envision and participate in God's new work within our communities, emphasizing creativity, care, and collaborative ministry.

The planning team has worked diligently to craft an engaging, practical, and spiritually uplifting program. Workshops, keynote addresses, and worship services are all designed to inspire attendees to think creatively about their ministries and champion justice, care, and community building. This was a team effort, and I thank everyone for their help and dedication.

Key Components

1. Workshops:

- Exploring ministry through imagination and innovation, trauma healing, financial ministry, AI best practices, and more.
- **Particular focus:** Inclusivity, youth in church, governance, and healing initiatives.

2. Worship:

- **Opening worship (Friday):** Rev. Dr. Patrick Daymond
- **Keynote (Saturday):** Rhina Ramos, focusing on ministry within marginalized communities.
- **Closing worship (Saturday):** Rev. Terrill Murff

3. Business Meetings:

- **Friday, November 1 (1-2 PM):** Initial business session and updates.
- **Saturday, November 2 (10:15 AM - 2:30 PM):** Follow-up and wrap-up of critical discussions and decisions.

4. Celebration Banquet:

- **Friday, November 1 (6 PM):** A banquet to celebrate our siblings in Christ's accomplishments with special presentations, slideshows, and an opportunity for fellowship.

Additional Details

- **Hotel Information:** The conference hotel will be the **Holiday Inn South West in Countryside**. Rooms are available at competitive rates, and the venue provides two (2) banquet rooms with reasonable minimums.
- **Decorations:** Simple, colorful balloons will reflect the theme of joy and imagination.

Conclusion

We pray the 2024 Annual Celebration will inspire attendees to embrace God's ongoing work with fresh perspectives and renewed energy. The planning team looks forward to welcoming you all in November!