

2025 Illinois Conference Annual Celebration & TPIRC Education Summit Event Schedule

Thursday, Oct. 30

Check-In / Registration - 8:30 am

Option Trainings – 9 am – 3 pm

*MESA/COM Discussion 1 – 10 am – 12 pm

Check-In / Registration - 12:30 pm

*MESA/COM Discussion 2 – 1 – 4 pm

Friday, Oct. 31

Check-In / Registration - 8:30 am

Opening Worship with the Many - 10:30 am

Workshops Group A - 11:30 am

Lunch - 12:30 pm

Workshops Group B - 1:15 pm

Business Session 1 - 2:15 - 5 pm

Banquet (Faranda's) - 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Saturday, Nov. 1

Check-In / Registration - 8:00 am

Worship - 8:30 am

Business Session 2 - 10:15 am

Lunch and departure - 12 pm

Register Online Here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2025AnnualCelebration>

Training and workshop descriptions are on the following pages.

**Registration for these is separate. See page 2.*

Thursday, Oct 31 - Trainings, 9 AM – 3 PM

Boundary Awareness Training

Healthy boundaries are essential for building trust and maintaining integrity in ministry. This workshop equips clergy, with the tools to recognize, establish, and maintain appropriate boundaries in all areas of ministry. Participants will be led through guided discussions, case studies and thoughtful reflection to deepen their understanding of power dynamics, self-care and ethical practices which foster safe and respectful environments in the church.

Bias Awareness Training: Ministry of Radical Hospitality – Rev. Michelle Day

This highly interactive workshop provides understanding of issues and skills for addressing and preventing discrimination, bias and harassment in faith-based organizations using Biblical and transformative justice principles and practices.

UCC Polity (non-MID) – Rev. Shernell Edney Stilley

What makes the UCC unique is not only our theology but the way we organize ourselves as the Body of Christ. This workshop will provide an overview of UCC polity, which is our covenantal system of relationship, decision-making and shared ministry. This session is for lay leaders, clergy, new members, seasoned members and anyone interested or curious about how the UCC lives out its calling to be a united and uniting church.

Thursday, Oct 31 - MESA/COM Discussions

SEPARATE REGISTRATION – COM Members Only

Led by: Rev. Elizabeth Dilley & Rev. Melanie Oommen

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/COMdiscussions>

Discussion I – (10 am – 12 pm)

This discussion will be facilitated by MESA and will focus on the following topics: the central role of the COM in oversight and support of churches and ministers, Ministerial Standing, alternate/multi pathways, 3 and 4-way Covenants and Situational Support.

Discussion II – (1 – 4 pm)

This discussion will center on Fitness Review Process, moving towards a Unified Fitness Review Process, and other pertinent concerns.

Friday, Oct 31 - Group A Workshops, 11:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Lay-lead Congregations: Emerging Trends in Ministerial Leadership

Rev. Melanie Oommen

More and more churches in the UCC are finding that full-time ordained ministerial leadership is no longer possible. What are the implications of this emerging trend for ministerial leadership? What is possible? How can our churches, Associations and Conferences adapt so that all settings of the church have trained, skilled and faithful ministerial leaders? In this workshop we will discuss new ministry models that are emerging and the ways that our Manual on Ministry provides support for authorization that maintains excellence and adaptability to the new realities of the times in which we live. There will be ample time for sharing of experiences and discussion.

IL Conf 2026 Budget Discussion - Rev. Scott Peterson & Rev. Rocky Sheneman

This discussion will align mission, ministry, sustainability and covenant with the resources provided to the Conference for 2025 as we plan for 2026.

Camp Forward - Amy Wildermuth, Rev. Tracy Heilman, Mitch Kloster

This bold initiative reimagines and strengthens the Outdoor Ministry for the next generation. In this workshop we will share, learn, and explore how Camp Forward will be implemented in 2026. This initiative nurtures faith formation, builds community, and expands access to camp experiences which are relevant, sustainable, and life-giving.

Governance - Rev. Jon Prain & Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez

Updated discussion on the implementation of the new governance structure. This workshop will attempt to provide clarity and confidence in how we serve the churches of the IL Conference in a more efficient and effective manner beginning in 2026.

Partnering in the Community - Rev. Patrick Duggan & Rev. Dr. Susan Mitchell

Church Building Loan & Fund will discuss three initiatives: Partners in Vision program, Transform Community 2.0 and a new Lily initiative. CBL&F uses these three different initiatives to help churches in underserved communities by providing innovative and creative approaches which help churches create a plan that is resourceful, sustainable, creative and mission focused – assisting with project management, pre-development, repurposing church owned property that is unused or underused, planning complex projects and charting a course for real estate in transition.

Manual on Local Church (Faith Info) - Rev. Camarion D. Anderson-Harvey

This workshop will discuss this newly developed resource designed to help congregations discern their identity and who they are in Covenant within the wider church and how they function within UCC polity.

Metamorphosis (Transitions Lilly Grant Project): Supporting Churches in Seasons of Change – Rev. Shernell Edney Stilley & Rev. J.J. Flagg

Transitions are a natural part of the life of every congregation. The time between the ending of one pastoral leadership change and before the beginning of new pastoral leadership, is a time for reflection, visioning, and new beginnings. Some may call this time period the liminal phase. During this liminal time, your Conference can play a vital role. This workshop will introduce participants to the Lilly Grant (Metamorphosis) which provides; congregational support, congregational nurture, navigation of the search and call process, strategic planning and visioning, and nurture of healthy leadership during this liminal phase which can produce high anxiety. Faithful engagement and strategic use of the metamorphosis resources will help churches embrace new possibilities for mission and ministry.

Our Whole Lives - Christina Fairman

Did you know that the United Church of Christ, in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Association, co-publishes a lifespan comprehensive sexuality education curriculum? Yes, you heard that right: sex ed in church! It's not just about the birds and the bees, though. Come learn about the 25-year history of the Our Whole Lives program and how you can honor sexuality education everywhere from the sanctuary to your faith formation spaces.

Your Ministry Can Be Your Misery. Your Misery Can Be Your Ministry!

Rev. Dr. Ozzie E. Smith Jr.

The call of God is an amazing witness of what God can accomplish through those who say 'yes' to this sacred service. But what happens when the circumstances of the world dare creep into the church and attempt to hinder the Word of God?

The Many

A creative collective making inclusive, truth-telling, empowering music and liturgically grounded gatherings that help us experience God in a new way without the lens of toxic religion.

Called Together - *Keith Clark Hoyos, Church Training Center*

A Spirit-led workshop designed for Christian Congregations seeking to discern, articulate, and embody their collective calling.

Little Home Church by the Wayside

This panel of presenters will share how they've utilized the support of Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations (TPIRC) in the development of ministry opportunities within their congregation and community.

Friday, Oct 31 - Group B Workshops, 1:15 - 2:00 PM

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Environmental Justice – Caring for God's Creation - Rev. David Russell

This workshop will offer strategies for educating and encouraging climate action and advocacy from local congregations. The following ideologies will be examined: theological reminders of God's call to protect Creation; scientific climate data; educational strategies for local churches; challenge for education; advocacy; and action with the local church and community, and climate networks available for churches.

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Stewardship - *Kay Quinney-Burnard & Larry McCure*

Stewardship in the IL Conference is more than finances; it is a spiritual practice finding its roots and foundation grounded in generosity of the faithful gifts of God. Stewardship is about how we care for and manage all that God has entrusted us with. We will explore how generosity grows out of the spirit of open heartedness which reflects God's own abundance.

Love of the Children - *Amanda Herman*

Youth ministry today is very different than a few years ago. Generational identity, mental health, diversity and justice, online presence, and a multitude of other challenges bombard our young people. In this workshop you will discuss principles which can be used to revitalize children's ministry by fostering support, collaboration and innovation. You will also learn that faith formation in young lives is both a spiritual and communal priority.

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