Ecumenical Connection

A publication of the Illinois Conference of Churches



May 2017

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Rally and Interreligious Prayer Service

(to pray for the passing of the state budget)
was held Feb. 23 in the State Capitol Rotunda
Thank you to all who participated.





Rev. Glen VanderKloot, ELCA, offered a passionate speech about Luthern Social Services as well as prayer.

Rev. Beth Wagner, Presbyterian Church USA, closes her eyes as she prays with passion.





Rev. Wally Carlson, co-chair of the Leadership Team talked about the affect of “no budget” on our public school system.



Rev. Maryalice Sutter, Hakan Berberoglu, E. Garnet Fay and David Kelm carry one of the letters which were presented to the governor and the leaders of the House and Senate.

SAVE THE DATE !!!

2017 Illinois Conference of Churches Annual Assembly

"United in Christ: Reconciliation and Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation."

Friday, Sept. 22

8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

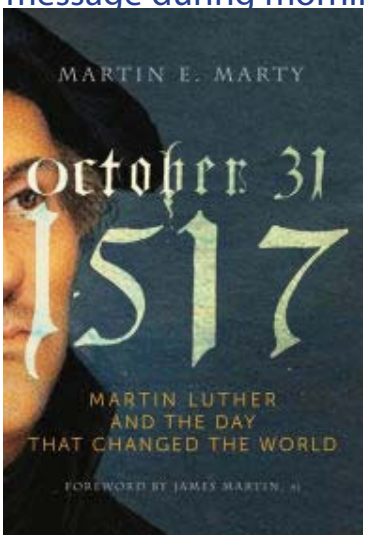
Worship 9 a.m.
Forum 10 a.m. -2 p.m.
Business meeting 2 p.m.

First Baptist Church
2502 E. College Ave., Bloomington, IL



(If you are no longer the delegate or if there are any changes in your contact information please let us know! Thanks.)

Bishop S. John Roth, Central/Southern Illinois Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, will deliver the message during morning worship.



Our Forum presenter:
Dr. Martin E. Marty author of "October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day that Changed the World" - published in 2016.

Submit a nomination for the Rev. Donald E. Mason Ecumenical Award by Sept. 1

Earlybird registration $35 until midnight Sept. 1 - no exceptions!

For a copy of any proposed by-law changes go to our website under "events" or request a copy by email, after Sept. 1.

Register online using the events tab on our website or e-mail to request a registration form. $10 for students, $45 for all others, includes breakfast, lunch and materials.

Questions? Contact Laurie Vial, Executive Director, at laurie@illinoisconferenceofchurches.org or at the phone number below.

Lodging: Rooms are blocked at Eastland Suites 1801 Eastland Dr, Bloomington at $85 plus tax. 309-662-0000. Rooms must be booked prior to Sept. 15 to assure the discounted rate.

Illinois Conference of Churches

1608 W. Church St., Champaign, IL 61821 217-522-7099
www.illinoisconferenceofchurches.org

You can all be Ecumenical Partners!

The Illinois Conference of Churches voted to forge a new membership structure. Previously, the governing bodies of denominations, located in Illinois were members – judicatories and they continue to be the foundation of our organization.

But the ICC is broadening this structure. Going forward, individual persons, individual congregations or churches (regardless of its judicatory being a member) and organizations, can become ecumenical partners and attend Annual Assembly where they will have a voice at the table. Voting is done by consensus and will continue to be the responsibility of the judicatory leaders and delegates.

All members and ecumenical partners must agree with the Mission Statement of the ICC:

"The Illinois Conference of Churches seeks to be an inclusive community of churches that celebrates and makes visible our sacred bonds of unity in Christ. We will do this by:
Promoting an honest sharing and understanding of both our common and divergent theological convictions; and Making public, prophetic witness to Christ's love for all people, particularly by addressing poverty and racism. To these ends the members of the Illinois Conference of Churches proclaim our common faith in Jesus Christ. In word and deed, we give expression to Ephesians 4:5 – there is "… one Lord, one faith, one baptism…" – as we unite in cooperative ministries."

To become an ecumenical partner please fill out and submit the form on the website under "news"electronically, or download and print the form to mail. By submitting or mailing this form you attest that you agree with the mission statement. Thank you for your generous support of the ICC.

2016 Donald Mason Ecumenical Award

The recipient of the 2016 Rev. Donald E. Mason Ecumenical Award was Fr. Robert Flannery of the Belleville Diocese of the Catholic Church. Fr. Bob's passion for ecumenism has led him to leadership roles at the world and national levels and he has been an unwavering supporter and active participate in the Illinois Conference of Churches and continues to serve on two teams. Congratulations and thanks, Fr. Bob.

We are seeking nominations for the Rev. Donald E. Mason Ecumenical Award which will be presented at Annual Assembly from now on. For a simple nomination form, due Sept. 1, 2017 please email us and request one. The award recognizes ecumenical initiatives of individuals, leaders, local churches, judicatories, or other organizations which serve to: nurture growing relationships among Christian churches through worship, education, and fellowship; and generate ecumenical witness and mission expressing the reconciling love of Jesus Christ. ***Thanks.***

ICC forges formal partnership with Faith in Place



We urge you to go to their website **faithinplace.org** and check them out.

In April, people of faith from all over Illinois flooded the capital building in Springfield with support of Senate Resolution 353 and House Resolution 234, which calls for environmental justice in Illinois. Specifically, the resolution seeks to protect provisions of the Future Generation Jobs Bill which extend training and jobs in the green economy to returning citizens and alumni of foster care. Close to 200 rallied at the Lincoln statue and spoke with legislators about environmental justice and other Earth care issues facing Illinois.

Urbana-Champaign church to unveil new rooftop solar array

A church is ready to harness the power of the sun to save money and help the environment. Thanks to a new state energy law, it may be among the first of many more houses of worship in Illinois expected to turn to renewable energy.

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign (UUCUC) church will formally unveil their new 25-kilowatt rooftop solar array during a ceremony on Monday, May 8 at 11:00 A.M. Urbana Mayor Diane Marlin and state Senator Scott Bennett (52nd district) will participate in the ceremony.

The array includes 81 separate panels that will offset nearly 70% of the church's annual electric usage and reduce as much carbon per year as would 611 trees.

Recently enacted legislation in Illinois, the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA), will encourage more houses of worship in Illinois to make the switch to solar energy.

The UUCUC project was the result of discussions held by Faith in Place, a statewide interfaith group that engages with religious congregations on environmental issues, and Hawk Energy Solutions, which installed the project.

Houses of Worship in Bloomington/Normal to Explore Solar

On Saturday, May 13, people from communities of faith will gather at the First Presbyterian Church of Normal, 2000 E. College Ave, to learn how it is possible to reduce a house of worship's carbon footprint AND its power bills.

Solar developer Jason Hawksworth, of Hawk Energy Solutions, and Central Illinois Outreach Director Cindy Shepherd from Faith in Place will provide information and examples from other area faith communities who have added solar to their energy mix.

Step by step guidance is available in determining if solar is a good fit for your facility, financing options, installation option and available rebates and incentives.

Come ask your questions and find out how to take the next step toward clean, renewable energy. Register here: https://www.faith**inplace.org/events/bn-solar-house-worship-workshop-0**

Shearing Day for the Alpacas At Jubilee Farms

Congregations in Decatur, Champaign/Urbana and Bloomington/Normal are partnering with a new Community Supported Agriculture farm in Clinton, Jubilee Farms. They are supporting farmer and UCC licensed minister, Cyndy Ash, in providing clean local food for food charities and for CSA shareholders, too.

Cyndy is hosting a fun open house at the farm on Saturday, May 20 at 9 AM, when visitors will be witnesses as her alpacas are shorn of their heavy winter coats. Find out more and RSVP here: https://www.faithinplace.org/events/shearing-day-jubilee-farms

Save the date

Sunday, Oct. 15th is the Green Team Summit
At the Field Museum, Chicago

The second annual gathering of Faithful People, Caring for Earth will have even more exciting workshops, speakers and learning/sharing opportunities to help people of faith become LEADERS in Earth care.

Bookmark www.faithinplace.org/events

News snapshots

Judicatory visits and major meetings

Laurie Vial, executive director of the Illinois Conference of Churches, is traveling around the state and meeting individually with all Judicatory executives.

Another of Laurie's goals is to attend the major meetings of each denomination and where possible have an information table in the exhibition space. Please help out the ICC by communicating about your major meetings and forwarding registration forms for exhibition space. She could also address these gatherings and bring a brief greeting from the ICC.

Looking forward

Another goal of the ICC Leadership Team is to be more proactive. And the major focus of the ICC is alleviating racism and poverty. The Leadershp Team seeks other ways to become more involved statewide. If you have a suggestion, please contact Laurie.

Would you like to join an ICC Team?

If you would like to serve on the Public Policy Team, the Illinois Christians Encountering Racism (ICER) Team, or help plan next year's Annual Assembly Forum – e-mail Laurie Vial and let her know. We also have a new Interreligious Team. If you would like to suggest someone to serve on this Team, please contact Laurie.

Grants

Now that the Illinois Conference of Churches will be seeking grants to supplement denomination donations in our working budget, we need you to be our eyes and ears. If you hear of appropriate grant opportunities from foundations or your own denomination, please notify the executive director. Thank you for helping in this way.



Donations/Pledges

The Illinois Conference of Churches relies on the generous donations of its 13 member Christian denominations for financial stability. Other generous supporters are affiliated members and individual congregations as well as the generosity of individuals.

Thank you for keeping current with your donations. Please contact the executive director if you need an update on your status.

ICC to host conference for college chaplains

The Leadership Team has learned the college chaplains in Illinois feel a need to meet together once a year to network and share common concerns. Please notify Laurie Vial, our executive director, to give her contact information for chaplains in your denomination or any that you know. This event will be hosted by a Christian college and sponsored by the Illinois Conference of Churches. Please forward this information to any chaplains that you know. Please put Chaplain in the subject line.

Is there a way for Judicatories to share more resources such as training sessions?

The Christian Church Disciples of Christ has led the charge by opening their annual anti-racism training to anyone in our 13 member deonominations. Everyone is watching their budget including travel budget and trying to be good stewards of the environment by not driving as much. If your denomination has a training session, a special speaker, an event, a workshop or any other "happening" that you would like to open to your fellow ICC members, please let us know. We will promote these events on our website and in our newsletter. Our Leadership Team would really like to grow this opportunity for more ecumenical encounters. And we'll all meet more brothers and sisters in Christ and have more networking opportunities.



Like us on Facebook!

Keep up with the Illinois Conference of Churches and be prepared to have a little fun along the way.
www.facebook.com/pages/Illinois-Conference-of-Churches

This can be observed any time during 2017. For additional information and materials see the website www.geii.org.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017 Theme



PREPARATION: Observing the Week of Prayer

Reconciliation - The Love of Christ Compels Us

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity gives Christians an annual opportunity to continue their quest for the unity they already share in Christ. It is also a time to gather in praise of the Triune God and to deepen the understanding of the ecumenical movement. By joining in this annual celebration Christians raise their voices, hands and hearts to God seeking the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus, the Son of God, "that they all may be one."

The Week of Prayer also invites those who participate to use it as an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the ecumenical movement in seeking to end the divisions among Christians. From the smallest to the largest communities, from all cultures, races and language groups, from all the baptized to all those in ordained ministry, the Week of Prayer is also an opportunity to ask examine the level of support they have given to this important movement in the life of the Church. An accounting of each Christian's discipleship and faithfulness to the proclamation of the Gospel—the good news of reconciliation—can be taken every year during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

What follows are some suggestions that we hope can assist Christians in the experience of observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and celebrating the 2017 theme of "Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us" (2 Corinthians 5:14-20)This is by no means a comprehensive listing. We hope that as you create your own opportunities of prayer for Christian unity you will share those with others. Each new experience of prayer and gathering provides the Christian faith community with opportunities to grow in our understanding of one another as we celebrate our unity and common mission. (See the website for more information.)

The National Workshop on Christian Unity

Watch for 2018 details in our next issue

www.nwcu.org

Teams of the Illinois Conference of Churches

We welcome new members to our teams. Please contact Laurie Vial, executive director, with questions or to join a team.

Leadership Team

Rev. Gary McCants, co-chair
African Methodist Episcopal Church
4th Episcopal District
Springfield

Rev. Wally Carlson, co-chair
United Methodist Church
Great Rivers Conference
Canton

Dr. John Charlton, treasurer
American Baptist Church
Great Rivers Region
Springfield

Fr. Kevin Laughery
Catholic Church
Diocese of Springfield
New Berlin

Rev. Galda McCants
African Methodist Episcopal Church
4th Episcopal District
Springfield

Dr. George Johnston
Presbyterian Church – USA
Southeastern Illinois Presbytery
Rantoul/Monticello

Rev. Megan Dean
United Methodist Church
Northern Illinois Conference
Waukegan

E. Garnet Fay
Religious Society of Friends
Western Yearly Meeting
Chicago

Rev. Sharon Patton
Christian Church, Disciples of Christ
Region of Illinois/Wisconsin
Charleston

Greg Krohm
Catholic Church
Archdiocese of Chicago
Wilmette

Fr. George Pyle
Greek Orthodox Church
Springfield/Champaign

Alicja Lukaszewicz-Southall
Episcopal Church
Diocese of Chicago
Wauconda

Rev. Catiana McKay
United Methodist Church
Northern Illinois Conference
Chicago, Rogers Park

Annual Assembly Forum Team

Rev. Wally Carlson, chair
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Great Rivers Conference
Canton

Rev. Catiana McKay
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Marianne Stowers
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Region of Illinois/Wisconsin
Springfield

Fr. Bob Flannery
Catholic Church
Diocese of Belleville
Carbondale

Rev. Robert Sherman
United Church of Christ
Illinois Conference
Kewanee

Illinois Christians Encountering Racism (ICER)

Rev. Kevin Laughery, co-chair
Catholic Church
Diocese of Springfield
New Berlin

Rev. Galda McCants, co-chair
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Springfield

Rev. Dwight Bailey
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Region of Illinois/Wisconsin
Aurora

Rev. Mark Harkness
United Methodist Church
Northern Illinois District
Walnut

Martha Herrin
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Region of Illinois/Wisconsin
Stewardson

Rev. Christine Hopkins
Episcopal Church
Diocese of Springfield
Champaign

Rev. Megan Dean
United Methodist Church
Northern Illinois Conference
Waukegan

Rev. Sharon Patton
Christian Church, Disciples of Christ
Region of Illinois/Wisconsin
Charleston

Continued on next page

Interreligious Team

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United Methodist Church
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Chicago, Rogers Park

Rev. Dr. Sheldon Culver
United Church of Christ
Illinois South Conference
Highland

Dr. John Charlton
American Baptist Church
Great Rivers Region
Springfield

Fr. Kevin Laughery
Catholic Church
Diocese of Springfield
New Berlin

Hakan Berberoglu
Niagra Foundation
Chicago/Peoria

Alicja Lukaszewicz-Southall
Episcopal Church
Diocese of Chicago
Wauconda

Greg Krohm
Catholic Church
Archdiocese of Chicago
Wilmette

Fr. Bob Flannery
Catholic Church
Diocese of Belleville
Carbondale

Public Policy Team

E. Garnet Fay, chair
Religious Society of Friends
Western Yearly Meeting
Chicago

Robert Gilligan
Catholic Church
Archdiocese of Chicago
Chicago

Rev. Gary McCants
African Methodist Episcopal
4th Episcopal District
Springfield

Rev. Wally Carlson
United Methodist Church
Great Rivers Conference
Canton

Rev. Michael Winters
Presbyterian Church – USA
Chicago Presbytery
Oak Lawn/Oak Park

Rev. Dr. John Rickard
Presbyterian Church - USA
Blackhawk Presbytery
Oregon

$$$$$ Thank you for your generous response to our 2017 pledge drive. If you have not yet filled out and returned your pledge card please do. To see a copy of our current budget please email and request a copy. Donations are always welcome - one easy way to donate is to use PayPal on our website. Again, thank you for your generous gifts.

Dates to remember

Thursday, May 25 Joint Teams Meeting in Bloomington
Friday, Sept. 22 Annual Assembly in Bloomington

Illinois Conference of Churches
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