Community UCC

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of *Hope*

Volume 65, Issue 8
September 1 - September 30, 2026

e-Communigram

Just Peace, Progressive, LGBTQ
Open & Affirming Congregation

Letters From Leah

"Does this cost anything?"
"Do we have to sign up for something to get the hot dog?"
"Why are you doing this?"
Every year, when we set up shop in the parking lot and pass out hot dogs, veggie dogs, and cold cups of water to college students on their way to and from the Quad, these are my favorite questions. In a world where everything costs something, quid pro quo is the norm, and so many Christians use pray-to-play tactics requiring people to participate in some kind of church experience in order to receive direct services, handing out free hot dogs, expecting nothing in return, is a radical act. That's shocking, I know, but it's true.

When they hear our response, each student's face confirms it. Our gesture melts their skepticism.

"That's SO nice!" many a student exclaims. Others, particularly the ones who are overstimulated by the heat and crowds on the Quad, soften. They smile.

I'm not sure if this is what our forebearers had in mind. Over a hundred years ago, when they decided to move closer to the university in order to be in relationship with the community forming there. In fact, I often wonder what those folks would think of our annual ministry of the hot dogs extravaganza. And while I'm not sure what they would think of the details, I do know they would be heartened to see us continuing to live out what they discerned so long ago: we are called to be a university church.

We are called to be in relationship with the professors and staff of the University of Illinois. We are called to be in relationship with the students here. We are called to be a witness to the love of Christ alive in the world. Whether we are feeding more than hungry bellies on a Monday night at Jubilee, handing out hand cut rainbow hearts at Pride, standing for a just-peace amid the violence of the world, or handing a college kid a hot dog and saying, "Welcome to the neighborhood. We are so glad you're here," we are practicing our purpose in the world.

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WORSHIP MINI-SERIES:
Called, Gathered, Formed, Sent Out

Here is a look at our September worship schedule. We invite you to join us for learning, fellowship, and service.

AUG 30 — **Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Called
Exodus 3:1-15

SEP 6 — **Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Gathered
Matthew 18:15-20

SEP 13 — **Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Formed
Youth-chosen scripture

SEP 20 — **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Sent Out
Jonah 3:10-4:11



✦ WORSHIP NEWS ✦

What's Happening in Worship

We've just begun a tiny but mighty 4-week series which will run **August 30 - September 20**. This series theme, titled Called, Gathered, Formed, Sent Out, explores what it means to be formed as God's people. We are called to a life of lovingkindness, gathered together as One Body, formed as people of faith, and sent out to serve. During this series, Pastor Leah and Pastor Izzy will both preach. The youth and young adults who went on the summer mission trip will also lead worship.





Worship Assistants

Liturgy is defined as the work of the people; the community gathered for worship. This is one of the reasons Liturgists, Greeters, Ushers, the Choir, and others participate in the leadership of worship. Worship is not just the pastor's role. Many voices add richness to the worship experience for all.

To sign up to be a **liturgist, greeter, or usher** for September 2026, please sign up on the paper sign-up sheet in the Parlor. Just write your name on the date that works for you and check the task you wish to fill.

You will recieve an email reminding you that you are scheduled for the Sunday you signed up for that includes intructions for arrival time and job duties.



CAMPUS AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Ministry Updates

August has been a busy time for many youth as they return to school and their extracurricular activities, but we still managed to see one last movie in the theater: a recording of the original West End cast of SIX! It was awesome! The youth also gathered during worship on August 30th to plan for the service they are leading on September 13th. They helped choose music, scripture, and other worship elements. And perhaps more importantly, we laughed a lot while planning. Campus Ministry students who chaperoned the trip also helped, which was great. It felt a little like a mission trip reunion in the best way. The first Youth Group gathering of the Fall is in the evening on September 6th, and earlier that day the youth have already agreed to help out with serving communion. See below for what's coming up in the next few months!



Upcoming Events for Youth Ministry

YOUTH GROUP

Every other Sunday from 5:00pm - 7:00pm, beginning September 6th

- May not meet on Decmeber 27th if most families are out of town

YOUTH-LED WORSHIP SERVICE

September 13th

- Mission trip focused but all youth are invited to participate

FALL FIELD TRIP

October 18th after worship

- Trip to Curtis Orchard or Hardy's Reindeer Ranch

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dates TBD

- Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and/or Sola Gratia Farms

WEEKEND RETREAT

Dates TBD

- Retreat at Tower Hill Camp in Michigan







Campus Ministry Updates

Students are back and the energy in the building has shifted already! We had a busy first week with a booth for Quad Day, dinner at Jubilee Cafe, ecumenical Bible Study at St. Andrew's, and a Bingo event to welcome students back to campus. Campus Ministry students and some folks from the congregation also had a final round of summer bowling on August 30th, with an array of snacks provided by generous congregants! Monday after-hangs are already going strong, and a recent surprise visit from some campus ministry alum made for a really special afternoon. We already have a lot on the calendar for the Fall semester. Keep reading to find out more!

Upcoming Events for Campus Ministry

REGULAR FALL DROP-IN HOURS	Tuesdays from 3:00-6:00pm Thursdays from 2:00-6:00pm
DINNERS AT JUBILEE + AFTER-HANG	Monday Nights After-hang 6:30-8:00pm
ECUMENICAL BIBLE STUDY	Every other Thursday 6-8pm Starting August 27th
CAMPUS MINISTRY CHAPERONES CO-LEAD WORSHIP WITH YOUTH	September 13th
FALL RETREAT AT TOWER HILL CAMP	October 9th - 11th
UCC CAMPUS MINISTRY PRIDE FEST BOOTH	October 17th
CAMPUS MINITRY-LED WORSHIP	October 18th
CHILI COOK-OFF FUNDRAISER AND FOOTBALL WATCH PARTY	November 13th
READING DAY STUDY SESSION	December 10th







Like last year, Campus Ministry also plans to participate in CUCC congregational activities and will be looking for folks to host students for lunch after worship. You can sign up at https://tinyurl.com/hostucccm4lunch or look for a QR code in the yellow Announcements sheet. Thank you to the folks who have already signed up for September and October!!!!!

If you would like to connect with me about programming, special events, or anything else, please reach out by email at izzy@ucccampusministry.org.

Peace,
Pastor Izzy

UPCOMING SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SEPT 6
Gathering of the Waters

Join us for worship and the Gathering of the Waters on Sunday, September 6. If you collected water on your summer travels, bring a small vessel of water to worship with you to be joined with water that others collected on their journeys and poured into the Baptismal Font. Just be sure to label any vessel of water you bring with you with your name and the location where the water was collected.

SEPT 6
One Great Hour of Sharing

During worship on Sunday, September 6th, we will be collecting for the National UCC Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing. This is one of those offerings that supports ministries too large for us to tackle with just our congregation.

SEPT 8
Pub Theology

Pub Theology, one of the CUCC book groups, resumes meeting on Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm on September 8 in the Fellowship Hall. We will begin the fall semester reading Hope Dies Last: Visionary People Across the World, Fighting to Find Us a Future by Alan Weisman.

SEPT 13
School Kit Packing

Join us after worship on September 13th to assemble Kids' Kits for Church World Services!

SEPT 20
Brown Bag Bible Study

Begininng on September 20th and continuing on the third Sunday of the month throughout the school year, join us downstairs fifteen minutes after the worship service ends to explore a book or passage in more depth. On September 20th we will look at The Book of Jonah.

SEPT 27
Bike Ride / Pizza Party

Save the date – On September 27th we will have our annual bike ride and pizza party at Riggs Brewery. Join us for kickball (playing or watching), pizza, ice cream, and visiting with your wonderful CUCC friends and family!

UPCOMING OCTOBER EVENTS

OCT 4
Neighbors in Need

During worship on Sunday, October 4th, we will be collecting for the national UCC's Neighbors in Need offering. This offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

OCT 4
Dementia Seminar with Emily Harmon

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, October 4th **immediately following worship.** Emily Harmon from the Illinois Extension will cover things like what is dementia, challenges for caregivers and how to lessen their stress and burnout, and strategies to better interact and communicate with our friends with dementia. This seminar will be approximately 90 minutes, and a light lunch will be served. **Please let the office know by October 1st if you plan to attend, or sign up on the sign up sheets in the Parlor.**

OCT 4
Crop Walk

Join the 2026 CUCC Crop Walk team on Sunday, October 4th at 2:00pm in walking to fight hunger, or by financially sponsoring a team member by accessing the team page at https://tinyurl.com/cucccrop26

OCT 17
Pride Fest

Save the date – October 17th is the CU Pride Fest! Both CUCC and Campus Ministry will have booths, and CUCC will be participating in the pride parade! Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved.

OCT 24-25
All Church Camp Out

We're going camping! Everyone is invited to go to the **Middle Fork River Forest Preserve** for an all church camp out on October 24-25th. We'll roast marshmallows, sing camp fire songs, and star gaze — it's an official Illinois Dark Sky Park. Need camping equipment, let us know. Want to only go out for the evening, that's fine! More details to come. See Alison Anders with questions.

OCT 27
That's My Story CU

On October 27th at 6:00pm CUCC is hosting That's My Story CU! Join us for this open mic storytelling event and share a story, or simply listen. We hope to see you there!

GRATEFUL GATHERING – NOVEMBER 22

GRATEFUL GATHERING

Join the Interfaith Alliance of Champaign County for an annual gathering of giving thanks and celebrating the rich spiritual diversity in our community

Sunday, November 22nd 3:00PM

Spurlock Museum - 600 S. Gregory, Urbana

Doors open at 2:30pm for fellowship in the Spurlock lobby

Presentation of awards for the 4th Annual Interfaith Arts Contest, featuring art by area middle and high schoolers

2026 theme: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBHOR



grateful to our host and co-sponsor, Spurlock Museum of World Cultures

I | SPURLOCK

PUB THEOLOGY

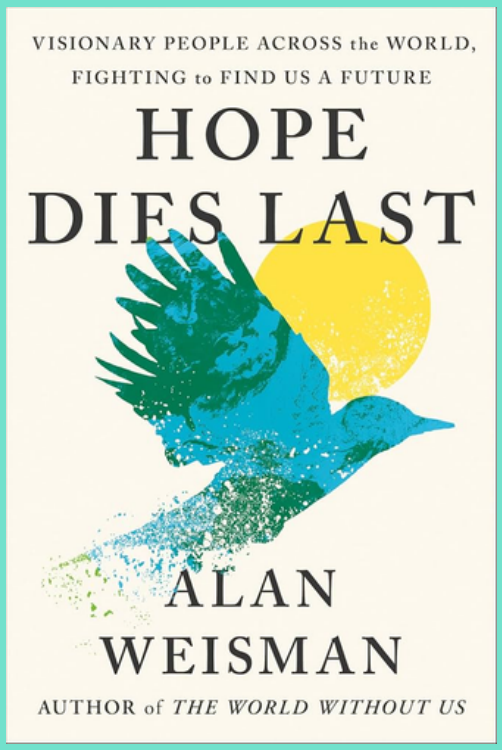
Pub Theology, one of the CUCC book groups, resumes meeting on **Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm on September 8 in the Fellowship Hall**. We will begin the fall semester reading Hope Dies Last: Visionary People Across the World, Fighting to Find Us a Future by Alan Weisman.

The jacket cover says this is "a book ten years in the making: a study of what it means to be a human on the front lines of our planet's existential crisis. It is a literary evocation of our current predicament and the core resolve of our species against the most precarious odds we have ever faced.

Hope Dies Last fills a crucial gap in the global conversation: Having reached a point of no return in our climate confrontation, how do we feel, behave, act, plan, and dream as we approach a future decidedly different from what we had expected?"

It will be fascinating read. If you'd like to join us on Tuesday evenings, get a copy of the book and start reading.

If you're not on the mailing list, but would like to be added, email Tom Ward at wardt508@comcast.net and he'll add you to the list.



BROWN BAG BIBLE STUDY

Curious to know more about the Bible? **Beginning in September and continuing on the third Sunday of the month throughout the school year, join us downstairs fifteen minutes after the worship service ends** to explore a book or passage in more depth. Sometimes the text will be related to the theme of the worship service that day, while other sessions may focus on a particular church season. Pastor Connie will be leading and coordinating these sessions. You are welcome to grab coffee and snacks before coming down or to bring your own brown bag lunch.

If there's a passage or story you have always wanted to know more about, please let Pastor Connie know so she can try to include it on the schedule. Her email is connie@community-ucc.org; her cell, 217-202-9624.

SEP 20 — **The Book of Jonah**

OCT 18 — **To be Determined**

NOV 15 — **Overview of The Gospel of Mark**

CUCC'S MONTHLY SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Men's Breakfast

The Men of CUCC meet the first Thursday of each month for breakfast. Join them at **7:00am Thursday, September 3**, at Maple and Yolk Restaurant, 810 W Killarney St, Urbana, IL 61801. Contact Tom Ward if you have any questions.

Anyone who identifies as a man is welcome to join the group for breakfast.
~Tom Ward (**wardt508@comcast.net**)

Just 4 Fun BREFFAS

There was no gathering in August. Join us for our September gathering on **Tuesday, September 8 at 8:30am at Perkin's**
Everyone is invited to attend. If you would please RSVP if you're coming it will help us know how many tables we'll be needing. You can text Rocio @ 217-418-6185 or call and leave a message

Remember you are still welcome to join us whether you RSVP or not. Orders will be placed by 8:45am to be cognizant of everyone's time.

Retiree's Cool Kids "Young at Heart" Lunch

Eighteen retirees went on a field trip to Brown Bag Deli in Monticello for lunch on August 18th and then some walked across the street after lunch to the Prairie Fire Glass Gallery to browse and enjoy a mini demo by the owner, Jim.

Our September lunch will be **September 15th** (the 3rd Tuesday of the month) and will be a **picnic at the Savoy Colbert Park**. Watch for more details soon.





CREATIVITY GROUP

Did you know that CUCC has a group that meets regularly to explore the topic of creativity and to encourage one another in creative practice? We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 10 a.m., usually at the Champaign Public Library. Some of us are writers while others paint, use photography, or express themselves in other ways. We would love to have others join us!

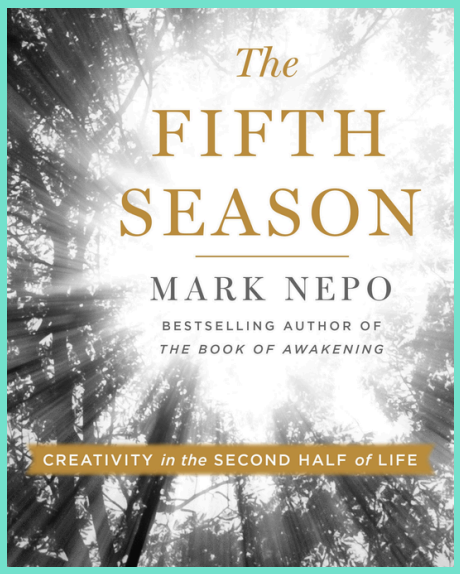
As fall begins, we are going to begin reading Art is How God Loves Us: The Sacred Beauty of Created Things by Meridith Hite Estevez. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Connie (connie@community-ucc.org; 217-202-9624) for more information.



POTENTIAL AGING WITH INTENTION GROUP

There's no escaping the fact that our time on Earth is limited. As the years go by, the question for each of us becomes more and more real: What does it mean to age? Despite the limitations that come as the body wears down, there are many gifts to inhabit by aging. So much is gained and so much is shed along the way. How all this happens and where living and dying take us will never be completely understood. We must face living and dying from the inside of the one life we are given. But we can share the journey.... –Mark Nepo, The Fifth Season: Creativity in the Second Half of Life

With these words, the poet Mark Nepo opens his book on aging, inviting us to come along as he explores what it means to age with purpose and intention. While the questions may become more pressing for those of us who are older, anyone can benefit from thinking about positive ways to move through the years and the opportunities and challenges they bring. If you would like to be part of a group reading The Fifth Season in the coming months, **please sign up on the clipboard in the parlor by September 20th**. Once we know who is interested, we will have a quick organizational meeting after worship to determine when and how often to meet based on people's schedules. Questions? Contact Pastor Connie (connie@community-ucc.org; 217-202-9624).



PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNICATION IN OUR CONGREGATION

Did you know that CUCC has two committees that facilitate communication between the congregation and pastors? This is your quarterly reminder that the Pastoral Relations committee provides support for CUCC's pastor, advocates for the pastor's leadership, and provides for a regular channel of communication between the pastor and the congregation. The committee meets with Pastor Leah monthly to offer guidance and support her ministry and professional goals. Current members of this committee are Kristy Brownfield, Joel Brotheron, incoming moderator Bill Gropp, and committee chair Cara Finnegan.

Similarly, the Joint Personnel Committee facilitates support and accountability for the ministry of Izzy Colazzo in her position as Director of Campus and Youth Ministries. Members of the committee represent the Church Life Board and the Campus Ministry Board, and they meet quarterly with Pastor Izzy to review her work and to encourage her upcoming projects. Current committee members are past moderator Susan Pawlicki, Ilsa Kantola, and committee chair Stephen Kolderup.

In our congregation, we emphasize the importance of direct communication between the people of CUCC and the pastors. However, in the event that communication has gotten off track, there may be times when one of these committees can be invited to step in and help the parties get back on track together. In these cases, CUCC'ers are invited to contact anyone on the relevant committee.



Jubilee Cafe

Jubilee Café requires many volunteers to make everything run smoothly. If you would be willing to volunteer, anyone older than 14 is welcome to come and help at Jubilee Café. There are still many open slots on many of the Monday nights volunteer list. Please look at the list and consider volunteering. If you are willing to volunteer, go to the sign-up link at tinyurl.com/mw5zeeky. Contact the office, info@community-ucc.org, for more information.

Date	Meals Served
8/3/2026	70
8/10/2026	78
8/17/2026	93
8/24/2026	105
8/31/2026	88
Total Meals Served	**434**

8/3/2026 - "You know," one of our Jubilee Cafe CUCC volunteers said, "this place makes me happy." In this world that is often full of bad news, tragedy, and disappointment, that's not nothing. I often tell you a story about how jubilee impacts our guests. It impacts our volunteers, too, giving them purpose, connection, and community which are all essential for human flourishing. It's true that we feed more than hungry bellies here at Jubilee Cafe, and sometimes, it's the volunteers that feast. This evening, guests had their choice of a chicken enchilada casserole, or vegetarian version of the same. Each casserole was layered with housemade enchilada sauce, chicken or the vegetarian protein, black beans, and a mix of 4 cheeses. Every entree was served with a side of sauteed squash, peppers, onions, and tomatoes, along with a curtito slaw. We served 58 meat, 6 veg, and 6 heat at home meals.
For dessert, guests had their choice of housemade banana pudding, housemade pineapple bread pudding, angel food cake topped with a housemade raspberry sauce, or assorted pastries, some topped with a housemade cold fudge which, for Champaign-Urbana folks, tasted an awful lot like Jasrling's cold fudge thanks to Anna Barnes' kitchen wizardry.













UPCOMING EVENT SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 1 - Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Thursday, September 3, 7:00am CUCC Men's Monthly Breakfast (Maple & Yolk)

Sunday, September 6, 10:15am Gathering of the Waters

Sunday, September 6, 10:15am One Great Hour of Sharing

Sunday, September 6, 5:00-7:00pm Youth Group

Monday, September 7, 6:30-8:00pm Campus Ministry Jubilee After-Hang

Tuesday, September 8, 8:30am Just 4 Fun BREFFAS (Perkins)

Tuesday, September 8, 7:00pm Pub Theology

Thursday, September 10, 6:00-8:00pm Campus Ministry Ecumenical Bible Study

Sunday, September 13, 10:15am Campus Ministry Chaperones Co-Lead Worship with Youth

Sunday, September 13, 10:15am Yearly Training for Safety Procedures

Sunday, September 13, 11:30am CWS School Kit Assembly

Monday, September 14, 6:30-8:00pm Campus Ministry Jubilee After-Hang

Tuesday, September 15, 11:30am Cool Kids "Young at Heart" Lunch (Savoy Colbert Park)

Tuesday, September 15, 6:30pm Church Life Board Meeting (zoom)

Tuesday, September 16, 7:00pm Pub Theology

Thursday, September 17, 9:30am Community Alliance Meeting (zoom)

Sunday, September 20, 11:30am-1:00pm Brown Bag Bible Study

Sunday, September 20, 5:00-7:00pm Youth Group

Monday, September 21, 6:30-8:00pm Campus Ministry Jubilee After-Hang

Tuesday, September 22, 7:00pm Pub Theology

Thursday, September 24, 6:00-8:00pm Campus Ministry Ecumenical Bible Study

Sunday, September 27, 4:00pm Bike Ride/Pizza Party (Riggs Brewery)

Monday, September 28, 12:30-1:30pm UYMCA Personnel Committee Meeting

Monday, September 28, 6:30-8:00pm Campus Ministry Jubilee After-Hang

Tuesday, September 29, 5:00-6:00pm Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 29, 7:00pm Pub Theology

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

CUCC Team	Opportunity	Contact	Contact Info	Online Sign-Up
Worship Team	Technical Help	Office Manager	info@community-ucc.org	
Worship Team	Usher, Greeter Liturgist	Office Manager Sebastian Major	info@community-ucc.org smajor1123@gmail.com	https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0B4EAAAC2AA1FD0-worship Paper Sign Up in Parlor
Choir	Music – vocal or instrumental	Kathy Lee	mailto:music@community-ucc.org	
Prayer Team	Team Member	Office Manager	Info@community-ucc.org	
Children's Ministry	Event Planner/Leader	Alison Anders	amanders@Illinois.edu	
Jubilee Café	Meal Prep, Cook, Clean-up	Office Manager	info@community-ucc.org	https://tinyurl.com/JubileeCafe-Volunteer

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Event	Day	Time	Meeting ID	Passcode	Join Zoom Meeting	Dial by Your Location
Worship	Sun	10:15AM	391 847 803	788969	https://zoom.us/j/391847803?pwd=ZmNvaHJYZm1uUUQrdTNBd2NRZThDZz09	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
Daytime Meeting	Any	Anytime	815 146 054	697698	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/815146054?pwd=UmMwdW01ZFBmV0hpZmxrRWNlUmhwdz09	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
Evening Worship & Other Gatherings	Any	6:30PM	847 5319 7334	675757	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84753197334?pwd=ZENQVDNjY0RQMWxNVXRjd2w3WDFVZz09	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Contact CUCC:

805 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL. 61820 | 217-344-5091 | www.community-ucc.org | email: info@community-ucc.org
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday | 9am - 3pm