

Several social justice projects will keep General Synod-goers engaged on Saturday, June 22

On Saturday, June 22, General Synod organizers hope to see hundreds of UCC volunteers spread out in service around Milwaukee, Wisc., sharing the denomination's love of neighbor, love of children and love of creation with the people of their host community.

Keeping with tradition, the Local Arrangements Committee of the Milwaukee Conference is organizing several General Synod Social Justice Opportunities. All this year's projects are inspired by the Church's Three Great Love initiative.

"Each opportunity will include education and reflection on the organization's mission along with a service project," said the Rev. Tim Perkins, coordinator of the Local Arrangements Committee. "Our goal is to connect UCC Delegates and Guests with ministries that address human concerns and issues of social justice in the city of Milwaukee while celebrating The Three Great Loves initiative of the United Church of Christ."

Delegates and visitors will be invited to choose from number of acts of service. The projects are scheduled for Saturday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:30 pm, with transportation provided to most of the sites from the convention center.

Here is the current list of locations and service opportunities:

Love of Neighbor: Guest House Shelter of Milwaukee (<http://www.guesthouseofmilwaukee.org/>)

The Guest House Shelter assists men in moving from homelessness to permanent housing. Executive Director Cindy Krahenbuhl and staff invite UCC volunteers to visit this innovative shelter program and its gardening project, Cream City Gardens, located across the street. Participants will receive a tour of the site, an introduction to the Guest House's approach to service, and will be put to work making bagged lunches, sorting donations and other projects. **(Up to 40 adults and children accompanied by adults are welcome to sign-up.)**

Love of Neighbor: Justice Walk

This 3.5 mile walk around downtown Milwaukee will take participants to several organizations that help men, women and families in crisis in the community. The Walk will begin at the Wisconsin Center and proceed to the Milwaukee Public Library, where librarians are trained to meet all patrons with courtesy and compassion. From there, walkers will head to the County Courthouse and the doors of the County Jail; to St. Benedict de Moor, the site of the largest community meal program in the city; to Guest House Shelter of Milwaukee, an innovative assistance organization for homeless men; to the Coggs Building where Friedens Community Ministries -- a UCC founded food ministry -- is housed. This learning and exercise opportunity also includes stops and refreshment. **(Up to 20 adults and children/teens accompanied by an adult who can walk 3 to 4 miles are welcome. Rest Stops and water will be provided.)**

Love of Children: Pathfinders (<http://pathfindersmke.org/>)

Pathfinders works to assist youth in crisis in several ways in Milwaukee community. In partnership with Staff at Plymouth United Church of Christ and the Staff at Pathfinders, participants will learn more about what Pathfinders is prepared to provide youth who come to them, and get an opportunity to serve this transformational organization that brings healing, hope, and safety to young people 11-25 who've

experienced homelessness, sexual abuse or other trauma. Volunteers can assist by creating hygiene sacks for their street ministry or organizing clothing. **(Up to 20 adults and teens/children accompanied by adults are welcome to sign-up.)**

Love of Creation, Love of Children, Love of Neighbor: Digital Bridge (<http://www.digitalbridge.ngo/>) A computer is an important tool, but many households do not have one. Digital Bridge works to connect under-served groups and individuals with digital resources that they would otherwise not be able to access on their own. In partnership with Jeff Hanson, Executive Director of Digital Bridge and Cheryl Leanza of the UCC's OC, Inc., participants will learn about this innovative program that seeks to share fully functional cleaned and re-purposed computers to low income people in Milwaukee and around the world. along with ways OC, Inc. is working for digital inclusion. Volunteers will also help prep, clean and sort computers for donations. **(Volunteers over the age of 14 are welcome, but minors must be accompanied by adults. Up to 40 are welcome to sign-up.)**

Love of Creation: Urban Ecology Center and Milwaukee Clean Up: (<https://urbanecologycenter.org/>) Volunteers will visit one of the sites of Milwaukee's Urban Ecology Center, an innovative and creative organization committed to connecting people in the city with nature and each other. The group will also participate in a clean-up project supported by Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful (<https://www.kgmb.org/>). **(Adults and children/teens with Adults are welcome. Numbers yet to be determined.)**

Love of Children: Cathedral Center of Milwaukee (<https://cathedral-center.org/>) Cathedral Center is a compassionate ministry that assists women and families who are temporarily without a home. Volunteers should be 18 or older. Participants will receive a tour and orientation and help organize donations. **(Up to 15 Adults, 18 and older are welcome to sign-up)**

Blood Drive (Friday, June 21): In addition to these social justice opportunities, the Local Arrangement Committee is also planning a Blood Drive with the Blood Center of Wisconsin on Friday June 21 from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm, and inviting all General Synod attendees to bring items to donate to Guest House, Pathfinders and Cathedral Center.

Donations: "Please bring new underwear and socks for women, men, teens, and children," said Perkins. "Please stick to these specific clothing items. You can drop your donations off at a box located near the Registration Table."

Sharing the Light ("Shine" Light House): The host committee is also encouraging Synod attendees to visually share ways they are living into the UCC's Three Great Loves in their own communities.

"Delegates and Guests are invited to bring a 4 x 6 photograph and attach a note card size description of a mission project that their Church or Conference is engaged in that 'shines' the light of God's love in the world," Perkins said. "These will be displayed on a large lighthouse as a witness. It's a great way to share ministries and ideas with others at Synod." (Additional note cards will be available at the lighthouse for delegates and visitors to describe their mission project that "shines.")

Sign-Up: Pre-Synod sign-up can be done by e-mail through Rev. Tim Perkins at PerkDrews@aol.com. Sign-up will also be possible at the Synod Registration Table according to space availability.

General Synod 32 will be held June 21-25 at the Wisconsin Convention Center, located right in the heart of Milwaukee. Information is available on the General Synod website, which will be continuously updated with emerging details. <https://www.synod2019.org/en/uccsynod2019>