

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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Reunion 2016: Coming Together in Jesus

by Harry Foockle
Vice-President of Planning

Soon we will gather in the wonderful city of Louisville, Kentucky. Our gathering place is the Galt House Hotel on the banks of the Ohio River. This puts us in the "middle of all the action" in downtown Louisville.

We have so much going on. The Annual Conference sessions, the Bible studies, workshops the luncheons and programs, the Women's Christian Fellowship, the Samaritans, the Ministerium, the reception and our Reunion time with one another.

Listen, if that isn't enough come to hear the great God-inspired preaching by our own ICCC pastors. Then if all goes according to plans and God be willing we will introduce our new Executive leader. It doesn't get any better than that.

But, wait there is the Supper Club (Under the Bridge), a riverboat cruise, Louisville Slugger baseball bat factory (Go Royals – oops sorry – not really) and our Conference entertainment will be a special tour of the Muhammad Ali Center which is included in your registration.

Did I say our children and youth will be there working and sharing with the Louisville community and leading us in worship on Thursday morning. Finally there will be, as always, the Annual Conference Banquet which is a highlight moment of our Annual Conference.

There is more – folk coming from all over gathering in love and celebrating the Grace of Almighty God. We will greet old friends and make new ones. This sounds so good I wish it were tomorrow!

My friends, much planning and more importantly much prayer has lead us to this Annual Conference. I look forward to seeing you and sharing the wonder of God's movement – our International Council of Community Churches. Don't you just love it?



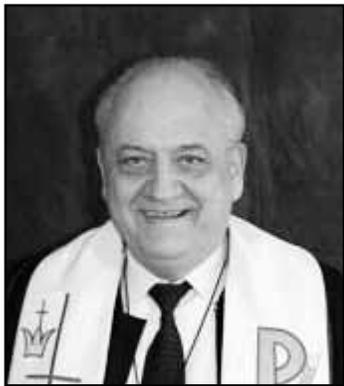
Harry Foockle

Annual Conference Checklist

Have you done the following yet?

- Sent in your registration form and fee?
- Called the Galt Hotel and made your reservations? 800-843-4258
Deadline June 20th.
- Made your meal reservations (optional) with the Council office?
- Signed up for the Supper Club (optional)?
- Contacted the office about volunteering at conference?
- Sent in or talked to your church about sending their Voting Delegate form or an extra contribution to offset their loss of presence at conference?
- Signed up for the Sightseeing Cruise (optional)?

If you need more information, please contact the Council office.



Functional Forgiveness - 2 Abuse -

President's Message Rev. Dr. Richard O. Griffith

(As I wrote last time, I have just two messages left to share.... Therefore, I will attempt to articulate something toward which many of still strive – forgiveness. God's forgiveness for all of us all is absolute; our forgiveness of others, though difficult, can be "functional.")

There was a seminary classmate of mine who, with his wife, lived next to us in married students housing. He was (and is) an interesting person, with a unique sense of humor, and was involved with off campus street preaching in New York City. He also had a good time being an "older uncle" to the kids on the playground, and everything (at the time) seemed to be wholesome.

He has completed 12 years in a state penitentiary for child abuse – for abuse while he was their pastor.

Why, one might ask, am I writing about this? Because now, the epidemic of abuse is better known, and I am certain that within the churches and centers of our Council (hopefully very few) (and I also am certain that within the communities where we minister), ignorance of abuse subjects the innocent to grievous harm.

Research tells us that approximately 80,000 child abuse cases are reported each year, and only 30% of abuse victims report their abuse as children. I want us to be more aware of some of the warning signs so, hopefully, there can be earlier interventions for more childhood victims.

Following are some realities research has to offer:

- Most abusers know their victims
- Many victims are too afraid to report
- Some of the abused become abusers themselves
- Effects of abuse can include (among others)
 - unhealthy relationships as children and adults,
 - sleep problems and/or nightmares,
 - depression,
 - seductiveness,

- delinquency,
- "acting out" in inappropriate ways,
- unusual aggressiveness,
- extreme fear and/or anxiety,
- substance abuse

During his imprisonment, as part of the process to which he agreed, many of his victims, now adults, confronted him, clearly telling him, with anger, tears, and shouts of betrayal, how he had devastated their lives, and the lives of their families. It was God awfully traumatic for all!

Isn't all this, realistically, unforgivable? Even if, theoretically, God can forgive him, how can we? Even after confrontation, how can the emotional debris be healed? And what about everyone's family?

Miracles do happen. He still is married to the same woman we knew in seminary; his children have healthy relationships with him, I am told; he attends a recovery group for people like him; he is active in his church (the pastor knows everything); he avoids situations that could cause temptation; he never is alone with minors; he acknowledges his sin and sickness; and, I believe, still is striving for the feeling of forgiveness from God.

In reality, certain things are hard to forgive, even functionally. Yes, some of the spiritual Velcro has been replaced by spiritual Teflon (See last month's column.), but there still must be open wounds, even within his family, not to mention his victims'.

We may find it hard to forgive the most grievous abuses we have been forced to confront, and perhaps, for some of us, it will be impossible, even as we strive to be vigilant, and do all we can, in our churches and communities, to protect the vulnerable.

May we find health in vigilance and straining for forgiveness, asking ourselves the difficult question, "What would Jesus do?"

As God is making all things new,

Dick

National ICCC Dining Out Event

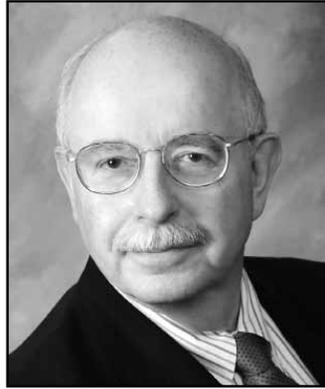
By Roberta Smith,
VP of Financial Development

During the first week of May, three of our member churches participated in a fund-raising effort that I hope will become routine for us. Great Lakes Scrip Center of Grand Rapids, MI administers a scrip (i.e. gift card) program. Nonprofits such as The International Council of Community Churches register and then individuals can buy gift cards with a portion of every purchase benefitting a designated charity. We designated the last week of April as National Dining Out Week. Participants bought gift cards at TGI Friday's and Applebee's. For every gift card purchased, the restaurants contributed 8 – 9% of the purchase to the ICCC.

Many thanks to Antioch Community Church of Kansas City, Emmanuel Baptist Church of Ridgewood, NJ and Wilson Memorial Church of Watchung, NJ. 71 gift cards of \$25 were purchased. After a donation to cover mailing costs, the Council earned \$144.25. And participants had great dinners at those restaurant chains or had a gift card to give as a gift.

The gift card program is used by many nonprofit groups all over the US. The cards do not expire. The purchaser can use the card anytime. Extend an invitation to family or friends to join you for dinner. Consider buying the dining out cards as gifts. Consider donating one to a needy family.

With churches all over the country participating, the earnings could really add up. Won't you or other members of your church join us for our next National Dining Out week? **September 11 – 18th will be our next National Dining Out Week. Mark your calendars!**



Why I Love the Council

Don Ashmall

Council Minister

Within the next few weeks, the Council will welcome a new staff member and I will be retiring – again. Before that happens I want to answer the questions so many have asked me.

“Why did you take this job in the first place, and what has kept you at it?”

It’s not a job. Truly, it’s a calling. Nobody can succeed or even survive in a pastoral ministry without a vision of call. And have no doubt: this calling that I have been engaged in for five years is pastoral above all else. We as a Council don’t have a formal creed. We don’t have an authority structure. There isn’t enough money around to make wealth a factor. The only thing we have in abundance is the relationship we call love. In my calling as Council Minister I have been privileged to listen to, feel for, weep with and pray for pastors and lay people throughout this fellowship. It hasn’t been a job. It has been a privilege.

“Why did you take this job when some of the self-appointed experts said the Council had no future?”

Of course we’ve proved them wrong; the Council has survived and we’ll thrive. I have no doubt about that. But even if the Council were to somehow evaporate, it would be necessary to re-invent it immediately. The world desperately needs a witness to and an example of Christian unity without uniformity; of diversity without division. The world desperately needs to see a worshipping community constitute itself anew at each Annual Conference: a community that models patience, caring, dignity and spiritual inclusiveness across all the boundaries that human beings invent for themselves and against others. The world desperately needs to see the same Spirit that enlivens that international

worshipping community reflected in the worship, witness and service of our congregations. I know without a doubt that the Council doesn’t have a future; in the worldwide church of Jesus Christ the Council is the future.

“What’s next for you and for the Council?”

I expect that God will have surprises for us. I have a list of “things to do” waiting for me in Maine. But every time I have approached my to-do lists throughout my life, God has called me to do other things besides or instead. I’m not expecting that pattern to change. As for us as Council, I see a transformed, transforming life together. Our commitment to shared outreach ministries, celebrated at the 2015 Annual Conference, will lead us to new collaborations. Our willingness to reach over around and through all the barriers that society erects will lead us to new relationships – among which I pray will be a number of new-member congregations whose primary language is not English. As I promised to you at an earlier date, I’m struggling to learn new words and phrases in Thai, partly because (who could have guessed in advance?) many of my newest neighbors in Maine speak that language. I know that we as a fellowship will reach out to neighbors new and old in Christian love, and welcome them into our expanding circle of witness and service.

“You have spoken about loving the Council. Why do you love the Council?”

What attracted me first about the Council was the people. When I came to my first Annual Conference in 1990, I was new to the ICCC, and you welcomed me into the fellowship without hesitation. At that conference the Council was short on money. (So what else is new?) Bob

Puckett and Marion Bascom got up at one of the sessions, made us laugh, made us weep, and made us reach into our pockets. I decided then and there that I wanted “in” on a group that could produce such a salt and pepper team working so effectively together! In the years since I have found again and again among us a depth and breadth of Christianity made real. What’s not to love?

“Do you have any parting words of advice for us?”

First of all, don’t count me parted or departed just yet. I’ll be around, praying for and with you, and for and with all who you have chosen as your servant-leaders. As for advice: don’t look to me. Look to the one who at the end of time and beyond time will welcome you to that heavenly banquet at which there is room for all and no one needs to eat out on the porch or at a servants’ kitchen table; at which there will be enough for all and all will be filled; and at which you will find eternal joy. That’s your source of advice!

Blessings to you.

A Time to Laugh



“Wireless communication is nothing new. I’ve been praying for 75 years!”

REVIEWS

Dr. Robert M. Puckett

America's Original Sin: Racism; White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America: Jim Wallis, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, 2016, 232 pages, \$21.99.



Jim Wallis is the founder of Sojourners and a writer who puts faith into action for social justice. He is also a professor at Harvard and Georgetown University and an outstanding advocate for ethics in public life. His latest book calls for truth telling in the midst of America's present racial unrest in order to arrive at a more hopeful future. He insists that we must be honest about our "legacy of racial inequality...that significantly shaped every institution in American society" which began with our treatment of native people who were subjected to genocide and displacement.

Slavery was banned by the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution but African Americans continued to be marginalized by racial segregation, acts of racial terror in which thousands of black people were lynched while many white Americans stood by and said nothing or openly cheered. "We are currently in an era of mass incarcerations and excessive punishment in which the politics of fear and anger reinforced the narrative of racial difference. We imprison people of color at record levels by making up new crimes, which are disproportionately enforced against those who are black or brown." (p. xii)

Wallace forcefully proclaims that "Racism is America's original sin and must be named as such." He then says that "It is time to repent from our original sin of racism by repairing our racialized policing and criminal justice system, by restoring voting rights to all Americans, by striving to undo the profound inequalities in our education system, and by ensuring that the same economic opportunities are available to people of all races." (p.xvii)

This book was written to encourage Americans, black and white, to build a bridge to a new America by looking truthfully "at the underlying racial injustices, misunderstandings, and conflicts that continue to hold us back from being the country we can and should be."

America is fast becoming a more racially diverse nation which will no longer be a white majority nation. We will undergo a demographic shift to become a majority of minorities. No race will be dominate. Will that lead to chaos or a more vibrant multiracial community? This book took shape in Mr. Wallis's mind on March 7, 2015 when he joined the huge crowd that celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the "Bloody Sunday" on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama which became a turning point in the civil rights movement. As he thought about the courage of the people who were brutally attacked on that day fifty years before, he began to ask "What bridge will we now have to cross?"

Our original racial diversity was a product of oppression based on greed. However, that diversity is the key to our brightest, transforming future. It is one of our greatest contributions to the world. Our country is on a journey to an even greater diversity. Achieving that richer future depends upon our ability to recognize the injustices that continue to rob our greatness. "It's time for us in Christian churches to not just talk about the gospel but live out the gospel by tearing down these dividing walls not only by learning and listening to one another but also by standing up and speaking out for one another." (p. 26)

Mr Wallis calls upon white people in America to recognize that they have

benefited from the structures of racism "whether or not they have ever committed a racist act, uttered a racist word, or had a racist thought. Just as surely as blacks suffer in a white society because they are black, whites benefit because they are white." (p. 49)

Wallis challenges his readers to become bridge builders to a new and even greater America!!

Happy Birthday Bob!

Rev. Dr. Robert Puckett will turn 90 this month! He has decided to retire as the ICCC Book Reviewer.

The Christian Community runs 8 times a year, starting with October. Each issue contains a Book Review.

We are looking for someone willing to replace Bob or multiple people to share, as editors.

If interested, please contact the Council Office.



ICCC Hires New Executive Minister

The International Council of Community Churches has called as its Executive Minister the Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray. Murray becomes the seventh consecutive leader of the Council since its formation in 1950. Murray will serve the Council as he continues as President and Professor of Systematic Theology and Preaching at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan.



Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray

Ordained by the American Baptist Churches in the USA, he has served as the Senior Pastor of The First Baptist Church of Boston, Massachusetts and as American Baptist Chaplain to Harvard University and Denominational Counselor and Lecturer in Ministry at Harvard Divinity School, following tenures in American Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Unitarian-Universalist, and United Church of Christ congregations. He has been on the faculty of Endicott College, Skidmore College, and Suffolk University, was an administrator at Yale University's Dwight Hall Center for Public Service and Social Justice, and taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York and Auburn Theological Seminary.

The International Council of Community Churches was formed in 1950 as a merger of two groups of community churches, one African-American and the other Caucasian. The association of independent congregations remains one of the most racially diverse among US Protestant communions, and now has member churches in Africa and Europe as well as in Canada and the US.

Murray received the B.A. in philosophy and religion from Bucknell University, the M.B.A. from Endicott College, the M.Div. from Yale University Divinity School, and the M.Phil. and Ph.D. in systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He serves on the Commission on Christian Ethics for the Baptist World Alliance, on the Emerging Theologians Commission of the American Baptist Churches USA and is on the Steering Committee of the Tillich: Issues in Theology, Religion, and Culture Group of the American Academy of Religion. He has been a denominational delegate to the National Council of Churches, was the founding Managing Editor of the Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue, and is a past President of the North American Paul Tillich Society.

Murray will be formally installed as Executive Minister of the International Council of Community Churches at the 2016 Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. He succeeds the Rev. Donald H. Ashmall who has served as Council Minister since 2011.

Dr. Murray is the author of *Reclaiming Divine Wrath: A History of a Christian Doctrine and Its Interpretation* (Peter Lang, 2011), co-editor with David L. Bartlett and Claudia Ann Highbaugh of the festschrift for Harry Baker Adams, *Crossing By Faith: Sermons on the Journey from Youth to Adulthood* (Chalice Press, 2003), and co-editor with Aimée Upjohn Light of the multi-volume set *God and Popular Culture: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Entertainment Industry's Most Influential Figure* (ABC-CLIO, 2015). In 2016, he will deliver the Bible Lectures at the annual meeting of the National Association of Christian Congregational Churches and be the keynote speaker at the 50th anniversary commemoration of the internment of Paul Tillich at the Paul Tillich Park in New Harmony, Indiana.

ICCC 2016 Annual Conference Workshop

Introduction of the ICCC Mission: Creating Community – All attendees will participate in a “Town Meeting style” discussion of what it means to Create Community and how we can bring that mission to life in our individual churches and ministry centers.



Roberta Smith

Special Guest is Dr. Bruce Main, Director of Urban Promise who will share how creating community in that ministry made a difference in Camden, NJ and other communities where Urban Promise operates. Participants will participate in exercises and receive some resources to increase their knowledge of this topic. Hosted by Roberta Smith, Mission Moderator.

For conference information and registration, please visit our website www.ICCCNOW.org



Be sure to visit our Facebook page to see many great things happening at ICCC Churches!

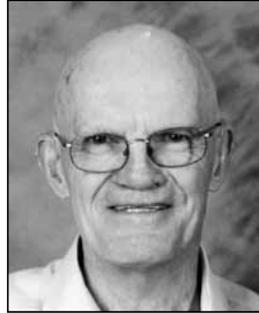
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Wasting Away How America's and the World's Food Production and Marketing Practices are Contributing to the World Hunger Problem

by Bob Harris, ICCC Hunger Relief Mission Team Member

The statistics are both mind-boggling and grim.

Globally, about 800,000,000 people suffer from hunger. Amazingly, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, 2.9 trillion pounds of food are wasted each year. That's enough to feed the world's 800 million food-challenged people twice over.



This massive food waste accounts for approximately one-third of all food produced annually. The chief causes of food not being consumed are a lack of storage and refrigeration facilities in third world countries.

In developed countries, the causes are too-large meal portions in restaurants and homes, retailers buying more food than they can display or sell, and leftovers not being eaten.

One of the least-known causes of food waste is grocery store chains and restaurants insisting on fruits and vegetables free of imperfections. So perfectly edible carrots with two "tails", irregularly shaped/ too small/ too large cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, etc. are scrapped by growers by the tons weekly because they don't meet food wholesalers' "cosmetic" standards.

In the United States alone, retailers and consumers throw away 133 BILLION pounds of food annually—that's a staggering 40% of all food produced in or shipped to the U.S. More than half (53%) of all fruits and vegetables in the U.S. are thrown away uneaten.

Over the course of a year the estimated value of food in the U.S. that is never consumed is a whopping \$162 billion. The vast majority of the roughly 300 nations in the world individually have GNPs that are dwarfed by the value of annually wasted food in the U.S.

What can we do about this massive waste in a nation with tens of millions of food-challenged citizens? Cook smaller amounts of food to minimize throwing out leftovers. Search for sources of perfectly edible and healthy "rejected" fruits and vegetables-- which are just as nutritious but cost significantly less than the "beauty queen" produce in supermarkets. Don't buy more perishable foods than you can eat before they spoil.

Sources: "Waste Not, Want Not" in the March 2016 issue of *National Geographic* magazine and "The New Face of Hunger" in the January - February issue of *AARP Bulletin*.

Mission Statement



"As people devoted to following Christ we are committed to community, to treasuring diversity, to living our faith in service and love."

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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A Lasting Way to Honor Your Loved Ones

By Bob Harris

We all know the names of one or more loved ones or couples who have for countless years given much of their time and talent to further the Council and its ideals. People who have had a strong, positive and lasting impact on the life of the Council.

How can we make sure that these dedicated servant leaders are not forgotten when death, long-term illness or age-related disabilities prevent them from attending ICCC regional and annual conferences? How can we memorialize our own family members?

One fitting and appropriate way to further their legacy is to establish a Named Fund in their honor in the ICCC Permanent Endowment Fund. Thanks to an amendment passed at the 2015 Annual Conference there are now two opportunities you can choose from to memorialize loved ones. One is the newly created Memorial Named Fund and the other is the re-named Legacy Named Fund.

The Memorial Named Fund: You can create a Memorial Named Fund by making cumulative current gifts to the Endowment Fund totaling \$10,000 or more. Or you can leave a planned gift to the Endowment Fund that, in combination with your total current gifts, adds up to \$10,000 or more in Endowment Fund assets.

Memorial Named Funds clearly list the name of the individual or couple so honored in each Annual Conference Program and in other listings of Endowment Fund donors.

The asset mix (the ratio of stocks to bonds) in Memorial Named Funds is the same as that in the Endowment Fund. Like the Endowment Fund, the annual Earned Appreciation (the increase in the value of assets less depreciation) generated by Memorial Named Funds is used to support the Council's General Fund.

The Legacy Named Fund: This fund, while a part of the Endowment Fund, is physically separate-- unlike the Memorial Named Fund. With the approval of the ICCC Board of Directors, donors of current and planned gifts totaling \$25,000 or more are able to restrict the use of the Earned Appreciation generated from Legacy Named Funds.

Like Memorial Named Funds, Legacy Named Funds will clearly list the name or name(s) of the individual or couple being memorialized in Annual Conference programs. The investment strategy for Legacy Named Funds will be the same as for the Endowment Fund.

If you have a loved one or a couple you want to commemorate so their name(s) will always be remembered in the ICCC family, prayerfully consider establishing named fund in their honor in the ICCC Permanent Endowment Fund. In so doing you will help perpetuate their beliefs and ideals for generations to come.

Seeking a Senior Pastor

The Havenscourt Community Church membership of Oakland California is prayerfully seeking an experienced full-time Pastor with Theological and formal academic training to Shepard full time an interdenominational Community Church congregation. A benefit package will be offered to the successful candidate.

The pastor applicant must be called by God and equipped to effectively preach and teach His Word. Our next pastor must be responsible for the biblical and spiritual obligations as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and also be a man after God's own heart (I Samuel 13:14)...We are seeking a visionary with strong leadership skills who preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ, teaches sound Christian Doctrine, engages in pastoral care, directs Christian growth and development and promotes missions and the Great Commission for increasing the Kingdom of God...

The Pastor is responsible to the church:

- Set as a guideline of personal behavior the standard required in I Timothy 3:1-7 and I Peter 5:1-4.
- Provide administrative leadership for the total church program.
- Maintain a regular program of study to enable himself to plan and conduct meaningful worship services.
- Prepare for and conduct worship services; lead in the observance of the ordinances; and, lead the church in proclaiming the gospel to the church and community.
- Visit members and prospects and lead the membership in a visitation program.
- Supervise other members of the church staff according to staff organization.
- Conduct premarital, vocational, family, bereavement, counseling sessions, etc., as needed. Advise other professional help when necessary.
- Perform wedding ceremonies and conduct funeral services.
- Work with deacons, church officers, and committees in performing assigned responsibilities. Be available for and lead in training as needed.
- Cooperate with and lead the church in cooperating with associational, state, and denominational leaders. Keep the church informed of developments within the denomination.
- Serve as a representative of the church in civic matters.
- Act as moderator for church business meetings, if the bylaws require it.

Send resume to: Pastor Search Committee, 1444 Havenscourt Blvd, Oakland CA 94621, or FAX to 510 638-8858 or E-mail address havenscourt@sbcglobal.net.

The International Council of Community Churches is grateful for the following

2015 Annual Conference Sponsors

for their investment in the community church movement:

We-Mac Manufacturing Company, Kansas City, MO

Antioch Community Church, Kansas City, MO

Two Anonymous Donors

***We thank you
for your financial support
of a conference program.***



2016 Annual Conference

WORKSHOP UPDATES

AGAPE, Led by Rev. Dr. Michael Donahue
 Today's political landscape demonstrates that the need for AGAPE is greater than it has ever been. Come to the workshop and discover how AGAPE can be used to bring your community together. During the workshop two new AGAPE exercises will be showcased. Both of the new exercises were developed from comments at an ICCC zone meeting. Make the AGAPE workshop a "must attend" event on your conference schedule. Come and leave with a renewed spirit that through Christ we can literally change the hate and prejudices in our communities



MMBB: Financial Planning for All, led by Rev. James Cook.



The Reverend James R. Cook, CFP handles Financial and Wealth Management for MMBB Financial Services. This workshop will cover the fundamentals of financial planning from the perspective of those who serve in ministry. MMBB Financial Services is focused on financial planning as a core part of its ministry. Critical to successful planning is financial literacy which includes an understanding of retirement planning, investments and estate planning.

LUNCHEON UPDATES

The **Welcome Luncheon** will be hosted by Abraham Wright, ICCC Secretary, and will include a delicious meal, various welcomes including one from an area representative, presentation of various awards, wholesome ICCC-style fellowship, and an orientation for first-time and returning conferees.



The **Koinonia Luncheon** speaker will be former ICCC Executive Director Michael Livingston. He will talk about church in the public square, reflecting on his experiences since his time at the ICCC.

BIBLE STUDY

Connecting with the Conference Theme, "Coming Together in Jesus," Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick will focus on unity in Christ and unity in the world – the two poles of God's intention for humanity and the Church.



The first session (on July 12) will focus on God's Cosmic and Global Vision: Restoring Creation and Reconciling the World. Our primary biblical text will be the first creation story found at the very beginning of our bible in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. That study will lead us through how God created the world for the good, composed it of incredible diversity, made humankind in the image of God, and called us to be stewards of this wonderful and beautiful world. We will explore the meaning of this vision for a world being destroyed by climate change and by treating so many of the world's people not at all like what it means for humanity to be created in the image of God.

The second session (on July 13) will focus on God's Vision for the Church: Joined and Knit Together in Christ. Our two texts for this session will be Ephesians 4: 15-16 and II Corinthians 5: 17-19. Building on the powerful biblical themes of unity and reconciliation, we will explore the juxtaposition between the unity and oneness that Jesus so clearly desires of us and the reality of a deeply divided church and world. We will explore what it might mean in 21st century America to reclaim the vision of II Corinthians 5:19 that God was in Christ reconciling the world and entrusting us with the ministry of reconciliation.

Restoring creation and reconciling the world – high callings for Christians but an incredible blessing that we have to offer to a world on a collision course with the destruction of creation and humanity. These bible studies will be led/facilitated by Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Professor of World Christianity and Ecumenical Studies at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Stated Clerk Emeritus of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Be sure to prayerfully read in advance Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, Ephesians 4: 15-16, and II Corinthians 5: 17-19 and be prepared for a lively time of reflection and discovery of God's call to us "for such a time as this."

For all conference information, please visit our website. www.ICC-CNOW.org

ICCC Endowment Fund Status As of June 10, 2016	
Gifts Goal by June 30, 2016:	\$15,000
Gifts since 06/30/15:	\$7,995
Help us meet our goal, need:	\$7,005
Current Fund Assets:	\$279,216
Current Investment Mix:	50% stocks & 50% bonds

Sharing Joys:

- **Peace Community Church**, Fort Myers, FL, Rev. **RC Fleeman**, Senior Pastor, recently sent a check of \$1,805.50 to the Harry Chapin Food Bank. This will allow them to purchase 10,833 pounds of food. The check represented money contributed by church family members during the month of April. Thanks to Pastor **Bruce Merton** and the MISSION 152 concept - Hunger knows no season, and this church is not done yet!
- **Lakewood Village Community Church's Youth Group**, Long Beach, CA, Rev. **Steve Boggan**, Senior Pastor, held a successful St. Patrick's Day Dinner fundraiser, collecting nearly \$1,000.00 to aid families who cannot afford to send their kids to summer camp.
- **The Church at Litchfield Park**, AZ youth sponsored a spaghetti dinner, prepared by Senior Pastor "Chef" **Dale Hopely**. All monies will be used towards the youth mission trip to El Paso, TX.
- **ABBA Church of Renewed Faith**, Chicago, IL, Rev. **Sharyon Cosey** Senior Pastor, celebrated their church's 9th anniversary April 23rd, inviting friends and family for refreshments and celebration. On April 30th, **ABBA** co-hosted the ICCC Chicago area mini-conference at their church. 20 conferees attended, representing 9 area churches! Pictured are attendees ICCC WCF President **Barbara Ratliff** and **Beatrice Winfrey**, ICCC Key Layperson of the Year, 2015.
- The **Gahanna Community Congregational Church**, OH, Rev. **Brian McGookey** Senior Pastor, celebrated the church's 80th Anniversary on April 24th. Included in that service was special music, historical tributes and a brief video presentation, followed by a potluck luncheon in their fellowship hall, where photos and memorabilia were displayed. Council Minister Don Ashmall attended the joyous occasion.
- **Norris Religious Fellowship** announces soon-to-be Rev. **Karen Neely**, ICCC Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations committee member, has accepted their call for Senior Pastor, replacing the now retired **Rev. Dr. Keith Haverkamp**. Karen recently graduated seminary school, will be ordained June 11th, and be installed at NRF on June 26th. Congratulations to both Karen and NRF!
- **Park Road Community Church**, Washington, DC, Rev. **Shirley B. Cooper** Senior Pastor will celebrate their 85th anniversary on June 5th, 2016. The church hosted the ICCC **Region B Area 1** Annual Community Day on April 30th. Worship, food, discussion & dialogue, and a special tribute to Sister **Sandra Roberts**, their coordinator, ICCC's **WCF** coordinator and **Jordan Scholarship** committee member.
- Congratulations to **Erlene O'Brien**, **Antioch Community Church**, KS, Rev. **Harry Foockle** Senior Pastor, who was recognized by the Northland Church Women United on



May 6th, honoring her as an Outstanding Church Woman of 2016.

- Happy Retirement! Rev. **Vince Carroll**, Senior Pastor of **Longboat Island Chapel**, FL announced he will retire July 1st, 2016. He has been with the church the last 4 years, accomplishing much during this time. ICCC member Rev. **Bill Friederich** will serve as Interim Pastor.
- More Happy Retirement! Rev. **Herb Freitag**, Senior Pastor at **Chapel By The Sea**, Clearwater Beach, FL announced he will retire next year at this time. Congratulations!
- **Ariel Gibbs**, **St. Anne Woods Chapel Community Church**, IL, Rev. **Louis Barnes** Senior Pastor, has recently received the **Jordan Scholarship Award**. Ariel is pursuing a career in Criminal Law & Justice at the University of Illinois Chicago. Best of luck with your education endeavors.



- ICCC VP of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations **Herman Harmelink III** recently attended the National Council of Churches annual Christian Unity Gathering along with Council Minister **Don Ashmall**. Herman is pictured here with NCC President and General Secretary Jim Winkler.



- **Antioch Community Church**, Rev. **Harry Foockle** Senior Pastor. On May 20th, the church served strawberries, cake, Ice cream and sandwiches at their 132nd Strawberry Festival that started in 1874! That's a lot of berries!!!
- **Jerry Brown**, **Antioch Community Church**, **Harry Foockle** Senior Pastor. Jerry's father, **Marshall Brown**, passed away June 6th. Please keep the whole family in your prayers during this difficult time.

Our prayers are with:

- **Rev. Fran Begonja**, **Heart of Jesus Ministries**, Des Plaines, IL and family - her sister, Carolyn Virginia Pinkerton of Leland, NC passed away on April 14th at the age of 69 after a short battle with metastasized lung cancer.
- **Rev. Stephen York**, ICCC VP of Leadership Development, who lost his 38 yr. old daughter, Kimberly Ann York, on April 26th unexpectedly. Memorial services will be held Sunday, May 29th at the Stonington United Methodist Church, MA.
- **Willie Jones** and family, **Tennessee Valley Community Church**, Florence, AL, **Rev. Fred Perkins** Senior Pastor. Willie's wife, Barbara, passed away April 5th. Funeral services were April 9th at TVCC.
- The family of **Chaplain Peter Connolly**, **The Free Episcopal Church**, **Chaplain Ken Young** Senior Pastor. Peter passed away on May 15th from cardio pulmonary complications.

Ecumenews

by Herman Harmelink III

ICCC VP for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

I have just returned from one of the happiest experiences I have had in the International Council of Community Churches--the ordination of Karen Neely to the Christian ministry, which took place at the Church of the Loving Shepherd in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on June 11.

Karen had been a very active member of the Church of the Loving Shepherd for a number of years, and also was a frequent participant in our ICCC Annual Conferences. All who knew her were delighted when she felt called to Christian ministry and enrolled at Lancaster Theological Seminary (UCC). Upon graduation Karen has now been called to the Norris Religious Fellowship, an ICCC congregation in Norris, Tennessee.

The ordination service was unique in a number of ways. Participating in the service were: Rich French, a Lakota Pipe Carrier and Practitioner; Meg Cowan French, an elder of the sponsoring church; Merle I. Malone, a recent graduate of Lancaster Seminary who intends to serve in ministry in St. Thomas (Virgin Islands), her home island; Natalie Katz of Beth Chaim Reform Congregation; Max Dugan of the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia; Dr. Michael Penn of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster; as well as ICCC representatives: Abraham Wright; Ronald Miller; the pastor, John Woodcock; and myself. In addition a number of clergy participated in the laying on of hands at the ordination.

Because so many of our clergy have been ordained in other communions, an ICCC ordination is unusual. Many ordinations are ecumenical, and one would expect this one to be so, because of the consistent ecumenism of Pastor John Woodcock, and because both John and Karen serve on our ecumenical committee of ICCC. But we are becoming increasingly aware of the importance in our global village of being interreligious as well as ecumenical, and this service gave expression to that dimension as well. Having Jewish, Muslim, and Bahai participation reminded us all that many avenues of religious expression have the common goal of serving God and our whole human family.

Thank you, John Woodcock and Karen Neely, for exemplifying in this service such an important emphasis of our life as the International Council of Community Churches.



Seeking Associate Pastor

Community Church at Tellico Village is seeking an Associate Pastor of Membership and Family Ministries to serve our 1400 member interdenominational congregation in Loudon, Tennessee. We are located in Tellico Village, a planned community, nestled on Tellico Lake in the foothills of the beautiful Smoky Mountains, just southwest of Knoxville. Although primarily a senior congregation, we have members of all ages. Our church is affiliated with the International Council of Community Churches.

Several of the duties for this position will include coordinating with administrative, music and pastoral staff in planning of worship, managing the volunteer database, implementing an effective marketing plan to increase church membership and serving as the primary preacher for Wednesday night informal worship service.

Our ideal candidate possesses a deep personal faith in Jesus Christ and demonstrates a true desire to shape his/her ministry by the Great Commandment. She/he values Christian unity and is a mature "people person" with leadership skills. Ministers from all denominations may apply. M. Div. required. Deadline for resumes is June 1, 2016. If interested, visit us at www.tellicochurch.com and post resume to search@tellicochurch.org. Or mail to CCTV Search Team, 130 Chota Center, Loudon, TN 37774. We look forward to hearing from you.

WCF Updates

by Barbara Ratliff, President

The 66th Annual Conference of the International Council of Community Churches that will convene in Louisville, KY is almost upon us.

The Women's Christian Fellowship is inviting all women to attend our worship service which you will find invigorating, inspirational and informative. The WCF session can be beautiful start to your day.

The Shoe Box Ministry will be supporting a transitional facility that assists families in setting up their apartments. Hence, we are requesting women to bring gift cards to support this endeavor. The suggested stores are: CVS, Walgreens, Target and Wal-Mart. Gift cards can be in amounts \$10, \$15, \$20, \$25 and up.

The Bazaar needs articles to sell to support the Jordan Scholarship and other mission projects. All articles are welcomed and especially hand-made crafts. We also accept cash donations as WCF is a self-sufficient ministry.

The WCF Prayer Breakfast is scheduled for Thursday and we invite everyone to come and be filled both spiritually and physically. Prayerfully we look forward to seeing you in July.



News to Know

The **Alabama Area Council State Conference** will be held at **St. Paul Community Methodist Church**, 826 Choctaw Ave., Selma, AL. on June 24th & 25th, 2016. For more information, please call the church at 334-872-6314.

The **Michigan Fellowship Fall Meeting** will be held October 8th, 2016 at **Emmanuel Community Church**, 322 Elkenburg St., South Haven, MI. For more information, please email Fellowship President **Alfred Hawkins** at hawkinsalfred@comcast.net.