

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

*A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations and Christians Around the World*

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## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CHURCHES NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Press Release: March 12, 2018

The International Council of Community Churches, the nation's ground-breaking inter-racial fellowship of community-based churches and ministry centers, has called Rev. Phil Tom as its next Executive Director.

The International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) was formed in 1950. The Biennial Council of the Peoples Church of Christ and Community Centers led by Dr. Joseph M Evans (until then all African-American) and the National Council of Community Churches led by the Rev. Roy A Burkhardt (until then all Caucasian) merged to form the largest inter-racial church communion. Member churches are a fellowship of ecumenically-minded, freedom-loving congregations cooperating to work for Christian unity, justice and reconciliation. The Executive Director leads these efforts through the national office.

A native New Yorker, Rev Tom received his Bachelor's degree in Economics from Coe College but gradually became more and more interested in ministry. He received his M.A. in Community Development from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration and his Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary. Throughout his ministry and working life he has sought partnerships between churches, government and social organizations to develop communities and address such issues as affordable housing, job training, after-school programs for youth, worker justice and community organizing for a cause.

In addition to successfully pastoring churches, Rev Tom worked for the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership. Through his office he worked with faith-based and neighborhood organizations, the City of Indianapolis, lenders, funders, and United Way to successfully create and implement a city-wide affordable housing development strategy.

Dear ICCC Family,

I am honored and humbled to serve as your new Executive Director. I want to thank Rev. William Samuels and ICCC's Board for their vote of confidence in electing me to this position.

I want to thank Rev. Don Ashmall for his gracious leadership and work on behalf of our ICCC family and his support of me during this period of transition. Finally, thank you to DeAnn Anzaldi for providing me with support and assistance to my many questions as I begin this ministry.

I look forward to discerning with you on how God is leading us forward in fulfilling our call, to be God's beloved community, and to work for unity amid diversity. The founders of ICCC came together in solidarity for racial reconciliation and equity. Our world is afflicted with division, hate, and acts of violence. It is essential that we continue to lift our voice, to stand up and to work for unity, reconciliation and justice in our society.

I look forward to working with our Board of Directors, Trustees and you on how we can strengthen our life together, and minister together, so that we can grow spiritually, numerically, and in service to our world.

May we continue to give all the glory to God.



Peace,  
Phil



*continued on page 7*



## President's Message

### Choosing Barabbas—An Easter Story Emerges After a Good Meal

**Rev. Dr. William H. Samuels**  
(Rev. Bill)

In the midst of Black History Month, I had a chance to sit down for coffee with Dr. Martin Marty. Now a sit down with Mr. Marty, renowned historian, is a special treat for me. Earlier in the month, the University of Chicago invited me to a celebration honoring his 90th birthday—we were all asked to put on a bow tie for the *occasion* along with other festive attire-- but a big snow storm didn't allow me to attend. After an apology from me for missing the event, Mr. Marty thought we should still have a "sit down" discussion so that I could "catch him up" with my interpretation of the news of the world.

What a challenge! How do you begin to relay the issues and the world condition to a "contextual" historian amidst problems of "alternative truth" and slanted political news in the 21st century? When the ABC, NBC, and ABC networks asked Mr. Marty to comment on the 911 tragedy some years ago, the historian simply quoted from Psalm 46. "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in the time of trouble." Such was the bold Christian-based answer to an increasingly skeptical world.

I had a similar meal with Mr. Erik Erikson one afternoon at the Quadrangle—a spot chosen by author Don Browning (a religion and psychology scholar) who, along with my support as a student of psycho-history, invited the famed psychoanalytic author to our University.

Mr. Erikson, at the time, was interested in the concept of truth. After exploring the problem of identity from a psychoanalytic point of view in *Young Man Luther*, he was now turning his attention to *satayagraha* (truth force) in *Gandhi's*

**Truth.** What is to follow is a written record of what it means to dialogue with these two giants of history and psychoanalysis and how truth and historical context have become problems in modern discourse.

Pilate asked, "What is Truth?"  
John 18: 38

Now Jesus was brought to several trials beginning late Thursday night after the Passover meal with his disciples. Depending upon which evangelist you choose as witness for the story, early Friday morning: the chief priests (Caiaphas, Annas), the local government (Herod), as well as Roman government itself (Pilate), all had a chance to interrogate Jesus. After the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot, completed his end of the conspiracy bargain by grabbing hold of Jesus signifying; here he is—right here.

The chief priests, because they were part of the religious hierarchy of Jerusalem, had the first chance to inquire of his authority base. The questions followed the line of: "Who are you?" How do you spend your time? What is the nature of your power base? Are you a king? Let us see some of that magic you are known for.

Now the case against Jesus was "shaky." As Jesus reminded them, I have been in the open this week, and, for that matter throughout my ministry. The people should be able to report my activity which includes teaching, healing, encouraging, comforting and bringing people back to life. That's pretty much what I do. The angry witnesses began to shout "fake news." They needed lies, accusations and mis-direction to argue their case. After bouncing back and forth from

interrogations and insults, Jesus was finally brought to Pilate. He, like Gandhi, had a desire to understand truth--whether there was really such a thing or merely a fantasy pushed by a naive reading of the psalms. Gandhi's conclusion was that truth was indeed a force—a power that when acted upon could bring about non-violent change in a world full of deception (*satayagraha*).

Pilate, apparently the voice of reason and reconciliation this wicked morning, offered one more attempt at a punitive action which would satisfy the hometown crowd. "You know," he said, "during this holiday it is customary to release one prisoner. Here is a man named 'son of the father' (Barabbas). He is a liar, fornicator, bully, thief, murderer and troublemaker under the cover of being for the people. Whom shall I set free into your streets amongst your women, children, lame and downtrodden? Shall it be Truth (Jesus) or Barabbas?"

And the people cried out: **Give Us Barabbas!!!** Now, how shall we go forward?





*Go in Peace*

**Don Ashmall**  
Council Minister, Emeritus

When I was privileged to serve Bridgeport Community Church, Michigan as pastor, we customarily ended each worship service by singing

*Go in peace, and the peace of God  
be with you this day.*

*Go in peace and the peace of God  
be with you always.*

*Celebrate and share the joy!  
Celebrate new life!*

*Go in peace, and the peace of God  
be with you always.*

Many then and now would tell us that's a strange thing to sing. After all, we live in a world of trouble and challenge. If we listen to the pundits, they will tell us that our future looks threatened, or threatening, or maybe both. Peace as the absence of conflict has been an elusive goal throughout human history.

And yet we sang peace. And we still sing peace. In our singing we aren't commenting on today's news reports. Rather, we are being prophetic and welcoming. God's peace is real, and like the Kingdom it is among us and still approaching, present and yet to come. Peace is unity deep enough not to need uniformity. Peace is diversity celebrated so widely that it overcomes division. Peace is good news that is as broad as the love of God. Peace is justice, rolling down like mighty waters. Peace is reconciliation, growing up out of the tiniest seeds of faith to become a mighty forest. Peace is unity, made possible in the Christ whose people we are and whose ministry is our gift. In short, peace is shalom: wholeness found in the grace of God's Holy Spirit.

Since 2011, I have been amazed, comforted, inspired, overcome and blessed by the fellowship of God's peace known as the International Council of Community Churches. If I were to share the special and precious memories that experience has given me, all of the issues of the Christian Community could not contain them. So I will restrain myself from rehearsing them, and simply say thank you to each and to all within the fellowship, including that great cloud of witnesses who came before us and whose sacred vision we carry into the future.

That vision sees all of God's beloved community drawn together, to be community in love. That vision sees all of God's people grasping hands in faith, just as two courageous leaders once did in 1950. That vision sees peace in its fullness alive within the church and reaching out to the entire world that God loves. In that prophetic vision, I pray that we keep on singing peace until God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Go in peace.

p.445, Chalice Hymnal, Chalice Press, 1995

## Annual Conference Workshop Added

**"Lord Teach Me How to Pray, II"**

The Lord gave us a prayer to meet all of our needs. The Lord knew that on our earthly journey we would need support when we are tested.



This workshop, **Eloise M. Crenshaw** led by Minister Eloise M. Crenshaw, will look at the devotional side that Christ left with us to strengthen us in our times of need. This prayer engages our thoughts and feelings of the creator and what he means to us. Christ wants us to embrace the wonder and mystery of this prayer when saints need it. It's humbling to be on the receiving end of a gift. The Lord's Prayer is the gift that keeps on giving. It's part of the give and take of a healthy, lasting and meaningful relationship with Christ. Everyday people all over the world repeat the Lord's Prayer, however the prayer should not become habitual but it should be meaningful in our daily lives.

Visit [www.icccnow.org/annual-conference/](http://www.icccnow.org/annual-conference/) for all conference information.

### Do you shop Amazon.com?

You can now designate the International Council of Community Churches to receive .5% of the purchase price from the AmazonSmile Foundation!

Please support the ICCC today and get shopping! Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select the **International Council of Community Churches** as your charitable organization.





## Laity Nominations

Each year the Council recognizes two laypeople for service to the Council and to their local congregations. The Laywoman and Layman awards are designed to express our appreciation to individuals who:

1. Shared the open, welcoming, joyful spirit of the Council as well as items of Council news with their local congregations;
2. Shared events, joys and concerns of their congregations with the wider fellowship of the Council.
3. Acted as advocate and interpreter of the Council within their local congregations.
4. Participated in area and regional events as well as attending Annual Conference.

You may nominate a candidate for Laywoman and/or Layman of the year. Please include in your nomination:

- A. Your name and contact information.
- B. The name and contact information of your nominee.
- C. A short biographical sketch of your nominee.
- D. Specifics on how the nominee has fulfilled the expectations for the award listed above.

Submit your nominations by email to [iccc60423@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iccc60423@sbcglobal.net), or by postal mail to ICC, 21116 Washington Parkway, Frankfort, IL 60423. Deadline for nominations is May 15, 2018.

### A Note from Women's Christian Fellowship by Carol Nichols, President



Each year the WCF contributes to a cause in the city which hosts the conference called the Shoebox Ministry. This year Second Vice-President Dorothy Gardner has researched and identified the St. Patrick Center.

St. Patrick Center is the lead agency for coordinated Entry, a multi-agency effort under Housing First. St. Patrick Center is a centralized location where people can go for intakes, assessments, meals, shelter and housing coordination.

The WCF is asking for donations to this worthy cause in the form of gift certificates. Please bring them or send them to Mary Summers, our Treasurer through the Council Office. Representatives from St. Patrick Center will be at one of our meetings to accept our donations.

Thank you in advance for your generosity to this worthy effort.

## Prayers for the Month of April

from Harry Fooockle, VP for Planning

I wanted you to know that I am turning my attention in the month of April to pray for you. I intend to spend time with our Lord and lift up every fellowship in the International Council of Churches.

I will pray for our new Executive, Phil Tom and God's anointing Spirit to rest upon him as he comes to lead us.

I will pray for Don Ashmall in gratitude for his leadership to the ICC

I will pray for DeAnn Anzaldi God's Blessing of understanding and hope as she takes care of all the detail work of the ICC.

I will pray for Bill Samuels as he leads us as our President.

I will pray for the Samaritans, the WCF and the Ministerium and their power filled leadership.

Finally I will pray for our Annual Conference in St. Louis. Prayers that God's anointing spirit would lead us in a great Annual Conference heading for the "Gateway to Glory."

I was wondering (and hoping) that you would join me in prayer.

I look forward to seeing you in St. Louis.

## Mission Statement



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

## Annual Conference Sponsorship Opportunities

The International Council of Community Churches is grateful for your empowerment in the community church movement. Your business, professional association, labor union, service group, etc. may invest in the cause of furthering Christian unity by providing a sponsorship in the Annual Conference. We have listed several possibilities below. If you wish to explore other potential opportunities for sponsorship including exclusive sponsorship of a segment of the Conference program, please let us know. Conference sponsorship opportunities begin at \$1000.

General conference sponsorship.... \$1000

Bible Study  
multiple plenary sessions .....\$2500

Prayer Room  
(24/7 during conference) .....\$1500

Clergy continuing education event ..\$3000

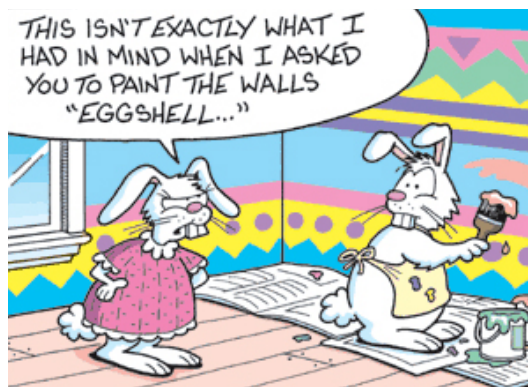
Fellowship luncheon.....\$1500

All-Conference Banquet .....\$2000

Full Day Sponsorship .....\$5000

The International Council of Community Churches is a 501(c)3 organization under IRS regulations. All sponsorships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and your tax situation. Contact the Council Office for details.

## A Time to Laugh



## Nomination Recommendations are Needed

Under the ICCC Bylaws, the Board of Directors act as the Nominating Committee for the Council. Terms of office begin at the close of Annual Conference. If you have suggestions for nominees or if you wish to be considered as a nominee for an office, please respond no later than MAY 30, 2018. Some offices are occupied by incumbents who are eligible for re-election. Nominations will be presented to the Annual Conference business sessions, at which additional nominations from the floor are in order. Available positions are as follows:

### Officers

**President:** The President serves for a term of one year, and may serve two consecutive terms (two years). Incumbent President the Rev. Dr. William Samuels is 'termed out' as of the 2018 Annual Conference.

**Secretary:** two year term, with a maximum of three consecutive terms.

**Treasurer:** two year term, with a maximum of three consecutive terms.

### Board of Directors

All Vice Presidents are members of the Board of Directors. Each serves for a term of two years, with a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Vice President for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships.

Vice President for Financial Development.

Vice President for Informational Services and Outreach.

Vice President for Membership Enlistment.

Vice President for Planning.

Vice President for Membership Services.

Vice President for Regional Relationships – this position is currently vacant

### Board of Trustees

Trustees serve a single five year term. No Trustee positions are up for election this year.

### Endowment Fund Trustees

Endowment Fund Trustees serve for a term of three years, with a maximum of two terms.

Two Endowment Fund Trustee positions are up for election for the class maturing in 2021

### Your Input Is Requested:

When recommending an individual for service in any position, first please be sure that the individual is willing to serve. Then, tell the nominating committee: the name of the individual and that person's individual contact information together with the elective position for which you are recommending her/him. Please include with your recommendation a brief profile of the individual, including the name of the church or ministry center in which the person holds membership, activities with that congregation, and activities with the ICCC. Send this information to both [iccc60423@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iccc60423@sbcglobal.net) and [cs83nick@aol.com](mailto:cs83nick@aol.com).

## *Make a Gift to the ICCC Endowment Fund to Honor the Appointment of our New Executive Director*

The ICCC Endowment Fund was established by a resolution at the 2000 Annual Conference. The first gifts were received in 2001. Since that time, the Fund has grown to just in excess of \$330,000. The ultimate goal for the Endowment Fund is to reach \$1,000,000 so as to provide meaningful financial assistance to the ICCC each year to help the Council continue to strengthen its existing programs and develop new ones that support its missions.

Recently, the ICCC has been blessed to have obtained the services of the Reverend Phil Tom as our new Executive Director. You can help celebrate this important event by making a gift to the ICCC Endowment Fund so that he will have additional financial resources each year to help build the Council for the future.

The Endowment fund was created to ensure that the ICCC would have the necessary financial strength for generations to come. It performs that function by each year providing a portion of the appreciation of the fund to the ICCC to help sustain its operation.

All of your contributions to the Endowment Fund are retained in the Fund and conservatively invested in mutual funds managed by The New Covenant Trust, part of The Presbyterian Foundation. This organization works exclusively with Christian organizations and only invests in socially responsible stocks and bonds of companies that support racial diversity.

An Endowment Fund is an established vehicle for organizations to provide the capacity for survival when times are tough. As the economy ebbs and flows, and memberships rise and fall, the ability of groups like the

ICCC to obtain the necessary operational funding varies along with it. An Endowment Fund helps groups like the ICCC weather those difficult times.

There are examples of similar organizations, one with an Endowment Fund, and one without, in the same community, where the presence of a Fund helped one organization survive, while the other one, without the Fund, did not.

The main reason to support the ICCC Endowment Fund is to support and perpetuate the values and ideals that you, as an ICCC member, cherish. What better way to do that than to contribute to something that will help ensure that the ICCC, this historic organization formed 68 years ago, continues to survive and succeed in uniting Christians in their diversity through the love of God and the spirit of community.

There is no limit on the size of gift, either large or small. Every gift will be a valuable contribution to the success and future of the ICCC in these difficult times. The Missions of the ICCC, Feeding the Hungry, finding the true love of God (Agapé) and building community are even more important as we try to bridge the divisiveness that is so present in the public discourse of today.

### **Here's How You Can Help Support Our New Executive Director**

Take a moment to make a gift now to the ICCC Permanent Endowment Fund to help our new Executive Director. Simply make out a check to the International Council of Community Churches, designate in the check's lower left corner that it is for the Endowment Fund and mail it to DeAnn Anzaldi, Office Administrator at ICCC, 21116 Washington Parkway, Frankfort, IL 60423-3112.





Sharing Joys:

- "The ICCC Northeast region held their spring meeting in March. Scheduled for March 2, due to the winter snowstorm and a nor'easter, it was cancelled until the next day, when some were able to travel to New Hope Pennsylvania. We gathered in a restaurant for lunch. Seated, from left to right, and **Angela Della Ventura (Wilson Memorial)**, **Rev. Forrest Parkinson (Community Church of Little Neck)**, **Eileen Higgins (Wilson Memorial)**, **Rev. Ginny Leopold (retired, Protestant Community Church)**, **Lonnie and Ron Miller (Wilson Memorial)**, and **Doris and Ron Marsisak (East Williston and Community Church of Little Neck)**. Forrest Parkinson led us in prayer.



The day of the cancellation, some were able to meet locally in Central New Jersey: **Roberta Smith, Eileen Higgins, Herman Harmelink, Angela Della Ventura, Ron and Lonnie Miller, and Michael Droege**. We were delighted and blessed to have our NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, **Rev. Phil Tom**, come through the snow and join us that day, and he led us in prayer at that gathering.

We love our lunches! At each of these gatherings, we shared what was new as well as our concerns. Also, we discussed our own Lenten practices, as well as those we experienced in our various traditions in our earlier years. We certainly echo the diversity that we embrace in the International Council of Community Churches! We look forward to our next meeting in May, when we hope the weather will be what May in the Northeast is supposed to be! Our thanks to Eastern Regional Trustee A, Doris Marsisak, for scheduling, arranging, coordinating, and notifying us throughout the year. *The next ICCC Northeast Region gathering will be held Friday, May 18th at 11:45am and the Marhaba, located at 77 S. Union St., Lambertville, NJ 08530.*  
- Lonnie Miller



- **Rev. Leon Perry III, Metropolitan Community Church**, and founder of **Where Eagles Soar Ministries** reports he preached at 6 different venues in 2 days to over 1800 Ghanaians in Accra, Tema, Afiyenya, Ashiman and Elmina. He visited 2 orphanages sharing gifts provided by MCC members and friends. To hear more, contact Rev. Perry at MCC. 773-536-2046

Our prayers are with:

- **Gladys Pearsall, Park Road Community Church, Rev. Dr. Shirley Cooper, Senior Pastor**. Gladys has been ill for several months and after extensive surgery, she is now home recovering and hopes to be back on her feet soon.
- **Bob and Nancy Steele, Peace Community Church, RC Fleeman Senior Clergy**. Both Bob and Nancy are recovering from separate issues and could use your prayers.

## Thinking About Furthering your Education?

Apply for a  
**JORDAN SCHOLARSHIP**

Contact the Council Office for  
information and an application.



## New Executive Director

cont'd. from page 1

From 1993 – 1996 and 2000 - 2010, Rev Tom worked with the Presbyterian Church USA and helped to equip church congregations of diverse locations (rural to urban) to strengthen their congregational life and community outreach. In 2010, during the Obama Administration, Phil became Director of the US Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He worked over the next five years with Secretaries of Labor Hilda Solis – then Thomas Perez – to build partnership with faith-based and community-based organizations related to worker justice and workforce development issues and programs.

More recently, Rev. Tom served as Interim Pastor of the Eastchester Presbyterian Church in Bronx, NY, completing that assignment in January 2018. Rev. Tom has several publications to his credit including Handbook for Urban Church Ministries And All Who Reach Out With Their Neighbors, co-edited with Sally Johnson, and Congregational-Based Community Organizing: Building Vital Congregations, Building Just Communities, Presbyterian Church (USA), 2009

Rev Tom and family currently reside in Mt. Vernon, NY.

## Seeking Full-Time Pastor

Founded in 1973, People's Community Church (PCC) is a non-denominational church located in Berea, Ohio, approximately 25 miles south west of Cleveland, Ohio. We are blessed to be a diverse, all-inclusive, and family oriented church with an active membership of approximately 100. PCC is an active affiliate of the International Council of Community Churches and Ohio Fellowship of Community Churches.

The qualified candidate shall: Be an ordained and licensed minister; Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach the Holy Bible; Be an empowering educator with strong skills in discipleship, homiletics, stewardship, pastoral care and community building; Demonstrate godly character and integrity; Share our church's vision of equipping Christians in the mission of Christ; Have a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; Have attended an accredited seminary (seminary degree preferred); Have a minimum 3 years of experience in preaching and church leadership; Have experience working with church leadership teams and church employees; Demonstrate excellent verbal, written, and presentation skills; Demonstrate excellent leadership, organizational, strategic planning and time management skills.

**Job Description:** Pastor will be responsible for preaching, teaching, conducting funerals and special worship services and programs; Oversees pastoral care to sick and shut in and to those in personal crisis through visitation, counseling and prayer; Administers the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; Officiates weddings as agreed upon with couples as defined by Holy Scripture; Coordinates and leads church business meetings; Adheres to PCC Bylaws and Constitution; Maintains affiliation and supports of International Council of Community Churches and Ohio Fellowship of Community Churches; Actively engages in community sponsored events; Other duties as required

If you have been led by the Holy Spirit to seek the position as Pastor of People's Community Church, please submit your cover letter and resume to [peoplescommunitychurch631@gmail.com](mailto:peoplescommunitychurch631@gmail.com).

Candidates may also learn more about our church and its ministries via our Facebook page. You can also download our church app: the echurch's app, PeoplesCC, at the Apple or Google Play stores.

Final candidates will be subject to a background check and drug test.

## ICCC Endowment Fund Status As of March 26, 2018

Gifts Goal by 30 June '18: ..... \$15,000

Gifts since 7/01/17: ..... \$7,256

Help us meet our goal, need: ..... \$7,744

Total Endowment Gifts to  
ICCC since inception: ..... \$46,373

Current Fund Assets: ..... \$323,521

Current Investment Mix: 50% stocks, 47% bonds, 3% Cash

## Seeking a Music Director



Norris Religious Fellowship (Norris, TN) is seeking a Music Director. Salaried, part-time position. The Music Director works in initiating programs, rehearsals, special music, etc.; provides piano and/or organ accompaniment for the hymns. Ability to lead a choir and congregation, directing and inspiring others through a ministry of music. Excellent vocal skills a plus. Please provide a resume and cover letter along with recording demonstrating your skill set via audio CD, DVD, or link to digital materials online (YouTube, Vimeo, professional website). Submit via email to [norrisreligiousfellowship@comcast.net](mailto:norrisreligiousfellowship@comcast.net). More information

## Seeking a Senior Minister

Historic non-denominational community Christian church in northeast Ohio seeks a full-time Senior Minister. Established in 1809, The Church in Aurora ([www.tcia.cc](http://www.tcia.cc)) has an engaged congregation, four full-time staff including Associate Minister, and part-time staff that helps administer vibrant CE, youth and music programs. Church activities include Women's Guild, Stephen Ministries, Work Camp and Bible studies. Founded in 1799, Aurora is part of the historic Western Reserve and equidistant from Cleveland and Akron. Interested candidates should submit cover letter, resume and statement of faith to [SearchCommittee@tcia.cc](mailto:SearchCommittee@tcia.cc).

