President's Message

Lift Every Voice and Sing

by Harry Foockle

There are times in history when we need to take a deep breath.

Times when we need to step up.

Times when we need to speak up.

Times when we must make a difference.

I cannot think of a better assist than the closing verse of James Weldon Johnson's great poem, who with his brother's help penned "Lift Every Voice and Sing." I offer you his words:

God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who has brought us thus far
on the way
Thou who hast by Thy Might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray
Lest our feet stray from the places,
In Psalm 46, the Psalmist proclaims—“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. He says ‘Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

There have been many moments and some days these past few months that I have become weary and exhausted, emotionally and spiritually, watching and experiencing all the chaos happening in our world—watching the growing number of people dying and suffering from COVID-19. The ongoing killing of Black lives and the increasing acts of racism, bigotry, and hate worldwide. The growing division in our country and within the religious community as we move toward the Presidential election. And to add to all this chaos, watching the burning fires in the western states and the hurricanes in the south/southeastern states destroying homes, families, and communities as our national leaders continue to fail to address the growing impact of climate change to Mother Earth.

The Psalmist reminds us that the calamities that we face now are no different from humanity’s misfortunes in the past. When we are anxious or weary, the Psalmist reminds us that God is always with us and that God is our refuge and strength in times of troubles, natural and human made. As we continue to wrestle today with the challenges facing us, our families, our congregations, and our world, let us continue to root ourselves in the Good News that God has not abandoned us. God is at our side, always guiding us as we move forward into the new normal so that we can continue to serve God, working to build God’s beloved community.

Peace,

Phil Tom
Georgia Representative John Lewis was an intriguing figure in the struggles for America’s moral compass and victory over structural racism. In all the remembrance of his life, we are still discovering something new about him. Perhaps, one of the best ways to understand John Lewis is in his own words. In Across That Bridge: Life Lessons and a Vision for Change (2012), Lewis offers details about what inspires him and hope that it would inspire us. As we continue seeking dignity for humanity, let’s consider the insights of John Lewis, who said: “The most important lesson I have learned in the fifty years I have spent working toward the building of a better world is that the true work of social transformation starts within. It begins inside your own heart and mind, because the battleground of human transformation is really, more than any other thing, the struggle within the human consciousness to believe and accept what is true” (p. 16 Kindle Edition).

Many ask: What can contribute to personal transformation? In an appealing introduction and eight chapters, Lewis offers “a few of the truths” for change such as faith, patience, truth, love, peace, study, and reconciliation. At first glance, it seems that Lewis is offering his version of the Apostle’s Paul fruit of the spirit list found in the New Testament Book of Galatians. But in a closer look, one will find something more for consideration.

Some will say that Lewis goes on too long about explaining his familiar story. While this may be true, Lewis’s observations about study and truth may be worth reconsidering. In the Truth chapter, Lewis contends: “the search for truth must be a vital part of any activist’s life or that of any movement because it conveys meaning to action, and it mandates constant learning, evaluation, self-criticism, and a constantly rejuvenated comprehension of a movement’s core principles. We believed if we anchored ourselves firmly on that bedrock and used nonviolent action to demonstrate the truth with an unwavering faith, then we could shine a light that would expose the lie of segregation (pp. 90-91).

Lewis contends that “[t]he work of love, peace, and justice will always be necessary, until their realism and their imperative takes hold of our imagination, crowds out any dream of hatred or revenge, and fills up our existence with their power” (pp. 8-9).

In the Study chapter, Lewis explains how preparation is the key to achieving one’s purpose. Lewis offers a comparison between his preparation and Martin Luther’s King, Jr.’s preparation. While King comes from the Black middle class of his time, Lewis’s practice was from the farm. Whereas King would be eloquent, Lewis learned his eloquence from preaching to the chickens on his farm. Lewis argues that “through study and preparation you can increase the power of your work” (p. 70). Lewis’ challenge engages the soul to work for good despite your circumstance, and especially don’t let your lack of anything prevent you from doing something.

Lewis’ Across That Bridge: Life Lessons and a Vision for Change, offers the reader a compelling observation of what makes a difference in someone’s life, and then dares the soul to ask: What kind of legacy would you like to leave?

INVITATION TO A VIRTUAL BOOK DISCUSSION on So You Want to Talk About Race by Oluo, Ijeoma.

Let’s discuss this Book in a Zoom meeting. Can we use the discussion guide and questions as a starting point for improving ourselves and our communities? If you want to be a part of this, let’s plan for two months, and you can sign up by using the Comments Section contact information. Let’s try it for a 30 to the 40-minute discussion. How about this for a start:

Chapter 1: Oluo states: “It is about race if a person of color thinks it is about race. It is about race if it disproportionately or differently affects people of color. It is about race if it fits into a broader pattern of events that disproportionately or differently affect people of color.” How about you?

Chapter 2: How do the concepts discussed in the chapter “Why Am I Always Being Told to ‘Check My Privilege’?” help deepen your understanding of intersectionality and help implement intersectionality into your life?

SHARE YOUR COMMENTS. Thank you for sharing your comments. There are encouraging to our discussion. Remember, please share your thoughts at ICCNNow@sbcglobal.net by the end of the month. And let us know if we have your permission to quote or paraphrase your comments. Thank you for your feedback, and have a blessed month!
Sharing Joys With:

• Rev. Willard Dionne, Christian Catholic Rite of Community Churches, was consecrated as Coadjutor Bishop on September 13, 2020. “May the Almighty God give his grace to Willard and fill him with truth and holiness that he may faithfully serve before Him for the benefit of his holy Church. Amen.” ~ Bishop Serge Theriault, CCRCC

• Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, former interim at Greendale People’s Church, MA. After 3 years of faithful service as Interim Minister, Rev. Kev. attended farewell events at Greendale September 13th, 2020. Good luck to him on his future endeavors. The Pastoral Search Team continue to search for a new pastor.

• Rev. Leon Perry and Metropolitan Community Church, Chicago, IL. The church will celebrate its 100 years serving its community on October 25th, 2020.

• Rev. John Woodcock, Church of the Loving Shepherd, PA. John has retired after 49 years of serving CLS and now is named Pastor Emeritus! Good luck to John and MaryLou (wife) on their retirement journey!

• Welcome to Rev. Phoebe Kitson-Davis as she begins as Senior Pastor at Church of the Loving Shepherd, PA. The ICCC looks forward to our fellowship going forward.

• Rev. Bob Fread, ICCC Clergy in Special Standing. Bob received the 2020 Trentham Award for his sermon submitted to the 2020 Inclusive Pulpit Journal. You can read the winning sermon on our website: https://www.icccnow.org/community-church-press/. Congratulations! If you would like to purchase the book, please visit the ICC book store, where you can find an order form. https://www.icccnow.org/iccc-bookstore. Bob has recently announced he will be leaving Ripley United Church of Christ, after serving 12 years, Nov. 30th to join Union Congregational UCC as Senior Pastor. Congrats!

• Rev. Heidi Chaussé and Rev. Alan John Hayes, Imagine Church of the Carolinas, NC., who were recently ordained. We rejoice with Rev. Bruce Jones, who represented the ICCC, and his church family as they celebrated their ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Let Us Lift Up Prayers for:

• The family of Kay Andrews, Church at Litchfield Park, AZ. Kay passed away August 7, 2020 in Phoenix, AZ at age 84. To view her obituary, please visit http://obituaries.westvalleyview.com/obituary/katharine-andrews-1079955000. “Kay Andrews was my neighbor and a friend of 40 years. She was a Registered Parliamentarian and when I was President of the ICCC, Kay provided her expertise in our Annual Conferences 1998-2000; she chaired the Preservation and Expansion Committee of the Church at Litchfield Park that created the 2 million dollar expansion of the Sanctuary, new classrooms, nursery and Souers Hall. Kay was a remarkable lady!” ~ Pastor Emeritus, Judson Souers, Church at Litchfield Park.


• Fr. David Dismas and his family, as they grieve over the passing of David’s mother, Eleanor Rachel Williams, who passed away July 17th, 2020. Eleanor was the ICCC Key Layperson for the former Saint Nicholas Mission, which is now The Mission Diocese of Saint Nicholas, Rev. David Dismas, Senior Pastor.

• Rev. Daren Armstrong and his family as they mourn the death of his father William Frank Armstrong, who passed away July 28th at age 73. William was a Reverend for over 50 years and was married to his wife Ronnette for 52 years. Daren is an ICCE Chaplain stationed at Ft. Lewis in Washington.

• Rev. Dr. Sharyon Cosey, ABBA Church of Renewed Faith and ICCE Regional Trustee as she continues recovery to full health and begins to gain physical strength. She intends to organize a virtual regional meeting for the Central Zone this fall. Watch our website for details. https://www.icccnow.org/upcoming-meetings/

• Christ Foockle, son of ICCE President Harry Foockle, as he continues his battle with cancer and its treatment.

• ICCE VP of Informational Services and Outreach, Mike Donahue, as he continues to be challenged by his MS and learns to adapt to life change.

• Rev. Dr. Stephen York, ICCE Clergy in Special Standing, and his wife Catherine, as Stephen faces health challenges and treatment ahead.

• Elaine McCreary, wife of Rev. Leroy McCreary, as she continues recovery from health challenges.
With the current COVIC-confused state of our world, it’s hard to plan things out too far in advance. We don’t know what our situation will be next month, or even next week...let alone next year. However, your Conference Planning Committee has started planning next year’s conference. If we have to adjust, like we did this year, we’ll at least have a basic structure to work with and modify.

So, we’ve started putting together an initial program, and it already looks like a great opportunity to worship, learn, and grow. Anytime God’s people come together with those goals in mind, you can count on a positive outcome, but we have some exciting things planned for you.

We’ll all have a better understanding in the next few months about how our lives will unfold next year; and so it is with our conference planning. Look for updates next month. Know that we are already working to make the conference a highlight of your year 2021.

Confident in your prayers and God’s guidance, we will plan for the best, prepare for the worst, but in all things give praise and thanks to God for the blessings He’s given us, and the salvation of His Son.

Jerry Brown, VP for Planning

Your 2021 Annual Conference Planning Committee:
Jerry Brown, Abraham Wright
Roberta Smith, Nicholas Brame
Karen Neely, Doris Marcisak
Connee Fitch-Blanks, Wayne Samuels
Marcus Tillery, Bob Harris, Linda Hopkins

MONDAY, JULY 19 – THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2021
Embassy Suites Columbus – Dublin, Dublin OH.
https://www.icccnow.org/annual-conference/

If you missed our first ever 2-day Virtual Gathering, you can get the replay on our website.
Please visit, watch and share!!!

https://www.icccnow.org/annual-conference/
From the Auxiliaries

Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”
Micah 6:8

As Christians, we have pledged our lives to love one another as our Father loves us. We understand that His mercy is bestowed upon us even as we don’t deserve it. Acting justly is required as we grow in grace by reading his word.

We the leadership of the Women’s Christian Fellowship, hold tightly to God’s word in this time of in fathomable disease, vicious hate, race/gender insensitivity, and police brutality. We support the current efforts of the ICCC. We now encourage increasing dialogue and actions in making positive changes to eradicate hate, share our love, help our brethren to walk, talk and act in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We the WCF stand ready to help, being Bold, while walking humbly in our journey.

Dr. Connee R. Fitch-Blanks
President, WCF

From the Desk of Reverend Carl L. Davis, Sr.,
President of the ICCC Ministerium

Dear all Clergy. I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the book of Paul’s writing to the Galatians, these words are recorded in Chapter 6 verses 9 & 10. “And let us not be weary in well doing: For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Please let us not forget to support our Ministerial Association by mailing in your $20 dues to support the International Council of Community Churches Ministerium. Your financial support and prayers for our nation will be a great 2020 blessing. Your new card will be mailed to you. Please submit to ICCC, 21116 Washington Parkway, Frankfort, IL 60423. In the memo, please include Ministerium 2020.

We were unable to have a Conference because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, but our love for each other and the International Conference will be greatly appreciative. Our nation is going through national protest for human rights, a Pandemic, unemployment and many other problems.

Please continue to pray daily without ceasing for America the Beautiful.

Brothers, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Thanking you in advance,
Carl
What an eternal blessing God gave us in the lives, spirits and contributions of Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian and John Robert Lewis who both transitioned on July 17, 2020. C.T. would have been 96 yrs. of age on July 30. He was 92 when he gave the 85th Anniversary sermon at First Community Church in August of 2017. Don, his assistant said he had stopped doing sermons, but would come for First Community.

He served as Pastor of First Community Church from 1957-1961 and along with J.P. Walker, Fred Valentine and others were responsible for the present structure. At one point, the church was known simply as the Community Church. Before coming to Nashville, his civil rights activism really started in Peoria, Illinois in the 1940’s, protesting to integrate lunch counters. He and so many others worked tirelessly, strategizing, planning, challenging the status quo to bring about social change whether it was through marches, freedom rides or student sit-ins with Diane Nash.

During the 1950’s he became an integral part of the ICCC - one of the first national ecumenical organizations with the goal of racial unity and equality. Years later, after he appeared on the Oprah Show and started his company that provided Diversity Training, making companies aware of unfair practices and policies.

Our pastors have continued his legacy and community involvement. Rev. Harold Simmons provided community involvement with a Prison Ministry and his work with the Juvenile Department. Pastor Glenn V. Clay who transitioned in September 2019 maintained our commitment to community, with his mentoring of young people, serving on various boards with the ICCC and community boards with Meharry Medical College. Pastor Ella Clay has taken up the mantle, leading the church in serving the community with (PCN) Project Connect Nashville, providing meals and other resources to the community.

Everyone that knew C.T. loved his humility, ready smile and laughter. With so many achievements during the movement and the intellectual gifts he shared, what we will never forget is how they loved everyone (even their enemies) in the midst of hate and violence, truly exemplifying the love of Christ for humanity.

Left picture taken 2013 in front of War Memorial downtown Nashville. Dorothy Miller (my mom), John Lewis and Ardana Foxx; He was promoting his children’s comic book; he told us one of his first sermons was given at the Community Church.

Right picture taken in 2017 at the church 85th anniversary. Our beloved Pastor Glenn Clay transitioned in Sept. 2019. Ours and so many lives were touched by these men. Praise God for his indescribable Gifts!

For the full edition, please email the ICCC office. ICCCNOW@sbcglobal.net
Greetings ICCC clergy brothers and sisters!

I hope you are all doing well as you continue to navigate the new normal with your congregations, whether it be through your parish, center, or chaplaincy ministries. It is an understatement to say that these are challenging times for clergy, congregations and for the Church at large. Here are three articles that I thought you might find of interest to read.


How to Preach When Your Congregation is Online and In-Person - https://factsandtrends.net/2020/09/02/how-to-preach-to-two-audiences-at-the-same-time/

1 in 5 churches facing permanent closure within 18 months due to COVID-19 shutdowns: Barna pres. - https://www.christianpost.com/news/1-in-5-churches-face-closure-within-18-months-due-to-covid-19-shutdowns-barna-president-238612/?fbclid=IwAR3gfW._HBQ17FRBymflK8A57wUVMWv_uRlEuX0yF8gFY-3pEbcXtqQs

During this pandemic, clergy and congregational leaders have had to become adaptive, agile, and creative to maintain their worship services and ministries with their congregation members and their communities. Most congregations, large and small are facing financial challenges. This time has been especially difficult for smaller membership congregations which for many were already struggling financially pre-Covid!

I welcome your stories about creative solutions and resources that might be of help to our ICCC clergy, congregations, and members.

We continue to provide a monthly leadership development webinar. Past webinars can be downloaded from our ICCC website: https://www.icccnow.org/headlines/. I welcome your suggestions for future webinars.

DUKE DIVINITY LEADERSHIP GRANT

As you know, ICCC received a modest one-year grant this year from Duke Divinity Leadership Education Program. We are using the grant to provide the monthly webinars. We had planned to use the grant to provide support for our clergy through monthly clergy peer group gatherings, and for regional clergy retreats. Due to the pandemic, there has not been much support for these programs. I talked with the staff from the Duke Divinity Leadership Education Program last month. He supported our request to repurpose the grant for the remainder of this year. We now have two small grant funds:

1) Leadership development grant for clergy or lay. The maximum grant is $400. Since most continuing education programs have gone on-line, this grant will cover the cost for many on-line educational programming.

2) Vital Worship grants. The maximum grant is $500. I borrowed this idea from The Calvin Institute of Worship at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI. It provides Vital Worship grants. On its website it describes the purpose of the grants – “Grants to worshiping communities stimulate thoughtful and energetic work that will result in worship services that exhibit renewed creativity, theological integrity, and relevance.”

Obviously, our grants are much smaller than the grants offered by The Calvin Institute. Hopefully, our Vital Worship grant will assist and stimulate some of our congregations, especially our smaller membership congregations, to discern how they might do worship differently and more creatively as they move into the new normal of combining in-person and on-line worship and ministry!

The application form for the Leadership Development Grant and the Vital Worship Grant are on our website: https://www.icccnow.org/headlines/. All eligible ICCC clergy and congregations are welcomed to apply. The funds are limited. So, the grants will be provided on a first come, first served basis. If you have any questions about these grant funds, please contact me.

Let us continue to keep one another and our congregations in prayers as we all move through this time of great challenge and opportunity. Take care and have a blessed day.

Peace,
Phil Tom
iccppi@sbcglobal.net • 502-387-8515
**Senior Minister**

Longboat Island Chapel is seeking a Senior Minister who shall be the spiritual leader of Longboat Island Chapel, a Christian-based community church that welcomes people of all walks of life and faiths, and shall be responsible for preaching sermons and teaching the word of God in an inspiring and uplifting manner, administering the sacraments, leading the congregation in prayer and engaging in pastoral care ministries.

The Senior Minister shall be responsible for the overall spiritual care and counsel of the members of the Chapel including the development and administration of programs, involving the congregation in such ministries. He/she shall provide oversight of all areas of church life. He/she shall support and energize the outreach ministries of the Chapel and develop meaningful connections with key leaders in the local community. He/she shall oversee and encourage Chapel growth and the welcoming and integration of newcomers to the church.

The Senior Pastor shall be the visionary leader of the Chapel who, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, embraces, oversees and coordinates the development and implementation of the Chapel’s vision, mission core values and strategic plan. The Minister shall supervise, lead and evaluate Chapel staff and recommend personnel actions to the Board of Trustees. Additional duties and responsibilities of the Senior Minister may be set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and By Laws and may include additional and specific duties as agreed upon on an annual basis by the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees.

Please visit the ICCC website for qualification requirements and duties. https://www.icccnow.org/careers/

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**Pastor**

Norris Religious Fellowship www.norrisrf.org in Norris, TN is seeking a full time pastor. We are a suburban church located in East Tennessee. We are an interdenominational church and a member of the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC), that not only accepts and tolerates differences but encourages diverse groups of people to come together. Our minister must be ordained as a graduate from an accredited divinity school, have ministerial experience, and must be comfortable with a moderate-to-liberal theology. We seek an open-minded, non-judgmental spiritual leader, counselor and guide, with strong moral and religious commitments, demonstrated leadership skills, an ability to inspire and teach through engaging and relevant sermons, and a passion for counselling the ill and grieving.

Our pastor will be responsible for weekly worship services, providing pastoral care, and counseling for the congregation. Also, the pastor will have a leadership role in increasing and revitalizing both our membership and our religious education programs.

Our pastor will be responsible for managing the staff of the church. For consideration, applicants must be willing to relocate to Norris, TN. Interested candidates should email nrsearchcommittee@gmail.com to request a pastoral search profile for more information and an application.

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**Associate Pastor**

The Church at Litchfield Park, a historic and dynamic independent community church located in a beautiful resort community west of Phoenix, is searching for an Associate Pastor to join our wonderful staff.

Preferred qualifications include having a theological degree from an accredited institution, being ordained in a recognized Christian denomination, and having a servant’s heart, manifested in the pastoral gifts.

Specific areas of ministry will include small groups, fellowship, missions, visitation, counseling & support, some teaching, and occasional preaching.

CLP is a progressive church that "strives to love and serve ALL people through Christ”.

Qualified candidates should e-mail a resume and cover letter to: personnel-chair@clp.church with Associate Pastor in the subject line. Visit the ICCC website www.icccnow.org/careers/ for the entire job description.

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**Senior Minister**

The Historic People’s Community Church (PCC) fosters a tradition of being a singing, praying, tithing, teaching, serving, and loving church, and is guided by one of its golden text ‘I am come that they might have life and that they may have it more abundantly.’ – John 10:10.

This Historic Church, a member of the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) and located in the vibrant city of Detroit, Michigan is currently seeking an experienced Senior Minister to be the Spiritual Leader of its Congregation.

The Senior Minister is responsible for leading and moving the Congregation toward the fulfillment of God’s mission for PCC. The Senior Minister will have an unwavering faith and a firm relationship with Jesus Christ and is dedicated to cultivating others in Christ.

For complete information visit http://www.icccnow.org/careers/ or contact People’s Community Church office (313) 871-4676.