

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

February 2022



International Council of Community Churches

Volume 72

A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations and Christians Around the World

Number 4

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Abraham Wright

### Treasurer

Nicholas Brame

### Secretary

Bruce Merton

### VP for Planning

Jerry Brown

### VP for Regional Relationships

Wendy Childress

### VP for Financial Development

Roberta Smith

### VP for Membership Enlistment

Sharyon Cosey

### VP for Membership Services

Michael Donahue

### VP for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Rock Fremont, Jr.

### VP for Leadership Development

Rhonda Blevins

### VP for Informational Services and Outreach

Robert Fread

### Auxiliary Representatives

Wayne Samuels, Rhonda Blevins

Connee Fitch-Blanks

### Immediate Past President

Harry Foockle

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### President

Abraham Wright

### VP for Regional Relationships

Wendy Childress

### VP for Membership Enlistment

Sharyon Cosey

### VP for Membership Services

Michael Donahue

### Secretary

Bruce Merton

### Regional Trustees

Myrtis Brame, Kenneth Young,

Bruce Jones, Sandra Nelson,

Julia Powe, Linda Hopkins,

Jean Tillman, Deidre Seidel

### Chaplain Trustee

Hare Varnon

## AUXILIARY HEADS

**Samaritans:** Wayne Samuels

**Women's Christian Fellowship:**

Connee Fitch-Blanks

**Ministerium:** Rhonda Blevins

## Well Done to our 2021 ICCC Mission Grant Recipients

When we gathered last summer for our 2021 Annual Conference, we considered the theme "Send US!" and reflected how God is sending us into the world to serve those around us. As a result of this conference the ICCC offered "Send US!" Mission Grants to our local churches who are engaged in mission programs in their local communities. In December 2021, we were excited to announce that People's Community Church in Detroit, MI and Protestant Community Church in Medford Lakes, NJ, were recipients of these mission grants.

People's Community Church received a grant for their Monday Feeding Program. This ministry has been feeding a nutritious hot lunch every Monday to 50-60 families in their community for over ten years. In March 2020, the program had to be temporarily suspended because of COVID, but returned in October 2021, serving a bag lunch with sandwich, fruit,

chips, cookie and water. The plan is to return to a hot lunch when the pandemic subsides.

Protestant Community Church received a grant for their Casserole Program. This congregation has been providing casserole meals for 15 years for homeless clients of the Christian Caring Center in Browns Mills, NJ. In the first year the church provided about 100 casseroles by donating casseroles once a month. Now in 2021 over 1,200 casseroles providing 9,600 meals were provided, with casseroles donated weekly. Also, in 2021 over 1,100 sandwiches, milk, soups, salads and desserts were provided.

We would like to congratulate our 2021 ICCC Mission Grant recipients and say "well done" to the faithful servants at People's Community Church (MI) and Protestant Community Church (NJ)!



This year the ICCC will be offering a Lent/Pre-Easter program for member churches and centers. The theme will be "40 Days Toward Life" and will be special time of devotion, prayer and giving as a means of strengthening our fellowship and witnessing to our world. As part of this program a daily devotion and prayer list will be offered for each of the 40 days before Easter, along with a challenge to support a common mission of the *Interfaith Movement* of UNICEF-USA to aid in global COVID vaccination.

As your church plans for this year's Lent or pre-Easter season, please consider use of the ICCC's "40 Days Toward Life". A resource guide giving important details will be available beginning January 20, with the daily devotional and prayer booklet available by February 18, in time for the program's start on March 2.



## President's Message

### Abraham Wright

## *"What Shall We Do Now?"*

January marked the birthdays of the Emancipation Proclamation and the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., two pivotal events in the lives of Americans, especially African Americans. February marks the celebration of African American life and history. Although it has been practically a century and a half since the birth of the Emancipation Proclamation, over half a century since Dr. King's death, and almost a century of the celebration of African American life and history in America (1926/1976), many Americans, particularly African Americans, arguably believe that African Americans are still not free. However, few will claim that no progress has been made. So, what shall we do now?

Some individuals have suggested reparation for damage done for over two-and-a-half centuries of slavery. Yes, I am aware of the recent news that "Law Firm to Gift HBCUS Dillard University, Morgan State, Howard Portion of \$12M Case Settlement," resulting from a civil rights lawsuit over lack of equal funding; and there are, no doubt, other cases similar to this one. There also have been numerous other lawsuits, affirmative action, a variety of scholarships, and the wavering of fees for African Americans to enroll in other educational programs. Further, Ivy League universities that provided free money for African Americans to do graduate work at their institutions prior to the civil rights movement now offer free tuition for African Americans who qualify academically and fall within a designated income category. Then too, there were philanthropists throughout 20th-century America who gave millions of dollars for college scholarships for African Americans and provided free schools for African American after the abolition of slavery.

Although police brutality still exists, during 2020, especially during the election campaigns, the movement to address such injustices became center stage, and pressure is still being placed on police

departments throughout the U.S. to "get their acts together" toward fair policing, including the eradication of racial profiling. The renaming buildings, streets, and other sites was reevaluated, and several names were changed to reflect a country and communities that represent the "home of the free." Several statues of individuals with segregation ties also were removed.

Most of us, though, are aware that reparation is a utopian idea; these ideas exist, for the most part, in our heads but are seldom realized. If you don't believe it, look at the history of socialism/communism in Russia. Also, recognize the fact that no amount of money can erase the scars—the lashes and broken hearts, warped minds, and "mutilated" bodies—as part of the legacy of African Americans; those are afflictions only God can heal. Further, with the proposed idea of reparation, probably as many innocent individuals will be punished as victims rescued.

But maybe if all of us would love one another with all our hearts, souls, and minds - which leads to positive action every day of our lives that covers a multitude of sins - that may be one step closer to the unity God wills the Church, together with the mandate that all of us are required to do justice, to love of mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Now, some of us are saying, but where is the acknowledgment of guilt or the apology? Yes, much of that is necessary for healing to take place, and some of this has taken place. But we must move on from that place to a different place if we mean what we say when we confess, "And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12 NIV).

On July 30, 2008, the United States House of Representatives passed a resolution apologizing for American slavery and subsequent discriminatory laws. Nine states have officially apologized for their involvement in the enslavement

of Africans. Where do our states stand? Hopefully, all of this will further lead us back to the plan God had for us initially, especially before the Fall: to love God and serve him only, to work hard (yes, work was commanded before the Fall; it became harder after the Fall), to have a harmonious relationship with God and with fellow human beings, and to have a foundational family structure with a built-in support system.

Let's be candid, racism still exists, and we should combat it as powerfully as we combat giants more threatening than Goliath, but in the process we also must have mercy for the past and understanding and wisdom for the present and the future.

Together with this, maybe we need to listen more closely to the grace in "Amazing Grace" by John Newton, the English poet and clergyman, and a former slave owner, who wrote the hymn praising God for his conversion, a hymn written on the Negro pentatonic scale, as one of his acts of repentance and profound lesson learned. Newton later became an abolitionist and personified the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation.

We need to continue to demand better policing, but we must also know the law and abide by it, while at the same time fight along with many of our sisters and brothers to change those that are unfair. With this in practice, with genuine prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can lower the number of individuals in prison across the board by becoming a more orderly and a less punitive society. In 2016 the US had 300,000 individuals sentenced to life without parole, 1 out of every 9 individual executed was innocent, and 34 percent of black males in Alabama had lost their right to vote because of incarceration (Bryan Stevenson, "Just Mercy," YouTube).



## *Executive Director's Message*

**Phil Tom**

### *Keep the Faith*

The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith.

Ernil Brunner

**“Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”  
Isaiah 41:10**

Isaiah 41:10 is my favorite scripture passage. I was engaged in a spiritual journey to know more about God during my early college years. I visited multiple congregations of all stripes. I heard many congregations talk about their Christian faith, but I saw little about how they translated their faith into public action. During my journey, I met a Seventh Day Adventist urban missionary, Pauline Goddard, who ministered with street people on the street in New York City's Times Square area during the 1960s. Pauline ministered with pimps, homeless people, drug dealers, and prostitutes who walked the streets at night. The police in the area knew Pauline. They watched out for her since some folks had attacked her. But she did not let these attacks deter her from carrying out her nightly ministry, providing acts of comfort, compassion, and love to everyone she met. I asked her if she was ever fearful for her safety. Pauline told me that she trusted God and that whatever hap-

pened would happen. Pauline quoted the passage from Isaiah 41:10 and said that I should remember this passage whenever I face challenges in life. Pauline did not just talk the talk of the Christian faith. She walked the walk by putting her faith in action. Pauline's faith and trust in God were genuine, and everyone she encountered knew of her faith. I am indebted to Pauline's ministry and care for my spirit that helped me step forth and accept Christ as my Lord and Savior at the age of 19.

Our pastors, congregations, communities, nation, and global family face multiple crises and challenges, whether the ongoing pandemic, political, social, and racial divisions, wars, hunger, or poverty. Any of these crises is overwhelming by itself. It would be easy to resign ourselves and say the heck with the world and focus our attention and energy only on our loved ones and ourselves. Circle the wagons! Sadly, many congregations are struggling and have turned inward rather than out-

ward to the world. We cannot step back from this chaos. God sent Jesus, Godself, into the world to bring about redemption, reconciliation, and restoration. As Christ's followers, we are to boldly step into this chaos and continue proclaiming God's good news in Word and deed. If our congregations continue to focus on the three B's – buildings, budgets, and butts in the pews, the Church's role in the public arena will continue to decline, if not become irrelevant, e.g., the rise of the NONES.

As we move into 2022, may our ICCC family talk the talk! Let us move beyond institutional maintenance and continue to discern how we can be missionaries for God, wherever God has placed us! Let us be renewed and empowered by God's Holy Spirit to act boldly and with imagination! Let us have no fear, for God is with us, and God will guide our hands and feet if we place our trust in God!

*Phil*



## ICCC FEBRUARY 2022



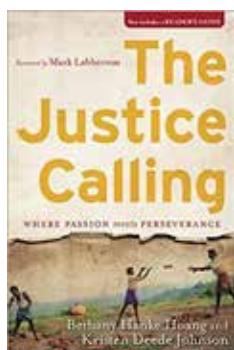
## Book REVIEW

By Rev. Kenneth N. Nelson

*Encouraging Our Hope (Romans 15:4)*

Black History Month: Focus on Historical Reflections and Young Readers

Considering our current blessings, how do we affirm the ending themes of American and Black history in our times and our hopes for the future? Below are books that may offer value to our reflections.



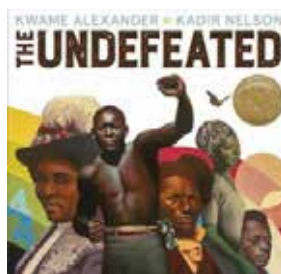
**The Justice Calling: Where Passion Meets Perseverance.** Bethany Hanke Hoang (Author), Kristen Deede Johnson (Author), Mark Labberton (Foreword). Baker, \$13 Paperback. \$12 Kindle (238p) ISBN-13: 978-1587433993

In this 2017 book, the authors, Hoang and Johnson, encourage readers to respond to this question: "How is God calling you, your community, and your church to respond to his passion for justice?" (p. 194, Kindle Edition).

The authors argue that our current approach to social justice should be approached from a biblical perspective or theology of social justice. The authors maintain that we should be responding to issues of social justice with the passion that God has explained in the Scriptures. This book provides an engaging perspective on current issues such as sex trafficking, modern-day slavery, and other injustices that we should respond to from a theology of social justice.

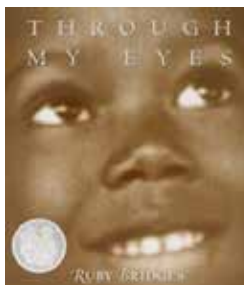
In seven chapters— Engage the Whole Story: Justice and Righteousness, Receive God's Vision of Flourishing: Justice and Creation, Move toward Darkness: Justice and the Fall, Lament: Justice and Israel, Live as Saints (Not Heroes): Justice and Jesus, Be Sanctified and Sent: Justice and the Church, Persevere in Hope: Justice and All Things Being Made New, Hoang and Johnson offer guidelines on how to reflect and act on these themes. The authors also provide a reader's guide to encourage reflection and action steps. Another reviewer observes that "offering a comprehensive biblical theology of justice drawn from the whole story of Scripture, this book invites us to know more intimately the God who loves justice and calls us to give our lives to seek the flourishing of others." If you are interested in building a theology of social justice, then this book should be read.

If you are concerned about the reading skills of our young people during this pandemic, then consider this listing of favorite books for Black History Month from the website Reading Rockets (<https://www.readingrockets.org/booklists/favorite-books-black-history-month>). You will find many historical and new selections focused on youth from the ages of three to twelve. Here are a few of my favorites from the webpage.



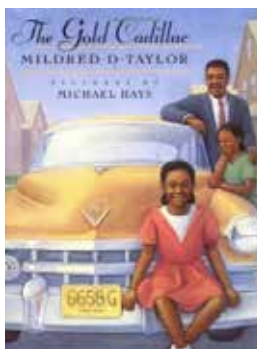
**The Undeclared.** Kwame Alexander, Illustrated by: Kadir Nelson Genre: Nonfiction, Poetry Age Level: 9-12, Reading Level: Independent Reader, \$13 Paperback. \$12 Kindle

This poem is a love letter to black life in the U.S. It highlights the unspeakable trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes. The text is also peppered with references to the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, and Gwendolyn Brooks. Robust back matter at the end provides valuable historical context and additional detail for those wishing to learn more.



**Through My Eyes.** Ruby Bridges, Genre: Nonfiction, Biography, Age Level: 9-12, Reading Level: Independent Reader

Six-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first African American to integrate an elementary school. Her memories of that year, when so much hatred was directed at her, makes for a powerful memoir. A 1999 Parents' Choice Gold Award Winner.



**The Gold Cadillac.** Mildred Taylor. Illustrated by: Michael Hays. Genre: Nonfiction, Biography. Age Level: 9-12. Reading Level: Independent Reader

Set in the 1950s, this book by Mildred Taylor is frank in its portrayal of racism. Lois and Wilma are proud when their father buys a brand-new gold Cadillac. Only their mother won't ride in it. On a trip from their home in Ohio to Mississippi, there are no admiring glances only suspicion directed toward the black man driving such a fancy car. For the first time, Lois knows what it's like to feel scared because of her skin color.

**SHARE YOUR COMMENTS.** Remember, please share your thoughts at [ICCCNOW@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ICCCNOW@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.*

**Our prayers are with:**

- **Carol Horvath** and family, KeyLay for **The Federation of Christian Ministries**. Carol's husband, **Tom Leonhardt** (clergy of FCM) passed away December 2, 2021 from complications of COVID.
- The family of **Father Joseph H. Reynolds, Catholic Apostolic Church of North America**. Joe was the treasurer of CACINA and passed away suddenly. The mass of Christian burial was held at Holy Trinity Parish on October 9, 2021. "Fr. Joe passed away on August 28, which was the morning of the consecration of CACINA's first woman Bishop, Monica Kennedy. He was in Linthicum for the ceremony. He had always been an advocate for the ordination of women, so perhaps he saw his work was done seeing one elevated to high office. He had been in poor health for some time." ~ Joe Biddle, FCM.
- **Ken Nelson** (Senior Pastor, Seneca Community Church) and his family. Ken's mother, **Louise Ann Robinson Nelson** passed away January 15th, at the tender age of 95. Her going home celebration is January 29th.
- **Nicholas Brame**, ICCC Treasurer, and his family. Nick celebrated his 78th birthday this month! Happy Birthday! Please keep Nick and his family in your prayers as he battles cancer treatment.

**Sharing Joys with:**

- **Rev. Michael Droege, Wilson Memorial Union Church**. Michael transitioned from acting pastor to Senior Pastor on December 10th. Congratulations!
- **Elaine Richardson Dennis, ICCC WCF Bazaar Chairperson**, retired January 6, 2022. A Charity/Retirement luncheon will be held in her honor January 29, 2022. Best wishes!

**Someone You**

**Should Know**



We've been going through old photos here in the office.

Recognize this ICCC faithful supporter?

It's **Sandra Nelson!**

**THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**  
A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations  
(ISSN - 0145-3297)

A periodical of news, reviews, and reflections for ecumenically oriented and community-minded churches, ministry centers, and clergy.

Published Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June by the International Council of Community Churches. Home Office: P.O. Box 846, Longmont, CO 80502. Subscription rate: \$12.00 per year.

**Editors:** Phil Tom, DeAnn Bath

**Circulation:** DeAnn Bath

**Telephone:** 815/464-5690

**E-Mail:** [ICCCNOW@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ICCCNOW@sbcglobal.net)

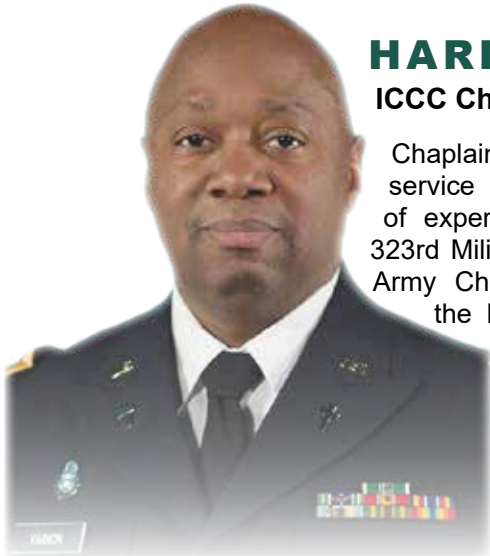
**Website:** [www.ICCCNOW.org](http://www.ICCCNOW.org)



*International Council of Community Churches*

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

## Meet Our Leadership, One by One



### HARE VARNON ICCC Chaplain Trustee

Chaplain Hare Varnon is a dedicated public service professional with a solid record of experience as a Battalion Chaplain at 323rd Military Intelligence Battalion with U.S. Army Chaplain. Additionally, he serves as the Education and Leadership Ministry Officer at New Christian Memorial Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Chaplain Varnon also served as a full-time Corporate Chaplain with Corporate Chaplains of America for seventeen years.

Chaplain Varnon exemplifies and encourages living victoriously through prayer, daily Bible study, and worship in God's presence. He is an anointed Bible teacher who uses real-world applications of Scripture and personal experiences, interwoven with humor and wisdom, to help others overcome challenges with the scriptures' direct application. Chaplain Varnon is committed to loving God's people and preaching the Word of God with authority. He desires to liberate the people of God so they may live lives pleasing to God. Chaplain Varnon's chief desire is to see souls added to the Kingdom of God.

Chaplain Varnon received his Master of Divinity from Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union and a Bachelor of Science in Biblical Foundation from Lancaster Bible College. He is in his third year of a Doctor of Ministry program at Erskine Theological Seminary with a Christian leadership concentration.

He is married to Winona Varnon. They are in their 35th year of marriage. They have one son, Cameron, who lives in Alabama.

ICCC elected Chaplain Varnon to the office of Chaplain Trustee at the July 2021 conference. In partnership with DeAnn, he maintains regular contacts with chaplains, reviews chaplain membership applications, and works directly with Chaplain Groups. Those groups consist of but are not limited to the U.S. Department of Defense, the Association of Professional Chaplains, Veteran Affairs, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and hospitals. In addition, he will learn the necessary regulations and requirements so that the ICCC is confident that our Chaplains are compliant.

He has observed the ICCC for many years and has decided to accept a role and become an active member. As a chaplain in the military and the corporate world, he has first-hand knowledge of the lengthy process of joining an organization. He will assist DeAnn and others in ensuring the applicants have met the requirements for ICCC and the organization they are seeking endorsement.

He looks forward to the challenge of learning this new position and developing a framework on the process, and approving those seeking endorsement with ICCC.

*Hare Varnon*

## President's message cont'd. from p. 1

Although much has been destroyed, we can still do much as houses of Christian faith to move us closer to reconciliation. So let us work toward encouraging and supporting each other. Where Christian churches exist within the same community, let us be compelled to combine our resources

- To continue to feed the hungry on a regular basis
- To attack poverty and lack of adequate and fair health care treatment as counter-forces to God's love
- To encourage our membership to take advantage of newly open centers that now provide free, holistic health care, including a certified physician, such as the Bread of Life Center in Anacostia, Southeast, Washington, DC
- To encourage students to enroll in higher level course work both in grade school and in college, with appropriate support systems to enable students to succeed
- To put to rest our unbeliefs about the lack of the presence of God in our communities and the false sense of threats in things designed to help us
- To provide other needed programs based not on the amount of money churches will receive for operating the programs but on the quality of services provided for God's children
- To provide genuine mentorship in safe environments that protect those being served and preserve those providing the services
- To lower the number of individuals we quickly punish or push back to the ground and increase the number we love and nourish.

America still has a long way to go, and we must help her along the way.

James Baldwin correctly said that we will not be free until the oppressors are free.

In a letter to his nephew ("My Dungeon Shook") on the 100th celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation, Baldwin wrote:

"It will be hard, James, but you come from sturdy peasant stock, men who picked cotton, dammed rivers, built railroads, and in the teeth of the most terrifying odds, achieved an unassailable and monumental dignity. You come from a long line of great poets, some of the greatest poets since Homer. One of them said, 'The very time I thought I was lost, my dungeon shook and my chains fell off.'"

Let us, one of the most advanced Christian bodies seeking reconciliation of the body of Christ, keep the faith, work hard, and demand justice until the day our dungeons shake and our chains fall off.

*Abraham*





## PASTORAL SEARCH

### *Senior Minister*

Bridgeport Community Church, (Bridgeport, Michigan) is seeking a candidate for Senior Pastor to replace current pastor retiring December 2021.

BCC is an interdenominational church that has been serving the community since 1867.

Responsibilities include spiritual leadership, pastoral and youth ministry, church and community relationships and church administration.

Ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's degree and seminary degree or equivalent. Strong biblical knowledge and proclamation of The Word is required, along with good communication and planning skills.

Qualified individuals should submit a resume to Attention: Pastoral Search Committee via [1867BCC@gmail.com](mailto:1867BCC@gmail.com).

### *Ordained Minister*

Join us in turning the tide from surviving to thriving in 2021 and beyond. The historic Community Church of East Williston is a Mainline, Interdenominational Protestant Church serving the needs of persons from all backgrounds. We have a faithful, hardworking congregational core and seek a Senior Minister who, through Christian love and action, will help us turn those with occasional attendance into persons with faithful commitment. The position requires an experienced, ordained Protestant minister with youthful enthusiasm to reestablish CCEW as the "Light in the Community." We offer a competitive salary and a beautiful manse in a verdant suburb with a highly ranked school district (top 10% in NY), only 25 minutes from Manhattan via railroad.

Our ideal candidate:

- Is an ordained minister and graduate of an accredited Protestant Seminary (CCEW will facilitate ordination if necessary)
- Maintains a cheerful and enthusiastic outlook
- Preaches interesting, thoughtful and provocative sermons
- Relates Scripture and the teachings of God to everyday lives
- Fosters relationships with youth and young families
- Collaborates with lay leadership and church staff to coordinate and conduct the ministries of the church
- Counsels congregants and committees
- Uses social media to further the goals of the church
- Considers high quality and diverse music to be a vital part of worship
- Demonstrates team building and conflict resolution skills
- Visits congregants in need
- Works to expand the influence of the church in the community
- Provides wedding support including rehearsals
- Has experience in pastoral ministry as a Senior Minister

The Pastoral Search Committee is accepting packages containing (but not limited to) your resume, your calling (share your call to ministry), style of ministry (share your beliefs) and samples of your sermons on a website, blog or Facebook.

Please email your response to: [maryellen@ccew.org](mailto:maryellen@ccew.org), or mail a hard copy to:

Community Church of East Williston  
Pastoral Search Committee  
Mary Ellen Williams, Chairperson  
45 East Williston Avenue  
East Williston, NY 11596



## Ecumenews – World Interfaith Harmony Week

Rev. Rock R. Fremont Jr., VP Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

I would like to encourage your observance of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), observed between January 29 – March 3, 2022. Begun on October 20, 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution designating the first week in February to be an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. The UN General Assembly called for dialogue among different religions to enhance interfaith harmony and cooperation globally and locally. The annual WIHW observance has today become an outstanding opportunity for raising up the imperative of dialogue between religions and spiritual communities of all kinds for the sake of greater understanding, peaceful coexistence, and mutual collaboration for the common good. Its basic premise is that regardless of religion, faith, or system of belief, there is a common affirmation shared by many: that our highest convictions about life and meaning impact not only ourselves, but also compel us toward love of our neighbors.

It is highly significant that WIHW takes place at the end of Epiphany. Each year on January 6th we are reminded



of a meeting between the child Jesus and some Seekers of Wisdom from a far away land. Now, more than ever, as we face the most challenging public health crisis in generations, and as followers of Christ in a religiously diverse time, we hear a call to cultivate encounter and relationship with neighbors who journey along different spiritual and religious paths. Histories and incidents of hostility and violence between faith communities amplify the significance of cultivating relationships as a contribution to the work of making peace.

The urgency for inter-religious awareness and cooperation to respond to the many challenges facing our one human family continues to grow, and I believe it is a critical part of Christian discipleship today to commit ourselves to the way of genuine encounter and peacemaking with people of other faiths and beliefs. I therefore wholeheartedly endorse the global celebrations of WIHW, and encourage you to embrace its vision and aims as a faithful expression of love of God turned outward into love for all others.

Please visit [WorldInterfaithHarmonyWeek.com](http://WorldInterfaithHarmonyWeek.com) for more information and a schedule for events happening in your local community and throughout the world.

# Jesus Loves You As You Are

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 1 Peter 1:22*

