

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



NOVEMBER 2023

Volume 74 |

A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations and Christians Around the World

| Number 2

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Abraham Wright

Treasurer

Tim Meadows

Secretary

Bruce Merton

VP for Planning

Jerry Brown

VP for Regional Relationships

Wendy Childress

VP for Financial Development

Dorothy Campbell Gardner

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

John Hardman-Zimmerman

Winessa Crutchfield

Rock Fremont, Jr.

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

Sandra Roberts, Sandra Nelson,

Linda Hopkins, Jean Tillman,

John Woodcock, Bruce Merton,

Rock Fremont, Jr., Vicky Kirkman

Chaplain Trustee

Hare Varnon

AUXILIARY HEADS

Samaritans:

John Hardman-Zimmerman

Women's Christian Fellowship:

Winessa Crutchfield

Ministerium: Rock Fremont, Jr.

President's Message Abraham Wright

*"This old world is
going to catch on fire,
and my soul will be at rest..."*



Often as a child I heard this refrain sung in several African American places of worship. The spirit of the song ignited immediately by the syndicated clapping of hands, sometimes stumping of feet, and a sway from side to side. Then, after listening for a few minutes, I asked myself, amusingly, "are they actually that anxious to get to heaven?" The lead songster then adds that because there is a leak in the building, my soul has got to move. The last bar gives the reason for the move: "There is a leak in the building." A leak for the soul is a dangerous predicament so in order to secure the soul, to fasten tightly the anchor, one must move from sinking ground to higher ground.

We can love each other as sister and brother. We can recognize the leak in the building and move to a safer place with Jesus. It is possible! Christ did it; Bob Puckett did it; Sandy Singley did it; Harry Fooockle did it; Paul Scott did it; Dorothy Bascom did it; Andrew Briscoe did it; Jeffrey Newhall did it.

If we are abusive to one another, we try to help find the source of the abuse and find ways to eliminate the abuse. The same holds true with hatred; with violence; with lack of love and justice and multiple forms of abuse and unjust wars, especially at the expense of others.

We pray, O Lord, that you teach us to be on the Lord's side; to pray and work for the best, to reflect on our lives and discover what we can do for the best.

I hope it were just that simple; but it is not. However, this logic is good food for thought, and it doesn't take a ton of logic to understand. For example, if something is broken, we try to fix it not by just putting a bandage on it but by treating the source of the ailment as well; in hopes that we will become restored and remain so.

If someone is out of the household of God, we introduce them to the gospel of Jesus Christ and continuously nourish them along the way that they may become whole. We can recognize the leak in the building and move to a more secure place in God's house. Impossible? Marion Bascom did it; Bob Puckett did it; Harry Fooockle did it; Paul Scott did it; Dorothy Bascom did it; Sandy Singley did it; Annette Duarte did it; and Jeffrey Newhall did it. So why can't we?

Abraham



Executive Director's Message

Phil Tom

Give Thanks!

Every time I send money to my nieces and nephews for their birthday, Chinese New Year, or any special event happening in their lives, they always send me a thank-you note. I appreciate their thank you notes even though I don't expect them. My guess is that their parents had a hand telling them to write the thank you notes. Writing thank-you notes is a good habit, and I hope my nieces and nephews will embrace this practice in their lives.

Has there been a moment when you did something for someone, and they did not say thank you for what you did? How did you feel about this situation? I know many of us will do something for another because it's the right thing, and do not expect a thank you in return. But, when this happens, it may also say something about the other person's spirit of gratitude.

In the familiar story of the healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19, we read that Jesus heals ten lepers. The cleansed lepers go away, but one returns to Jesus and gives thanks to Jesus for his healing. Jesus responds by saying, "were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this one? And Jesus says to the man, "Rise

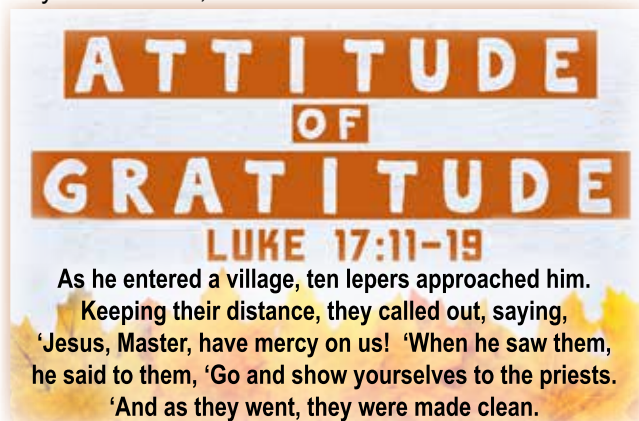
and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Jesus expects us to have a spirit of gratitude. He is clearly angry at the unthankfulness of the nine lepers who didn't return. They took their healing for granted. Sometimes, we may also take someone's assistance, support, or hospitality for granted. Do we give thanks to God only when things are going well? We are to be like the healed leper who returned to Jesus to thank him for being healed. This story tells us that we must be filled with a spirit of gratitude, not just in response to a singular event but as a way of life.

Gratitude has the power to change the way we experience any situation. Ashley Elizabeth says, "An attitude of gratitude means that you operate from a place of abundance instead of a place of scarcity and fear. Each of us always has a choice of what we will focus on." Grateful people give thanks for everything in their lives, even on the days when it feels like nothing is going right.

Let us thank God for our blessings, not just on Thanksgiving Day or before our meals, but every moment we can to cultivate a spirit and life of gratitude in serving God and our neighbors.

Phil



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

Website: 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."

ICCC NOVEMBER 2023

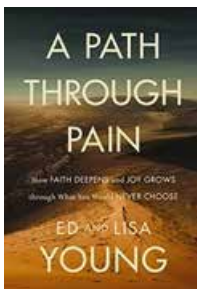


Book REVIEW

By Rev. Kenneth N. Nelson

2023 Theme: **Call to Fellowship (1 John 1:3 ESV)**

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family. We pray all is well with you and those you care about. This year we pray that sharing captures the idea of fellowship from 1 John 1:3. We pray that these reviews will not only call you to fellowship but also involve you in fellowship. This month we start with some engaging book reviews from Publisher Weekly.



A Path Through Pain: How Faith Deepens and Joy Grows Through What You Would Never Choose. Ed and Lisa Young. Zondervan, \$27.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-310-36693-5

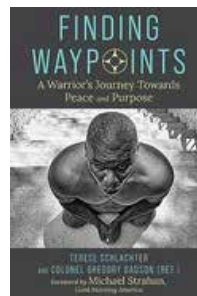
In this stirring guide, married pastors Ed and Lisa Young (*The Creative Marriage*) share how they found purpose in faith after their daughter's sudden death and counsel readers on how they can navigate hardships of their own. According to the authors, pain is inescapable, but God supplies "the strength you need to endure it, to grow from it," and sometimes even "to find joy in it," a process they're still working through in the wake of their 34-year-old daughter's death from alcohol-related complications. They guide readers through a four-step plan that begins with admitting "you cannot process pain on your own," then moves on to accepting that "Jesus is your loving Lord," "choosing him daily," and finding "hope and healing in community." Along the way, readers can adopt such restorative practices as journaling and consistent Bible reading, and establish "support structures" that include seeing a therapist or leaning into "replenishing relationships." The authors also highlight pain's benefits, including spiritual growth and increased compassion, which "can change the way we experience" grief. While the Youngs' relatively bare-bones plan might strike some readers as reductive, most will appreciate the authors' willingness to tackle thorny faith questions ("How could a good God—a loving God—allow so much pain and suffering in the world?") while remaining painfully candid about their own ongoing grieving process. This is ideal for the faithful seeking strength amid life's trials. (Nov.)



We Become What We Normalize: What We Owe Each Other in Worlds That Demand Our Silence. David Dark. Broadleaf, \$26.99 (224p) ISBN 978-1-5064-8168-5

Dark (*The Possibility of America*), an assistant professor of religion at Belmont University, sets out a full-throated critique of contemporary American culture and offers an alternative to its "toxicity and terror and trauma." In so doing, he calls out a "deferential fear" that "dictates our speech, behavior, and our sense of what's possible," as well as the "hidden structures and tacit social arrangements that draw us away from ourselves," including brands, businesses, and governments.

He's especially outspoken about the damages of whiteness, which he defines as a "refusal to see," claiming, for example, that white people failed "to rationally process the fact of the January 6 insurrection as an insurrection." While these and other ills foster a "dysfunctional culture," readers can step "out of the infinite loop of normalizing harm" by willingly engaging in "brave and risky" dialogue with others. (To Catholic theologian Thomas Merton's adage, "it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything," Dark adds: "There are no randos.") Drawing on sources ranging from Socrates to LeBron James's social media, Dark makes a persuasive case for building a more just society by stepping into sites of tension and conflict, though his message is sometimes diluted by elaborate metaphors that do more to confuse than clarify (including a mention of "robot soft exorcism theory," which "helps us spy out, analyze, and act imaginatively upon our common compromised reality"). Still, this is an impassioned *cri de coeur*. (Nov.)



Finding Waypoints: A Warrior's Journey Toward Peace and Purpose. Terese Schlachter and Gregory D. Gadson. Schaffner, \$28 (320p) ISBN 978-1-63964-024-9

In this intense and inspiring debut, television producer Schlachter recounts the life story of coauthor Gadson, a retired U.S. army colonel, former West Point football player, actor, and motivational speaker. A veteran of Desert Storm and wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan, Gadson was returning to base from a May 2007 memorial service in Baghdad when his vehicle hit an IED, triggering a blast that cost him both legs above the knee and severely damaged his right arm and hand. Schlachter describes how Gadson's fellow soldiers administered medical aid in the surreal moments after the explosion, and shines a light on the deeply rooted faith, family, and military brotherhood that helped him battle through recovery. She also attributes Gadson's rousing pregame speech to the New York Giants with inspiring the team to victory in the 2008 Super Bowl (the players saw a man who'd "been... on the edge of death but had grabbed onto life and stuffed it back into his soul," Schlachter writes). In gritty detail, Schlachter documents Gadson's surgeries and slow road to recovery, and reveals how he used his experiences to inspire others, even as he struggled to overcome his own emotional obstacles. Eventually, he was able to forgive those who fought against him—as well as those who sent him into a war whose motives he could not defend. It's a fast-moving, unsparing account of a fascinating life. (Nov.)

SHARE YOUR COMMENTS. Remember, please share your thoughts at 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.*

Ecumeneews

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



What Is Receptive Ecumenism?

Part 1

In my Christian Unity workshop at this year's Annual Conference, I mentioned the concept of Receptive Ecumenism, a new concept for many, so I have decided to explain the idea. Receptive Ecumenism begins by reversing the agenda frequently implicit in encounters between Christians of different traditions. Here, the secret thought very often is, 'If only you were a little more like us, everything would be all right.' We tend to think about what others need to learn from us, not what we need to learn from them. Whereas Receptive Ecumenism's 'simple but far-reaching strategy... essentially seeks to draw out a value that has been at work, to some degree at least, in all good ecumenical encounters and to place it center-stage as the appropriate organizing principle for contemporary ecumenism.' The critical question is then not 'What can we teach them?' but rather, 'What do we need to learn, in integrity, from others?'

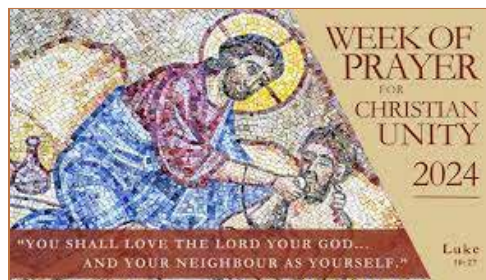
In the context of a spirituality of relationships, this has far-reaching effects. It emphasizes how the gift of unity in the prayer of Jesus is a method for understanding truth. This fundamental principle cannot be asserted strongly enough. Unity is not something bought at the expense of truth, but rather, it opens up a way of insight.

At its outset, Receptive Ecumenism was intended as a response to the challenge of ecumenism at the beginning of the twenty-first century 'wherein the hope for structural

unification in the short to medium term is, in general, now widely recognized as being unrealistic.' This was combined with 'the abiding need for the Christian churches precisely in this situation to find an appropriate means of continuing to walk the way of conversion towards more visible structural and sacramental unity.' Such unity can only be achieved based on a shared understanding of truth. This, in turn, can only be reached through a proper understanding of the other, and so it demands a mutual silence that welcomes the other in all the other's 'otherness.' It takes place in the most profound relationship and, as Kallistos Ware puts it, 'If we speak of relationship, then at once we need to add: the model and paradigm of all human relationship is nothing less than the Holy Trinity. In a Christian context, there can be no genuine giving and receiving that is not Trinitarian. If, then, by Receptive Ecumenism I mean listening to one another in creative silence and thereby giving and receiving from each other, it follows that Receptive Ecumenism needs to set, at the very center of its agenda, a deepened awareness of the Trinitarian nature of God.' And putting this Trinitarian awareness at the center of the agenda means to bring God into our thinking. Can there be any more efficient form of dialogue than that?

In Unity,

Rev. Rock Fremont
VP Ecumenical
and Interfaith Relations



Next year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, scheduled for Jan. 18-25, 2024, will utilize worship resources prepared by Christians in Burkina Faso on the theme, "You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). Find the 2024 resources at www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/resources-for-the-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2024.

— **The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church have begun preparing the 2025 materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,** which will commemorate the Council of Nicaea. The year 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the first Christian ecumenical council held in 325 AD. "Consequently, given the upcoming Nicaea celebration, the focus of the annual observance will not be on a region but rather on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed," said the announcement. "There was consensus that the ecumenical monastic community of Bose [Italy] be chosen to prepare the 2025 resource." The theme for 2025 will be taken from John 11:25-27: "Do you believe this?"

Meet Our Leadership, One by One

REV. JOHN WOODCOCK

**Newly appointed Regional Trustee for
the Eastern Zone, Region A**

I first learned of the ICCC in the late 1970s. My Assoc. Pastor, Rev. Mark Bailey, was working on a ThM at Princeton Seminary when Rev. Ralph Shotwell spoke on campus. Mark was interested enough to invite Rev. Shotwell to visit us at Church of the Loving Shepherd in Westtown, PA. Needless to say, Rev. Shotwell was a wonderful advocate for the ICCC. However we felt that as a young congregation with members from a variety of Christian backgrounds, we had yet to discover our own identity. It seemed clear, though, that we should keep the ICCC in mind.

In the 1990s I attended two annual conferences: 1994 in Marlboro, MA, and 1999 in Toronto, Canada. In Marlboro I was impressed by a wonderful Agape exercise, designed to deepen our understanding of discrimination, and by Don Fair, who when my car broke down took on the job of transporting me to a local garage. Toronto showed another aspect of the Council, with participation and leadership from the Canadian chapter, under Bp Theriault.

As one of the very few independent and inclusive congregations in the Philadelphia collar counties, the members of Church of the Loving Shepherd very much wanted to identify with the greater Church, and as a largely white congregation in a community with a definite color divide in its churches, we wanted to find a larger venue to connect across the color line. We realized the ICCC, with its history and membership was such a venue, as well as a place which would connect us in some official way with the greater church. At the annual business meeting that year (1999) the membership voted to affiliate with the ICCC and became a part in 2000.

In the years since I've been increasingly involved with the ICCC. As time passed I was invited to serve on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, and have

represented the ICCC at two meetings of the National Council of Churches and three Triennial meetings of Churches Uniting in Christ. While eastern Pennsylvania is sometimes overlooked in the description of regions, CLS is the southernmost congregation in Eastern A, which I call the Northeast, and not too far from Baltimore and Washington, DC, which has made it not too difficult to make visits to Wilson Memorial and the Protestant Community Church in New Jersey, Douglas Memorial in Baltimore, and Park Road Community Church in DC. And I've occasionally been able to join with others in the NE region for retreats or in person gatherings. I've always found that those times of fellowship provide the same refreshment so many of us find at Annual Conference. Christ's spirit of inclusion creates a freedom of spirit and action often lacking in some churches and denominations.

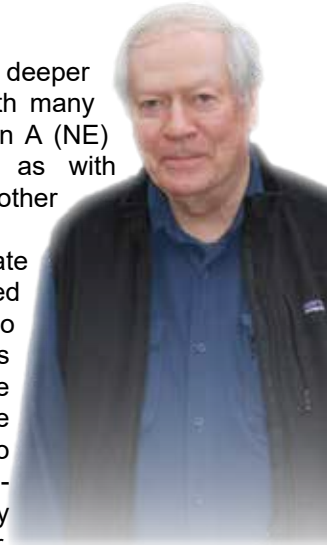
One highlight of my nearly 50 years of ministry at Church of the Loving Shepherd was the ordination of Rev. Cairn Neely a few years ago. Many readers will have met Cairn at Conference, though his work as a hospice chaplain has kept him from attending the last couple of years. It was wonderful to host many ICCC and Interfaith friends for that service at Loving Shepherd, as it was to watch Cairn's progress from Congregational Rep to the ICCC, through seminary and then ordination as a pastor and chaplain in the Council.

Last spring Phil Tom asked me to update a contact list and help to set up a zoom conversation within the NE region, and some of the conversations I had along the way reminded me of the beauty and diversity of our connection. I was honored to be nominated and elected as Trustee for the region at our most recent annual conference. I'm finding that retirement gives me more time for involvement in the things which matter most to me, so I'm looking

forward to a deeper acquaintance with many of you in Eastern A (NE) region as well as with officers from other regions.

I was fortunate to be mentored by someone who believed Christ's body was one spiritually, despite the divisions so many have imposed on it. My time in active parish ministry gave me opportunities to build bridges with the clergy of West Chester's Black Ministerial Association, to build working relationships with Mt Carmel COGIC and Rice's Temple AUMP in West Chester, and to collaborate on efforts to create harmony when we experienced a Klan march in West Chester. Building Interfaith understanding has also been important to me, both as an active pastor and now in retirement. POWER Metro, an interfaith group working to bring equity to Pennsylvania's funding of school districts, provides me another avenue to build bridges.

To me, Jesus's prayer 'that all may be one' is the heart of inclusion, in every congregation, the ICCC, and more widely in the world of faith. I'm grateful for a lifetime of experiences which continue to enlarge my understanding of our lives in God and my appreciation for the created world and the diversity among God's children. Some time ago I read a reflection by Arthur Waskow, a Philadelphia Rabbi and activist. He reported a conversation with a grandson about the image of God. After noting several possibilities, his grandson concluded that, like a puzzle with a 1000 pieces, God's image must include everyone. I've no doubt the ICCC exemplifies that understanding.





Sharing Joys with

- **Chaplain Ken Young**, former ICCC Regional Trustee, who plans to retire December 1st, 2023, after nearly 4 decades of ordained bi-vocational ministry and 20 years of service within the Civil Air Patrol/USAF Auxiliary. Ken plans to focus his energy on family, spiritual direction and his grandchildren.



Sharing Concerns with

- **Rev. Steve Prevatte**, Senior Pastor at **Tellico Village Community Church**, Loudon TN, who lost both his parents this year. Please keep Steve and his family in your prayers.

ICCC Resource About Raising Funds for your Congregation

Did you know that ICCC has a resource that provides ideas on raising funds for your congregation/center/community? It's titled Fundraising 101, and you can download it from our ICCC webpage at <https://www.icccnow.org/council-other-agency-resources/>.



THANK YOU to a 2023 Annual Conference Sponsor
People's Community Church, Berea, OH

Women's Holiday Gathering
HOSTED BY:
WCF OF THE ICCC
Join us
VIRTUALLY
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023
8:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME
(5:00 PT, 6:00 MT, 7:00 CT)
[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/J/95370345616](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/95370345616)
MEETING ID: 953 7034 5616
DIAL IN: +13017158592, 95370345616
Contact Winessa Crutchfield ~ 301-785-5165

Women's Conference
NOVEMBER 18
Hosted by Rev. Eloise Crenshaw and
Metropolitan Community Church,
Birmingham, AL
Many special guests and speakers are scheduled.
"If God is within her she will not fail." ~ Psalms 45:5.
MCC is soliciting donations for the ad booklet.
Email Maryum Manning for information
manningmaryum@yahoo.com

JORDAN SCHOLARSHIP

Hey Family, the Jordan Scholarship Committee is looking for applicants.

- ✓ Any High School Seniors seeking higher education?
- ✓ Anyone thinking about going back to school to finish working on your goal?

Contact DeAnn for an application, questions or concerns.



PASTORAL
SEARCH

Full-Time Minister

Pembroke Township, IL- Minister/Pastor- St. Anne Woods Chapel Community Church-Non-Denominational. St. Anne Woods Chapel Community Church is prayerfully seeking a full time Minister who is called by God, ordained, and dedicated to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Status and qualifications will include:

- Must hold a degree from an accredited seminar or Bible college.
- Must be an ordained and/or licensed minister.
- Must have a minimum of 3-6 years of experience as a minister or minister assistance.
- Must have great leadership skills, ability to reach out to the youth, and open to growing the ministry.

Duties:

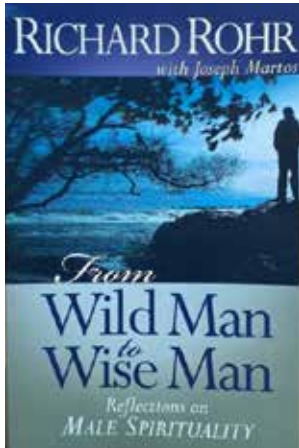
- Coordinating with the church secretary to prepare a weekly bulletin.
- Conducting weekly adult bible study.
- Preaching the weekly sermon on Sunday mornings.
- Teaching weekly Sunday School class
- Administering the Sacraments of communion and baptism.
- Officiating at all weddings, funerals, and other ceremonial occasions as needed.
- Participating in community events.
- Works with the deacons and board regarding the future of the church.

If interested in the position, please submit the following information listed below to stannewoodschapelc@gmail.com. Please submit documents in a PDF format only.

- Cover letter that includes salary expectations, a little information about yourself, and why you believe that God is calling you to apply for this position.
- Resume
- Copy of Ministerial License and/or Certificate of Ordination.
- Degree from seminar or bible college
- Three references which would include one personal reference and two professional (minister/pastor) letters of preference.

Greetings men of the ICCC

How quickly the months are going by since our Annual Conference. During the Conference meetings of Samaritan Men, the ICCC's men's group, I was asked to finish our study of Richard Rohr's book on male spirituality, **From Wild Man to Wise Man**. So, let's do that this Fall. We'll begin with a review of the first ten chapters (each is only a few pages), then pick up with chapters 11, 12 and 13 on the "Father Hunger", "Father Wound" and "Grief".



Our schedule of 7 pm Zoom gatherings in which to reflect together on the readings is as follows:

Nov. 7 ➡ Chapters 19 & 20
 Nov. 28 ➡ Chapters 21 & 22
 Dec. 5 ➡ Chapters 23 & 24
 Dec. 19 ➡ Chapter 25

You are invited to participate even if you have yet to read the book. Our discussions are stimulating, enjoyable and well-worthwhile. The link to our Zoom meetings is:

Rev. John Hardman-Zimmerman

The Zoom link for the workshops are
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82087374279?pwd=U0E5dGxZQkUvQlV4U2xnWlE5NXJsdz09>
Meeting ID: 820 8737 4279
Passcode: 437296

Consider what else you would like to see happen in or through our men's group. Let me know your ideas and suggestions.

The peace of Christ to you all, my friends.

Rev. John Hardman-Zimmerman
 ICCC Samaritans President

Jesus Calling

If you were at Annual Conference, you saw there was a Book Study session covering the book **Jesus Calling**.

If you are interested in purchasing the book, we still have some left! The cost is \$17.00 (book \$12, shipping and handling \$5), made payable to the ICCC. Mail to ICCC, PO Box 846, Longmont, CO 80502

"For many years, missionary Sarah Young kept a prayer journal, recording her thoughts and prayers. Then she decided to start listening for what Jesus might be saying to her in her daily journey."

The journey she started encouraged her heart, along with thousands of others the world over. Her meditations became the now classic devotional, Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence. These 365 days of readings share the words and scriptures Jesus laid on her heart to share. As you read these words of inspiration and encouragement you'll be brought closer to Jesus presence, experiencing His love and peace."

~ Christianbook.com

