

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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

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## Give Thanks

This Thanksgiving season, let's pause and give thanks to God for all he has done, and what he continues to do.

*"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever." Ps. 118:29*

*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." James 1:17*

*"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thess. 5:18*

*"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever; ..." Ps. 136:1-5*

*"The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him." Ps. 28:7*

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Phil 4:6*

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." Ps. 100:4-5*

*"O Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Ps. 95:1-3*





*President's Message*  
*Grace and Peace to You in the Name of Jesus the Christ*  
**Harry Foockle**

We recently mailed out “flyers” to a number of churches here in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Still waiting for a response. If the response is not forthcoming we will follow up with a phone call. Following the call we will make a personal visit to each church. Our hope is for others to see who we are, where we came from and what we believe in the ICCC. All of these efforts are undergirded with prayer.

This leads me to wonder about you. How are you doing? We have so many venues to be able to reach out to any of our churches with needed assistance. I believe God

put us in this place at this time to bring hope to a world plagued by violence, inequality and injustice. The ICCC is a model of the Kingdom love expressed through our human interactions.

Once the hope is settled in our life and the life of our local churches, then we can become, as Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians 5:20 “So, we are ambassadors for Christ...”

Personally, I believe we are an Ambassador Movement.

***I was wondering what do you believe?***



Contact the Council Office for informational brochures about the ICCC. [iccc60423@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iccc60423@sbcglobal.net)



## Executive Director's Message

### Imagine

Phil Tom

*"Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people sharing  
all the world, you"*

*John Lennon – "Imagine"*



Our world is rapidly changing via global geopolitics, broadening social norms, technological innovation, and a widening of religious habits. In a recent Pew Research Center study - "Why Americans Go (and Don't Go) to Religious Services," the study shows that the percentage of U.S. adults who say they regularly attend religious services has been declining, while the share of Americans who attend only a few times a year, seldom or never has been growing. The survey finds that the main reason people regularly go to church, synagogue, mosque or another house of worship is an obvious one: to feel closer to God. But the things that keep people away from religious services are more complicated. Among those who attend no more than a few times a year, about three-in-ten say they do not go to religious services for a simple reason: They are not believers..... Overall, the single most common answer cited for not attending religious services is "I practice my faith in other ways," which is offered as a very important reason by 37% of people who rarely or never

attend religious services" Here is the link to the complete study - <http://www.pewforum.org/2018/08/01/why-americans-go-to-religious-services/>.

These are challenging times for the Church as many congregations are finding themselves adrift with an aging and declining membership. For some congregations, they continue to refuse to adapt their ways of doing church to the changing culture swirling around them. For some of these congregations, they recite the spirit-killing statement - "we have never done it that way!" For some congregations, they throw out the baby with the bathwater by changing everything that creates more chaos than creativity.

I have worked with many congregations with their renewal strategy. Too many congregations are looking for a quick turnaround solution. There are multiple congregational redevelopment strategies and too many consultants willing to assist. There are no quick fix-it solutions! Renewing a congregation's mission and life requires God-led and passionate lead-

ership, time, a lot of hard work and prayers, a willingness to be open to God's spirit, to think differently and creatively, and to imagine that God is leading them into a new future.

Seeking to be responsive to our changing social, political and religious landscape does not mean that we compromise our Christian beliefs and values. What this requires of us is to have an open mind, to imagine how we might share God's Good News in new or different ways so that God's Spirit continues to touch and transform the lives of our brothers and sisters!

*Phil*

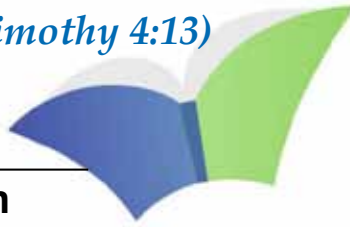
*"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*

*Isaiah 43:18-19*

*Attend to Reading! (1 Timothy 4:13)*

## BOOK REVIEWS

By Rev. Kenneth N. Nelson



### **JUST MERCY: A Story of Justice and Redemption**

by Bryan Stevenson \*\*\*\* 1/2 stars.

Audiobook, narrated by: Bryan Stevenson, Length: 11 hrs. and 5 mins, rated 5 stars, \$12.99  
with Amazon Kindle purchased of \$14.99, and Google Play, \$14.99

Barnes & Noble, paperback, \$12.49; 336 pp. Spiegel & Grau. \$28.00 Copyright © 2014.

Last month, we started with a review of *Just Mercy* and some of the activities from the discussion guide. This month let's review some questions from the *Just Mercy* discussion guide (<https://eji.org/just-mercy/discussion-guide>).

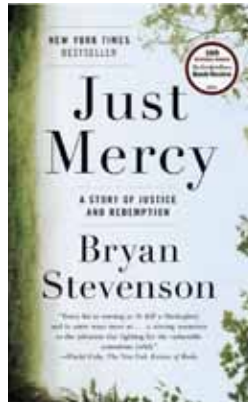
#### **Discussion Guide, Chapter One, Mockingbird Players**

In Chapter One, Mockingbird Players, Stevenson offers a chapter summary, 5 discussion questions, 2 activities, 8 correlations to the Common Core Standards, a high-quality academic standard for teaching and testing English and mathematics between kindergarten and 12th grade.

Our focus question from last month was: What famous novel was written in Monroe County, AL, and how is it relevant to *Just Mercy*? (Hint: Actor Gregory Peck won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role as Atticus Finch in this 1962 film adapted from the novel).

Did you answer, *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee? Great!

Since its publication in 1960, *To Kill A Mockingbird* is recognized as literacy phenomena describing the life and culture of the deep south around the 1930s depression near Monroeville, Monroe County, Alabama. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is linked to *Just Mercy* because they both deal with racial injustice, and their location in Monroe County, Alabama is critical to each book's storyline. While *To Kill a Mockingbird* looks at social justice through the eyes of a Caucasian child, Jean Louise Finch (Scout) as narrated by her father, *Just Mercy* looks at social justice through the eyes of Walter McMillian as described by his attorney, Bryan Stevenson.



#### **Discussion Guide, Chapter 15, Broken.**

In Chapter 15, Broken, Stevenson offers a chapter summary, 6 discussion questions, one activity, and 4 correlates to the common Core Standards.

Last month, we used one question from this chapter to continue our dialogue: Discuss the ways in which the system failed Jimmy Dill. Discuss the ways the system is failing in your community.

The Alabama Supreme Court would say that the system did not fail Jimmy Dill. But the laws on the books that were to protect Dill were ignored. The charges against Dill were

changed unexpectedly. In *Just Mercy*, Stevenson (2014) writes,

"We tried frantically to get the Courts to issue a stay based on the new issues we'd uncovered, to no avail. Courts are deeply resistant to reviewing claims once a condemned prisoner has completed the appeals process the first time. Even the claim of mental retardation was thwarted because no court would grant a hearing at such a late stage. Although I knew the odds were against us, Mr. Dill's severe disabilities had made me privately hopeful that maybe a judge would be concerned and at least let us present additional evidence. But every court told us, "Too late" (p. 284).

Stevenson then writes about feeling his work being "too late." He questions his faith and ponders what action he should take. More people are saying it is too late for our criminal justice system. In a 2017 CNN opinion piece stating their own views, Senator Chris Coons (Democratic, Delaware) and Senator Thom Tillis (Republican, North Carolina) state they "share a strong belief that America's criminal justice system is broken, focusing far too much on criminalization and incarceration and far too little on rehabilitation" (<https://www-m.cnn.com/2017/01/09/opinions/america-needs-criminal-justice-reform-coons-tillis/index.html>). The Senators also note that the problems with juveniles should be at the forefront of reform. Many people may agree with these ideas but not many are acting to encourage change.

Senators Conns and Tillis also approach their work with faith by stating: "In Leviticus 19, the Lord urges Moses, 'Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.' We do a great disservice to our nation's future when we do not judge children fairly or treat them justly."

*How about you and your community? Is it too late?*

Next month, we will continue this dialogue with your comments and discussion questions from *Just Mercy*, Chapter 2, Stand and Chapter 3, Trials and Tribulations

Please share your thoughts at [ICCC60423@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ICCC60423@sbcglobal.net).

## WCF Update

Hello Everyone,

It is a blessing to be able to greet you once again.

Our 2018 Annual conference is over. It was a great conference!

I would like to thank the following people for all of their hard work and efforts in making the WCF program and breakfast a success.



Thank you to:

- Vice-President, Connee Fitch-Blanks for the work she put into the program and the prayer breakfast.
- 2nd Vice-President, Dorothy Gardner for her effort in finding the organization for the Shoe Box Ministry.
- Secretary, Winessa Cruthchfield for the beautiful book marks she designed for the prayer breakfast
- Treasurer, Mary Summers for tracking our giving.
- Coordinator, Sandra Roberts for the enormous task of designing and assembling our booklet.
- Bazaar Coordinator, Elaine Richardson for all of the hard work she contributes to the Bazaar. Elaine also assisted Connee in the programing.

Thank you ladies for the job you did and I look forward to working with you again this year!

To those that have been affected by the storm, know that we continue to pray for you. Also, know that we are praying that the Lord will supply whatever needs you may have at this time.

I, along with Dorothy Gardner attended the retirement celebration for Rev. Leroy McCreary. Upon arriving we were pleasantly surprised to see many other ICCC members, including our Executive Director, Rev. Phil Tom. It was a great evening and so nice to be in the company of our ICCC family. On Sunday we attended People's Community Church's worship service. It was a heartwarming service. On behalf of the Women's Christian Fellowship we wish Rev. McCreary, and Mrs. Elaine McCreary many wonderful years of retirement. We also hope that he, Elaine, and their granddaughter, Ava Pearl, will continue to be a part of the ICCC family, and continue to attend the conferences.

Ladies, remember to notify any of the board members for any suggestions you may have for next year's conference.

Until next time, may God bless and keep you,  
Carol Nichols, WCF President

## 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).

## 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 about NRF [www.NorrisRF.org](http://www.NorrisRF.org).



## Why I Love the Council

I love the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) because it is all I know. I was 2 years old when the conference was established. Having a Baptist raised mother and a Methodist raised father, before I was born they decided to find a “neutral” church to worship and work in. So they joined Douglas Memorial Community Church in Baltimore, Maryland. I found out in 2009 that my father, Rev. Vincent Norris, was at the original meeting of ICCC in 1950.



Having become active in the Community Church movement, I love it because it has become family. I remember not understanding the struggles of the “Civil Rights Movement” in the late 50’s early 60’s. As a young teenager, I remember discussing issues that separated our nation when we were at conference and we listened to one another. Everyone spoke of God’s love and how we were to have that love for each other. And we stayed together. I remember a conference in California when I conducted a workshop. We had adults and youth, black and white, male and female, friends and strangers and I made them sit in groups with each representative. There were several questions presented and each group came to a conclusion. The thrill of the workshop for me was when this young white kid and this old black lady came to me with their arms around each other. They discovered they both had the same hobby and they told me they were going to stay in contact with each other.

When things happen in various parts of the country, we think about our brother and sister churches in the area and many times we are the first to reach out and help. We have become family. I can’t say that enough – *We have become family*. Our worship may differ, our music may differ, our form of celebration may differ, but we have learned how to embrace the differences because we are still family. Jesus prayed in John 17, “that they all may be one” and the council has embraced that prayer and we have become one in Christ. And that’s why I love the Council.

## Seeking a Senior Pastor

The Church at Litchfield Park (Arizona) is seeking to fill the position of Senior Pastor. The Church at Litchfield Park is an Interdenominational Christian Church that serves the Litchfield Park community and surrounding areas. The applicant must be ordained, effective in planning and leading worship services, be of firm Christian faith and able to assist members in applying and developing their Christian faith. The candidate should possess stellar biblical qualifications and must be able to communicate and teach the Word of God in a clear and effective manner.

### Qualifications:

- 1) Ordination required.
- 2) Three (3) years of prior service as Senior or Associate Pastor.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to preach sermons focused on interdenominational principles and doctrine.
- 4) Experience teaching Christian Education classes to various age groups.
- 5) Demonstrate the ability to serve the congregation with pastoral needs (i.e. visits to hospitals, shut-ins, counseling, weddings, funerals, memorial services).
- 6) Demonstrate the ability to work well with people/groups.
- 7) Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- 8) Must possess exceptional interpersonal skills.
- 9) Effective leadership skills for supervision of staff and Associate Pastors.
- 10) A strong and unwavering commitment to the mission of The Church at Litchfield Park and the Litchfield Park community.

Learn more about the church at: <https://www.churchatlitchfieldpark.org/>

Please email your resume along with a statement of your faith to [personnel-chair@clp.church](mailto:personnel-chair@clp.church).

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## Mission Statement



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

## Bargain Hunters – Check this out!

The Planning Committee for our Annual Conference tries very hard to keep conference costs and expenses as low as possible. There are so many factors and considerations involved in planning and executing a rewarding conference. We realize that if attendees spend the time, effort, and expense to come to the conference, we owe them an outstanding program. But like everything else, costs continue to go up, and you get what you pay for; so we strive to squeeze everything we can out of every penny spent.



That's why we haven't had to raise the registration cost since 2013. We knew, however, that sooner or later that would have to be increased too, in order to continue to provide an outstanding program and valuable experience for you.

But here's the good news, if you register early (by June 1), before the registration increase goes into effect, you can attend for the same price you did in 2013!

You know you get the best airfare if you book a flight at least 6 weeks before you fly to Jacksonville. You know that the Hyatt Hotel is giving us discounted room rates if you reserve them early. You know that you have to request the time off work to allow your employer to arrange scheduling. Why not register early in order to save even more?

A great city, a great hotel, a great conference...and a great price - plan now, and we'll see you in Jacksonville. Visit the Council website to register today. [www.ICCCNOW.org](http://www.ICCCNOW.org)

## Resources for Pastors and Congregations

The Lilly Endowment's Congregational Resource Guide is a treasure trove for congregations and their leaders. You can find resources on "Running Church Meetings," to church planning, to "Changing the Culture of your Church." Access the Congregational Resource Guide at <https://thecrg.org>.

The Presbyterian Church USA recently produced a new toolkit for redeveloping your congregation. This resource guide can be adapted and used by any congregation who is looking to redevelop and revitalize its life and mission. You can purchase this resource for \$3.95 at <https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/2231618001/vital-congregations-revitalization-initiative.aspx>.

Jim Kitchens from the Center for Healthy Churches has a blog that posts interesting articles about congregational life and renewal. You can access his blog at [chchurches.org](http://chchurches.org).

If you know of a resource that will be helpful for ICCC pastors and congregations, please send this information to DeAnn Anzaldi at [icccdc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:icccdc@sbcglobal.net), so that we can share it in The Christian Community.

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

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**Editors:** Phil Tom, DeAnn Anzaldi

**Circulation:** DeAnn Anzaldi

Telephone:  
815/464-5690

Fax:  
815/464-5692

**E-Mail:**  
[ICCC60423@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ICCC60423@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.ICCCNOW.org](http://www.ICCCNOW.org)

### ICCC Endowment Fund Status As of October 2, 2018

Gifts Goal by 30 June '19: .....\$15,000

Gifts since 7/01/18: .....\$7,668

Help us meet our goal, need: .....\$7,332

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

Current Fund Assets: .....\$340,407

Current Investment Mix:  
50% stocks, 48% bonds, 2% Cash

**Sharing Joys:**

- On October 7, ICCC Executive Director **Phil Tom** had the wonderful opportunity to worship and to celebrate World Communion Sunday with **Rev. John Woodcock**



and members of the **Church of the Loving Shepherd**, West Chester, PA. Their beautiful sanctuary and social hall is a converted barn, as you can see pictured here. Also pictured is Rev. John Woodcock speaking with church members.

- From ICCC Regional Trustee **Rev. Sharyon Cosey** "Kudos to all who attended the Midwest Region's (ICCC Central Zone, Region A) Fall mini-conference and to **The Center** (Palos Park, IL, **Rev. Chris Hopkins** Senior Pastor) for hosting the event!



*Pictured here are, Greg Outlaw, Rev. Bill Samuels, Carol Ann Brown and, Barbara Ratliff all from Commonwealth Community Church.*

- Palisades Community Church, Rev. Elizabeth Hagan** Senior Pastor, celebrated their 95th anniversary as a church October 20-21, 2018. Congratulations!

- Bishop Serge Theriault, Christian Catholic Rite of Community Churches**, Ottawa is passing on a press release regarding a new book about Mgr. Vilatte and his consecrator Mar Alvares Julius of the Indian Orthodox Church. He encourages you to get a copy of this informative book on the origin of our Catholic/Community Churches. The book, *Western Rites of Syriac-Malankara Orthodox Churches* is available on Amazon.com.



- The Jordan Scholarship was recently awarded to **Shirley Corbin**. Ms. Corbin attends **Douglas Memorial Community Church, Rev. Todd Yeary**, Senior Pastor and is seeking a Master of Arts in Church Ministries. Congratulations and best wishes in your educational endeavors!



- Congratulations and best wishes to **Rev. Leroy McCreary!** Leroy's final worship service with the **People's Community Church**, Berea, OH as he entered retirement was September 30th. ICCC Executive Director **Phil Tom** joined in the celebration, where they even named a street after Leroy!



Pictured here with Leroy are **Linda Hopkins** and **Rev. Dr. Charlene Watkins, Second Community Church** who joined in the celebration.



- Our prayers of joy are with **Rev. Charles Harkness**, his family and the **People's Community Church** family (Berea, OH) as Rev. Harkness begins his pastoral responsibilities as their new Senior Pastor. Pictured here, **Rev. Leroy McCreary** traditionally gives his Bible to the incoming pastor, Rev. Harkness. Rev. Harkness will be officially installed November 18th.



- The Arizona ICCC members will have their first Meet & Greet in a long time November 9th. The ICCC has a variety of ministries throughout Arizona and all are invited to meet and fellowship at the Rock Springs Café (35900 S. Old Black Canyon Hwy, Rock Springs, AZ). Please RSVP to ICCC Regional Trustee **Chaplain Ken Young** ChaplainKenYoung@gmail.com by Nov. 2nd.



**Our prayers are with:**

- Kay Andrews** and her family with the passing of her husband Al, who died October 1st. Al was an NCCUSA delegate for the ICCC from 1999-2002 and attended 9 conferences. A celebration of Al's life was held October 19th at the **Church at Litchfield Park, Rev. Dale Hopely** Senior Pastor.
- Ruth Glenn, St. Anne Woods Chapel Community Church**, IL who still is recovering from a car accident last April. **James Glenn**, her husband, was also hospitalized for almost 4 weeks. They were being driven by their oldest son to Ruth's 90th birthday party when the accident occurred. "God is good. We are improving. May God continue to bless us." ~ Ruth
- The family of **Charles Franklin Cooper**, who passed away Sept. 24th. Chuck was clergy with former ICCC church **Sts. Brendan & Brigid Catholic Mission**, which dissolved in Nov. 2016. Chuck remained an individual member and found interactions with the ICCC meaningful. You may remember Chuck recently published a book *Safety Harbor*. "I know he would appreciate your prayers." ~Patty



**Be sure to submit any church news you may have.... blessings, achievements, illnesses, passings, etc, to the council office so we can share with readers in future newsletters.**

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