

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A Voice for Ecumenical Congregations and Christians Around the World

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President's Message

Harry Foockle

Grace and Peace to the People of the ICCC

*As we leave November memories and
thoughts of thanksgiving linger...*

Number one for me was Veterans Day. I served 8 years active duty in the United States Air Force. I have so many memories of the Vietnam era and friends who did not come back or came back injured physically or mentally. It is like that in all wars, isn't it? Will they ever stop?

I am thankful every day for those who sacrifice and give the ultimate so we can live a free life. My prayer is that we honor those sacrifices with respect and remembrance.

Thanksgiving is a time to remember we live in a great and wonderful place called the United States. My prayer is that we honor this gift with respect and remembrance.

I am thankful to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. My prayer is that we honor God's gift of the Christ with respect and faithfulness to God's call.

Every day I am thankful for my God and family, for Antioch Church, where I serve as pastor and for the International Council of Community Churches. Speaking of this movement we call the ICCC, my prayer is we all honor it with respect and remember it in our giving.

Since we live in a time of great need...let us give more than just our words. Let us give of our resources. Resources that will insure our Veterans are cared for, our local churches can continue to tell others about the Christ and our ICCC to tell others we are all "One."



Advent approaches. Soon we celebrate and remember the birth of our Savior. I pray Advent will be a time of remembering this great gift from our God. Glory!



Just a moment to say an additional word....

I see who we are in the ICCC at the conference level as a place where programs, ministries and informational help on how to engage in ministry is what we do.

We offer support to local churches through our conference office and personnel. We bring folks together at Annual Conference to offer hope, encouragement and help to the ICCC membership.

We offer words of proclamation from time to time addressing issues in our society.

To coin a phrase, "The boots on the ground" then takes place in the local churches and communities where we organize, step up, step out and lead our churches in ministries which make a difference.

Locally, our ministry impact lifted up as the ICCC and what its core belief is that "we all may be one" makes the point of who we are as an organization empowered by the love of God for all God's children.

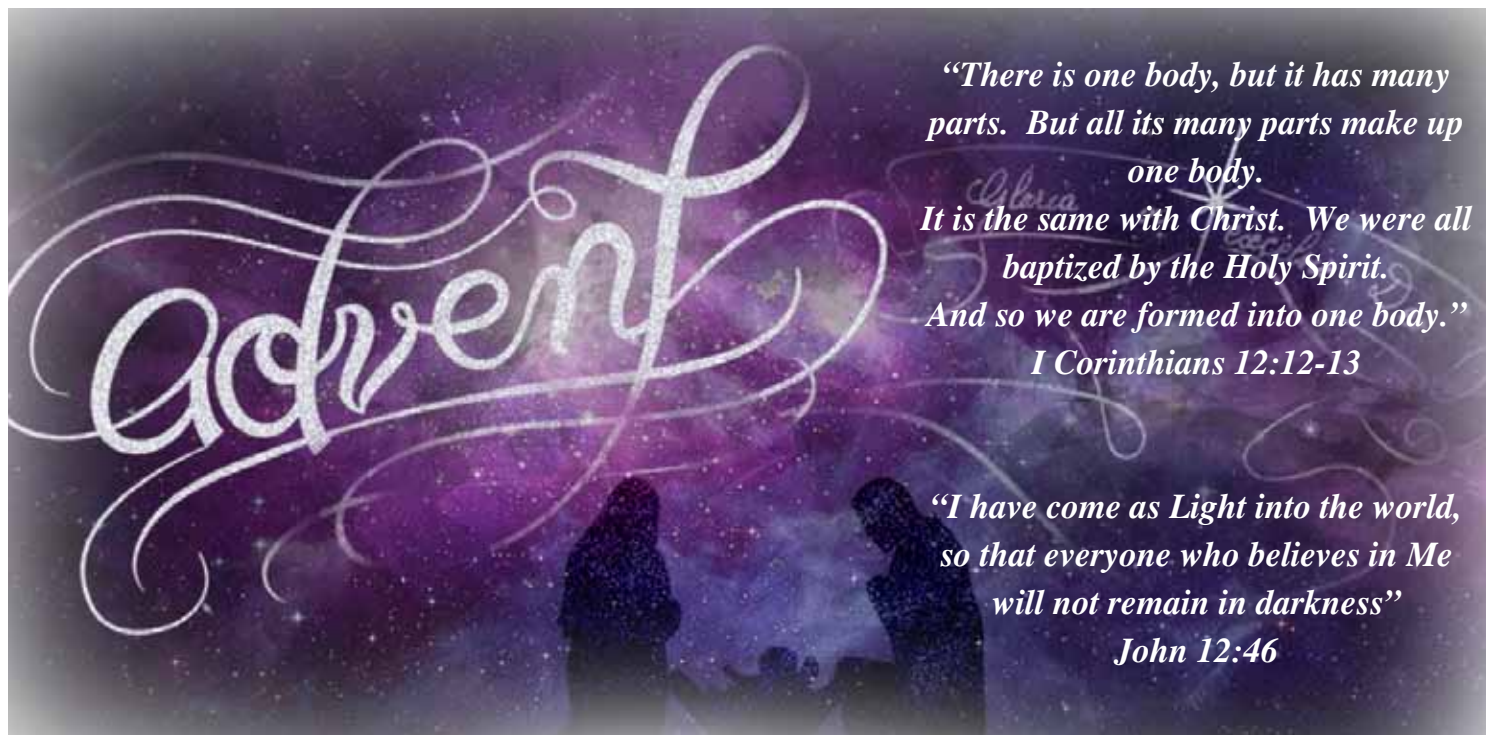
We are the International Council of Community Churches working in our local communities as Disciples of the Master.



Executive Director's Message

Advent Reflection

Phil Tom



"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" means that the individual parts make the entirety stronger. This statement is right for our ICCC family. ICCC as an organization is only as healthy and robust as its congregations, centers, and members.

Several folks have asked me – what is ICCC doing for me/us or what is ICCC and what does it do? I can recite the list of programs and resources that ICCC offers but I would prefer to say look at what is happening in our congregations and centers and how they are serving God and their neighbors. When someone asks

what ICCC is and what does ICCC do, we should be able to boldly proclaim that our congregations, centers, and members are fulfilling God's call and faithfully living out the gospel in serving our communities. We should be able to say congregation A is working for racial justice and reconciliation; Congregation B is feeding the hungry; Center C is housing and serving folks with addictions; Chaplain D is training his/ her colleagues on how to welcome diversity within the hospital staff, police force or military troops. This is who ICCC should be and what it should do! People should know ICCC not because of its name,

history, programs or operations but by its members' works!

Our congregations, centers, and members are points of light for God. Jesus proclaimed, "You are the light of the world.....Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:14-16)."

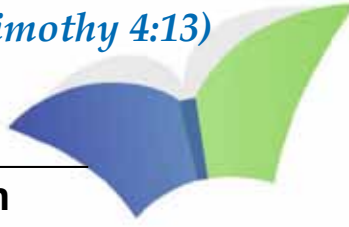
During this season of Advent, may we shine brightly for God, be light of the Light, joyfully proclaim that Jesus Christ is born and that the Light has come to shatter the darkness in our world!

Phil

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 ★★★★★ stars.

Audiobook, narrated by: Bryan Stevenson, Length: 11 hrs. and 5 mins, rated 5 stars, \$12.99

with Amazon Kindle purchased of \$14.99, Google Play, \$14.99

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

Welcome back to our discussion on *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. Let's start this month with some sharing from our Council readers!

"My 19-year-old grandson and I both loved the book and learned so much from this outstanding man and writer, and we still talk about it. This is "a book that is so important, is so readable and fascinating, and has information we all need to know and act on."—*Lonnie Miller, New Jersey*

We continue our dialogue with Discussion Questions from *Just Mercy*. Let's look at Chapter 2, Stand, and Chapter 3, Trials and Tribulations.



Bryan Stevenson

Just Mercy, Chapter 2, Stand. Several themes emerge: inmate deaths, racial profiling, and a call to action. On inmate deaths, Stevenson's writes, "Despite the reforms of the 1970s and early 1980s, inmate death in jails and prisons was still a serious problem. Suicide, prisoner-on-prisoner violence, inadequate medical care, staff abuse, and guard violence claimed the lives of hundreds of prisoners every year" (p. 37).

Do you think inmate deaths is an issue in today? Mark Clarke of *Prison Legal News* writes, "... the average combined daily population in local jails was 750,128 in 2014. There were 1,053 deaths among jail prisoners that year. Illnesses accounted for 498 of the deaths, with heart disease (239), respiratory disease (41) and cancer (38) being the leading causes. Additionally, 392 prisoners committed suicide (37% of jail deaths), 90 died due to drug or alcohol intoxication (a 25% increase over 2013) and 25 were victims of homicide" (<https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/jan/8/>



department-justice-releases-reports-prison-and-jail-deaths). Should we consider what occurs to our family members after imprisonment? Do these numbers reflect number your community?

We now turn to the question of does your state have Stand Your Ground laws? Do you support them? Recall last summer when an argument over of a parking space resulted in a death. The shooter was released because of an existing Stand Your Ground law.

Elizabeth Elkin and Dakin Andone, CNN reporters, wrote, "While most states provide some form of legal protection in cases of self-defense, 25 have enacted "stand your ground" laws, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). If your state was on the list, what would you do?"

To understand racial profiling, Stevenson asks, "... what approaches are effective means of reducing police brutality and increasing accountability" (p.7). David A. Graham's article in *The Atlantic* article helps answers this questions (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/police-accountability/472524/>).

Just Mercy, Chapter 3, Trials and Tribulations. Stevenson tells us of another trial, the events leading up to the trial, and then the verdict. Walter McMillian's story is our story, seeking justice of the fact, not on legal schemes. Let's look at one questions: here: (1) **In your opinion, who is most to blame for Walter's conviction?** Let consider a summary of facts from the Discussion Guide:

- Walter is arrested, but not for the murder of Ronda Morrison, because the district attorney's office had not yet done enough research on McMillian. But they are under pressure to make an arrest. Based on the dubious evidence provided by Ralph Myers, they put Walter in prison and continue to build their case.
- The trial is moved from a community with a large black population to a more affluent county with a much higher white population, therefore decreasing the potential of black jurors serving on McMillian's jury.

In your opinion, who is most to blame for Walter's conviction? The district attorney? The defense attorney? The community? The criminal justice system. You decide.

NEXT MONTH. We continue with your comments and Discussion Questions. We look at *Just Mercy*, Chapter Four, The Old Rugged Cross, and Chapter Five, Of the Coming of John

SHARE YOUR COMMENTS. Thank you for sharing your comments. They are encouraging to our discussion. Remember please share your thoughts at ICCC60423@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.

Why I Support ICCC

Submitted by Abraham Wright

As a graduate student at Howard University, I was introduced to the Council because I boarded directly across the street from an ICCC church. After attending the church off and on for almost a year, Grant Strong, my church mentor, gave me a telephone number, told me to call it, and ask for Jeff. I begged Grant for Jeff's last name, but Grant adamantly refused to give it to me. Reluctantly, I dialed the number and asked for Jeff. I later learned that his full name was Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Newhall, but ICCC's first-name basis was a familiar bond and a daily reminder of the equality among human beings, regardless of age or color. No sensible person would argue with that concept. Jeff became not only a close friend but a brother. We diligently worked together on the ICCC Board of Trustees, literally walking in each other's shoes, especially at the annual DC area camp retreat when we inadvertently got our tennis shoes mixed up.

I attended one of my best and earlier ICCC conferences in Memphis, Tennessee where I was nourished as a Young Adult, with the freedom of explicating scriptures, praying spontaneously on major programs, presenting dramatic recitations, singing in the Young Adult Made-up Choir and participating in Samaritan programs. I developed leadership skills and bonded with youths and adults of all ages. Serving as an ICCC Accredited Visitor at the 1991 World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra, Australia was one of the crown jewels of my experiences working with and representing ICCC among people who genuinely and contagiously loved each other. But the greatest joy was sharing my wider vision of people among the ICCC family when I returned to the United States.

As a humble lad, I also gradually met what would commonly be called some of the "Who's Who" Among ICCC parishioners. Their wisdom was fascinating and helped me to grow stronger and humbler as a member of ICCC. Among them were Robert Taylor, ICCC's ecumenical pioneer; Dr. Dorothy Sutton Branch, the icon female clergy who taught her male and female peers that anything (n-ne-thing) is possible with God; Marion Basom, the model pastor and the human rights/civil rights ambassador who extended the definition of love with as much elasticity as one needed. Marion was one of the first well-known church figures who spoke out freely for the dignity of individuals with AIDS and often reminded us that we need not wait for the law to decide what is right; the Word of God tells us so before the law is formed. Further, Marion constantly reminded us that we ought to have as much religion in our head and heart as we have in our feet and hands, and that we ought to

think about what we would do in certain situations before they occur. Also, among this group were Herb Freitag, a stalwart leader in the fight against the racial divide; Marion Henley, the "modern" Rosa Parks who represented us on the COCU Racial Task Force as well; Bob Puckett and Susan Miller, the Ambassadors of Goodwill,



specifically with mission programs, such as CORA; Dorothy Bascom, the model lay leader and one of COCU's first recording secretaries; Jeff Newhall and Kermit Long, the unofficial nourishing bishops; Pastor/Chaplain George Davis, the biblical scholar; Emma Smith and Caroline Burke, unmovable rocks in a weary land; Lonnie Miller, confidant extraordinaire; and Dee and Gail Clarke, who laid the foundation for acquiring Council House, our Illinois headquarters.

I also love and genuinely support ICCC because of the the admirable years of extended service by Council members such as Don Ashmall (ICCC pastor and an extended-term, hard-working Executive Director), Grace O'Neal, Sandra Nelson, Carolyn Ford, Leroy McCreary, Bob Harris, Herman Harmelink, and Louis Joy; and for the current gifts of the leadership of Harry Foockle, who does not rest until his work is done and wakes up each morning with visions of new mercies for ICCC; the leadership of the Immediate Past President, Bill Samuels; and that of Rev. Philip Tom, whose energy and understanding of the kingdom of God just keep multiplying and multiplying and multiplying toward making ICCC one of the most inviting fellowships of Christian love. Recent leadership positions of Pastors Karen Neely and Rhonda Blevins, Carl Davis, Bruce Jones, and Marcus Tillery, continued leadership of Board of Directors members Nick Brame (and Trustee Myrtis Brame), Roberta Smith, and Herman Harmelink, and the incredible expertise of Office Administrator DeAnn Anzaldi encourage the Council to keep the faith through the night.

In essence, with sound Christian beliefs, ICCC works diligently toward nurturing a fellowship "as comprehensive as the spirit and teachings of Christ and as inclusive as the love of God" (*The Council's Initial Constitution*).

Who wouldn't love and support a fellowship like this?

Why We Belong to the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC)

Recently a committee was formed to address the membership and financial status of the ICCC. The initial results was the unanimous adoption of the Why We Belong statement (below) by our Board of Directors.

Please share this with all members of your churches and encourage use by ICCC laity and clergy to share this while inspiring new churches to join our wonderful ICCC.

The International Council of Community Churches is a movement of community churches and centers who value and respect:

- Being a multiracial and ecumenical communion of churches and centers
- The diversity of humanity
- Unity without church and center uniformity
- Membership in the global Christian community
- It's members' independence without the requirements of denominational membership.

We welcome all who wish to follow Christ. We represent like-minded churches who actively work to build community wherever they may happen to be. We seek to draw the circle wider to embrace all races and cultures and people in other circumstances under the umbrella of the Christian community.

Through our ecumenical relationships, we collaborate with our fellow Christians to continue to work for the higher purpose of One in Christ. We speak out to remind our nation and the world that the reason that the ICCC was created in 1950 is still relevant today to embrace all races and cultures that we are ONE in Christ.

To fully experience the benefits of Membership in the ICCC, active participation is a must of congregations, centers and individuals. Active member churches and centers have a real "Seat" and a vote at the table in the ICCC.

Some of the services and opportunities provided by ICCC include:

- Multiracial and ecumenical fellowship, worship, educational learning and networking through our regional gatherings, Annual Conference, Zoom events, etc.
- Assistance and support for pastors searching for new calls, and congregations seeking new pastors
- Investment and retirement benefits are made available to ICCC churches, faith-based institutions and their staff through the Ministers and Missionaries Benefits Board.
- Membership in an international church network and the global Christian community through ICCC's membership in the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Christian Community Together.
- Leadership development programs
- Technical assistance for congregations through a network of skilled members throughout the country.
- Grant program assistance for churches and pastors
- Affiliation membership for Chaplains

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**A Voice for
Ecumenical Congregations
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ICCC Endowment Fund Status As of November 10, 2018

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

Gifts since 7/01/18:\$8,510

Help us meet our goal, need:\$6,490

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

Current Fund Assets:.....\$331,129

Current Investment Mix:
49% stocks, 49% bonds, 2% Cash

Why I Love the Council

Hello Everyone,

I pray that the upcoming holiday season will be a Blessed one for all. I pray that those affected by the storms and fires will feel the love of God surrounding them, for we know that "Prayer Changes Things."

Ladies, remember that you have a voice in the WCF. We have started making plans. If you have ideas or suggestions regarding the program for the 2019 Annual Conference, let your voice be heard. We want to hear from you.

Also ladies, if there is information that your churches are involved in and you want to pass the information on, let me know. My e-mail is cs83nick@aol.com.

Until next time, May the Lord 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) 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.

ICCC and Social Media

Here is where you can find the ICCC!

#ICCCNOW



Facebook: Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/621865474840291/>
Page - <https://www.facebook.com/ICCCNOW/>
(For the ICCC Regional Groups, visit our website under Headlines)



Instagram: @icccnow



Snapchat: icccnow



Twitter: @icccnow

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. More information about NRF www.NorrisRF.org.

Sharing Joys:

- **Revs. Tony and Fran Begonja, Heart of Jesus Ministries**, have relocated to Tampa, FL and are seeking ICCC churches in their new area to visit. The Chicago ICCC Region will miss their presence at their area meetings!
- WELCOME to ICCC's newest member church, **American Apostolic Old Catholic Church**, located in St. Charles, IL!! The church joined November 9th. We look forward to a fruitful relationship!
- **People's Community Church** in Berea, OH installed their new Senior Pastor, **CJ Harkness** on November 18th. We welcome you to the church and to the ICCC!
- A special thanks to **Bob Fread**, ICCC Clergy, who visited the Council Office and went through some archives as we clean the office basement. It's amazing all the ICCC and Community Church Movement history and knowledge he has. Ask him sometime at conference!
- Executive Director, **Phil Tom**, recently visited **Second Community Church** in Columbus, OH. They met to work on their Pastoral Search. Pictured below are **Deacon Daniel Nelson, Sandra Smith, Elder Joan Spencer, Claudia Harper, Jodi Hopkins, Donna Sinclair, Connie Oliver, Francis Smallwood and Linda Hopkins**. All recognizable from Annual Conference. "Our congregation and Council are blessed to have such a caring Executive Director." ~ Daniel Nelson. While in Ohio, Phil also met with Gahanna Congregation Community Church's Pastoral Search committee as they prepare to find a new Senior Pastor.



- Executive Director, **Phil Tom** had the wonderful opportunity on November 10th to participate in the annual banquet sponsored by the Eastern Zone, Region B, Area 1, Samaritan Men and Women's Christian Fellowship at Douglas Memorial Community Church, Baltimore, MD. It was a great program and a great turnout of almost 200 people! The officers - **Sandra Roberts, Abraham Wright, Mary Summers, Frances Garner, Mytris Brame, and James Jones** did a great job in organizing this event! Phil also had the opportunity to worship with the Palisades Community Church in Washington, DC on Sunday, November 11.

Our prayers are with:

- **Dick Meese** and his family with the passing of his wife **Mary Meese**. She passed away October 24th. The memorial service was held on November 17th at her church, **The Church at Litchfield Park** in Arizona. Both Mary and Dick, attended many conferences and were active supporters of the ICCC.
- As announced last month, **Al Andrews** passed away October 1st. The memorial service was held at **The Church at Litchfield Park, AZ**. If you would like to watch that service, you can visit www.thechurchatlitchfieldpark.org and find Memorials under Resources.

Gifts have been received for the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| As a Memorial to: | Sandy Singley from Tim & Shannon Meadows |
| In Honor of: | Rev. Carol E. Parrish-Harra from Carol Beyer, the former Church in Radburn Foundation from Joan & Martin Massler |



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This holiday, make a difference while you shop.

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50 Ways to Take Church to the Community

The following article is from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership (2014). The complete piece can be found at <https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-take-church-to-the-community/>.

Churches can no longer open their doors and expect that people will come in. Effective congregations go into the world to encounter those in need of the gospel. These 50 Ways provide tips on reaching beyond the walls of your church with worship, community events, ministries, and service.

Embrace an expansive concept of community

1. Learn to regard your community as an extension of your congregation. A church's mission field goes beyond its membership to include all the people God calls it to serve. You are connected to individuals who never set foot in your building.
2. Know that what's happening within the church — preaching, worship, music, Bible study — is no longer enough to attract people in an age when church attendance is no longer a cultural expectation.
3. Don't sit in your church building waiting for people to come. Be prepared to meet people where they are.

Prepare spiritually

4. Acknowledge the synergy between the Great Commandment in Matthew 22 (love your neighbor as yourself) and the Great Commission in Matthew 28 (go and make disciples). Evangelistic outreach expresses our love of others.
5. Remember that Jesus primarily engaged people through everyday encounters, rather than in the Temple or synagogues. He fed people, met their everyday needs, and enjoyed the fellowship of others.
6. Express love and compassion for your community in big and small ways. Avoid judgmentalism.
7. Pray regularly for your neighbors and lift up community concerns.
8. Attend to the faith formation of existing members. Willingness to share faith and reach out to others develops as one grows in faith and discipleship.
9. Prepare spiritually for the transformation that creative, risk-taking outreach will bring.

Please visit <https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-take-church-to-the-community/> where you will find this article in its entirety.

Seeking a 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.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Minister has accountability to the Congregation and to the governing boards (Board of Stewards and Board of Trustees). The Senior Minister's primary responsibility is to conduct the religious services of the Church and to perform all duties pertaining to his/her office. The Senior Minister shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer and Spiritual Leader of the Church, and in cooperation with the governing boards, coordinate and administer the various Church ministries.

The Senior Minister is also responsible for leading, developing, and inspiring staff and volunteers in achieving high levels of performance and service to the Church and surrounding community. Required to regularly visit members who are sick and shut-in or in institutions of care. Also, responsible for conducting weekly Bible study classes that aid individuals in developing a better understanding of God's word, which helps to foster a more meaningful and deeper commitment to the Church and service to others. The Senior Minister is expected to maintain office hours that support the needs of the Church and Congregation.

QUALIFICATIONS

- He/She must be a graduate of a University and a graduate of a Theological Seminary with a divinity degree or its equivalent.
- Must have actively pastored at least three (3) years over a Congregation that is recognized by the National Council of Churches.
- Must have demonstrated preaching, pastoral, and Church administration experience.

CHARACTER AND QUALITIES

- Passionately embodies God's word and exemplifies the gospel in his/her daily life; consistently demonstrating moral character and decision making internal and external to the Church.
- Does not engage in any activity or behavior that creates or potentially creates a conflict of interest for the Church or in any way harms the reputation of the Church.
- Excellent listener who enables members to increase their participation within the Church.

DESIRED SKILLS

- Highly developed communication skills, including the ability to clearly outline and articulate the Vision, Mission, and Strategies that continually develops and advances the Church.
- Must have excellent partnering and resolution skills, which fosters an environment that encourages member support of diverse opinions and ideas that enhance the Church's mission; ability to effectively manage change and growth.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills and integrity in providing confidential counseling to members and others; sensitive and compassionate to the needs of others.

TO APPLY

Please forward your resume to: The Historic People's Community Church, 8601 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48202, Attn: Paul Williams, Jr., Board of Stewards
or to: Church email address: pcc8601@ameritech.net • or contact the Church office: (313) 871-4676

Note: The job description is not an all-inclusive list of duties and responsibilities, character and qualities, and desired skills. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience. This position will require a background check and drug screen for a candidate who receives a contingent offer.