



2017 Annual Report Illinois Conference of Churches

The Illinois Conference of Churches (ICC) is a state-wide ecumenical organization of 26 member Judicatories of 13 denominations representing the Protestant, Anglican, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian traditions. The ICC is an ecumenical table that brings together religious leaders, judicatory staff, clergy, and lay representatives from the member churches for dialogue, deliberation, and decisions. The ICC is an institutional expression of the ecumenical movement, a vehicle for the church's mission in Illinois for bearing witness together to the gospel of reconciliation. The Illinois Conference of Churches website is located at www.illinoisconferenceofchurches.org.

Illinois Conference of Churches Mission Statement:

The Illinois Conference of Churches seeks to be an inclusive community of churches that celebrates and makes visible our sacred bonds of unity in Christ. We will do this by promoting an honest sharing and understanding of both our common and divergent theological convictions; and making public, prophetic witness to Christ's love for all people, particularly by addressing poverty and racism.

The Illinois Conference of Churches is comprised of a half time staff position – Laurie Vial, Executive Director. Laurie's position transitioned from full time to half time in 2016 in an attempt to balance the budget. In addition, the ICC is comprised of teams of judicatory representatives and delegates who dedicate their time to furthering the mission and vision of the Illinois Conference of Churches.

Leadership Team – The Leadership Team governs the ICC as needed including all personnel matters and planning the ICC Annual Assembly. The Leadership Team is led by two co-chairs, at least one of whom is a Judicatory Executive (if possible). The chairs of the other four teams also sit on the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team consists of the following members Rev. Gary McCants, African Methodist Episcopal and Rev. Wally Carlson, United Methodist Church – co-chairs; Dr. John Charlton, American Baptist - treasurer; Rev. Sharon Patton, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Fr. Kevin Laughery, Catholic Church; Dr. George Johnston, Presbyterian Church USA; Rev. Megan Dean, United Methodist Church; E. Garnet Fay, Religious Society of Friends, Rev. Galda McCants, African Methodist Episcopal, Rev. Catiana McKay, United Methodist Church; Alicja Lukaszewicz-Southall, Episcopal Church, Fr. George Pyle, Greek Orthodox and Greg Krohm, Catholic Church.

Public Policy Team – The Public Policy Team (PPT) takes a leadership role on public policy issues that impact ICC member judicatories. The team is vocal on concerns primarily before the Illinois General Assembly and Congress. The team carries out the portion of the ICC's mission statement, "*to make public, prophetic witness to Christ's love for all people, and to address in particular, issues of poverty and racism.*" It is this part of the mission statement that guides the PPT's efforts as it works in consultation with the ICC's Leadership Team and the Illinois Christians Encountering Racism (ICER) Team. The Public Policy Team consists of the following members: E. Garnet Fay, Religious Society of Friends - chair; Robert Gilligan, Catholic Conference of Illinois; Rev. Gary McCants, African Methodist Episcopal Church; Rev. Wally Carlson, United Methodist Church and Rev. Dr. John Rickard, Presbyterian Church USA.

Illinois Christians Encountering Racism (ICER) Team – The Illinois Christians Encountering Racism (ICER) Team is a ministry focused on dismantling systematic racism and building bridges to racial wholeness within churches, institutions, and communities. ICER implements its mission by offering training to members within the ICC network of churches as well as to the community. The ICER Team consists of the following members Rev. Kevin Laughery, co-chair, Catholic Church; Rev. Galda McCants, co-chair, African Methodist Episcopal; Rev. Dwight Bailey, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Mark Harkness, United Methodist Church; Martha Herrin, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Megan Dean, United Methodist Church, Rev. Christine Hopkins, Episcopal Church and Rev. Sharon Patton Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Annual Assembly Forum– The Annual Assembly Forum Team plans and implements a forum annually to engage denominational representatives and judicatory executives in meaningful dialog at the Annual Assembly. The Forum Team consists of the following members: Rev. Wally Carlson, United Methodist Church, chair; Rev. Catiana McKay, United Methodist Church; Fr. Robert Flannery, Catholic Church, Rev. Robert Sherman, United Church of Christ. Marianne Stowers, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has resigned from this Team and we thank Marianne for her many years of service to the ICC.

Interreligious Team- Members: Rev. Catiana McKay, chair, United Methodist Church Dr. John Charlton, American Baptist Church, Fr. Kevin Laughery, Catholic Church, Hakan Berberoglu, Niagra Foundation, Alicja Lukaszewicz-Southall, Episcopal Church, Fr. Bob Flannery, Catholic Church and Greg Krohm, Catholic Church.

Recap of activities

- The Leadership Team met quarterly.
- Held the 12th Annual Assembly in Bloomington focusing on “United in Christ: Reconciliation and Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.” Dinner was held the night before.
- Decreased our operational budget, seeking ways to become better stewards of our donations.
- Newsletter was published quarterly.
- Updated our website.
- Invited our 13 member denominations and their members to anti-racism training offered by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- Sent executive director to annual meetings of all denominations to bring greetings and participate in exhibition space.
- Sent executive director to the national gathering all of state ecumenical executives.
- The ICER Team met frequently by conference call.
- Held a Rally in the Rotunda and prayer service to pray for the passing of the state budget especially to help social service and public education.
- Supported Donor Sabbath and began work on a new website tab on End-of-Life Decisions.
- 2-2-17 “The Illinois Conference of Churches, the ecumenical body of the state of Illinois, representing 13 Christian denominations, calls on the people of Illinois and all citizens of the United States to pray for our nation and its leaders to remember we are a nation of laws where all voices of our nation deserve to be heard as we recognize human rights and freedoms. We further call for humility, healing, reconciliation, peace and calmness in the wake of divisiveness. Consequently, our highest priority is

that all people treat other people as they would wish other people treat them, remembering that all people of all faiths are children of God, deserving of respect.”

- Policy statement on immigration, refugees was passed on 2-10-17
- Held a Joint Teams Meeting in May in Bloomington-Normal with a program on End-of-Life Decisions.