

# Your Church and the International Council of Community Churches





## What does it mean to be a member of the International Council of Community Churches?

The International Council of Community Churches is a community of ecumenically minded, freedom-loving churches cooperating in fulfilling the mission of the Church in the world, witnessing and working for Christian unity and reconciliation in human society. That is the work we consistently carry into our future.

While every church and center in the ICCC is unique and autonomous, we strive to be valuable and relevant to our diverse members. Through the ICCC, these member churches and centers find mutual encouragement and resourcing, that their local ministries may be strengthened, plus together develop connections for ministry and mission in the wider church.

### What is the ICCC?



The International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) is a fellowship of self-governing churches and ministry centers. The ICCC was formed in 1950 as a merger between a group of Black congregations and a group of white congregations, seeking to be a fellowship of ecumenically-minded, freedom-loving congregations cooperating in fulfilling the mission of Christ and the Church in the world.

From its beginnings the Council, as an interracial, intercultural, post-denominational movement, has witnessed and worked for Christian unity and has been committed to justice and reconciliation in all of human society. As people following Christ we are committed to community, to treasuring diversity, and living our faith in service and love.




*(The Rev. Dr. Joseph Evens (left) of the Biennial Council of Community Churches shakes hands with the Rev. Dr. Roy Burkhart (right) of the National Council of Community Churches in 1950 at the creation of the International Council of Community Churches.)*



**“I am about to do a new thing...” Isaiah 43:19**

### Why Financially Support the ICCC?



Any organization is only as strong as the support given by its members, therefore the ICCC can only serve and resource our churches, engage in common mission and take its role in the wider Church in proportion to the annual support given by its members. Member churches and centers are required each year to contribute to the General Fund of the ICCC. Because of this contribution, together we are able to gather for worship, learning and fellowship at Annual Conference, produce resources for churches, offer virtual enrichment and learning opportunities, offer our staff for professional assistance, offer standing and endorsement for clergy, participate in ecumenical organizations, and engage in common mission through grants to local churches and aid following disasters and humanitarian crises.

Like-minded individuals are also invited to financially support the ICCC to further our common mission and ministry.



# Annual Conference

The churches and ministry centers of the ICCC engage in an Annual Conference, held in a new location each year. This Annual Conference is time for Community churches pastors and laity to network with each other and share in fellowship, worship, learning and mission. At Annual Conference we get to see ourselves as a covenant community committed to be in ministry and mission together. Moving ahead the ICCC is beginning to explore virtual and hybrid models of holding conference so more people can participate.



# Missions

In many church bodies programming and missions money is dictated at the national level, having a “top down” approach. The ICCC, following its historic commitment to local autonomy and resourcing of local churches, is committed to “local” and “bottom up” missions giving. This means that locally missions money is invested in the mission programs of our local churches. Then at a national and international level, support follows money already given by local churches and individuals to address large scale humanitarian needs by doing together what we can’t do apart.

The ICCC’s engagement in missions includes:

## Local Church Mission Grants

ICCC churches and centers may apply for a Local Church Mission Grant to assist their church in ministering to their community. Mission programs such as a food pantry or meal program, after-school learning or recreation program, reading, tutoring or mentorship program, senior citizen meal or activity program, quilt/blanket ministry, local resettlement of a refuge or migrant family, racism or racial justice education program, etc. may qualify.

## Disaster and Humanitarian Relief

The ICCC is a long time member of Church World Service (CWS), an ecumenical and cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations and communions, providing disaster relief, refugee assistance, anti-hunger and poverty relief, and promoting justice and peace both in the US and around the globe.

## Human Development

Another long time relationship of the ICCC is with World Neighbors (WN). This international organization works to alleviate hunger, poverty and disease in some of the most isolated and rural villages in Asia, Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean. They take a holistic approach by focusing on the entire community- training and inspiring them to create their own life-changing solutions through programs in agriculture, literacy, water, health care, leadership, financial development and environmental protection.

Support for all these missions should be sent to the ICCC Office.



## Education

Through the ICCC's education partner, Lexington Theological Seminary (LTS), there is a wide variety of learning opportunities from theological education for laity and those pursuing a call to ordained ministry, continuing education for clergy, to learning and enrichment webinars on contemporary issues for the whole church. LTS offers traditional degree theological degrees (M. Div. & D. Min.), plus degrees focused on African-American and Hispanic ministry, lay theology certificates and an annual continuing education certificate. All



programs are offered in-person or via internet. Some small scholarships are available through the ICCC for educational opportunities at LTS.

## Resourcing, Networking and Serving Our Local Churches

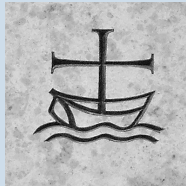


The ICCC exists to serve its local churches. Here are some ways we seek to serve and resource our churches:

- + Assistance and support of churches during the process of search and call of a pastor.
- + Publishes a annual Lenten devotional booklet.
- + Produces a resource kit so churches can celebrate their Community Church heritage on Community Churches Sunday.
- + Educational webinars for laity and clergy. Webinar topics in recent years have included suicide, racism and grant writing.
- + Scholarships for undergraduate students and those pursuing a graduate theological education.

## Christian Unity

The ICCC, itself a microcosm of the ecumenical movement, has always been committed to the unity of Christ's church. The Council as a member of several ecumenical organizations engages in relationships with other denominations and communions for the sake of witnessing to the unity of the wider Church and of the world. The ICCC is a member of the World Council of Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Churches Uniting in Christ and Christian Churches Together. It also engages in conversations with other Christian bodies and an inter-religious dialogues.



## The International Council of Community Churches

*We seek a church  
as inclusive as the love of God  
and a faith  
as comprehensive as the spirit  
and teachings of Christ.*

*As a people devoted to following Christ,  
we are committed to  
an inclusive and just community,  
treasuring diversity,  
and living our faith in service and love.*

## Retirement and Pension Programs

Through the Ministers and Missionaries Benefits Board (MMBB) the ICCC offers a comprehensive benefits plan for ordained or lay staff of our local congregations. The plan has options for pension, disability, and life insurance. Membership in the pension plan is an the option of the local congregation. Other services by MMBB include individual retirement savings accounts and financial planning services.



## How Do I Learn What is Happening in the ICCC?

Good communication is essential for any group. Here is how you can learn what is happening in the ICCC:

- + Subscribe to our E-newspaper, *The Christian Community*, by emailing [iccnnow@sbcglobal.com](mailto:iccnnow@sbcglobal.com)
- + Receive email communications from the ICCC. Email your address to [iccnnow@sbcglobal.com](mailto:iccnnow@sbcglobal.com) and ask to be added to the email list.
- + Follow the "International Council of Community Churches Group" on Facebook.

