



**Inter-Church  
Ministries**  
of Erie County

# T O G E T H E R

*Working Together...United in Faith*

Volume 2019.4 ...*Feeding Body, Mind + Spirit Since 1975* Winter 2019

## VISION STATEMENT

The Vision of Inter-Church Ministries of Erie County is to:

WITNESS to Christ through unity among Christian churches;

ENCOURAGE interfaith cooperation;

SHARE resources with those in need; and to

DO nothing separately that can be done better TOGETHER.

*(adopted 2/19/04)*

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Dear Friends:

December 2019

## *A Message from the President*

Christmas greetings to one and all. I trust you had a wonderful Christmas celebration of God's gift to us – the Hope of all Ages, Jesus Christ!

As we think about the new year, a familiar song to many Christians is *"Hold to God's Unchanging Hand."* Part of the significance of the words of this song has everything to do with transitions. Part of the lyrics is, *"Time is filled with swift transitions."* *Transitions...* a very appropriate word for Inter-Church Ministries.

Included in the many transitions time brings at Inter-Church Ministries (ICM) is our own, with the irreplaceable, Mrs. Diane Edwards, transitioning into the next phase of her and her family's life. Part of the transition also includes new board members and officers to carry the vision and mission.

As we transition, we take comfort above all else in the powerful presence of the one who stated very clearly, *"... And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."* God is, and will always, be with us in the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ. With confidence we look forward to all that God has in store as we transition under a new director.

We are grateful for past and present members of the ICM board for its collective wisdom that will guide us into new territory and vistas of opportunity. While ICM takes a pause and deep breath, we take great comfort in what Sister Edwards has given us to advance ICM's evolutionary Mission, Vision, Objectives and Values.

It is our hope that all who read this newsletter will join us in our heartfelt thanks for the thirteen years Sister Edwards has given us with all her heart, mind, soul and strength. We ask your prayers for her and her wonderful husband who lent her to us with his same loving sacrifice of service.

Please remember us in your prayers as we invite your continued support in this time of swift transitions in our churches, nation and the world.

Have a prosperous and healthy new year!

*Charles Mock, Servant Leader*

T'was the Night before Retirement  
(Original poem thanks to Clement Clarke Moore)  
(This tribute version... thanks to Mary Mumford)

T'was the night before Retirement when all thru the church  
Not a creature was stirring but Diane on her perch.

She said, "What have I done all the years I've been here?"  
I said, "Sit back and listen, I'll now bend your ear."

You stepped up to bat thirteen years ago,  
Whatever the hat, you'd just say, "Let's go!"  
You come in from a meeting with encouraging word,  
And see 48 phone messages to be heard!

You got right to work, to the team gave a whistle;  
No matter the load, you'd deal with the gristle.

On Faxer and Printer, Computer and Shredder,  
On Vouchers and Quickbooks, Reports and Newsletters!

To the top of the pile, to the top of the hill,  
Office Administration was certainly a skill.

Media reviews, seminars, meetings galore,  
You urged us to grow in our thinking and more –  
With Inter-Church Ministry always a goal,  
Your people skills shone through your generous soul.

You also could climb to the top of a steeple  
When it comes to compassion in dealing with people.

To the bus depot, trailer park, anywhere seedy,  
Your heart is too big to leave anyone needy.

Opening your purse and using your cash,  
You'd try to bring help to those dealing with trash.

You've worn so many hats I can barely begin  
To say which one was best – you wore all for the win!

Now please hear us exclaim as you go out of sight,  
Merry Retirement to you, and to you a Good Night!!

Thank you, Diane Edwards!

*Read at Diane's retirement dinner with ICM board, guests  
and friends....December 19, 2019... Knox Hall*

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*Thank you dear board members, volunteers  
and friends for the inspired Songfest, the  
delicious dinner and heartfelt sentiments  
expressed. You are all very special to me....  
wishing you all the best always! Diane*

## Inter-Church Ministries' Council Members/Officers



At ICM's 2019 Annual Meeting held on  
October 15<sup>th</sup> at Luther Memorial  
Church, new officers\* and council  
members\* were elected and installed:

### Class of 2020

Dr. Gregory Baker (Roman Catholic)  
Rev. Dr. Charles Mock (National Baptist Conv.  
U.S.A., ICM President\*)  
Rev. Harold Blair (United Methodist)  
Rev. James Haas (Presbyterian)  
Rev. Kristen Papson (Lutheran ELCA)  
Sr. Rosemary O'Brien (Sisters of St. Joseph)  
Rev. William Coleman (Lutheran ELCA)  
Rev. Dale B. Snyder (African Methodist Episcopal)

### Class of 2021

Rev. Dan Arnold (Roman Catholic)  
Rev. Harry H. Johns III (Presbyterian,  
ICM Exec. Committee Member at Large\*)  
Debra Johnson (Non-denominational)  
Rev. Richard A. Moyer (UCC, Treasurer\*)  
Rev. Robert Lewis (United Methodist, ICM VP\*)  
Rev. Adrienne Rush (African Methodist Episcopal,  
ICM Exec. Committee Member-at-Large\*)  
Kristin Headley (Presbyterian)  
Johnny Johnson (Church of God, Anderson, Indiana  
ICM Immediate Past President\*)

### Class of 2022

Rev. Dr. James Bernhardt\* (Presbyterian)  
Dr. Aaron Kerr (Roman Catholic, Secretary\*)  
Rev. Katie White (American Baptist,  
ICM Exec. Committee Member at Large\*)  
Sr. Mary Ellen Plumb (Benedictine, ICM VP\*)  
Dr. Zachary Irwin (Episcopal)  
Rev. David Edmunds (Presbyterian)  
Geyzel Mendoza (Pentecostal)  
Rev. Floyd McClure\* (Baptist)

**POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT & MEDIAN INCOME ARE MEASURES of ERIE'S OVERALL ECONOMIC HEALTH & NEED FOR SOCIAL SUPPORTS**

According to Erie Vital Signs ([www.erievitalsigns.org](http://www.erievitalsigns.org)):

In 2013-17 –

Median household income in Erie County was **\$48,200** (down from \$53,900 in 2000)...

Median household income in City of Erie was **\$35,800** (down from \$41,800 in 2000)

\*17% of Erie County residents had incomes below the poverty level (**up 5% points** since 2000)

\*27% of City of Erie residents had incomes below the poverty level (**up 8% points** since 2000)

\*25% of children under 18 in Erie County lived below the poverty line (**up 9% points** since 2000)

\*39% of children under 18 in the City of Erie lived below the poverty line (**up 12% points** since 2000)...

...higher than the state (19%) and the nation (20%)

In 2017, **unemployment rate in Erie County was 5.8%**

...higher than state (4.9%) and the nation (4.4%)

In 2017, **unemployment rate in City of Erie was 6.4%**

...(up 1.5% points since 2000)...

**ICM Voucher Program Serves Neighbors in Need**

**Impact in 2018:**

603 (314 adults/289 children)...261 vouchers...nearly \$9,000 in direct aid (food, gas, lodging, other emergency needs)

**Impact in 2017:**

582 (352 adults/230 children)...234 vouchers...nearly \$9,000 in direct aid (food, gas, lodging, other emergency needs)

**Impact in 2016:**

628 (387 adults/241 children)...249 vouchers...nearly \$9,300 in direct aid (food, gas, lodging, other emergency needs)



**Scholarship**

**“MORAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS”**

Established in 2015 in celebration of ICM's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1975–2015) and in honor of Sister Mary Louis Eichenlaub, OSB, ICM's Moral Leadership Awards are to provide **educational scholarships to graduating high school seniors** who have demonstrated leadership qualities, including: integrity, responsibility, dependability, character, positive attitude, moral leadership and service with a heart.

Unlike 'celebrity' leadership that stresses individual heroism, achievement or success, applicants must exhibit and embrace the concept of moral leadership involving service to others on behalf of the common good in their schools, their neighborhoods and/or their community.

**Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded.**

Deadline for submitting a scholarship application is **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**.

For complete details about the application process, please call the ICM office at:

(814) 454-2411 or

by email: [icm@icmeriecounty.com](mailto:icm@icmeriecounty.com)

**Mark Your Calendars for these Upcoming Community Opportunities in 2020**

**Saturday, January 11, 2020** – 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. King Awards Dinner at Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafra Pier, Erie - Dinner begins promptly at 6 pm; Tickets: \$50 / person; Guest Speaker: Martin Luther King, III (oldest son of the late Dr. King Jr. and Mrs. Coretta Scott King); For more information: Executive Director James Sherrod (814) 459-2761 [www.mlkcentererie.org](http://www.mlkcentererie.org)

**Thursday, January 16, 2020** at 4 pm – Crossroads Community Baptist Church, 5827 Old French Road. Video presentation and lots of time for discussion in groups re: “Hate over Hope”; Event sponsored by One Table – come early for meet and greet time from 3:30 pm to 4pm.

**Friday, February 7, 2020** at 6:15 pm at Temple Anshe Hessed, 5401 Old Zuck Road, Erie. Educational “Seder Meal” hosted by the congregation at Temple Anshe Hessed, for those interested in learning about how and why our Jewish friends celebrate this ancient rite. Understanding one another is crucial pillar of building bridges. RSVP before Tuesday, January 28, 2020 by calling Temple at 814-454-2426.



Inter-Church Ministries Sponsors Local Event

Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God  
Theme: They Showed Us Unusual Kindness (Acts 28: 2)

Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 3:00 pm  
Venue: Belle Valley Presbyterian Church  
1694 Norcross Road, Erie, PA 16510

Please join us for an afternoon gathering to pray, sing and celebrate the love of Christ...In February many Christians in Malta celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of St. Paul, marking and giving thanks for the arrival of Christian faith on the islands of Malta and Gozo in the Mediterranean Sea. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles used for the Feast is the text chosen for this year's Week of Prayer. The story begins with Paul being taken to Rome as a prisoner. (Acts 27: 1ff). Paul is in chains, but even in what turns out to be a perilous sea journey and shipwreck, all is not lost as the mission of God continues through him.

Following the celebration, there will be a reception with light refreshments.  
For more information, please contact ICM at (814) 454-2411.



2020 Theme: They Showed Us  
Unusual Kindness (Acts 28:2)

"Malta, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, received the Christian faith through the efforts of the Apostle Paul after he was shipwrecked there while travelling to Rome. In Acts 27 and 28, we read the detailed narrative describing the terrible storm at sea, the 'providential' shipwreck and subsequent welcome afforded to the 276 individuals on the vessel who all made it safely to shore. Paul's healing ministry in Malta is also briefly described in the same New Testament text.

Today many people are facing the same terrors on the same seas. The very same places named in the reading also feature in the stories of modern-day migrants. In other parts of the world many others are making equally dangerous journeys by land and sea to escape natural disasters, warfare and poverty. Their lives, too, are at the mercy of immense and coldly indifferent forces – not only natural, but political, economic and human. This human indifference takes various forms: the indifference of those who sell places on unseaworthy vessels to desperate people; the indifference of the decision not to send out rescue boats; and the indifference of turning migrant ships away. As Christians, do we show unusual kindness?"

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Inter-Church Ministries Sponsors Local Event

Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God

Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 3:00 pm

Venue: Belle Valley Presbyterian Church  
1694 Norcross Road, Erie PA

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Each year, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a time for Christians throughout the world to gather and raise their voices, hands and hearts to God seeking the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus, the Son of God, "that they all may be one."

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18 – 25. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul, and therefore have symbolic significance.

Resources for the 2020 Week of Prayer have been written by Christians from the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Gozo.

Please feel free to reflect upon the following scriptures privately or for group discussions during the week of prayer, being mindful that by doing so, you will be in prayer with others all around the world.

### Daily Scripture and Prayer Guide for Week of Prayer

**Day 1: Reconciliation: Throwing the Cargo Overboard** (Acts 27: 18-19, 21; Psalm 85; Luke 18: 9-14)

**Day 2: Enlightenment: Seeking and Showing Forth Christ's Light** (Acts 27:20; Psalm 119: 105-110; Mark 4: 35-41)

**Day 3: Hope: Paul's Message** (Acts 27: 22, 34; Psalm 27; Matthew 11: 28-30)

**Day 4: Trust: Do Not Be Afraid, Believe** (Acts 27: 23-26; Psalm 56; Luke 12: 22-34)

**Day 5: Strength: Breaking Bread for the Journey** (Acts 27: 33-36; Psalm 77; Matthew 6:34)

**Day 6: Hospitality: Show Unusual Kindness** (Acts 28: 1-2, 7; Psalm 46; Luke 14: 12-24)

**Day 7: Conversion: Changing Our Hearts and Minds** (Acts 28: 3-6; Psalm 119: 137-144; Matthew 18: 1-6)

**Day 8: Generosity: Receiving and Giving** (Acts 28: 8-10; Psalm 103: 1-5; Matthew 10: 7-8)

Meditations and prayers for each day are available by going to:  
[http://www.geii.org/week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_christian\\_unity/prayer\\_worship/daily\\_scripture...](http://www.geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity/prayer_worship/daily_scripture...)

*Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute*  
[www.geii.org/week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_christian\\_unity/](http://www.geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity/)



**YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HELPS ICM MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

The Human Impact...by the Numbers (10/1/18 to 9/30/19)

TOGETHER we were able to serve 603 clients with emergency assistance vouchers for food, gasoline, lodging and other emergency needs totaling \$8,662 in direct aid to our neighbors. TOGETHER we reached 356 learners at 12 community educational events. TOGETHER we collected and distributed hundreds of warm coats, jackets, hats, gloves and other cold weather gear through our annual Coats for Kids Project. TOGETHER we honored and recognized two high school graduates (Eric A. Marn and Emma L. Weichman) with our "Moral Leadership" \$500 Scholarships. TOGETHER we advanced our financial literacy project... "Achieving Your Goals...Empowerment through Financial Literacy" helping clients to set short and long term financial goals toward self-sufficiency and well-being for self and family. TOGETHER we encouraged interfaith cooperation through One Table: Erie's Inter-faith and Multi-cultural Bridge Builders....and more!

Heartfelt thanks to each of you for your kindness, generosity and faithful support of ICM and the valuable ministry we do TOGETHER. Your support makes a huge difference in the lives of the people we serve. Your support helps us help them...and we couldn't do what we do without you!

In 2020, please feel free to mail your gifts to Inter-Church Ministries at 250 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie, PA 16501 or go on-line to our secure web portal to make a PayPal donation by credit card – <http://www.icmeriecounty.com/donate/>

**Thanking you as always for your generosity... for your unusual kindness... and for your continued good thoughts and prayers! ....Diane Edwards**

"Together" is ordinarily published quarterly by Inter-Church Ministries of Erie County, 250 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St., Erie, PA 16501 and is provided free to our supporters and friends. Publication of events in "Together" does not indicate specific endorsement of an organization or event, and is strictly of an informative nature.



**Be inspired to be the change!**

Interested in receiving this newsletter by email?  
You can help us Go Green and Save Green\$!

*Yes, count me in!*

Print Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your info to: ICM at 250 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie, PA 16501  
or email ICM at [icm@icmeriecounty.com](mailto:icm@icmeriecounty.com)

The Mission of Inter-Church Ministries of Erie County is to be a network of Christian churches committed to cooperation for the greater good of the religious community and people of Erie County, Pennsylvania.