

Covenant Connection

The Newsletter of the North County Churches United for Racial Harmony and Justice

Covenant Churches

Fall 2019

Bellefontaine United Methodist

Black Jack Baptist

Christ Ministries at the
Community Church

Christ Our Redeemer AME

Church of the Master UCC

Florissant Presbyterian

Greater Grace Church

Immanuel UCC

John Knox Presbyterian

Lutheran Church of the
Atonement

Lutheran Church of the Living
Christ

Most Holy Name of Jesus Catholic

Most Sacred Heart Catholic

New Creation in Christ

Olivet Missionary Baptist

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic

St. Andrew United Methodist

St. Barnabas Episcopal

St. Ferdinand Catholic

St. Mark's United Methodist

St. Martin de Porres Catholic

St. Norbert Catholic

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne
Catholic

Third Presbyterian

Trinity Church of the Nazarene

Dear Friends,

Since the last newsletter, I and the NCCU have been, as always, extremely involved. I attended a Joshua Project Conference led by Rev Richard Dalton who is temporary Pastor at John Knox and the National Director of the Joshua Project which seeks ways to reduce violence in our cities. The Conference discussed some ways that have been successful in reducing violence in several U.S cities. An interfaith breakfast was held at the Pallotine Renewal Center where we were updated on what the Center is doing in North County. I met with Rev. Melissa Woeffel, the newly installed pastor of Church of the Living Christ. I have been appointed to the St. Louis County's *Complete Counter Committee* which will work to make the Census Count more accurate. Because previous counts have been inaccurate, St. Louis County has lost millions of dollars. Our first meeting was on September 18th,

At our September meeting of the NCCU Board, we installed two new members, and, because we have been unable to secure funding, we regretfully voted to abandon the "Be the Change for Your Community" Program. This was a very difficult decision because we believed it would be helpful to both students and the community.

At our annual meeting with Florissant Valley Community College we began to plan for the Dr. Martin Luther King's Celebration in January of 2020. We are now seeking candidates for the Dr. King Oratory Essay Contest which leads into that celebration. Please inform your members that the essay contest is open to all, including students from 3rd grade through college and adults of all ages.

I would also like to ask those of you congregations who do not have a representative serving on our Board to please nominate someone to do so. We need you to be represented and participating, as well as keeping us in your prayers. **We held our Annual Awards Dinner on October 6th and only four of our pastors and no members attended.** This was a major event where we presented awards to truly outstanding and well-deserving individuals and organizations. Our next **Major Event** will be held on November 17th when we will hold our annual **Covenant Renewal Ceremony**. We encourage pastors and members of our churches to participate.

I hope that all of you have a wonderful fall season and may God bless all of us.

Rance

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest is again underway. This year's theme is, "*Continuing the Dream: What I can do to keep the Dream Alive.*" The essay contest is for Elementary grade 3 and up, Middle School, and High School students and adults of all ages. The winners of the essay contest present the essays orally in a competition for the 5 best winners who then present at the *Martin Luther King, Jr Celebration* at St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley in January. Florissant picks one of these winners to perform at their Dr. Martin Luther King, Dr. Thomas has sent contest materials to all NCCU member congregations.

New Members for NCCU Board

During the September Board Meeting, two new members were welcomed. Albert P. Harrold was installed representing the Ferguson-Florissant School District, and Lisa Kozieja comes to the Board representing St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church. Thanks to all who are willing to serve. Each member Congregation is encouraged to nominate a representative who can serve as a liaison between the Board and the individual Congregations.

Joshua Partnership Project

Pastor Richard C. Dalton, temporarily serving John Knox Presbyterian, offered to hold a free training session using his *Joshua Partnership Project*. The goal of the training is to learn how to unite neighborhood churches in a faith based violence prevention program. He suggested one or two sessions of 4-6 hours to be held at John Knox Presbyterian Church in October. If your congregation would be interested in sending representatives to this event, contact Dr. Rance Thomas.

“Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things” Ps.114:18

“Be the Change for Your Community program cancelled

At the September meeting, the Board voted to end ties with Amy Vaughn and cancel efforts to present a middle school drop-out prevention program for summer 2020. The program became untenable because Ms. Vaughn was unable to secure the funds needed and promised to make the program feasible.

The Board also votes to present Ms. Vaughn with \$500 to compensate her for the many hours and time she spent trying to get the program underway.

Invitation to Annual Covenant Renewal Ceremony

Save the date Sunday, November 17, 2019, 3 pm. and plan to attend this uplifting event at Lutheran Church of the Living Christ located at the corner of New Halls Ferry Road and Concord Drive, Sunday, November 17, 2019, 3 pm. Participants will be invited to resign the pledge board. Light refreshments will be served.

Summons of Joy 2019

NCCU is collecting funds for this year's "Summons of Joy" Christmas Program which began three years ago. \$100 gift certificates are purchased and given to the Florissant Police Department. The officers then pass the cards along with a certificate to citizen they have stopped for minor violations—especially those who seem to be in need. Many who have received a "Summons of Joy" have been overwhelmed with gratitude. Some have wept while others have hugged every policeman in sight.

Annual Awards Dinner

The NCCU's annual Awards Dinner was held on October 6th at the Paul F. Detrick Building in the Atrium at Christian Hospital. Well-deserved awards were presented to:

Dr. Elizabeth Perkins, President and Chief Academic Officer of St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley for *Outstanding Education Achievement*

Dr. Bonita Jamison, Executive Director of Integrated Support and Accelerated Learning at Ferguson-Florissant School District for *Outstanding Education Achievement*

Mr. Matthew Phillips, Associate Superintendent for Students Services and Elementary Education at Hazelwood School District, for *Outstanding Education Achievement*

Ms. Colleen Wilkerson, Manager of Service Excellent at Christian Hospital, for *Outstanding Community Service*

Hazelwood Police Department, for *Outstanding Community Service*

Third Presbyterian Church for *Outstanding Community Service*

Florissant Police Dept. Being Evaluated for Prestigious Award

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) has invited Dr. Thomas to speak on behalf of the Florissant Department as he did several years ago for the Hazelwood Department. The Florissant Police have worked with the NCCU for several years. After the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, efforts to improve police and community relations intensified. Concerns by members of the community resulted in Dr. Thomas being appointed as an Advisor to evaluate police stops in Florissant. He served in that position for two years. He will speak on behalf of the Florissant Police Department on October 22.

Welcome to a New Congregation

On Sunday, October 13th, Dr. Thomas made a presentation on the NCCU to the First Presbyterian Church in Ferguson. Following the presentation, the Congregation voted to join as a member and agreed to participate in as many of our activities as they can. They will be officially accepted and given a plaque at the Annual Renewal Ceremony in November

Hazelwood School District Award

Congratulations to Dr. **Barbara Thompson** and **Dr. Rance Thomas** who received *Community Partnership Awards* from the Hazelwood School District. The award was based on their relationship and work with the District through the programs of the NCCU.