



AAIC

**AKRON AREA
INTERFAITH
COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER**

FEBRUARY 2023

January 30, 2023

Friends,

Another name, another child of God demeaned and brutalized by a system of injustice. From Jayland Walker to Michael Brown to Amadou Diallo to Tamir Rice to Eleanor Bumpers to Eric Garner to Ahmed Aubrey to Breonna Taylor to Walter Scott and so on and on and now to Tyre Nichols. I am so tired of hearing one more name . I am so enraged in knowing about one more senseless loss of life because for decades this has been happening in one way or another to at least 300 Black and Latino males and females per year whose names we may never hear.

This is why some of us worked so hard on Issue 10 in Akron to take one step toward improving Police-Community Relations. We know there are so many more steps to take. It makes this even more urgent and calls for people of faith everywhere to stand up, speak out, vote, work together to say no to any kind of brutality and violence among those who are to "protect and serve" or ourselves.

For those who are passionate about social justice and come from faith traditions, where are we being called to act in the prophetic tradition of Micah: seeking justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God? I hear only lamenting of mothers who have lost their children in violent, unjust ways. I have to admit that I needed to hear a few words from someone I consider a wise and humble leader.

I have attached those words, in case they speak to you. They come from a recent Pastoral Letter from the Presiding Bishop, of the Episcopal Church (the highest position in this denomination).. If offer you these words from: The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry,,the first African American to be elected Presiding Bishop:

Humbly,

- Rev. Joyce Penfield,



A pastoral word from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on the death of Tyre Nichols

Sense cannot be made of the murder of a young man at the hands of five men whose vocation and calling are to protect and serve. This was evil and senseless.

There is a passage from the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, which is later quoted in Matthew's Gospel when innocent baby boys are killed by an immoral dictator:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.”
—Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:18

With the murder of Tyre Nichols, another mother, as in the biblical texts, weeps, with the mothers of Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others. A family grieves. A community fears. A nation is ashamed. Like the psalmist in the Bible, something in us cries out, “How long, O Lord, how long?” How long violence, how long cruelty, how long the utter disregard for the dignity and worth of every child of God? How long?

As if this wasn't enough, there is another horrible dimension to what happened. Tyre Nichols was beaten, kicked, and cursed as if he was not a human being. Then, after he was lying on the ground, having called for his mother, they let him stay there for several minutes without anyone, including the police and EMT who were present, providing medical assistance. Not one Good Samaritan.

Jesus once told a story to teach about what it looks like to love one's neighbor, which Moses and Jesus both said is a commandment of God. It's a story about a man beaten nearly to death and left on the side of the road to die by people who knew what Moses taught about love for God and neighbor—and what the prophet Micah taught when he said that God requires three things of us: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Only one person stopped to help the man, and he did so without regard for the fact that they were of different religions, nationalities, ethnic groups, and even different politics. This second man was a Samaritan, and he helped because the man on the road was human. He helped because he was a fellow child of God. He helped because the man lying on the side of the road, regardless of race, class, clan, stripe, or type, was his brother. And the man who helped has been called the Good Samaritan.

(Pastoral cont. on page 3)

(Pastoral cont. from page 2)

The fundamental call and vocation of law enforcement officials, and indeed every one of us, is that of the Good Samaritan.

Here is where there is hope: The Good Samaritan in the parable of Jesus was not the last one.

There are Good Samaritans who are government officials in Memphis who, after assessing what happened, fired the offending officers, charged them with crimes against human life and dignity, and have committed to addressing systemic and cultural issues that created an environment in which this evil was enabled.

There are Good Samaritans doing what is necessary to radically reform the environment and culture of law enforcement—to create an atmosphere in which the dignity and worth of every human being is respected, protected, affirmed, and honored.

There are Good Samaritans in law enforcement, and other first responders, who often work while others sleep, laboring to protect and serve, at times risking their own lives for the neighbor they do not even know.

There are Good Samaritans, people of goodwill and human decency, who are peacefully protesting. There are Good Samaritans who are activists working tirelessly for the realization of communities and countries where there is truly, as the Pledge of Allegiance proclaims, “liberty and justice for all.”

While we grieve, we cannot give in or give up. Just throwing up our hands in despair is not an option lest we leave a brother, a sister, a sibling on the side of the road again. No, let more Good Samaritans arise so that Tyre Nichols’ death will not be in vain.

Please pray for Tyre’s family, the whole Memphis community, this nation, and world. But also pray for people to rise up like the Good Samaritan and work to create change so this never happens again.

And may the soul of Tyre, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercies of God, rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

Torah Studies for Christians What Christians Need to Know

with Fr. George Balasko, Deacon Jesse McClain
and Rabbi Joseph Schonberger



In person
and Zoom

The Holocaust—Never Again?
The Holocaust and Ken Burns Series

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023

The Golden Door
(____ to 1938): America the
Home of the Free and Brave

1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM

This Bible education series is an opportunity for Christians to reflect on the Scriptures using video resources from various Scripture scholars. Working closely with the biblical text, we will explore the methods and insights of the sages of the Jewish tradition, their love for Torah, their eye for detail, their incisive questions, debates, and creative storytelling (midrash). In this way we will deepen our appreciation of a Torah tradition that is at the core of Jewish life, which formed Jesus as a Jew, and which is the root of our biblical heritage as Christians. Join us in this fascinating journey of biblical and spiritual enrichment.

Participants need not attend all sessions in the series.

Registration is not required.

The Zoom link will be on our website.

This program will be available to view via Zoom only on the day of the event.

Future Dates:

March 15, 2023

April 19, 2023

May 17, 2023

[Villa Maria Education & Spiritual Center](#)



THE UNITY OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Of all the conflicts which exist in contemporary society, none is more destructive for both individual and social life than conflict between religion and science.

For the individual, religion is the expression of self-transcendence, a need to feel a purpose which is God-given and not self-created. For society, religion represents the need for unity, love, harmony, and cooperation.

Science, by contrast, represents the need to know, to understand, to gain mastery over ourselves and our environment. This is true both for the individual, who needs knowledge in order to function in his own life, and for society, which needs organized knowledge in order to progress.

Returning for a moment to the individual's viewpoint, we might say that the religious urge is an urge to be encompassed. It is an urge to feel oneself a part of something greater. The scientific urge is an urge to encompass. It is an urge to manipulate, control, direct, and dominate. There is no contradiction in these two urges since it is clearly possible for us to be in control on one level of our functioning while, at the same time, be controlled or encompassed on another level.

Indeed, since our knowledge is always relative, we are, in fact, constantly in the position of having a relative mastery over part of our environment (including the self) while being encompassed by that part which we do not know. Moreover, the further we make progress in knowledge, the more we realize just how great our ignorance is. There is an increasing realization of being encompassed by an unknown which accompanies the extension of the boundaries of the unknown, for new knowledge also reveals the existence of hitherto unsuspected unknowns.

Greater knowledge gives greater mastery and, at the same time, greater humility before the ever-increasing vastness of the unknown which lies before us.

Basically, then the religious urge and the scientific urge are COMPLEMENTARY, as each reinforces the other.

The Baha'i principle of the UNITY of religion and science applies this same principle of complementarity, so clearly true for individuals, to human society as a whole.

Abdu'l-Baha, the center of the Covenant of the Baha'i Faith, concerning the positive effects of the unity of religion and science, says:

“Religion and science are the two wings upon which man’s intelligence can soar into the heights, with which the human soul can progress. It is not possible to fly with one wing alone! Should a man try to fly with the wing of religion alone he would quickly fall into the quagmire of superstition, whilst on the other hand, with the wing of science alone he would also make no progress, but fall into the despairing slough of materialism...”

And furthermore he says:

“When religion, shorn of its superstitions, traditions, and unintelligent dogma, shows its conformity with science, then will there be a great unifying, cleansing force in the world which will sweep before it all wars, disagreement, discord and struggles – and then will mankind be united in the power of the LOVE of God.”

And again he emphasizes the important of the unity of science and religion for human society and says:

“The outcome of this dissension is the belief of many cultured men that religion and science are contradictory terms, that religion needs no powers of reflection, and should in no wise be regulated by science, but must if necessity be opposed, the one to the other. The unfortunate effect of this is that science has drifted apart from religion...”

“...Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame...”



LOVEAKRON

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

JOIN US
THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 23, 2023
8:00 - 9:15 AM



MARK GREER
Writer & Director, *Beyond the Innerbelt*



GINA BURK
Moderator



Urban Renewal *Beyond the Innerbelt*

IN PERSON!

TRAILHEAD EVENTS

21 WEST NORTH ST.,
AKRON, OH 44304
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THE UNSPOKEN HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

JOIN US FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

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THE 2023 EMPTY BOWL EVENT

*Dine-In with us at Woodridge
High School*

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17,
5:30-7:30 PM**

WWW.WOODRIDGE.K12.OH.US/BOWLS

**WOODRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
4440 QUICK ROAD, PENINSULA, OH**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17,
5:30-7:30 PM**



**A FUNDRAISER FOR
FAMILY PROMISE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY**

**Soup Dinner,
Bread, Salad,
Desserts, Art, Live
Music, Raffles,
and Fun!**

**HOSTED BY WOODRIDGE HIGH
SCHOOL FCCLA & ART CLUB**





MISSION

The Akron Area Interfaith Council (AAIC) exists to initiate, coordinate and enable effective interfaith responses to the social, moral, ethical and cultural issues of our community and to promote freedom of religion, equality and understanding.

VISION

We envision a strong network of faith communities that collaborate to make our city a haven for all.

GUIDEPOSTS

- Diversity is a blessing and enriches us all; the diversities of all peoples, languages, cultures, and colors must be cherished and celebrated.
- We are responsible for each other's welfare.
- Because of the importance of individual's faith traditions in developing underlying values, faith communities can contribute to the development of a more just, humane, and ecologically responsible society. [We refer here to "faith traditions" vs. "religion" as AAIC is interested in reaching not only congregations but also those who are searching and may not have a specific faith affiliation (such as the NONEs).]
- Members of AAIC oppose any and all forms of discrimination, especially those based on faith, gender, race, heritage, nationality and sexuality
- Advocacy and Social Justice: AAIC has consistently put issues of social justice at the forefront. Our past history shows a deep concern for inclusiveness. The group has been focused on the issues faced by the immigrant populations in Akron, ongoing issues of racism in the community, hunger, as well as xenophobia.

TO JOIN AAIC

Please visit our website for information on yearly dues:
Individual membership— \$30.00/yr., Institutional— \$50.00/yr.
Send your check or donation to:

Akron Area Interfaith Council
3300 Morewood Rd.
Akron, Ohio 44333

or send a membership fee via the following link: <https://donate.fundhero.io/aaic/aaicmembership>.

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month. We are meeting in person and via Zoom.

Website: Akroninterfaith.org

Facebook Group: Facebook.com/AAICOH