

BREAKING THE CHAINS

faith and justice and the incarcerated

Schedule and Workshop Descriptions

Schedule: Sunday, November 17, 2019

10:00 AM | Worship in the Sanctuary, Shane Claiborne preaching (free)

11:30 AM | lunch in the Fellowship Center *

12:30 PM – 1:20 | Workshops Session One*

1:30 - 2:20 PM | Workshops Session Two*

(Each workshop will repeat)

2:30 | Beating Guns workshop 4 with Shane Claiborne/forging demonstration

4:00 | Closing benediction, and informal reception

* registration and ticket required

Important note: A previous version of the workshops listing had workshop 4, Beating Guns with Shane Claiborne. That is now a plenary session that begins at 2:30, which all conference participants will be invited to attend.

Workshops (Choose 2)

1. *Hope for the Hopeless: The Injustice of Mass Incarceration in America*

Interested in learning more about the issue of mass incarceration – if you're new to it or want to learn more? Join Alison Stump, Intervarsity Staff at TCNJ and Mercer County Community College and other Intervarsity students for a workshop that will provide an opportunity to share information about mass incarceration, its origins and rationale. The group will also discuss a scriptural basis for taking action on the issue of mass incarceration, including tangible ideas for responding.

2. Re-Entry from Incarceration: CookWell, Job-training through a Community-based Partnership

Learn about how a local congregation got involved in welcoming returning citizens into a supportive, respectful and caring community through a partnership-based model; CookWell is a culinary job training program that was started by the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville. Joining some of the leaders of CookWell is Donnell Cole, Business Development Manager for the NJ Association on Corrections, who will speak about the challenges facing individuals recently released from incarceration. Moderated by Tom Wilfrid, President of CookWell's organizing board, presenters will include Anita Narayan, CookWell's director; Andre Gause of Arm in Arm; one or more local restaurateurs that host interns from the program, and one or more program graduates.

3. Criminal Justice Reform: What's needed, and What's Changing?

U. S. Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman and her husband, Rev. William Coleman, will speak about how our country's policies on mass incarceration have affected our communities, and why they personally care about that issue. They will also offer information and a perspective on recent and potentially upcoming legislation in the U. S. Congress and in New Jersey proposed to respond to the need for criminal justice reform.

5. The Mark of Cain: Theological Understanding of Mass Incarceration

The lifetime purgatory for people with convictions is a kind of double jeopardy that never allows them or their families to ever stop serving time. For years people have centered their belief in God and the need for God's justice as the reason for punitive justice, as opposed to reconciliation for those who have been convicted of committing crimes. This type of thinking has led to the broken structure in our society as it pertains to criminal justice issues. When we allow this broken structure to dictate our vision of justice, we see punishment as the way to justice, instead of the Christ-like response of restorative justice. Join Erich Kussman, pastor of St. Bartholomew's Lutheran Church and founder of Ransom Writers & Speakers, as he helps us explore our response as a Christian community.

6. Trauma, Poverty, and Incarceration: How to Make an Impact from the Sidelines

Bill Davis will address some of the challenges faced by men who are incarcerated or returning from incarceration. He will suggest strategies and resources available to help them survive and succeed. Jonathan Shenk will highlight some of the challenges inherent in connecting people of relative wealth and privilege with those trapped at the bottom. He will offer strategies and resources for how to engage those on the sidelines.

Presenter Bios (Partial listing):

Shane Claiborne is a Christian writer, activist and part-time blacksmith, who founded the intentional Christian community Simple Way in Philadelphia. Shane was also the best man at Erich Kussman's wedding (see below).

Donnell Cole Sr. currently serves as business development manager for NJ Association on Correction, which runs many re-entry and housing programs for returning citizens. Mr. Cole

has developed a training program for re-entry clients with Forklift certification and has developed and identified business opportunities for services in the warehouse and logistics industry.

Bonnie Watson Coleman is the U. S. Representative for the 12th congressional district; her husband **William Coleman** is a Pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church.

Bill Davis serves as a Certified Anger Management Specialist facilitating classes in Anger Management, Parenting and Job Readiness at UIH Family Partners Father Center in Trenton.

Andre Gause is a case-manager at Arm-in-Arm, a non-profit organization in Trenton responding to the needs of poor citizens.

Erich Kussman is the Pastor of St. Bartholomew's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Trenton. After being incarcerated for 12 years, he received his undergraduate degree, then attended Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 2019.

Anita Narayan is Executive Director of the Lawrenceville Job-Training Partnership (LJTP), a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville. CookWell is the first program established by the LJTP.

Rev. Jonathan C. Shenk is the owner of Greenleaf Painters and is co-chair of the Nassau Presbyterian Church Mass Incarceration Task Force.

Allison Stump is staff for Athletes Intervarsity at The College of New Jersey and Mercer County Community College.

Tom Wilfrid is a retired Executive Director of the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation, a former Vice President and Acting President of Mercer County Community College, and currently chairs the Lawrenceville Job-Training Partnership. He's also an Elder at the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville.