We are The Inclusive Collective.

We are a **community**.

We are Artists. Intellectuals. Realists. Weirdos. Doubters. Believers. Students. **People**.

We are a safe place to be our whole selves. **Unashamed** of who we are. What we look like. Or who we love.

We are shamelessly **Christian**.

And we’re reclaiming the genuine love it should mean.

We are Leaders and **Activists**.

We are **Servants** to those in need.

We are Fighters for true **justice**.

With Christ as our fuel.

And we exist to inspire radically **inclusive** communities that explore, share, and **flourish** in Christ’s grace.
Hi friends,

I first want to express my deep gratitude to you, our partners in ministry, who pray for us, champion our work, and give of your time, energy, and finances in such generous ways. Simply put, our community couldn’t exist without you.

And I’m convinced that our community must exist. In fact, it must grow and thrive, especially today. We live in days of immense injustice, constant change, and rampant division. In the midst of this, we can choose to retreat or we can decide to Embrace Courage. Embrace Courage to lead, risk, create -- and follow Jesus as we imagine new possibilities.

In the Inclusive Collective, we strive to Embrace Courage. In this Annual Report, you’ll find compelling stats about our year and important information about our finances and leadership, but you will also find stories from five of our members. Stories that reveal the ways we are Embracing Courage by creating a community that is: Christ-Centered, Inclusive, Communal, Authentic, and Active.

May God use these stories to inspire us all to be people who Embrace Courage.

Peace,
Rich

RICH HAVARD, Pastor and Executive Director: A native Southerner, Rich grew up in Gloster, Mississippi — a small town with a population of 960. After calling Alabama and Georgia home for seven years, Rich moved to Chicago in 2014 to work as a Church Starting Resident at Urban Village Church. After his one-year residency program, Rich became Pastor and Executive Director of the Inclusive Collective and has spent the past three years leading the relaunch of this ministry. He feels called by God to create faith communities where all people are both truly welcome and invited to follow Jesus with all they’ve got. Rich holds a BA in Religion from Samford University and an MDiv from Mercer University. He has also completed intensive trainings in non-profit leadership through North Park University and anti-racism through Crossroads. Rich has been a frequent leader and preacher at retreats and conferences, taught in the Theological Studies Program at Lee Arrendale State Prison, and leads the interfaith clergy group at the University of Illinois at Chicago.
72% of our folks have started or restarted a relationship with Jesus through the IC.

Hosted 13 small groups with over 60 people invested in these weekly discipleship opportunities.

19 people trained in faith-rooted community organizing at our Justice Retreat.

Served over 3,300 meals and for over 530 hours through South Loop Community Table, our weekly dinner party with people experiencing homelessness.
45 PEOPLE crammed into Rich’s Apartment for our CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Engaged 7 PEOPLE in our intensive leadership development program, which strives to raise up creative, energetic, and thoughtful leaders of faith who want to help further gospel-shaped transformation in this world.

FED AND ENGAGED 60 PEOPLE at the People’s Supper, an interfaith event designed to explore healing practices for our divided society

REACHED 1,023 FACEBOOK LIKES and 785 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS.

DOUBLED our number of monthly donors.
CHRIST-CENTERED

Jesus Christ’s life, love, and transformative grace fuel who we are and all we do.

When Moses was at the burning bush, God mysteriously defines Herself as, “I Am Who I Am” (Exodus 3:14). God takes on this non-definition because She is too big to be articulated. Like the shape of our spherical planet, where God ends, She begins again: “I Am Who I Am Who I Am.” God is everywhere.

But how can a God who is so big also have time to love me? To listen and understand the groans and joys of my human experience? Like the biblical character Job, in the visceral frustration of his loss, God can sometimes feel impersonal, demanding, and judgmental to me. Job cries out for a redeemer, someone to champion humanity in all of our beauty and brokenness. I felt a bit like Job this semester because I had a really hard time adjusting to the weight of my responsibilities, and struggled to find life in the tedious parts of my calling to build racial justice through business.

Even through the last few years of my spiritual revival, I’ve always struggled to understand Jesus. But the Inclusive Collective allows me to think and grow in my spirituality, offering an accepting space I wouldn’t be able to get anywhere else. This last semester, in the midst of some difficult days, Jesus was opened up to me as my redeemer. Reading Job, I realized that he took our form so that we could trust and believe in his commitment to us. He could have, at any moment, granted us his grace. But he chose to do so in a climactic act of empathy. Being Christ-centered is about building communities and relationships not based off of exclusion or homogeneity, but off of that empathy, which is grace. I can grant the people in my life mercy by empathizing with the reality that we’re all trying to do the best we can with what we have. Jesus challenges us to love radically and include the diversity of God’s creation in the Kingdom.

The Inclusive Collective is that Kingdom. I can show up with the whole complexity of my humanity, knowing Jesus loves me. I’m a believer and a doubter, a justice fighter and a business person. My friends: gay and Christian, homeless and respected, disabled and strong, brown and American. With the grace the Gospels teach us, we learn from our differences and grow in our relationships with each other and with God. Centered in Christ’s love, we work together to build our Kingdom, holding each other when we fail, and lifting each other up when the Holy Spirit sets us on fire.

On alternating days, CALEB LEMAN is a Business Analytics undergrad at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the co-owner of a digital marketing consultancy and workforce development program. He grew up humanist in the Unitarian church and was pursued by God in his late teens. He is now a proud member of the Inclusive Collective, coleading the weekly Bible Exploration Group with his roommate, Damon.
We don’t have to worry about pretending or hiding; we bring our full selves – a raw and complex mix of beauty and brokenness.

Church never felt right for me. I was expected never to question, never to doubt, never to abberate from the role I was assigned. As a Latina, that role was a vow of silence, a promise to subserviate. I can’t remember a moment, out of internal willingness or out of external demand, that I ever fulfilled said role as expected. My deviance was sinful, and therefore, I was isolated. My nature was sinful, and therefore, I was condemned. My place in the world of the Church unfitting, and therefore, I was unwelcome.

Once I felt I had any agency, my way of validating myself was to invalidate God’s love for me. If I was rejected, then there was proof that God is capable of rejection, and therefore not God at all. So I ran away from the church and from home in order to find a place I belonged. I found myself on the Pacific coast of Canada, impassioned with the resolve to cultivate an identity unprescribed, unmonitored, unregulated. I was free, but never more lost.

In the place of my distance, my defiance, my stubbornness and unbelief, God had a place prepared for me. I encountered God’s love outside of the context of institution, and finally could not doubt Their efficacy as creator, mother, architect, and love. God found me, reminded me of who They made me to be, and changed my life forever.

When I returned back home to Chicago, I was full of belief, but still without place. The pursuit of Christ became a series of doors closed to me, of communities that excluded me for my inability to fit into “Christian” molds. At the moment displacement had again exhausted my faith, I bumped into a table on UIC’s campus. I read these words:

We are The Inclusive Collective.

We are Artists. Intellectuals. Realists. Weirdos. Doubters. Believers. Students. People. We are a safe place to be our whole selves.

These words felt a lot like home. For the first time.

For someone placeless and floundering, the Inclusive Collective has been the first space I’ve found where God’s love is not disconnected from the work of serving Them. Where who I am is embraced in community and in service. What my leaders have taught me both in theory and in practice is that I have already been equipped, as I am, with the tools to serve God’s kingdom. What they’ve allowed me in both their vision and their action, is a place where I am never unwelcome to explore, to question, to engage in the ways that feel right for me. I don’t hyperbolize when I say the community I’ve found with the artists and intellectuals and weirdos and believers here has changed my life and my faith.

SARAH BONILLA is a 4th year English Student at UIC.
Earlier this year, the British government appointed its first Minister of Loneliness. For a government to take such drastic measures, it must have had to recognize the reality of loneliness as an epidemic in their country. It’s also an epidemic around the globe, especially in the United States among young adults.

This is one of the reasons why community is so vital for the Inclusive Collective. When I think about how community manifests itself in the IC, I often think about the concept of “chosen family” and how it showed up for me in the Inclusive Collective throughout last year.

Last year, I began to attend a community group in the IC more regularly. Every week, I was struck by the depth of conversation and the vulnerability the group members were willing to engage in. People didn’t skim the surface; they shared about their lives in ways that don’t happen in many spaces. I was dealing with my own fair share of mental health and personal issues. I had begun to internalize them and to think that I was meant to deal with them either on my own or only in my counseling sessions. I felt isolated and lonely then. It honestly wasn’t until I was invited to share those intimate parts of my life with my community group that my walls started coming down.

I was happy to find that the IC became a place where I could speak openly about topics I’m often shamed into wrapping in secrecy. I was happy to find a group of people who were also trying to figure out what being queer and Christian meant for them and were okay with not having a complete and perfect answer for that. I was also happy that I could lean into this community for support, friendship, and empathy.

COMMUNAL

Life isn’t meant to be a solo thing, so we build deep relationships, not just another social network.

AURY BWASHI was born and raised in the central African country of Burundi but currently lives on the south side of Chicago as a student at Illinois Institute of Technology. As black queer techie immigrant, Aury’s goal is to align their work as a designer and web developer with their calling in social justice movements across different areas, with a focus on immigration, education, queer and racial justice issues. When they’re not in school, Aury loves to spend time staying active at a bouldering gym or at a yoga studio.
I am a child of God, loved and liked by the Creator of the world. Originally from Texas, I am a Masters of Divinity student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary because I felt called by God to enter the ministry in seventh grade. Now, ten years after that call, I am learning just how complicated, and yet beautifully gratifying saying yes to that call was.

I came to the Inclusive Collective for my required seminary internship, and I often think I am the luckiest Garrett student because I have the best internship. It is the best internship for me because it has become the place that I get to flourish as the Christian leader I was called to be ten years ago, and I get to do that as my authentic self who happens to have fallen in love with my best friend -- who is a woman. For some time, I tried hiding this love for her out of fear, but the IC has affirmed God’s work in my life throughout my coming out process. This community has given me the courage to believe that God, people, and my partner love me for who I am, a queer child of God, and not what I do or achieve.

The Inclusive Collective strives to be, well, inclusive. It seems so obvious, but that word can come with a list of exceptions or changes to one’s identity that must occur to truly be included. Often in religious spaces “inclusive” has a subliminal message like: “love the sinner, hate the sin” or “everyone is welcome to hear my message, but your culture is not important in the conversation”. So, to name an organization as the Inclusive Collective is a bold move. It can send a myriad of associated messages that require unpacking.

For the IC, though, inclusive is quite simple. No strings attached, no identity needing to be changed, no human denied space to lead because of the color of their skin, no disability to hide. Inclusive means everyone, acknowledging the imago dei, the image of God, in and on everyone. Period.

I am grateful for this unique space that is doing radical Jesus and Holy Spirit work in the city to bring about the Kingdom of God on Earth. I am grateful because I am never put in a position where my identity as a child of God, loved and liked by the Creator of the world, is questioned, and I get to flourish in God’s desire for me to empower others in their walk with Christ.
When I think about the word active, I look at my mentor and former academic advisor, Dr. Larycia Hawkins, who applied this ideology to her message of Embodied Solidarity. Embodied Solidarity is being close to those who are oppressed and standing up for justice. Dr. Hawkins wore a hijab during the 2017 season of Lent to show solidarity with Muslim women. Islamaphobia runs rampant throughout the world because people are frequently moved by fear, rather than knowledge. My mentor ended up losing her job because of her stance. She never backed down, and that was such a beautiful image of an active faith.

Dr. Hawkins was motivated by how Jesus radically opposed the status-quo because it fostered an environment of injustice, fear, and hate. If we are to be like Jesus, too, we have to be active in our faith. Which means we must recognize justice as an inherent part of faith. The Inclusive Collective has provided me with so many opportunities to be active in the pursuit of justice. On the Justice Retreat last March, where we were trained in faith-rooted community organizing, we visited Reesheda Graham-Washington at LIVE Cafe in Oak Park. This cafe is actively developing the community through funneling its profits back to the people of Austin to create jobs for those who are under-resourced. Reesheda’s love for Christ fuels her passion for justice. She showed me how important it is to use your degrees and accolades as tools for equity and inclusion instead of weapons of superiority. We need to constantly use our wide array of tools and gifts to engage with our communities.

There is beauty in finding a community of believers that are passionate about moving towards justice in the face of such injustice. Oppression does not end through inaction. Freedom from oppression requires the diligent action of people who believe that justice is important for all. The Inclusive Collective pushes me to action and gives me the resources to seek justice faithfully.

MATTHEW ADAMS is a communication professional by day, photographer at heart and recent Wheaton College grad. He is passionate about the ways minorities are represented in media. Matthew strongly believes that changing the narrative in mass media will ultimately impact race relations on a whole.
**2018 FINANCES**

**INCOME: $130,372**

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<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>$71,372</td>
<td>Donations This comes from individuals, churches, and other organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$59,000</td>
<td>Denominational Grants This comes from grants from our primary denominational partners, the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Presbytery of Chicago (PC(USA)).</td>
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## EXPENSES: $109,153

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discipleship</td>
<td>$13,656</td>
<td>Staff time, small groups, Fall Retreat, and other spiritual formation experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service + Justice</td>
<td>$14,247</td>
<td>Staff time, South Loop Community Table, Justice Retreat, and other opportunities to practice an active faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitality + Community</td>
<td>$25,645</td>
<td>Pastoral care, good food, and events designed to foster connection.</td>
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<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>$19,912</td>
<td>Stipends, staff time, and resources for our Ministry Intern program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelism + Outreach</td>
<td>$12,128</td>
<td>Staff time and events created to invite people into the Inclusive Collective and God’s Gospel-Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$23,565</td>
<td>Staff time, tech needs, and supplies used to keep us running effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves/Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>$21,219</td>
<td>The 2018 contribution brings this fund to a total of $63,190. This fund represents our hard work to create healthy amount in our reserves as well as funding to launch new initiatives.</td>
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</table>
DONORS

We are so grateful to all of our generous donors. Will you join them? Your gift helps create inclusive Christian community where people experience grace and are fueled to change the world. Please visit LetsGetInclusiveUIC.org/Donate.

25,000+
Presbytery of Chicago
Northern Illinois Conference, United Methodist Church

5000-24999
North Shore Baptist Church
Lisl and Sumeet Heymans Paul
Forum for Theological Exploration

2000-4999
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First United Methodist Church, Chicago
George Francis and Lola Corcoran*
Glenview United Methodist Church
Luke Beasley*

1000-1999
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Christian and Anne Coon*
Christy and Rickey Havard*
Community Presbyterian Church, Clarendon Hills
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David Owens*
Felix Huang and Josh Lau*
First United Church of Oak Park
First United Methodist Church, LaGrange
Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary
Kimberly Harvey
Rich Havard*
Southminster Presbyterian Church, Arlington Heights

500-999
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First Presbyterian Church, Arlington Heights
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Kingswood United Methodist Church
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Rimes and Kathryn McElveen  
Roger Wilson  
Ruth Mazorana Anderson  
Stephen Pierce  
Susan and Donald Johnston  
Teel Short*  
Victoria Dal Santo  
Yoon Tae and Jody Chong*  

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Aury Bwashi  
Bo Morris  
Brad Pierce  
Brianna Renae  
Carlee George  
Carmen Woodring  
Cathleen Freels  
Chris and Connie Holoman  
Chris Walters  
Christina Sanchez  
Christine Peschier  
Cindy Waters  
Cynthia N. Greenwood  
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Dennis Rich  
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Ruth Di Diana  
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Todd and Venida Rodman Jenkins  
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Weston Kightlinger  
Whitney Spalding Spencer  
Will Burke  
William Barkhausen  
Zoie Sheets*  
Zuri Thompson  

* denotes monthly donors
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Deanna Christianson, Ministry Intern
Kaitlyn Frantz, Student Pastor
Ari Guerra, Ministry Intern
Rich Havard, Pastor and Executive Director
Tito Ponce, Ministry Intern
Aury Bwashi, Ministry Intern
Zoie Sheets, Leadership Development Fellow