

**REV. CYNTHIA JO (“C. J”) WRIGHT** is of Cherokee and English/Irish heritage. Her Cherokee name is Awahili Gawoni which means “She Who Talks with Eagles”. She is an Interfaith Minister and spiritual leader in the Kentucky Native American Community and the Executive Director of the Louisville-based Rainbow Spiritual Education Center (RSEC) which is a member organization of the Kentucky Indigenous Peoples organization. The focus of RSEC is to provide education and ceremony with a focus on Christ’s life teachings, Indigenous teachings and Buddhist teachings, while examining wisdom from a variety of world religions. Rev. Wright is a member of the United Methodist Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) and the Kentucky Federation of Fire Chaplains. She has served Middletown Fire Protection District as Chaplain for 12 years.

She is educated in her Cherokee traditions and in indigenous ways through oral tradition. She has been in ceremony with, worked with, and been mentored by, tribal leaders and educators from the Cherokee, Creek, Shawnee, Lakota and Dakota Sioux, Nez Perce, Hopi, Zuni and Ojibwe tribes over the past 20 years. She has provided support, counseling, workshops and requested ceremonies in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Ohio.

Rev. Wright is a Certified Trauma Responder (CTR), a Certified Trauma Services Specialist (CTSS) and a certified trainer in Critical Incident Stress Management (CCISM). She is a member of the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists (ATSS) and the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). Over the past 40 years, she has gained extensive education and experience in designing and presenting training programs in Crisis Intervention, Suicide Intervention & Prevention, Disaster Behavioral Health Coordination and Outreach, Law Enforcement, Loss Prevention, Investigations, Staff Training and Interfaith Pastoral Care. She has served on the Kentucky Community Crisis Response Team since 2001. She has worked closely with police departments and private companies in Missouri, Minnesota, Indiana and Kentucky as a licensed Investigator and Consultant.

At the end of 2017, Rev. Wright retired after 15 years serving as the Bioterrorism Program Coordinator and then the Training Program Coordinator for the Kentucky Community Crisis Response Board at which time she was Commissioned as a Kentucky Colonel in light of her services to Commonwealth.

Rev. Wright has been involved in the editing and publishing of *Earth Councils* by Osahmin Judith Meister, and *Healing Feeling Series* Children’s books by Patrice Joy. She is the author of *The User-Friendly Guide to Biblical Exegesis & Interpretation*. She was one of the featured women in *Kentucky Voices: Feminine Wisdom* (Festival of Faiths, 2018).

She has been a Keynote Speaker and Workshop Presenter at several educational, health and human services-related, and community-based, programs in Kentucky. She has participated in a number of conferences including those organized by The Theosophical Society in America (2018, 2019), and Aids Volunteers of Northern Kentucky (10 years).

Since 2017, Rev. Wright has been a Consultant to *The Salaam Network (TSN)*, a Louisville-based group comprising educators, writers, artists, and peace-and-justice activists committed to countering Islamophobia and other manifestations of bigotry, hatred and mistrust in the city of Muhammad Ali, America's best-known Muslim and a universal peacemaker. Rev. Wright is a highly gifted Moderator who has conducted some of *TSN's* most important workshops. The Native American Invocations with which she inaugurates some of these workshops adds a special emotive and spiritual dimension to them.

Rev. Wright is also a dedicated social justice advocate who has been actively engaged in *TSN* programs focusing on matters of public concern such as issues relating to women and the LGTQ community. In Spring 2020, she participated in *TSN's* programs which aimed at making the community aware of the catastrophic implications of an anti-immigration bill (Senate Bill 1) which was awaiting final approval by House representatives in Kentucky's General Assembly. She led a letter-writing campaign which encouraged many people to contact their representatives and voice their strong opposition to the bill. She made a notable contribution to *TSN's* awareness-raising efforts in a number of ways. Her broad-based experience, wisdom and exceptional communication skills have made her a most valued member of *TSN*.