The Christopher Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

— attributed to St. Francis of Assisi
Celebrating films, TV programs & books that affirm the highest values of the human spirit.

The 69th Annual
Christopher Awards
MAY 17, 2018 320 PARK AVENUE NEW YORK CITY

RECEPTION 6 p.m.
AWARDS CEREMONY 7 p.m.

WELCOME
Father Jonathan Morris
The Christophers

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
Ernie Anastos
News Anchor/Producer WNYW-TV Fox 5, New York

CATEGORIES & PRESENTERS
Books for Adults Tony Aiello
Books for Young People Joan Bauer
Feature Films Joan Bauer
TV & Cable Programs Jeannie Gaffigan

SPECIAL PRESENTATION
Elizabeth Vargas
Christopher Life Achievement Award
Ken Burns

Please join us at the After-Party immediately following the Awards presentation!

Photos: Paul Schneck
Welcome 2018

by Tony Rossi, Director of Communications & Program Manager, The Christopher Awards

“The world will be saved by beauty.”

That’s a famous Dostoevsky quote and part of the title of one of our Christopher Award winners. But it also reflects the power of stories to shape people in a positive way, stories like the ones we’re honoring tonight.

In the TV/Cable category, ABC News 20/20: Wonder Boy follows the Newman family as they deal with their son’s rare cranio-facial condition and their efforts to help the world see his beautiful heart, mind, and soul; the mini-series The Long Road Home dramatizes the sacrifices and heroism of the U.S. Army’s First Cavalry Division during a 2004 ambush in Iraq; in The Middle episode The Christmas Miracle, Frankie Heck’s adult son Axl refuses to attend church with the family on Christmas Eve, causing her to confront her own lackluster faith; The Music of Strangers celebrates cellist Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble, a group of musicians from the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Africa, who blend their musical cultures to build bridges in a divided world; and POV: Swim Team highlights young people with autism who gain confidence by channeling their energies into sports in an inclusive and encouraging environment.

The Feature Film category brings us Darkest Hour, which follows British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as he rallies his unprepared nation to face an imminent Nazi invasion; a rebellious teen strives for independence from her critical mother and experiences moments of grace due to her Catholic education in Lady Bird; a brave donkey, lovable sheep, and wisecracking dove bring Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth in the animated Nativity story The Star; and a 10-year-old boy with facial deformities teaches his classmates and community about acceptance and the power of kindness in Wonder.

In the Books for Adults category, historian David McCullough explores the ideals, values, and individuals that brought out the best in our country’s citizens in The American Spirit; Holocaust survivor Dr. Edith Eva Eger recalls her journey to overcome survivor’s guilt and become a psychologist who helps others deal with trauma in The Choice; radical forgiveness and reconciliation are on display in Andrew Collins’ and Jameel McGee’s Convicted, about the unlikely friendship between a crooked white police officer and the innocent African American man he sent to jail; in Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved By Beauty, Kate Hennessy profiles her grandmother, the Catholic social activist who strove to balance her commitment to serving the poor with that of being a good mother; I’ll Push You chronicles the physical struggles and spiritual fruits of Patrick Gray’s 500-mile pilgrimage through the mountains of northern Spain with his best friend, Justin Skeesuck, who is confined to a wheelchair; and in Redeeming Ruth, Meadow Rue Merrill shares her family’s story of adopting an orphaned Ugandan baby with cerebral palsy and embracing the sacrificial joy of raising her.

In the Books for Young People category, a trip to the park prompts a little girl’s discovery of the world’s ordinary joys, leading her mom to a new perspective on life in Through Your Eyes; Pocket Full of Colors introduces readers to trailblazing illustrator, designer, and animator Mary Blair, one of the first women ever hired by Walt Disney Studios; Harriet Tubman’s bravery as a Union spy, nurse, suffragist, and leader of the Underground Railroad is highlighted in the poetic tribute Before She Was Harriet; in Genevieve’s War, an American girl’s vacation at her grandmother’s farm in 1939 France tests her character and sense of personal responsibility when the Nazi occupation begins; The Red Bandanna explores the life of 9/11 hero Welles Crowther, who worked in the World Trade Center’s South Tower and helped lead 18 people to safety before being killed himself; and in post-World War I Chicago, the friendship between two boys - one white, one African American - challenges the youngsters to practice courage and loyalty in the face of hatred in Crossing the Line.

In addition, our special Award winner – Ken Burns – is profiled on a separate page of this program book.

Beauty comes in many forms, as our winning projects demonstrate. We thank their creators for giving our spirits a needed boost.

Photo: Tony Rossi of The Christophers with Award-winning authors Marcy Cottrell Houle and Joseph Kim
Ernie Anastos
Anchor/Producer, Fox 5, NY/2016 Life Achievement Award winner

Tony Aiello
Reporter, WCBS-TV, New York

Joan Bauer
Author, Three-Time Christopher Award Winner (Books for Young People)

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Rev. Jonathan Morris
The Christophers

Elizabeth Vargas
2016 & 2018 winner, ABC News 20/20 Anchor/Correspondent/Writer

Jeannie Gaffigan
2016 winner, writer/producer “The Jim Gaffigan Show”

Father James Keller, a Maryknoll priest who believed that every individual has the power and responsibility to change the world for the better, founded The Christophers in 1945. He created the Christopher Awards in 1949 because he understood that the arts, media, and popular culture had the power to influence millions of people. When we’re exposed to books, films and TV programs that shine a light on our struggles as well as virtues like faith, courage, hope and love, we’re subtly nudged toward becoming better people.

Books for Adults

The American Spirit:
Who We Are and What We Stand For
(Simon & Schuster)
by David McCullough

The Choice:
Embrace the Possible
(Scribner/Simon & Schuster)
by Dr. Edith Eva Eger

Convicted:
A Crooked Cop, An Innocent Man, and an Unlikely Journey of Forgiveness and Friendship
(Waterbrook/Penguin Random House)
by Jameel McGee and Andrew Collins with Mark Tabb

Dorothy Day:
The World Will Be Saved by Beauty
(Scribner/Simon & Schuster)
by Kate Hennessy

I’ll Push You:
A Journey of 500 Miles, Two Best Friends, and One Wheelchair
(Tyndale House Publishers)
by Patrick Gray and Justin Skeesuck

Redeeming Ruth:
Everything Life Takes, Love Restores
(Hendrickson Publishers)
by Meadow Rue Merrill

Our Presenters

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Our Sincere Thanks

The Christophers would like to thank all who aim to make a difference in our world, especially the winning directors, producers, writers, illustrators, photographers, distributors, publishers, publicists and the following people:

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...and all of our Donors, Friends and Advertisers

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Preschool and up
Through Your Eyes: My Child’s Gift to Me
(Aladdin Books/Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing)
by Ainsley Earhardt, illustrated by Ji-Hyuk Kim

Kindergarten and up
Pocket Full of Colors
(Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing)
by Amy Guglielmo and Jacqueline Tourville, illustrated by Brigette Barrager

Ages 8 and up
Genevieve’s War
(Holiday House Publishing)
by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome

Ages 10 and up
The Red Bandanna
(Viking/Penguin Young Readers Group)
By Tom Rinaldi

Young Adult
Crossing the Line
(Sky Pony Press/Skyhorse Publishing)
by Bibi Belford
Darkest Hour
(Focus Features/Working Title Films)
Director: Joe Wright
Screenwriter: Anthony McCarten
Producers: Tim Bevan, Lisa Bruce, Eric Fellner, Anthony McCarten, Douglas Urbanski
Executive Producers: James Biddle, Liza Chasin, Lucas Webb

Lady Bird
(A24 Films)
Writer/Director: Greta Gerwig
Producers: Eli Bush, Evelyn O’Neill, Scott Rudin
Co-Producers: Jason Sack, Alex G. Scott
Executive Producer: Lila Yacoub

Wonder
(Lionsgate)
Director: Stephen Chbosky
Screenwriters: Stephen Chbosky, Steven Conrad, Jack Thorne
Based on the novel by: R.J. Palacio
Producers: David Hoberman, Todd Lieberman
Executive Producers: Jeff Skoll, Robert Kessel, Michael Beugg, R.J. Palacio, Alexander Young

The Star
(AFFIRM Films/Sony Pictures Animation)
Director: Timothy Reckart
Screenwriter: Carlos Kotkin
Story by: Carlos Kotkin and Simon Moore
Producer: Jennifer Magee-Cook
Executive Producers: DeVon Franklin, Brian Henson, Lisa Henson
ABC News 20/20: Wonder Boy
(ABC News)
Producers: Sean Dooley, Jennifer Joseph, Jeff Schneider
Field Producers: Sunny Antrim, Susan Welsh, Michael Harris

Writers: Sean Dooley, Jennifer Joseph, Elizabeth Vargas
Senior Producer: Terri Lichstein
Anchor/Correspondent: Elizabeth Vargas
Senior Executive Producer: David Sloan

The Long Road Home
(National Geographic Channel)
Directors: Phil Abraham, Mikael Salomon
Writers: Mikko Alanne, Alan DiFiore, Lana Cho, Scott Gold, Amy Louise Johnson, Kelly Wiles
Based on the book by: Martha Raddatz
Co-Producer: Tony Lara
Co-Executive Producer: Mikael Salomon
Executive Producers: Phil Abraham, Mikko Alanne, Benjamin Anderson, Jason Clark, Edward McGurn, Mike Medavoy

The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble
(HBO)
Director: Morgan Neville
Producer: Caitrin Rogers
Co-Executive Producer: Cristin Canterbury Bagnall
Executive Producers: Jeff Skoll, Diane Weyermann, Laura Freid, Julie Goldman, William Ackman, Hyun-Sang Cho, Nancy Stephens, Rick Rosenthal
Senior Producer for HBO: Nancy Abraham
Executive Producer for HBO: Sheila Nevins

The Middle: The Christmas Miracle
(ABC)
Director: Lee Shallat Chemel
Writer: Ilana Wernick
Producer: Werner Walian
Consulting Producer: Korby Siamis
Co-Executive Producers: Ilana Wernick, Rich Dahm
Executive Producers: DeAnn Heline, Eileen Heisler, Tim Hobert, Jana Hunter, Mitch Hunter, Roy Brown

POV: Swim Team
(PBS)
Director/Producer: Lara Stolman
Producer: Shanna Belott
Co-Producer: Ann Collins
Executive Producer: Craig Perry
Executive Producers for POV: Justine Nagan, Chris White
Ken Burns
by Tony Rossi, The Christophers

Ken Burns has been making films for almost forty years. After the Academy Award-nominated and Christopher Award-winning Brooklyn Bridge in 1981, he went on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including six other Christopher Award winners: The Statue of Liberty, The Civil War, Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Jazz, Horatio’s Drive: America’s First Road Trip, and The War.

Burns’s passion for history has guided his filmmaking because, as he said in a 1990 interview with American Heritage magazine, “It is the great arrogance of the present to forget the intelligence of the past.” That passion, coupled with immense talent, resonated with audiences many times over as they tuned into PBS in record numbers to learn more about the people, places, and events that defined America.

The 15-time Emmy Award winner once told The Christophers, “Too often in our country, we’re reminded of how we’re different...and we forget the things that bring us together. Our motto, the Latin motto, is ‘E pluribus unum’ – ‘out of many, one.’ There are too many people out there in the job of pluribus. I’m in the job of unum. I want to remind us why we can agree to cohere, why we can all sit around a table and share an American conversation.”

In September 2017, PBS broadcast The Vietnam War, a ten-episode, eighteen-hour series Burns co-directed with Lynn Novick that helped prompt a national conversation about the most significant event in American history during the last half of the twentieth century. Future projects include films on the history of Country Music, Ernest Hemingway, Muhammad Ali, Benjamin Franklin, the American Revolution, the history of Crime and Punishment in America, Lyndon B. Johnson and Civil Rights, the history of Reconstruction, and Winston Churchill, among others.

One of the most admirable aspects of Burns’s filmmaking is that he doesn’t approach history as dry facts. Instead, it’s about stories, human connections, and the emotions and experiences that bind us together by transcending time and place. And while he knows that America and its citizens have sometimes fallen short of their own ideals, his films ultimately convey a spirit of hope that we learn from our mistakes to become better as a people and a nation. For that reason, The Christophers are honored to present Ken Burns with our 2018 Christopher Life Achievement Award.

Previous winners include jazz legend Dave Brubeck, actor Carroll O’Connor, and historian David McCullough.
2018 Christophers’ High School Poster Contest Winners

1st Place: Alysia Templeman
Ripon Christian High School
Ripon, CA
Planting a seed

2nd Place: Devon Marie Kuster
Tuscarora High School
Frederick, MD
Hand signs for ASL to demonstrate how to say “you can make a difference”

3rd Place: Imari Earley
Carrollwood Day School
Tampa, FL
Outreach 360 in the Dominican Republic

Thank you for inspiring us, Ken Burns.

Congratulations on your Christopher Life Achievement Award
— Your PBS family
Congratulations to Meadow Rue Merrill
Author of Redeeming Ruth

“Some stories warm your heart; others
break it. Redeeming Ruth does both. She
was the littlest, the last, and the least of
all, but God used this exceptional child to
change not only a family, but an entire
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—JONI EARECKSON TADA, CEO of Joni
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Convicted is the true story of a crooked white cop, an innocent black man, and their unlikely journey of forgiveness within this racially divided nation.

Find out more at www.convictedbook.com

Annie O’Neill Summers

Congratulations...

Ken Burns
and all of the winners
on their 2018
Christopher Awards

Thank you for using your inner spark
of God’s light to share positive messages
with all in our world!

PBS proudly
congratulates
POV
for winning a
Christopher Award
in TV & Cable
for “Swim Team.”
Congratulations to 
The Christophers 
on the occasion of the 
69th Annual Christopher Awards

Keep lighting candles 
of hope for us all!

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For more info, please visit www.christophers.org
Rev. Monsignor Peter G. Finn

Congratulates

Ken Burns

and all of the winners of the

2018 Christopher Awards

Thank you for using your God-given gifts to shine His light in the world and to encourage the resilience of the human spirit!

FATHER JOHN CATOIR
(Former Director of The Christophers)

Congratulates

Ken Burns

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2018 Christopher Awards

Thank you for sharing your talents to shine God’s hope in the world; to foster understanding among all people and to help unite us as one!

www.messengerofjoy.com

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“The Office of Prison Ministry for the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg would like to add their well wishes to those already received by the Christopher Awards on the joyous occasion of their 69th Anniversary!

“For over ten years, The Christophers have been faithful and faith-filled in their support of our local prison ministry by donating literally tons of outstanding materials to be distributed freely to men, women and children incarcerated in our 2 prisons, 5 county jails, 3 juvenile detention centers, various work release centers and local shelters. Items such as Three Minutes a Day books, Christopher calendars, and those outstanding Christopher News Notes, have been a staple of our ministry.

“Anytime we have asked The Christophers for assistance, the answer is not only yes, but; what else can we do to help you? The Christophers believe in ‘lighting a single candle to illuminate the darkness...’ and, certainly, over these 69 years millions of candles have been lit!

“The Christophers have done so much to send the blaze of the love and knowledge of Christ to countless inmates ‘behind the wire.’”

- Deacon Peter Andre, Office of Prison Ministry, Diocese of St. Petersburg
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“It’s better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”
Christopher credo

Special thanks to our host for the evening
Mutual of America

The Christophers, a nonprofit organization founded in 1945 by Maryknoll Father James Keller, uses broadcast and print media to spotlight individuals working to change the world for the better. In addition to producing the weekly radio program, “Christopher Closeup,” The Christophers syndicate radio spots; publish inspirational News Notes; and distribute “Light One Candle,” a syndicated weekly newspaper column. They also sponsor a Youth Awards program and Leadership course.

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Hope
Hope looks for the good in people instead of harping on the worst.
Hope opens doors where despair closes them.
Hope draws its power from a deep trust in God and the basic goodness of human nature.
Hope regards problems, small or large, as opportunities.
Hope pushes ahead when it would be easy to quit.
Hope “lights a candle” instead of “cursing the darkness.”

By Father James Keller, M.M.
Founder of The Christophers

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