

Justice and Mission Team Report for ISC Annual Meeting 2021

Our Team is active and engaged on several issues. We are always looking for new members to join our happy throng. We have stimulating discussions and we do take actions. If this sounds like a good fit for you, join us second Tuesday of each month at 1 pm via Zoom. Christy Pursell can help facilitate your participation.

1. Race Relations

A Tour:

As a committee we read, *In Walnut Grove*, a book about Tallie de Noyer, a large farm that enslaved people in Florissant, Mo. Rev. Sam Foskey led this review.

This resulted in a tour of Rev Richard Ellerbrake's home in OFallon, Illinois, Benjamin Stephenson Home in Edwardsville and lunch on the porch of Tallie de Noyer in Missouri.

Richard's home has been extensively documented as an underground railroad stop. Richard and Johann have beautifully preserved the feeling and the authenticity of the activities that took place there during the Civil War.

At the Benjamin Stephenson Home we learned that Stephenson's wife brought her enslaved people with her from Kentucky. In order for her to keep her servants, the Illinois law was changed to allow "indentured" servants for a life term. So much for Illinois being a "free" state.

We lunched on the porch of Tallie de Noyer (Walnut Grove). Once a large farm with enslaved people, it now sits on the campus of a mostly African American high school, McClure North. The author of *In Walnut Grove*, Andrew Theising, met us and showed us the interior of the home which houses in one room a collection of history of African Americans in the area of Florissant up to the Ferguson event.

A Celebration: Juneteenth

Rev. Norma Patterson was an integral part of the Juneteenth Celebration in East St. Louis. On a blistering hot day, Norma gave her brief but rousing "sermonette" to help us pause and understand that the enslaved folks in Texas heard two years after the Emancipation Proclamation they were a free people. Several of us participated in this gay time of remembrance.

Support of the Black Community Business

In support of a business owned by African Americans, Norma Patterson's church moved their accounts to the Midwest BankCentre. The bank motto is Dream Big, Rise Together. Orv Kimbraugh is the Chairman and CEO of the bank. Richard knows him from past work they have shared. Mr. Kimbraugh is well respected in the St. Louis Area.

2. Clean Energy and Jobs Equity Act CEJA

Four years in the legislative making, this major energy bill for Illinois will help us lead the way to a safer climate and to more equitable landscape for employment among our underrepresented populations in the work force.

Rev. Norman and Kay Ahaus have kept the Team informed of the negotiations and progress of this bill, SB 2408. It has passed the Senate, was changed through amendments in the House, and it has now passed back to the Senate. As I write this on September 13, 2021, CEJA or Climate and Equity Jobs Act

A Time To Replenish



I will satisfy the weary, and all who are faint I will replenish, Jeremiah 31:25

has passed with amendments through both Illinois legislative chambers. It is ready for Gov. Pritzker's signature.

3. Hunger Action Team

The work of this Team has gone on for 50 years. Margie Lindhorst, Kathi Emery, and Darline Wehl have helped us appreciate their constant work through Bread for the World and other efforts to fulfill the need of food locally and worldwide. September is Hunger Action Month.

They are sponsoring a fundraiser at DuBois to help our Conference needs in our Hunger & Youth Ministries.

4. Ecuador Mission

Lee-Alison Wilson spoke to our Team about the ongoing mission our Conference has in Ecuador. Because of COVID, trips there are out of the question. But, she is in great need of help with fundraising, building interest in this mission and in assistance with various tasks, most of which she manages alone or with their small committee.

5. Broadband for Illinois

Rev. Norma has informed us of Illinois and US efforts to provide broadband to all. COVID has illustrated the desperate need for broadband access for everyone. With children bused to areas where they can pick up WIFI to do homework, with a student sitting on the steps of a library in heat and cold weather to receive WIFI so she can do homework, or with students working on their cell phones to keep up with classes, the need for Broadband for All was nakedly exposed. There is a huge need to bring broadband to all.

6. Mental Health

Rev. Tim Darmour- Paul has committed to helping our Conference become a WISE conference. He will begin his special training at the end of September and then go on to Train the Trainer in our churches so that we all may become adept at listening to and sharing with those who have mental illness. We look forward to lifting up this mission in 2021-22.

7. LBGTQ

Justin Gibson is our point person for any action or discussion around this important topic. Justin has brought us valuable context in our conversations about marginalized groups of people. He has been a valuable technology person to help us more smoothly operate our meetings.

8. Health Care:

Rev. Richard Ellerbrake has raised concerns for the cost of health care and the former practice of parish nurses. This may well be an area we look into further next year.

It is a privilege to serve with these dedicated, inspiring and passionate Christians. Special thanks goes out to Christy Pursell for her technical support.

Kay Ahaus, Convener

Race relations subcommittee: Jerry Bennett, Sam Foskey, Richard Ellerbrake, Shana Johnson

CEJA subcommittee: Norma Patterson, Kay Ahaus

Hunger subcommittee: Darline Wehl, Margie Lindhorst, Kathy Emery

LBGTQ: Justin Gibson

Mental Health: Tim Darmour-Paul