Telling Our Stories for a New Perspective
For the last couple of weeks, I have been sharing writings by my colleagues who have used our fall study trip to Birmingham as a springboard to talk about a difficult subject we often avoid in the church...racism. In their writings you will discover a common summons to the Church to be about the kingdom work of creating Godly justice, mercy, and equality in our churches, communities and in the world.

This last installment is an article by Edith Guffey, the current Conference Minister of the Kansas Oklahoma Conference. Edith is not only an incredible colleague, but someone I consider a mentor. Edith speaks of learning how the "...very act of taking the risk to tell our stories to each other matters." With great vulnerability and raw honesty, Edith tells her story.

So often in the church, we struggle with where and how to enter into difficult conversations, which are necessary to begin the work of confronting injustice and moving toward action and transformation. Yet, the truth is it is actually quite simple, although it does take incredible courage. We begin by telling our truth. We begin by sharing our own stories, what we have known, and what we have experience. By telling our truth, we can open the eyes, ears, hearts, and minds of others to think about something in a new way, through a new perspective.

I pray you will hear Edith's story and truth, and it will encourage you to not only have the courage to tell yours as well, but also to listen more deeply to the stories of others, which reveal how discrimination and injustice is a constant reality for so many of our siblings in Christ. When we hear these stories, we cannot unhear them or pretend this truth does not exist. May we remember in our hearing, the call from our Lord and Savior to be about the kingdom work of bringing forth light, justice, and the mercy of God into the dark places of the world.

Blessings, Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

Changed by the National Memorial
by Edith Guffey, Conference Minister of Kansas Oklahoma Conference
In early September, I was in Montgomery, Alabama with the Pension Boards at the Annual Meeting of the Annuitant Visitors. Because Montgomery, Alabama is where the Memorial for Peace and Justice is located, the planners of the meeting, Rev. Krista Betz, (former Interim Conference Minister for KO) and her staff made the decision to alter the usual program to allow for participants to visit the Memorial and Museum.

If you don't know about the memorial, it is often referred to in shorthand as the National Lynching Memorial that was opened in April of 2018 to commemorate the victims of lynching. The Memorial for Peace and Justice was conceived with "the hope of creating a sober, meaningful site where people can gather and reflect on America's history of racial inequality".

As Krista began to plan the meeting, she extended the invitation to me and the Rev. Lori Walke to shape the conversations and set the tone for the meeting that might lead to deeper engagements about race as we all experienced the memorial and the museum. Rev. Walke is the Associate Pastor at Mayflower UCC in Oklahoma City.

I won't speak for Lori, but for me, it was quite an experience to have what might be considered a private conversation about race publicly with a pastor from our Conference that I deeply respect and whose history is so very different from my own.

We are of different generations, Lori grew up in the south, and in the Southern Baptist Church; she is white, and I am African American. We share very common values about racial justice, but we had never talked with each other about our stories and how our different histories around race have shaped us. I would never tell Lori's story as I know she would never tell mine; but learning and hearing parts...
of Lori’s story and journey was a sacred experience that I will treasure. And I learned that the very act of taking the risk to tell our stories to each other matters. It mattered to those present, and it encouraged others in the room to do the same. I heard stories that weekend that broke my heart, and I heard stories that lifted my heart and gave me hope for the future.

On Saturday, we visited the Museum and the Memorial; two separate experiences. The museum is described like this on the website: "The 11,000-square-foot museum is built on the site of a former warehouse where enslaved black people were imprisoned, and is located midway between an historic slave market and the main river dock and train station where tens of thousands of enslaved people were trafficked during the height of the domestic slave trade."

I have visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, the Civil Rights Museum in Atlanta, the site where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated, etc. so historical sites related to the African American experience are not new to me. But this one knocked me out. I don't know if the sheer numbers finally hit me, or the incredible brutality of slavery finally got to me, or why it was this particular experience in Montgomery was the one that I have yet to recover from. It was here that the ugly pieces of the puzzle of white supremacy finally fell into place and are now more vivid in ways that I can't even fully describe. Nothing new in the world has changed, but it's as if I actually SEE white supremacy differently.

Maybe it happened when I touched that map in the museum that listed the names of where people had been lynched and I touched the state of Oklahoma and the name of John Marshall popped up on the screen. I almost couldn't breathe. John Marshall; my father's name was John Marshall and the lynching took place in the county next to Marshall, Oklahoma. I knew my father's real last name wasn't really Marshall (something I learned when my oldest child was born). My father, like many African Americans born in 1919 or so he thought, never knew his real parents, or for that matter, his real name. He took the name Marshall; could it have come from the town Marshall, Oklahoma??

I calmed myself down, knowing it wasn't my father, because I grew up knowing my father.

But I wondered, could this John Marshall who was lynched have been his father or maybe a brother, a cousin or some other relative? I'll never know of course. But seeing the name, the same name as my father, as a victim of a lynching did something to me because while it wasn't him...it certainly could have been.

Not all have moments, experiences planned and unplanned that unexpectedly change us. This was one of those experiences for me and I am still "unpacking it" personally. But as the KO Conference Minister, it means something as well. Because I learned something else surprising. Did you know that Oklahoma is the state with the most lynchings in non-southern states; 76 recorded (19 in Kansas). Couple this with what we know about the Tulsa Massacre, and I wonder if this tells us something about the context and history of the state where we are called to be in ministry. Does it tell us something as we think about the future of the Conference and what we are called to do and be? And what about in Kansas? While the numbers are different, the context somewhat different, don't be fooled that it's all that much better just a little farther north.

And about language and lynchings. I more than cringed when our President called the impeachment inquiry "a lynching," and I was glad I was in New York as it kept me from "ranting" on my computer. Yet, it is a teachable moment. Because I very much want to believe that our President speaks from a place of ignorance, not truly understanding what he's saying. If he and others took the time to experience the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Museum, maybe he would understand the outrage and pain. For I believe, it is out of unawareness that he or anyone else would compare any process of questions and investigations with the lynching of 4400 black people in the United States.

If you doubt that, take a trip to Montgomery and witness the brutality; scroll through the names; see the columns that hang in the memorial; and even more disgusting, see and read how Christians left church and attended lynchings as Sunday afternoon entertainment and picnics.
But even if you don't doubt it, but need to know more, here's where you can read and learn more. It's hard to see and read, but it's way past time to face this part of history.

Region 2 Mission UCC Concert - A Great Success
Region 2 United Church of Christ churches of Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair counties held the first annual mission concert at St. Paul UCC in Waterloo on Sunday, February 9. Gary Humphrey, the Music Director of St. Paul UCC, organized the concert with selections performed by individual choirs from Region 2 churches and a combined choir of over forty members and friends of all the churches participating. Region 2 church choirs participating were Maestown St. John UCC, directed by Marcia Braswell; Red Bud St. Peter UCC, directed by Terrie Thies; and Waterloo St. Paul UCC, directed by Gary Humphrey. The choral selections were: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness", "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love", "Fly Away Medley", "A Jubilant Call to Praise", "We Are Singing for the Lord is Our Light", "Lord, I Stretch My Hands to You", "This I Pray", "The Welcome Table", "Wings of Your Love", "If You Love Me", and "The Old Time Religion Medley". The afternoon offering was $624.75 designated for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and the many ministries of Illinois South Conference. Waterloo St. Paul UCC will host the ISC Day of Discipleship on February 29. Their next concert series will be the Collinsville Chorale with its "Music of the Psalms" concert on March 15 at 3:00 pm.

Re-scheduled - Presentation on the Holocaust
Due to last week's weather and travel distance, the Holocaust Presentation is re-scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, at 6:30 pm, Alhambra Salem UCC. Mr. Steve Goldsmith will speak. He was part of the Kindertransport, an organized rescue effort that took place prior to the outbreak of World War II. The United Kingdom and several other nations took in over 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from Nazi Germany and other Nazi-occupied nations. The children were placed in foster homes, hostels, schools, and farms. Some received good treatment, and others were treated poorly and used as child labor. Often, they were the only members of their families to survive the Holocaust. The event is free and open to all. Salem United Church of Christ is located in Alhambra, Illinois on St. Rt. 140, exactly 5 miles east of I-55. For more information or questions, call the Salem Church Office at 618-488-3215.

Day of Discipleship - Early-Bird Discount Deadline - Friday, February 14
Workshop Opportunities
1 & 2 B  Self-Medication: So What?
Look at ways people cope with their mental health - healthy & unhealthy. Come find out how untreated & undiagnosed mental health issues can be disruptive and how to support someone facing these health concerns. Presented by Yvonne Petito, Hoyleton Youth & Family Services.
1 & 2 C  Mental Health 101 Crash Course
Mental Health is a difficult subject to approach with members of the congregation and with the loved ones of someone faced with mental health issues. Let's define mental health disorders, who they affect, ways to approach the subject, and resources to help. Presented by Anne King Riley, Human Support Services.
1 & 2 D  Let's Pay Back the Sacrifices of Veterans.
We owe much to the people who have served our country. Many times, mental health issues and PTSD go unidentified. We will discuss resources and what we can do to help those in need. Presented by Rev. Michael Cassady, Pastor of Murphysboro St. Peter's UCC.
How to Help Those Who Can’t Remember
Dementia is becoming more prevalent and caring for a loved one with impaired memory and judgement presents many challenges for the family. Learning facts about the condition and strategies to address problem behaviors can improve quality of life for both the individual with dementia and caretakers. Presented by Nancy Berry, St. John’s Community Care.

Grief’s Effect on Mental Health
Mental Health issues can be magnified when faced with our final days as well as times we suffer from the loss of a loved one. Let's talk about resources to aid during these times. Presented by Rev. Dr. John Allen, Chaplain and CPE Educator at SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital.

Stop the Bleed
The number one cause of preventable death after injury is bleeding. This workshop will teach you how to stop a bleed until professional help can arrive. Presented by Lynne Taylor, Christ UCC & Trained Instructor of Stop the Bleed

LIFE at Eden - March 14, 2020
Certificate Course What is the Church?
Rev. Shana Johnson
What is the Church? with Rev. Shana Johnson
This course will be a journey in exploring the multifaceted ways we speak of and imagine what it means to be the Church. We will not only reflect on the historical roots and form of Church, but the emerging forms of being and becoming authentic communities of disciples invested in transformative action. Participants will also be invited, challenged, and nudged to consider how the Spirit is summoning them to be a part of the continuing creation of the Church, the living manifestation of Christ’s presence in the world. Rev. Shana Johnson is the Conference Minister of ISCUCC.

Elective Course Spiritual Formation Dr. William Tucker
Spiritual Formation: Spiritual Writing with Dr. Bill Tucker
Flannery O’Connor said that anyone who survived childhood has enough material to write for the rest of his or her life. [Bird by Bird, Anne Lamott, p. 4]. What speaks to you and to others about your spiritual development, about your beliefs, your commentary on scripture, your prayers and reflections? We will attempt and share a variety of genres and begin a small portfolio of writing, both personal and professional. All sharing of writing is voluntary. Dr. William Tucker, Professor Emeritus Eastern Michigan University

Click here for more information and to register.
Contact Jill Schantz at jschantz@eden.edu or by calling 314-918-2554 FREE for Eden Students!
Click here for a flyer.

From history.com’s 6 Surprising Facts about St. Valentine. Here’s one...
Valentine is the patron saint of beekeepers and epilepsy, among many other things. Saints are certainly expected to keep busy in the afterlife. Their holy duties include interceding in earthly affairs and entertaining petitions from living souls. In this respect, St. Valentine has wide-ranging spiritual responsibilities. People call on him to watch over the lives of lovers, of course, but also for interventions regarding beekeeping and epilepsy, as well as the plague, fainting and traveling. As you might expect, he’s also the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages. Happy Valentine’s Day!!
What's a Star Party? An evening of stargazing, with hot chocolate and snacks around the campfire! This specific night just might be one of the best nights of the season to check out the night sky - depending on the weather. Mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate the start of spring! Festivities are scheduled from 7 pm - 10 pm on March 20, the Spring Equinox, beginning with a bonfire and snacks at Picnic Point. The big open playing field in the Rustic Village will be our prime star-gazing location. Trams will run to and from this area from the toasty campfire at 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Bring your own binoculars or view the sky with provided equipment. This is a FREE conference-wide, family-friendly event sponsored by Green DuBois. Dress warmly and bring your friends, neighbors, youth group or Sunday School class.

WINTER PROJECTS:
Upholstery, Refinishing, Repairing
It's not Spring yet, and there is still winter weather in the forecast! If you like to work with your hands and have some spare time, DuBois Center might have the perfect indoor project for you. Enjoy refinishing furniture? We have some wood-frame chairs in need of some TLC. Upholstery of more interest? Two chairs need attention - backs and seats only. Here's an interesting one... refinishing arrows. Removing and replacing damaged feathers takes time, patience and the right tools. We have a couple dozen that need work. All three of these projects can be done in the comfort of your home or here at camp. For more information, contact DuBois Center at 618-787-2202 or dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org.

CAMP NURSES
Servants with Sunscreen
Band-Aids - YES, but so much more! One setting for ministry at DuBois Center is our health center. Volunteer nurses, most of whom are RNs, are a vital piece of our summer camp program. Serving as a camp nurse can be a very rewarding mission experience that is similar, yet very different than most traditional nursing positions. Responsibilities include reviewing camper medical forms, conducting health screenings, receiving and administering medications, providing first aid and basic medical treatment, and documentation. But when you really get down to it, nurses spend most of their time removing ticks, soothing rashes, distributing medications and providing extra TLC for homesick and nervous campers. If you are an RN, please consider serving with us for a full or partial week. The living quarters do have AC, and there is often time to join us for worship, explore the woods or just sit back and read a book. For more information, contact Shirley at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202.

WRANGLE & RIDE
Saturday, April 4
Spring is a great time to be outside at DuBois Center... even more so when horses are involved! Join our equestrian team on Saturday, April 4 from 9 am - 5 pm for a full day of fun with the DuBois Center herd! Designed for both beginners and more experienced riders, this is a horse-intensive day of grooming, tacking, riding, instruction and other horse-related activities. Beginners will be introduced to basic skills, while experienced riders work on more advanced options. The cost for this event is $65 with lunch included. Online registration is NOW OPEN. Click here for more information or to register by mail. Questions? Contact us at dcinfo@duboiscenter.org or 618-787-2202.

LENTEN WORK DAY - April 4 - Plan Now to Attend
Looking for a meaningful Lenten discipline? How about pitching in with family and friends, and making a difference at DuBois Center? Stretch your muscles, get a little dirty and help spruce up the grounds. Projects vary depending on the weather and the skills of the workers - carpentry, cleaning and painting are on the list. Lunch is provided as are most tools and supplies. Check out this Service Saturday flyer for more information. RSVP to DuBois Center by Monday, March 30, at dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org or 618-787-2202. If this date doesn't work with your schedule, call or email to set up a different day for your group!
DuBois Center is your OCWM (Our Church’s Wider Mission) monies at work. When you or your congregation gives to OCWM, you are directly supporting the work of DuBois, a Camp and Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ. Thank you for your ongoing support of OCWM!

**Asset Based Leadership**

with Dr. Peter Dry will be held on Tuesday February 18 from 7:30 - 9:00 am. Learn how you can start with assets, strengthen teams, and innovate and accelerate organizational success. Peter’s recent role has been the dean of innovation and strategy leading significant cultural and programmatic change across the organization. Register [here](#).

Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, in conjunction with the Illinois South Conference, DuBois Center and Kindercottage, is proud to offer informational sessions in our Conference to help educate and inform individuals on ways they can pass the gift of faith and make a transformative difference beyond their lifetime. With two dates and locations during February, we hope to help individuals understand the importance of their legacy and how it can affect the lives of so many more children and individuals in the future. Click here for a [flyer](#).

Tues, Feb 11 at St. John UCC, 55 W Church St, Mascoutah, IL 6:00 pm
Tues, Feb 25 at St. Peter's UCC, 106 W Church St, Okawville, IL  6:00 pm

The Insurance Board presents a webinar on **Medical Marijuana in the Workplace** on Wed, Feb 19 at 1 pm CST. More Americans are using medical marijuana therapeutically than ever before. As the laws surrounding medical marijuana continue to evolve, there are proactive steps you can take now to protect your church, business, or nonprofit. The event will be live at the City Club in Cleveland, Ohio. If you are in the area, you can attend the live event, or you can register to view the free live webcast. For more information click [here](#).

**Planned Giving to Support Mission and Ministry Webinars**

While a significant wealth transfer occurs (and will occur) in our country as our eldest generation passes, many congregations and ministries remain unprepared to promote planned giving options among their members.

**Preaching Generosity**

It can be hard to talk about money. And yet Jesus spoke about it often, second only to the Kingdom of God. Join Rev. Andrew Warner (a Generosity Outreach of the United Church of Christ) to explore how to preach and teach about generosity and the use of our financial resources. Each webinar will focus on a specific liturgical season and a set of readings. We will plan out at least one preaching opportunity for teaching generosity as a spiritual practice.

**Wednesday Feb. 26th - 2 pm Central**

The Season of Lent: A Changed Life - Using the story of Nicodemus, we'll see how increasing generosity created change in his life. We'll look beyond the lectionary reading to consider the other two appearances of Nicodemus. The story will focus attention on what it means to experience change in our lives. Register [here](#).

**Monday April 20st - 2 pm Central**

The Season of Easter: Beloved Community - The stories of Good Shepherd Sunday (May 3) speak to what it means to live generously in a community (Acts 2: 42-47, Ps. 23, and John 10: 1-10). This Sunday offers a chance to think broadly about the many forms of generosity and how it reinforces connections within a community. Register [here](#).

For ISC Estate Planning Record, click [here](#).

**St. John’s Community Care**

Surviving Caregiving Conference will be held on April 4 from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm at St. John UCC Faith Hall in Collinsville. Attendees will learn about resources and techniques to help them on their caregiving journey. Speakers include Heidi Dodd, speaking on Legal & Financial Issues; Cindy and Christina Hardin-Weis, speaking on Learning Proper Techniques for Using Medical Equipment; and Gail Shaw and Chris Fulton, speaking on Dementia Resources & Coping - Helping You Age Well, Your Way!. Attendees will receive a resource packet. Continental breakfast and box
### Region 2

**St. Peter UCC in Red Bud** will hold a Winter BBQ, all you can eat buffet style on Sunday, Feb 23 beginning at 11 am. Ribs, pork steaks, pork roast, chicken, German potato salad, American potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw, sweet and sour salad, desserts and drinks. Carry outs available. Country store. To purchase whole sides of ribs or whole pork butts, call Bob Schmoll at 618-980-1068.

**Lenten Fish Fries at St. Peter UCC in Red Bud** will be held on Fri, March 20 and Fri, April 3.

### Region 5

**Troy Friedens UCC** will hold its 8th Annual Sausage Supper on Sun, March 8 from 11:30 am - 5:30 pm. Buffet Menu Includes: grilled pork sausage, sauerkraut, green beans, mashed potatoes & gravy, applesauce, coffee, tea and dessert, Call 618-667-6535 for curbside service & pre-orders. Adults: $10; Children 5 to 10 years - $5; Children 4 years & under free; Carry-outs and curb service - $10.

**Staunton St. Paul UCC presents Trivia Night on Sat, March 14 from 6 pm - 10 pm at Concordia Hall in Staunton.** Trivia, Games, Silent Auction, 50/50 Drawing and more! Doors open at 6. Play begins at 6:30 pm. $15 per person for teams of 8-10 people. Bring your own snacks. All alcohol must be purchased at Concordia. All proceeds go to St. Paul UCC ministries. Register by email or call the church office at 618-635-2386.

**St. Jacob UCC** will sponsor the Strawberry Festival on Sunday, May 17 from 10 am - 3 pm at Town Park in St. Jacob. Music, crafts, jump houses, entertainment for kids. Hot dogs, brats, pork burgers, strawberry desserts. Berry Bike Ride sign up here.

### Region 8

**New Baden Zion UCC** will hold its Chili Dinner on Wed, Feb 12 from 4 pm - 7 pm. Eat in or carry out. No drive thru. Menu includes hot and mild chili, grilled cheese sandwiches, corn bread, hot dogs, salads, desserts & beverages. Adults & Carry outs $9; Children 5 - 12 years $4; Children 4 & under Free (eat in only). Bulk Chili $5/pint; $10/half gallon; $20/gallon. Please bring your own container.

**New Baden Zion UCC** will hold Fish Dinners on Wed, Feb 26, Fri, March 20 and Fri, April 10 from 4 pm - 6:30 pm. Dinner includes cod tail or catfish, mac & cheese, fries or chips, hush puppies, cole slaw and dessert. Adults $10; Children $5.

### Region 9

**Belleville St. Paul UCC Fine Arts Series presents Jazz Winds of Patagonia on Thurs, Feb 20 at 7 pm.** The ensemble features Director Bill Mollenhof on percussion, Marla Gabriela Gualia piano and voice, and Joy Harris on 6-string electric bass and voice. No cost to attend. Free-will offering will be taken.

**Belleville Concordia UCC** will hold its Youth Pancake & Sausage Breakfast on Sat, Feb 29 at 7:00 IL Rte 163 in Belleville from 7 am - 10 am. There will be two kinds of pancakes - Buttermilk & Oatmeal. Adults $8; Children 5 - 12 years $5; and Children under 5 No Charge.