"But if we want to create a world in which conflict and trauma aren't the center of our collective existence, we
have to practice something new, ask different questions,"

Part 4 of a series on Emergent Strategy / by adrienne maree brown / quotes - pp. 149-150 [102-103],

Photo by C. L. Stumb

Whole, healed, strong, resilient, sacred and holy humans is a goal of transformative justice. (I added to brown's words the "sacred and holy." Reading her work, I believe that she would accept this addendum.) In the text Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds, I hear adrienne maree brown not invite us to "do better," instead I hear a demand, a charge, a "call" for us to do better. To quote the text on page 150 [103], "I want us to do better. I want to feel like we are responsible for each other's transformation. Not the transformation from vibrant flawed humans to bits of ash, but rather the transformation from broken people and communities to whole ones. . . . .[that] yield deeper trust, resilience and interdependence."

Within these words, I hear them in concert with Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor's latest article in the July 9, 2020 Christian Century article "Finding God outside the church walls" (or in the print edition "At home with strangers.") Brown discusses how her ideas and beliefs of the Church, God, beloved community and sacredness have all shifted. Since she left her role within the pastoral call of priest and rector within the Episcopal world, her notion now when she hears someone her age (white haired and wise) ask "'How are we going to get the young people back to church?' I say, 'Why don't you ask them where they are finding meaning instead?' This is the exciting
part. Not just what the next generation of seekers is doing, but what the Holy Spirit is doing in them that can enliven my generation as well."

What IS the Holy Spirit doing?!

Calling us to trust one another? Calling us within the walls of churches to rethink how we seek to offer meaning and purpose? Moving us into territories of reflection that are uncomfortable, demanding and noticing truth of our (All of us) flawed natures? Demanding that we not only repeat "that all may be one" but that we actually reach out into our interdependence AND "depend" on those "others" around us working within and toward this oneness?

Maybe it is because we are past the four month mark living in a global pandemic and the fact that "I am D-O-N-E" with online everything and learning more technology that is never-ending and continuing to reimagine creatively this notion to "Be the Church" that I have been focusing on the chapter entitled "Resilience: how we recover and transform." Within this chapter, read again for the fourth time, I am transfixed with the definitions, teaching and examples of transformative justice.

Transformative justice is a peace that is built on truth, accountability and equity. It demands that we ask "Why?" listening deep for the "whys" underneath our lies, betrayals, missteps and anger before we blame, accuse or seek punishment. This framework of discovery and questioning before we make impactful decisions rehumanizes us into sacred and holy creatures instead of immediately demonizing those as the "other."

Transformative justice wonders about the lessons learned within a pandemic, within mistakes, within the challenges and failures. These lessons learned lead to the emerging transformation that we seek that is probably beyond our own imaginations. Instead we allow for the Holy Spirit's flames to burn away our own dross. Burning away is not for the faint-hearted.

Transformative justice lives within a process found within our "real-time actions" that may move at a pace that we define as sloth-like. Slowed down. Reflective. Offering rest. Utilizing silence. Seeking out deep, thoughtful conversations offering us reasons to shift our own ways of being and hearing Jesus speak of new wineskins. These real-time actions go against the rapid tweet, the millisecond Facebook "share" or the immediate jumping into the social media world "teeth bared, for the jugular."

What is the Holy Spirit doing?!? Calling us to an interdependence that is founded on trust, seeing the sacredness within the secular and loving our neighbors as ourselves. She is transforming our very notion of justice into ways that offer deep meaning and demanding that we do better by our neighbors -- black, brown, disabled, mentally ill, old, young, gender fluid, addicted, or incarcerated.

May the Holy Spirit's holy flames liberate all the hearts, minds and bodies seeking to emerge and may we have the courage to fan these same holy flames to consume what is oppressing that which is emerging.
The long tradition of "Franklinton Center Day" will continue -- though virtual -- in 2020

submitted by Ms. Vivian M. Lucas (executive director) and Rev. Elly Mendez Angulo (program manager)

Like so many events in our lives, this year's Franklinton Center Day will be like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the need for justice in our health care systems and in our economic life; the spotlight on the Black Lives Matter Movement offers a perhaps unparalleled opportunity to confront and combat systemic racism. What can we do?

Franklinton Center at Bricks is holy ground where religious and secular champions for justice continue to be trained. Leaders are developing plans of engagement to realize God's vision of life for all people - across the United States and around the world. We invite you to join us this Franklinton Center Day 2020, in a renewed and heightened commitment to continue the legacy of preparing individuals, congregations, and community leaders to advance programs for racial, social, and economic justice.

Here at Franklinton Center at Bricks, this means supporting our work with local community leaders from our surrounding counties to address food insecurity, health disparities, and equity issues for our schools - particularly around access to technology. To support our nation and the world, it means having a wonderful freedom and justice conference center, spiritually-rooted, Gospel-proclaiming safe space, to make differences in lives.

We won't be able to gather in person for Franklinton Center Day this year; but we will gather virtually and in spirit.

Zoom Link for the Virtual Franklinton Center Day is listed below, and can be found on the Franklinton Center website.

https://zoom.us/j/96899490249?pwd=YWF4dTVoK241QnR0bHJDlzRDZWoyQT09
Meeting ID: 968 9949 0249 Passcode: 356313

To Join by Phone
+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown) +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
Meeting ID: 968 9949 0249 Passcode: 356313
Please support Franklinton Center and make a gift today through our website - www.FranklintonCenterAtBricks.org or mail donations to: Franklinton Center at Bricks, P.O. Box 220, Whitakers, NC 27891. We wish health and safety for you and your families in these challenging times.

Download flyer / invitation

Thriving in Ministry Program

SALISBURY - New Clergy or New to the UCC -- Join a Clergy Community of Practice: Are you new clergy or new to the UCC? Join a clergy community of practice ("clergy COP) to enhance your leadership skills, avoid burnout and learn more about pastoring in the UCC. Clergy COPs are designed for learning and support - personally and professionally.

The Catawba Clergy Network, through its Lilly-funded, Thriving in Ministry Program has designed a special COP for new clergy that also includes professional life and leadership coaching. By joining a clergy COP, you can develop a support network, learn from experienced peers and share resources.

In this clergy cohort that meets monthly beginning in September, you will talk about things that matter to you -- topics that can help you succeed and thrive in ministry, such as:

- Self-care and avoiding burnout
- Managing stress and busy schedules
- Navigating criticism, conflicts, and unreasonable expectations
- Working successfully with lay volunteers
- Communicating well with diverse peoples

Testimonials: Here's what some of your clergy colleagues have said about how clergy groups have helped them thrive:

"I loved it and being new to the association it gave me more connection to WNCA and to new colleagues. I am very grateful... It helped ground me in my new ministry, gave me colleagues to consult and pray with, and when I hit a really difficult challenge, my colleagues offered support and prayers. Rev. Karla M, WNCA

"This CCOP has been a rich blessing to my life and ministry. Learning to lean on and appreciate the expertise of my colleagues has expanded my ability to trust others, and to let go of holding all the strings so tight. Empowering others to be an active partner and leader in the mission work doesn't make me a weak leader. This group has demonstrated and taught me the value of shared leadership... As a result, it has created access points for lay leaders to step up and become more active in ministry. This creates an opportunity for me to streamline my focus and ability to lead as oppose to trying to focus on everything all at once." Rev. Hugo M, EVA

Grants for COP participants: Note also that, at the end of the cohort year, CCN will offer $500 grants to clergy who participate in COPs to finance self-care initiatives
that help them thrive (unless your group chooses a group grant to support educational and gathering opportunities for the group).

**Want More Information:** If you're interested in joining a clergy cohort this fall or in facilitating a small group, or if you want to learn more about COPs and CCN resources, contact Rev. Betty Morton at: bjmorton19@catawba.edu.

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**Artists create racial justice exhibit at First Congregational UCC**

**ASHEVILLE** (WLOS) - An art installation at an Asheville church focuses on racial justice in the United States.

The display at The Oak Street Gallery lists the names of more than 60 Black Americans killed by police officers and the circumstances surrounding their deaths.

Project coordinator Mandy Kjellstrom said the artists wanted to do something productive during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We were all sitting at home, confined at home because of the coronavirus, and this gave us something positive we can do to help the situation our world finds itself in right now," Kjellstrom said.

"SAY THEIR NAMES" is the first in a two-part series. It utilizes calligraphic art in a weathergram format which are brown paper bags, biodegradable over time, with either prose or poetry on them. The exhibit runs through July 31.

A second installation, which will run Aug. 6-29, will depict Black experiences. The two exhibits were conceived by members of First Congregational United Church of Christ in the hope of sharing the trials and tribulations, some lethal, of being Black in the United States.

The work in both exhibits was done by a number of members of The Mountain Scribes, Western North Carolina's calligraphy guild, as well as by members of the Carolina Lettering Arts Society. And many members of the church contributed time and artistic talent to each of the shows.

The Oak Street Gallery, at 20 Oak St., is open 1-4 p.m. every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Rev. Kimberleigh Buchanan (Ph.D.) is Senior Minister.

**News source:** ABC 13 NEWS, ASHEVILLE, N.C.

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**Lake Prince Woods Chaplain Gary Newsome Moderates Historic Clergy Meeting**

**SUFFOLK** - In an attempt to demonstrate solidarity and unity in light of the nation's racial tensions and unrest, Black and White clergy from Suffolk met together in historic fashion. The meeting was held on Tuesday July 14th at Lake Prince Woods Retirement Community.

In attendance were white Pastors from prominent historical Churches composed of varying denominations. This group organized by the name Suffolk Clergy United met with prominent African American Pastors organized as Suffolk Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. The purpose of the meeting was to address the issue of strengthening our local community, understanding the history of division between these groups, and answering the question of how can both
groups get to know one another, identify obstacles that hinder partnership, and to heal for the greater good of the community. Gary Newsome, Chaplain of Lake Prince Woods moderated the forum along with SIMA president Reverend Henry Diggs. The forum was met with enthusiasm and openness, recognizing the strengths and commitments from all who were involved. Key conclusions were:

- It will take time and "plowing" to get to know one another.
- Commit to relationship building, heart Change, and intentionality.
- Develop small group prayer for designated churches and their ministries.
- Continue tradition of pulpit exchange (interculturally) during Lenten and Holy week seasons.
- Establish periodic forums to discuss police reform and apprehension tactics in our community.
- Invite local Sheriff to attend to educate Pastors and inform for greater understanding.

Read more

Providence UCC (Chesapeake) to celebrate 166th Church Anniversary

CHESAPEAKE - Service celebrating anniversary will be held Sunday, August 2, 2020, 8:45 am. Rev. John T. Myers (D.Min.) will be guest speaker for the event. Rev. Myers is Minister for Justice and SOC Associate Minister for EVA. Rev. A. Jerome Danage, Sr. (D.Min.) is senior pastor. Providence UCC is located at 2200 Vicker Avenue, Chesapeake, VA. 23325. Download flyer

Southern Conference Summer Closing

The Southern Conference staff will be observing its annual summer leave from July 4 thru August 3, 2020. Should you have an Association issue that requires attention which cannot wait until the end of the leave, please contact those below according to your Association.

The phone messages at the Conference office will continue to be checked throughout this time. Should you need to get in touch with the Conference office, leave a detailed message at 336-222-8771 and the appropriate person will return your call.

WNCA:
Rev. William Vanderburg----704-622-9792----blackberry48@gmail.com
Rev. Jim Luck----336-740-5780----jrluckjr@gmail.com
Rev. Barbara Rathbun----828-891-9405----bmrathbun@bellsouth.net

EVA:
Rev. Ernest Hamlin 757-380-0472 ernestham@verizon.net

ENCA:
Rev. Gary Leath 336-213-6357 vankess39@yahoo.com

Southern Conference UCC Voter Empowerment Campaign
coordinated by Rev. John Myers (D.Min.)

Mission: To prepare all congregations to participate fully in upcoming local, state and national elections.

Goals:

- Achieve 100 percent voter registration of all members of the Southern Conference congregations.
- Achieve complete voter education of all members of Southern Conference congregations.
- Joining and Utilizing UCC "Our Faith Our Vote" Resources.

Find links for SOC Zoom Webinars...
Educating, Equipping and Empowering Series

Resources and links for previously aired webinars can be found on the Southern Conference web site.

Annual Gathering save the Date

A Virtual, Unified Southern Conference Annual Gathering...has ENCA, EVA, and WNCA joining together to have Association Meetings and the Southern Conference Annual Gathering over two days, October 16-17, 2020. Look for additional information and training in the coming months on how this never done before event will unfold. See you there!

Subscribe to SOC e-News / add names here

ALL persons are invited and welcome to receive the Southern Conference e-News. Churches may submit names, or share this invitation with their members for individuals to self-subscribe.

To add names, submit by e-mail to editor: stumb@boone.net
Please include 1) name, 2) e-mail address, 3) church or other affiliation, and 4) role in church, agency, etc. (i.e. council president). #4 category is optional.

JRVC river clean-up on New River
photo by C. L. Stumb
Blowing Rock Conference Center offers Labor Day Weekend Special

submitted by Ted Wilson, Executive Director

**BLOWING ROCK** - In honor of all of you who have supported our holy grounds over the years, we want to extend a special offer just for you. Over the long Labor Day weekend (from Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 7), we want to welcome "Family" and Friends of Blowing Rock Conference Center to stay at reduced rates.

Stay Friday and Saturday night, and receive free lodging for Sunday night. This is first come first serve as we are limiting our lodging to 50% capacity for physical distancing. We want you to come and enjoy a bit of serenity to unwind for a while, as well as feel safe.

Packages include:
- **Corriher Lodge room for 3 nights:** $180.00 for lodge room for 1 to 4 people, and $15.00 per person for three continental breakfasts.
- **Family Cottage for 3 nights:** $260.00 for a Cottage unit (sleeps 6), and $15.00 per person for three continental breakfasts.

Follow the link below to reserve your room or cottage today! You may pay at check-in.

[https://forms.gle/Lhm9zA4jxTsQawdw9](https://forms.gle/Lhm9zA4jxTsQawdw9)
You may also contact us at 828-295-7813

Come spend Labor Day weekend at your place in the mountains! We'd love to see you.

Johns River Valley Camp offers lodging as vacation destination

**COLLETTESVILLE** - Did you cancel a summer vacation due to COVID-19 concerns? Are you still hesitant to go near crowds? We might have a place for you to travel this summer.

As many of you know, we felt compelled to cancel our summer camping schedule for the summer of 2020. While we are saddened by the need to make such a decision, we are looking for the bright spots. Our unique location in the remote and scenic Johns River Valley makes it possible to offer you a safe space to travel this summer.

Contact Phil Hardy at 336-266-1617 or phardy.jrvc@gmail.com to learn about rates, open dates and to begin planning your family's vacation.

***This event has been re-scheduled***

Johns River Valley Camp is launching a "Connect" program for Middle and Senior High youth.

*Caring for planet Earth, our shared home*
Re-scheduled for September 25-27 - Cost / $120.00 in 2020 with Brooks Berndt, UCC Environmental Justice Minister
Each year we will turn our thoughts to our connections to the Creator, to Creation and to one another. With minds for justice we will ask in what ways we are connected, what those connections mean and what they require of us?

This weekend will concentrate on being good stewards of the Earth and encountering God in Creation. Saturday will include a bike trip on the Virginia Creeper Trail. Read more

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UCC Webinar: The Green New Deal and Reparation

August 5, 1:00 PM Eastern Time

When it comes to justice-oriented policy proposals that seek to fundamentally transform our society, the Green New Deal and reparations currently rise to the top. Yet, often they are discussed separately, despite clear and compelling connections. The Green New Deal Resolution proposed in Congress sought "to promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression." At the same time, the demand for reparations compels our society to address the historic injustices of systemic racism, including environmental racism. To explore such connections and how faith communities can work to advance just policies, this webinar will feature three panelists: Congresswoman Barbara Lee, 350.org's North America Director Tamara Toles O'Laughlin, and the UCC's Economic Justice Minister Sekinah Hamlin. Register now!

[Hyperlink: https://UCC.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kzxMjKP0SQS7nZLPmnJ1Qw]

Additional Upcoming Webinars

August 1: "The No Cost Solution to Climate Change" with Dr. James A. Martin, author of the UCC General Synod Resolution on carbon dividends. Read more / register

August 4: Faith and Politics hosted by the Rev. Traci Blackmon with guests Stacey Abrams and Leah Daughtry. Read more / register

August 6, 13, 20, 27: American Climate Leadership Summit, a weekly webcast at 2 pm ET. Read more / register

August 12: The Rights of Nature, a webinar by the UCC's Council for Climate Justice featuring the pioneering advocate Tish O'Dell.
2020 Church Women Calendar

SAVE THE DATES!

2020 and 2021 Church Women of the Southern Conference Summer Conferences: Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) our traditional Summer Conference (June 18-20, 2020) has been postponed until June 2021. We will still have our Annual Business meeting for this year via Conference Call (see below).

September 12, 2020 (Saturday)
Fall Enrichment - EVA-CW

June 2021
2021 CWSC Summer Conference

October 15-17, 2021
Southern Region Women's Retreat - Live Oak, Florida

August 1, 11:00 am - noon (Saturday)
Franklinton Center at Bricks will welcome all -- in a virtual state via Zoom -- for its annual Franklinton Center Day. Download flyer and invitation

August 2, 8:45 am
Providence UCC (Chesapeake, VA) will celebrate 166th church anniversary. Rev. John T. Myers (D.Min.) is to be guest speaker for the event. Download flyer
September 25-27 (Re-scheduled from original date of May 15-17)

Johns River Valley Camp will welcome Rev. Brooks Berndt, Environmental Justice Minister of the United Church of Christ. "Connect: Caring for Planet Earth; Our Shared Home" will invite Middle and Senior High Youth to reflect upon their connection to Creation and their role in providing it care. Cost will be $120 and will include meals, lodging and a bicycle trip on the Virginia Creeper Trail. Read more / Register.

October 5-7

Please save the date for the Tenth Annual UCC Retired Servants' Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center.

October 16-17

Virtual United Southern Conference Annual Gathering combining meetings of EVA ENCA, and WNCA together with the Southern Conference

Tentative schedule:
- Friday, October 16 - SOC Annual Gathering is called together in the AM
- Friday, October 16 - Associations meet separately in the PM
- Saturday, October 17 - SOC continues Annual Gathering with business and workshops

Summer, 2021

General Synod 33 of the United Church of Christ to be a virtual experience.

June 27-30, 2022

Due to the unforeseeable impact of COVID-19 on the health, social, and physical distancing behaviors of the world, National Youth Event (NYE) at Purdue University is postponed until June 27-30, 2022.