

Pursuing Justice and Equity Core Ministry Team

Our team consists of Rev. Andrea Asselmeier; Rev. Krissy Avise-Rouse, Joyce Bathke; Rev. Tom Baynham; and Rev. Laura Callender. We are staffed by Transitional Conference Minister Rev. Mary Nelson.

We have managed to organize ourselves and select co-chairs: Tom Baynham and Krissy Avise-Rouse.

Early conversations were held regarding our interpretation of our purpose and how best to use our time and energy – knowing that will change if we get a budget line item. We immediately began seeking ways to address the issue of the Osage Headrights which the Conference “owns” and which we are told we cannot simply give back to the Osage Nation. (We currently give the proceeds to the Osage Foundation.) We would like to build a relationship with the Osage Nation as we seek to address this injustice.

In our short time together we have put together two book studies:

- a study of My Body is not a Prayer Request, by Amy Kenny, in the spring/summer of 2023, led by Rev. Andrea Asselmeier of Emmaus Homes; and
- a five-week book study on The Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Strand of the United Church of Christ, Edited by Rev. Yvonne V. Delk, upcoming in October/November 2023:
 - Oct. 25 — Nov. 22, 7 p.m. Wednesdays via Zoom; Led by Rev. Carrie Moore Black, Senior Pastor, Second Congregational UCC, Memphis, Tenn., and Rev. Tom Baynham, Senior Pastor, Friedens UCC, St. Charles, Mo.

Looking ahead, it is our intention to begin offering resources around issues of Justice and Equity to our congregations sometime next year.

We also want to hear from you! What are the justice issues that our members are dealing with, are concerned about, or need more information about? Are there ways that we can help you organize your folks to make change in your community? Email Krissy at pastorkris@epiphanyucc.org

Tom and I want to thank our team for their work so far and we look forward to continuing this journey together. We offer profound thanks for the grace and deep care and concern Mary brings as our Transitional Conference Minister, her diligence in research and in providing us with information is so appreciated.

Respectfully submitted October 13, 2023
Rev. Tom Baynham & Rev. Krissy Avise-Rouse
Co-chairs PJ&E Team