



# HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
N. KY • OH • WV



## What Story Is Your Life Telling?

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you receive this message from me, we are already remembering the crucial final days of Jesus' life as he journeys in Jerusalem, the city of peace that forever struggles to realize its truest identity. As the gospel narratives remind us, Jerusalem is not only a city in Israel/Palestine, but also every intersection where the world of empire and the fear it perpetrates must be countered by the Reign of Love.

As you know, this week which we in the Christian tradition call Holy Week, was filled with competing narratives about the human family, what was necessary for community, and presumptions about who was expendable. If we pay close attention to the texts which form this sacred telling, we will notice that there were varying stories told about Jesus and those who were his followers. Some saw Jesus as a sign of promise and others told tales portraying Jesus as a threat to the order of the Roman empire. This week reminds us that the stories we tell about each other say much regarding our understanding of God's vision for the human family.

This crucial choice for the Reign of Love is as important now as it was two thousand years ago, for empire and the stories it rehearses continues to express itself in the violence of our own day. **As I write these words my heart is breaking over the rise of violence perpetrated in our country against our dear siblings of the human family of Asian and Pacific Island descent.** Again, narratives of diminishment and fear have become incarnated through acts of destruction and death. **Together, we must again say a firm, "No!" to these narratives by rehearsing a gospel alternative** that reframes everything and everyone through the vision of the beloved community made known to us by God through Jesus Christ.

The Holy Week narratives pose questions that are not new but bear repeating. Some of them include: In what way am I open to discovering the Christ in people who look different from myself? What alternative story am I ready and willing to tell when narratives are uttered which narrow or diminish other siblings in God's beloved family? What act of encouragement or celebration am I ready to offer those who have become afraid because of the stories that others tell? Such questions are only a beginning. But they are the kinds of questions that ready us for resurrection, God's unflinching and unfailing, "Yes!", answering the world's "no" so often stoked by stories creating fear and fragmentation.

As we know, Holy Week, with all of its twists and turns, detours and disappointments does not end in the grave of the world's making. It continues every time God's "yes" is rehearsed by the stories we tell with our lives about Love's ultimate power to heal everything.



# HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

N. KY • OH • WV

Yes, your life is a sign, whether you know it or not. And it's just the sign God needs for such a time as this. May God's power to make all things new, renew us and sustain us, as offer the same to others as living signs of the living Christ. Happy Easter! And thanks be to God!

-Pastor Dave