

### Reflections on Sankofa

On November 8, 33 participants from MWC churches and partnering churches embarked on the Sankofa Journey. It was a time of listening, learning, and looking ahead as each person reflected on their experiences with race and considered steps for moving the conversation on racial reconciliation forward in their own contexts. Below, some of the 2018 Sankofa participants share thoughts on their experiences.

*I gained heart knowledge, as well as head knowledge. Something I had not fully realized was how slavery morphed into mass incarceration after the Civil War with results of that to this day. I will take greater interest in both prison reform legislation and efforts to ensure voting rights for all. And I hope my increased awareness will spur more action on my part to do what I can, whatever that may be. - Donice Applequist, First Covenant, Salina, KS*



Donice Applequist and Millie Moye



James Mori and Kyle Kachelmeier

*For me, Sankofa was a powerful opportunity to hear a narrative and perspective that I rarely get the opportunity to hear. The idea that "you don't know what you don't know" was very evident for me throughout my Sankofa experience. Although I still feel like I have a long way to go in order to understand the ways that people of other ethnicities have experienced life in the U.S., I felt like Sankofa allowed me to begin a new trajectory to pursue. - Kyle Kachelmeier, The Journey, Wichita, KS*

### From the Superintendent

Friends,

Christmas is often a time of great anticipation, filled with bright lights, colorful packages, and celebrations with family and friends. But for some, Christmas lacks the luster and joy commonly associated with the holiday. As we celebrate the time when our greatest gift came in an ordinary package to a displaced couple seeking refuge, may our truest cause for celebration be that Christ's presence among us offers hope to us all – those seeking refuge, the broken, the hurting and the marginalized. I am grateful for the ministry of your church as you take this hope into your own community.

I am also grateful for our shared ministry that allows us to enter into difficult places together and shine the light of Christ into the darkest corners. This November, representatives from twelve of our conference churches participated in the Sankofa Journey, where they engaged in honest conversations around both the historical and present realities of racial divides in our country.

Thank you, friends, for the wonderful gift of partnering with you in ministry. May the hope of Jesus Christ be real to you as you celebrate this Christmas!

Tammy



**Memorable! Purposeful! Painful! Affirming! Life changing!** I highly recommend the Sankofa Journey to anyone who truly wants to learn about racial justice issues. The church has a role in the healing process of the past and present. White and black pastors of all denominations should consider the Sankofa Journey for their leadership teams. Catching up and educating leaders on Black history, visiting the historical museums and having honest dialogue (although a painful process at times) can lead the church on a journey that deeply reflects the heart of God. - **Trudy Williams**, CrossPoint Community Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO



Janie Tyler and Trudy Williams

### Journey to Bethlehem



On December 9, Community Covenant in Lenexa, KS, hosted a *Journey to Bethlehem* experience. Guests traveled with Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem and as they began their refugee flight toward Egypt. This interactive story came to life as actors shared their powerful interpretations of each character in ways that impacted both child and adult alike.

In the final scene where Mary and Joseph had just been spared from the soldiers while they were heading to Egypt, Mary closed by praising God. Guests were then encouraged to write out words of thanksgiving and praise to God as a response to the journey. Finally, they transitioned to a marketplace complete with crafts for kids, refreshments, and fellowship in a fun environment.

While we just recently held the event and do not know all the ways it has impacted our community, we are beginning to hear stories of how God has been speaking to those who experienced the journey. An actor who played Joseph has family who are devout atheists yet experienced this tour and finished by saying this story was "powerful." There were people who knew the Christmas story yet, through this experiential tour, heard a new dimension to the Christmas narrative that they had missed or not appreciated before. It is the stories of transformation and discovery that make this event such an important part of our Christmas season. We give God praise as we had more than 800 people, the majority not connected to our church family, walk through this tour!



Jessica Springer serves as Family Pastor at Community Covenant in Lenexa, KS, and led the coordination of the Journey to Bethlehem experience.

### Annual Ministry Celebration

First Covenant, Omaha, NE  
April 26-27, 2019

### Gather

Hilton Omaha, Omaha, NE  
June 27-29, 2019

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