



April 2, 2023

We can't be all leaves with no fruit!

I appreciate that the bible is careful to include a day by day recording of the activities and teaching of Jesus during Holy Week. Starting with Palm Sunday and moving to Resurrection Sunday, we can walk with Jesus and His disciples through the entire week. One of those great stories come from the Monday of Holy Week, when we are told that Jesus and His disciples happen upon a fig tree that had leaves but did not have fruit. Jesus is so upset with the tree that He curses it on the spot. Leaves on a tree represent receiving. Through their leaves plants receive their two most important necessities; carbon dioxide and sunlight. Fruit represents giving. The fruit of all plants are the offering of the plant back to the world to be shared with all who need it. There is a great lesson here for disciples of every era; **we cant be all leaves with no fruit.**

The Christian life should not be just receiving the blessing of God without giving back to humanity. Just as a tree receives through its leaves and gives by way of fruit, we are all called to accept the blessings of God and then share our fruit with the world. Jesus simple said it this way; "Bear much fruit!"

Rev. Cean R. James

PSEC Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development



A Call to Action,

Reconnecting the Church to a Vocation of God's Justice

Date: April 16, 2023 at Ascension UCC or Online

Free Registration at:

<https://acalltoaction.eventbrite.com>



Reverend Traci Blackmon will be visiting Ascension UCC on April 16th and speaking about the importance with connecting the Church to justice work. Rev. Traci Blackmon is Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ and serves as pastor in residence for Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, MO. As a public theologian, Rev. Blackmon's voice is featured on many local, national, and international platforms spanning the breadth of the White House to the Carter Center to the Vatican, as well as several documentaries and print publications.

From 2009 through 2020, Rev. Blackmon served as pastor of Christ the King United Church of Christ in St. Louis, MO, a position she retired from to serve the wider church fully. The ministries of the church expanded under her leadership, serving as a sacred launchpad for communal engagement. After the police killing of Michael Brown, Jr., Christ the King hosted the first community-led town hall meeting and dialogue with law enforcement and elected officials. The church led several other mobilization efforts and healing spaces during the Ferguson uprising.

The question of how to enact the role of the church in community justice work is often overwhelming for many local congregations. Determining the next steps is essential for the church to live out the vocation to which God has called us. We hope that she will be able to share her voice at this moment in Norristown and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

Join us to connect with a community working towards a more just world as we learn from the words and wisdom of Reverend Blackmon. This will be an interactive event. There will be a time for questions and answers to Rev. Blackmon's lecture. This will be followed by breakout sessions and time to discuss next steps.

For additional information or questions, please contact the church office at Ascension Church at ascensionucc@comcast.net or 610-539-1693.