



October 1, 2025
A Note from Pastor April

Dear Friends,

As a way of continuing our preparations for the Season of Origins, it was my honor this past Sunday to share a bit about my own family's origin story. Using the powerful framework created by Elaine Enns & Ched Myers, in their book *Healing Haunted Histories*, I shared some storylines that were woven together from the Landlines, Bloodlines, and Songlines of my life, my family, and the land that has shaped us.

I was touched by the many of you after the service who reached out to share some of your own storylines. One person noted, "Imagine all the webs of storylines that each of us are carrying around with us all the time. We have so much to be learning from one another."



Figure 14: Storylines (LBS model). Design by Elaine Enns.

Not all of us are able to trace our family's history. Some of the stories have been lost, systematically erased, and some of us have been displaced or estranged from those who might have shared that history with us. My great-grandfather Jose Hip was a Chinese immigrant who came to Chile and adopted a new name upon arrival. He shared very little about the details of his upbringing in China, so the trail ends with him. I wonder about the pain that he carried with him when he set sail for a new land, and whether he was able to find what he had been looking for.

Whether we know the details of our backgrounds or not, all of us hold the complexity of the people who have come before us. I'm speaking about our blood relatives, but also those ancestors who lived in the lands we now inhabit. The people who sought to make a life for themselves and their families, within a particular context, amidst the challenges of their days, with the skills they had. Like each of us, they were a work in progress, people who held moments of joy and pain, grief and possibility, fear and courage.

We stand on the ground that they have built for us. A great cloud of witnesses is present with us that stretches back farther than we can fully imagine. One day we will join that cloud, but for the time being, while we are here on this earth, we get to wake up and participate in the life that is before us. Our storylines are still being written.



This Sunday, it's my absolute joy to be in dialogue with Dr. Kate Common, the creator of the Season of Origins. You'll get to hear about the storylines that led Kate to this moment, and how they are hoping to launch a movement in the church where we can do this work collectively of working with our origin stories, the harm and the beauty, and imagining what liberative stories we want to place at the center of our life together.

Kate will then be back at 1pm on Sunday in the Social Hall to share more about their work and to answer questions about how the season will look. (<https://hilliardumc.org/events/origins-overview/>)

I'm grateful to be among people who are willing to do this work — to keep learning what it means to live with faithfulness in the present. To face the stories of the past that we need to learn from, and to imagine with our whole hearts what it means to live into a future where all of us can thrive.

And I'm especially grateful that this week Pastor Jon will be returning from his renewal leave!

I close today with the full version of the poem I wrote, based on the same prompt that Jen Coleman used last week, "I am From." Thanks to Jen, and to Kate, and the many people who continue to inspire us to hold the complexity of our origin stories as we do our collective work to learn how to leave a legacy of healing for the generations behind us.

I Am Here...

By Pastor April Blaine

I am from the dust of a copper mining town. From unlikely meetings across generations and continents that grew into love and family.

I am from dreams of progress. From Midwestern settlers who built railroads and farmhouses and an expanding nation.

I am from courage and resilience. To leave a country, to settle in new lands, to learn a new language, and to build life anew each time.

I am from rage. From the invisible loss of mothers whose cultures have been erased, so that their children could be seen as American and white. From the invisible loss of the Native people whose lives and cultures were erased so that people like my family could settle in their land.

I am from a small town. From country roads and pick-up trucks... where no one locked their doors at night and where everyone knew my name.

I am from the mountains. From rolling hills of green, where the land invited me to come and get lost in a place where there are more deer than people.

I am from kindness. From a father with a generous bed-side manner, and a mother who hand-stitched my clothing with care and pride.

I am from dogwood trees, whose blossoms welcome a new season of Spring along national rivers and natural springs.

I am from Southern cultures of niceness and politeness and Christian values, where we will talk to you about everything except the depth of our pain.

I am from silence. From unnamed griefs, unspoken feelings, and unrequited longings that could never be said aloud.

I am from spirit. From a God who moved in the depths of the waters of chaos and who lives and moves in me and all of life.

I am from an open table. From a God who, from the beginning, merged together matter and spirit, who walked on the earth and set a feast that was for all of humanity, and who sent me out to share the invitation of welcome, friendship, and love for all... no matter what.

Grateful,

Pastor April



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God Loves You  No Matter What

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