

***Gender Injustice in the United Church Stories***  
***Study on the Apology to Disjoined Deaconesses and Married Ordained Women***

- This is Muriel's story: If I had known about this, I might not have accepted the call here. This congregation called me after their second search process. This is what I didn't know. The first round, they had a strong female candidate, but half the Committee felt the congregation was not ready for a woman. This is 2009 we are talking about! So they didn't hire her. The reconstituted Committee had the courage to hire me, and it has been okay, although one family left. I don't think they left because of me exactly, but because they were surprised to learn that the sexist assumptions that govern their perceptions are, fortunately, not held by everyone. Still, a good woman minister was denied a good job, just because of her gender. (Optional prop: a silk neck scarf)
- This is Allan's story: Dah, like how dumb do you think I am? Yeah, think MORE! Sensitive new age guy, that was my self-image. I read a lot, I think a lot, I reflect a lot. I consider myself to be left of centre, politically astute. But it wasn't until a teacher in my ministry formation program pegged me directly with the truth that I honestly saw myself. I was oblivious to the power that I had. Power from many sources, but over riding it all was the power I had as a man. When I watched the videotape of one of our class circles I could see how much I dominated, how I spoke with authority, even when I was way out on a limb making it up. Cathy helped me to see that wasn't just my personality, it was behavior I developed within the protection of male privilege. Now, I am trying to change, but it is hard work. (Optional prop: cap with a sports logo or theme.)
- This is Deborah's story: As I get ready to retire from this congregation, I wonder what my legacy will be. When I look on the wall at the pictures of former ministers, it is a sea of male faces. Will I be remembered as the first woman minister? That would be ironic, because I'm not the first. Far from it. There were at least 8 women before me; Deaconesses, Staff Associates, Assistant Ministers. But only the Senior Ministers, all men up to now, are in this gallery. They'll be facing a dilemma, I am the Lead Minister, the new way term for Senior minister, but I'm a woman too. I wonder what they'll do? (Optional prop: liturgical stole)
- This is Stephen's Story: In my Conference there is still a lot of discrimination about diaconal ministry. To many people, it is second class, only okay for women, particularly those not good enough to be ordained. I am trying to fight my way to diaconal candidacy. Someone on the Education and Students Committee just said out loud what I know others were thinking, "Stephen," he said, "most men with a University degree go into Ordained ministry, you ought to think about that." E&S has put me on a hold, told me to *discern* more. If I challenge their gender discrimination it will just be more difficult for me. I am under enough stress, I am going to change to ordination. (Optional prop: man's neck tie)