

December 11, 2015

The Board of Directors and Search Committee together invite you to join us in prayer...

Constant, Companioning God,

Holding fast to your promise that no shadow or darkness can swallow up your light, assurance we hear in the opening lines of John's Gospel and which we claim afresh each Advent season, we who serve the Rocky Mountain Conference as members of the Board of Directors and as members of the Search Committee praise you for leading us as we seek to call our next Conference Minister. We thank you for being present to the people and congregations of our conference; we know they suffered much grief, hurt, and confusion when Rev. Sue Artt was moved to withdraw from our search process. We praise and thank you for the stirring of your Spirit that would bring the Board of Directors and Search Committee together in communion and concord, now working side by side to serve the common good of our beloved and much-needed Conference.

You know us well, O God. We prefer joyous beginnings and happy endings; be with each of our Conference members in this pregnant time, this waiting time, we pray. Set to shining in all of us your Advent hope, peace, joy, and love. Enable us in each of our settings to be faithful stewards of this moment in our shared journey so that through the unifying and strengthening of your Spirit, we can step boldly and confidently into the future you hold out to us.

Looking forward with hope calls us to look back and humbly acknowledge our failings, O God. Hear us now as we offer these confessions:

We confess those places of hurt and mistrust, some from seasons gone and stories past, that have complicated our present quest. Relying on your grace, help us heal, forgive, and move forward as a Conference.

We confess that we have unintentionally participated in a way of being Conference that has served to keep some in the know and others on the edges, wondering if they and their congregations matter. Set us aright; bless and advance every effort to become Radically Connected.

We confess that we have allowed the old litany of "We never get the process right" to cheat us of the opportunity to claim new, more life-giving understandings of ourselves. Give us new eyes, that we might see ourselves as you do.

In every age, O God, you send messengers into our midst--clear and faithful voices to challenge and guide. In Advent, we listen anew to prophets of old, Jeremiah and Isaiah, Mary and John. This Advent, we are grateful for the messengers you have sent into our Rocky Mountain midst--voices who, following the news of Sue Artt's withdrawal from consideration as Conference Minister, responded to our Board of Directors letter with:



Be  
Radically  
Connected!

*“What had seemed a setback has turned out to be a blessing in disguise, bringing the opportunity to clear up some old misunderstandings and make our Rocky Mountain Conference even stronger and more beautiful than before.”*

*“Processes need to be fit to the need at hand. There is plenty of room for creativity to be effective and timely.”*

*“We are at a turning point as conference... My call to you [the Board of Directors] is to take the bold step of discerning through the process-related discord, and Rev. Sue Artt’s related decision to withdraw from the process, to the future God has in store for us.”*

Gracious One, we are deeply grateful, as well, for the prophetic gifts of Rev. Gayle Engel, sent to us with the highest praise from the national church. His wisdom and experience have been saving, and his direction-pointing essential. We have heard and take seriously his challenge to focus our shared energies in three ways, so as to ensure not only the fullest functioning of whomever we will call as Conference Minister, but which will enable the Rocky Mountain Conference to live even more fully into the bold vision to which we are called.

Bless, then, these three essential pursuits:

- To engage in a system-wide focus on clarifying and healing any lingering perceptions and feelings around previous calls and communions as it relates to the calling of Conference Ministers.
- To develop a cadre of persons to work together to translate our Vision Framework from concept to implementation.
- In concert with whomever we call as Conference Minister (and as Associate), work with the churches and members of the RMC to clarify what is expected so that our vision for the Conference might be fulfilled.

In this season of holy waiting, O Constant Companion, keep us anchored in hope as together we look to your horizon. Grant each one in our Conference family your patience, while we their servants continue to work together in faith and love, returning early in the season of Epiphany to share the fruits of those labors.

Amen.

*Rebecca Kemper Poos, Beth Robey Hyde, John Rostykus, Chris Gilmore, Matt Huntington, Jan Hepp, Gage Church, Laura Gurney, Judith Baillie, Heidi Hess, Martha Sullivan, Ron Heil, Courtney Dobbins, Amanda Minter, Erin Gilmore, Adrian Miller, Martha Jones, Karen Winkel, Betty Barnes, Max Michalec, and Nate Miller*