



Rocky Mountain Conference
United Church of Christ
1140 W. 5th Avenue
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The First Six Months: Our Values in Action

In 2014, the Rocky Mountain Conference adopted a Vision Framework from which to move our ministry forward. This Framework includes **Five Core Values**; two that we created in the RMC, and three from the National UCC.

While many energizing ideas have a way of ending up on the shelf, I am proud to note that these Core Values have stayed central to us. As I have traveled across our Conference over the last six months, I have seen ample evidence that these Core Values are more than just bullets on a piece of paper. Whether consciously or not, we have invited these values to permeate our life together.



CV #1: Covenant

While honoring autonomy, we engage in covenantal relationship with the Holy, our neighbors, creation, and ourselves.

If had to pick one word that summarizes the essence of the last six months, it would be **“Relationship.”**

Everywhere I go, it becomes clear to me how deeply we value being in relationship, be it with one another, the people in our communities, or with Spirit itself. We talk a lot about the relational challenge posed by our expansive geography in the Conference, but there is blessing in it as well. There is something about our distance that makes us more aware of just how important our relationships are.

I learned this most clearly from the folks in Western Association. From the moment I arrived at their Fall Association Meeting, it was obvious how much they valued their time together.

The meeting started on Friday with a fantastic home-cooked meal (thank you to the folks at Grand Junction!) and a powerful worship that gave pastors and lay leaders some essential spiritual nourishment. The next morning, on Saturday, we started with a delicious breakfast before tackling the business of the Association. Because of the fellowship we enjoyed beforehand, the business meeting was grounded in relationship and purpose, and infused with a joyful and tenacious spirit.

Relationships first. That is the primary takeaway from these first six months.

CV #2: Enduring Faith

We express enduring faith in the transformational work of the Spirit.

For many years now, we have been living with the story of decline in the mainline church. While I am ever more aware of this reality, I am also witnessing another story—One about remembering who we are, and why we are here.

As much as I do not wish for the reality we currently find ourselves in as a nation and a world, there is something about this time that is calling us to BE the Church, and to do so in ever more faithful and courageous ways.

That is what I see you doing.

I have seen you standing for the dignity and worth of every human being. I have seen you relying on one another. I have seen you challenging unjust patterns and systems. I have seen you boldly declaring your faith in a God of radical inclusion. I have seen you walking in the way of Jesus. After six months on the road, I am incredibly inspired by the enduring faith expressed in our congregations.



CV #3, #4, and #5:

*Continuing Testament.
Extravagant Welcome.
Changing Lives.*

I was honored to meet a young woman at Christ Congregational Church in Pueblo, CO who had been looking for a church that was Open and Affirming. When she found Christ Congregational online, she and her mom decided to visit the very next Sunday. Afterward, she couldn't believe that she'd finally found a place to worship God without having to hide who she was.

This is the story I hear over and over. We stand in our communities as witnesses of another kind of Christianity that welcomes the fullness of our humanity, and embraces the mystery of a God who is still speaking. Because of our enduring faith in the transformational work of the Spirit, we are changing lives, from the Eastern Plains to the Western Deserts, and everywhere in between.

As we enter the Advent season and prepare ourselves once again for the birth of Jesus, I want to say, simply, "thank you."

Thank you for your good and faithful work.

Thank you for being the church across this wide and expansive region.

Thank you for continuing to covenant together as we seek to be one of the most life-giving and life-affirming forces in our world today.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Gilman".