

WELCOME!

Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC Annual Celebration Worship

July 26, 2020

Hosted by the Southeastern Association

WELCOME AND GREETING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Please turn to the center aisle and say in a loud voice: "The Peace of Christ be with you." At this time, we will not move from our seats.

Video Starts Here.



WELCOME

Brad Carroll, Executive Director of La Foret

Hello. My name is Brad Carroll. I'm the executive director here at La Foret Conference and Retreat Center and a member of the Black Forest Community Church, a UCC Congregation here in the Black Forest.

It's wonderful to be bringing you this virtual welcome on behalf of everyone here at La Foret. We so wish we could all be together, but that time will come again. Many of us call La Foret sanctuary. Sanctuary defines itself as a consecrated place. I have no doubt La Foret is consecrated land, Holy ground. Indeed, it is a sacred place. We know the Ute Indians used this land for their nomadic lifestyle, passing through here on their pilgrimage, to Taka Kiev, Sun Mountain we know as Pikes Peak.

Later the land developed by Alice Beamus Taylor. Alice was a gracious philanthropist, and said her mother raised her to bring all the good to others she could. She funded and provided scholarships at Colorado College. She funded the construction of the Colorado Springs Day Nursery, the Fine Arts Center, and Music and Theater of Colorado. She gave the largest individual gift to the city's Community Chest and provided countless anonymous gifts to those in need. Following her death it's no surprise that the family foundation saw to give their beloved La Foret to the Colorado Congregational Church.

In this sanctuary of La Foret, we are all welcome. Regardless of who you are, who you love, where you find yourself along your journey, you are welcomed here. At La Foret, we know we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses so many have come before us their work, and their legacies have made La Foret what it is today. We, as caretakers, now owe them, and those who will come after us to do our best to continue to be a place where all are welcomed. We are to provide hospitality to strangers regardless

of who they are and love each other as brothers and sisters. It is our hope and our prayer that La Foret can provide you this hospitality, this graciousness, this love and caring in your ministries, and layperson's roles in your daily lives.

May you continue to do good work and may your time at La Foret be a benefit to you. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

INVOCATION

Rev. Clare Twomey, Moderator Southeastern Association; Lead Pastor Vista Grande, UCC

Hi, there. My name is Clare Toomey, and I am the moderator of the Southeastern Association of the Rocky Mountain Conference. It is a joy and a privilege to welcome you this year to our annual celebration worship. Please join me in our invocation.

We gather this morning to celebrate as a community which exemplifies what it means to be a people of unity in the midst of our diversity. In this gathering, we wrestle with what it means to be the presence of the divine in a world so desperate to know our beloved. In this gathering, we embrace the paradoxes of our faith of being both a beloved community and a community who has not yet reached the pinnacle being grateful for the contributions of our ancestors while recognizing that the land upon which we all now stand was stolen from native peoples. The paradox of demonstrating gratitude for what we have while also acknowledging that what we have was in all probability painful for those who were stolen from their own sacred homes. The paradox of celebrating our diversity and offerings of radical hospitality to all. The paradox of acknowledging that not everyone would find a home in this place of embracing our beloved community while also recognizing our distinct and sacred differences. Divine Mystery, enable us to remain steadfast in our desire to represent your vision for this world.

Keep us strong and courageous in our quest to be in relationship with one another. Give us open hearts and ears that you may truly appreciate which each of us brings to your open table of belonging. Remind us to be patient with one another and remain grateful for our endearing and individual personalities. May we meet the challenges of relationship with humor, accountability, a desire for learning and understanding, gratitude and most importantly love. In your name, in the name of all that is good we pray. Amen.

Holy One, we gather this day as your beloved community. We gather as your people in this space made sacred by our desire to live as you have called us to live, space that transcends distance and means but is transformed into holy space by gathering in your name. Holy One, you have called your prophets throughout the ages to persist in the proclamation in the face of callousness and to be resilient in faith confronting ignorance,

we pray for those who have refused to be silent before injustice those who have been repeatedly turned away but are not discouraged. We pray for those whose outrageous faith has caused the mighty to tremble, those whose stubborn humor gives their siblings heart. We pray for those whose efforts in the cause of justice have left them damaged or bitter we pray for those who are repudiated, for those whom they struggle, who have lost all hope of remedy and whose voices are not heard. We pray for those who have the power to do good and will not who attend to no voice but their own, who dismiss the causes of oppression and ignore the plight and the voice of the oppressed.

Beloved, may we be the ones who stay in the fray whose voices rise above the voices of transgressors, who stand firm in your light and love. May we strive with every breath to be your holy presence in a world so desperate to know you are always here. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP **(adapted, Janet Morley)**

Rev. Darlene Avery, Pastor
Church in the Wildwood

One: Holy one, we gather this day as Your Beloved community. We gather as your people in this space made sacred by our desire to live as you have called us to live.

Many: Space that transcends distance and means but is transformed into Holy space by our gathering in your name.

One: Holy One, you have called your prophets throughout the ages to persist in proclamation in the face of callousness, and to be resilient in faith confronting stupidity.

Many: We pray for those who have refused to be silent before injustice; those who have been repeatedly turned away but are not discouraged;

One: We pray for those whose outrageous faith has caused the mighty to tremble; those whose stubborn humour gives their siblings heart.

Many: We pray for those whose efforts in the cause of justice have left them damaged or bitter;

One: We pray for those who are repudiated for those whom they struggle; who have lost all hope of remedy, and whose voices are not heard.

Many: We pray for those who have the power to do good and will not; who attend to no voice but their own;

One: Who dismiss the causes of oppression, and ignore the plight and voice of the oppressed.

Many: Beloved, may we be the ones who stay in the fray, whose voices rise above the voices of oppressors, who stand firm in Your light and love. May we strive with every breadth to be Your Holy presence in a world so desperate to know You are always here. Amen

OPENING SONG

Amazing Grace

arr. Chris Tomlin & Louie Giglio

Vista Grande Choir: David Hudson, Carol Burbank, Jan Morgan, Erin and Matt Spencer, Nancy Morlock Hollins

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, who called me here below
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

READING**Romans 8:26-29**

Kayan Cross, Moderator Vista

Grande

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

MOMENT OF LAMENT

Rev. Sarah Linn, Pastor Creede Community Church

Recognizing that we're living in challenging times, let's take a breath and quiet our hearts and prepare ourselves for prayer. Hear these words from Isaiah 43: "Don't remember the prior things; don't ponder ancient history. Look I'm doing a new thing. It's sprouting up right now. Don't you recognize it? I'm making a way in the desert streams in the wilderness filled with fear laden with sadness."

SONG**"Just Such a Time as Now"**Amanda Udis-
Kessler

Filled with fear, laden with sadness:
chaos and madness grow around us
Still we're here, risking and daring, endlessly caring.
Hope has found us. Peace surrounds us.

We were called for just such a time as this.
For this time, we were made.
We give all our love and compassion:
Trust into action, even afraid.
We were called for just such a time
as this and we make this vow:
We'll bring all our gifts to the table, do what we're able somehow
For we were called for just such a time as now.

Touched by grief, stressed and exhausted,
 counting the losses.
 Sorrow hounds us. Still, again, we are invited,
 gently reminded:
 faith has found us. Grace astounds us.

We were called for just such a time as this.
 For this time, we were made.
 We give all our love and compassion:
 Trust into action, even afraid.
 We were called for just such a time
 as this and we make this vow:
 We'll bring all our gifts to the table, do what we're able somehow
 For we were called for just such a time as now.

INTERLUDE

PRAYER CHAIN

Jeff Chapman—Moderator CWW; Sandy Taylor Moderator Christ Church UCC, Pueblo; Cindy Halsey Moderator Black Forest UCC, Jen and Weller Dorf Moderator and son, Broadmoor Community Church; Merilee Daugherty, Moderator Buena Vista.

Jeff Chapman: Dear Lord, help us in these trying times please give us the strength and the courage to act out of love and not out of fear please help us to spread hope and love to those that are most in need, those that are in need of healing, those that are in need of food, those are in need of being heard, and those that truly need to feel love from others.

Sandy Taylor: Join me in a prayer by Anne Hillman: We are all on a journey together to the center of the universe. Look deep into yourself into another. It is to a center which is everywhere. That is the Holy journey first you need. Only look. Notice and honor the radiance of everything about you play in this universe tend all these shining things around you—the smallest plant the creatures and the objects in your care. Be gentle and nurture listen as we experience and accept all that we really are we grow and care we begin to embrace others as ourselves and learn to live as one among many.

Cindy Halsey: Lord, we pray for wisdom in these trying times. We pray for compassion for those that are in pain. We pray for the ability to see beyond our own walls. We pray for long arms to reach out to those that we may have forgotten. We pray for strength to bear witness to truth. We pray for humility to ask for forgiveness for those we have hurt. We pray for understanding when the world does not make sense.

Jen Dorf: We are molded each one of us in the image of God, and within our souls there's a fingerprint no one can erase. We pray for those who have no regard for anyone but self, who put no value on a human life, for nations and individuals who abuse and kill. We are not called to be judge or jury, but we are called to be agents of change

Weller Dorf: And if the butterfly that flaps its wings should be our attitude to others and so be it, Lord; and may the hurricane this generates somewhere within the world reach into the hearts and souls of those for whom we pray, and reveal to them how precious are those for whom they have no love, and how precious are they, now bring tears to the eyes of God.

Merilee Daugherty: I fear for our world centuries of placing the value of others below our own has cost millions of lives. Help us to be free of stereotypes we've spent our lives developing. We want to be inclusive loving of all people, but it is difficult let us come back together as congregations to worship and fellowship each person is so precious.

FINAL REFRAIN

We were called for just such a time as this.
 For this time, we were made.
 We give all our love and compassion:
 Trust into action, even afraid.
 We were called for just such a time
 as this and we make this vow:
 We'll bring all our gifts to the table, do what we're able somehow
 For we were called for just such a time as now.
 We were called for just such a time as now

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

**Pastor Mary Williams, Pastor
 First Congregational Church, Pueblo**

³¹⁻³² Another story. "God's kingdom is like a pine nut that a farmer plants. It is quite small as seeds go, but in the course of years it grows into a huge pine tree, and eagles build nests in it."

³³ Another story. "God's kingdom is like yeast that a woman works into the dough for dozens of loaves of barley bread—and waits while the dough rises."

⁴⁴ "God's kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field for years and then accidentally found by a trespasser. The finder is ecstatic—what a find!—and proceeds to sell everything he owns to raise money and buy that field.

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ “Or, God’s kingdom is like a jewel merchant on the hunt for excellent pearls. Finding one that is flawless, he immediately sells everything and buys it.

⁴⁷⁻⁵⁰ “Or, God’s kingdom is like a fishnet cast into the sea, catching all kinds of fish. When it is full, it is hauled onto the beach. The good fish are picked out and put in a tub; those unfit to eat are thrown away. That’s how it will be when the curtain comes down on history. The angels will come and cull the bad fish and throw them in the garbage. There will be a lot of desperate complaining, but it won’t do any good.”

⁵¹ Jesus asked, “Are you starting to get a handle on all this?”

They answered, “Yes.”

⁵² He said, “Then you see how every student well-trained in God’s kingdom is like the owner of a general store who can put his hands on anything you need, old or new, exactly when you need it.” (The Message)

SERMON

Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite

Grace to you in peace from God our Creator, Jesus Christ our Liberator, and the Holy Spirit of resistance. For those of you who are attending this conference, I’m Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Professor Emerita and President Emeritus of Chicago Theological Seminary and I have the absolutely joyous opportunity to preach on one of my absolutely favorite things, and that is to preach on the parables. The two of the texts that you’ve selected here for the worship service are from Matthew 13:31-33, the first being the parable of mustard seed and the second the parable of the yeast.

He put before them another parable. the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field it is the smallest of all the seeds but when it is grown it is the greatest of shrubs becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.
(Matthew 13:31-32, NRSV)

And then immediately following he told them another parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took [and I’m going to use *hid* even though the NRSV has idiosyncratically mistranslated that and put *mixed* and that will become evident of why I’m using *hid* later in the sermon] and three measures of flour till all of it was leavened. (Matthew 13:33, NRSV)

Now in beautiful Colorado, don't these texts fit in with the kind of organic we just live outside all the time, beauty and we'll just grow and grow the kingdom of God. No, no. That is not at all what I am going to offer you as an interpretation of these two parables and. Let's if you will get our minds a little bit around parables.

Okay, parables have this quality of reversal. There's something hidden in the parable that the listener has to get. The listener has to actually enter into the parable, and often it because there's some kind of existential crisis. It's a psychodrama. You say, "Oh come on, Susan, mustard seeds and yeast, how are you gonna get a liberation reading out of that?"

Well, just wait, all right. Jesus grew up in a time of trauma. John Dominic Crossan, whose work I find enormously helpful talks about how Jesus grew up near Sepphoris which the Romans had destroyed for their disobedience to Roman rule 60 years before Jesus. They killed many of the adults, enslaved the children, burned it to the ground, and this would have been known in his time. The Roman military occupation under which Jesus grew up was violent, militaristic, and extremely dangerous. You know why we know this because Jesus was killed by the Roman occupation, so it's dangerous. It's dangerous. This forms a big part of how we understand the reversals of the gospels.

We've got militarism in our own time. Here's a nice picture from Ferguson of some police. The over-militarization in our own time is something we can use to dialogue with this Roman military occupation, but let's look because it's even more precise than this.

I want to invite you to think about the gospels as wartime literature and it's a struggle. It's a struggle between the kingdom of Caesar and the kingdom of God. Big time struggle. Dangerous. As the period in which the gospels are compiled it gets worse.

People who are members of the United Church of Christ should know these things. Jesus is crucified in 33. After that's conversion of Paul (c. 36). James killed in Jerusalem (c. 60). Fire in Rome (64). Persecution of Christians in Rome (64). The Jewish revolt begins (66). In 70 the Jewish temple in Jerusalem is destroyed by the Romans. And I won't go into great length how violent that was, but there were so many crucifixions according to historian Josephus they ran out of wood. They ran out of wood. The gospel of Mark is estimated to be written between 65 to 70. After this violent conflagration, the Romans putting down the revolt, Masada is destroyed by the Romans (72), the gospels of Matthew and Luke, 80-85, and then as we know later the gospel of John is written (c. 90). *(NB: dates in parenthesis added from power point for those without access to internet, c. stands for circa for dates that are approximate.)*

So, not only is Jesus telling these parables in a time of Roman military occupation. That is dangerous. Then the parables are put into gospels, after the military conflagration, and dispersal the Jewish nascent Christian communities that are forming post the destruction of the past. There's a reason there's stuff hidden in the parables.

Let's go back to the mustard seed. Jesus teaches in parables. I'm saying parables induce an existential crisis questioning in the hearer. Remember these are rural or semi-rural agrarian folks, even though Jesus was from the artisan class. The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. They're very teeny. How many pictures, or how many sermons, may you have heard about the continuing mustard seed someone took and sowed in a field, smallest of all the seeds and when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches mustard seeds grow into noxious invasive and relatively tall plants? This is from California website of noxious invasive plants.



Now, remember, Jesus is likely talking to a community that grows stuff. They're not going to ask, "What do you mean?" Jesus is comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to this noxious, invasive weed that we, the farmer, spend a lot of time yanking up and trying to get rid of. Gotta know the background the images in these parables, right? It's noxious.

Well, what did the Romans think of the Jesus movement? That it was a noxious, invasive movement. It's trying to bring about a different kind of kingdom—King of the Jews?

The Jesus movement is sneaking in a noxious—to the Romans—invasive, subversion of the kingdom of Caesar. The kingdom of Caesar is not entertained by this, not entertained by it at all. When we think about Jesus' ministry and Jesus telling these stories, the hearers are going to go, "What are you talking about? The Kingdom of God is like? It's a noxious weed? It's sneaking in under the nose of the Romans?"

Now, an example that John Dominic Crossan uses in his book on Jesus against Rome in terms of looking at those two empires, our empire and the time of Jesus empire (*God and Empire: Jesus against Rome, Then and Now*). Ever ask yourself why Jesus left his own hometown and went to the Sea of Galilee to recruit disciples? Why'd he do that? Why walk all our way up north when he could have done that closer to home?

Look at what the Romans did to the indigenous fishing industry, writes Crossan, under the suppressive taxation of the Romans. Why are the disciples all standing around

on the shore when if you're going to fish you need to get in your boat and go out there. They're out of work. They're poor. They're mending their nets because they're poor and all the fish they get gets taxed.

Crossan's work made me think Jesus wanted to go recruit people who would get it, who would get that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar are opposed. They would get what was so corrupt about the kingdom of Caesar and a new kingdom is coming in that is not about suppression.

It's about abundance. It's about the fact that this noxious weed message comes in and becomes a tree. This mustard seed that you see here does not become trees that will nest the birds. If that's the case, it's not this [ordinary] mustard plant which creates an abundant life for the birds of the air is the image that Jesus uses kingdom of God.

The hearers are going, "Hmm, mustard seed? It's noxious. I've been killing it."

They have to enter into the story and figure out that the abundant life holding the birds of the air is the kingdom of God.



Now this gets brought home really well with the next parable. A woman puts—hides—you know, when you get to hiding three measures. Wow, where she hides the yeast. This is how much bread three measures of flour would make. It's 50 pounds of flour.

It's a lot of bread a lot of bread. In the Fred Craddock et al, *People's New Testament*

Commentary, they did the math. For me I didn't make up the math what three measures would be is 50 pounds it's enough bread to feed 150 people. It's the same sneaky thing she doesn't mix it in she hides it she hides it in the flour. She has a boatload of flour in order, for this abundance.

The Kingdom of God is abundant. The kingdom of Caesar a lot of people starving or at the starvation level. Look at all that bread. Look at all that bread. Now people are going, "Well, I mean how much, you know, wow, now." This is picture I took from a *Guinness Book of World Records*. "This is not the winning loaf of bread by the way, but one of the largest loaves of bread ever baked and so was the loaf that was hidden in the parable as Jesus told it, and it was retold.

It has to be.

The word in Greek is *hide*. The word in Greek is *hide*! Why did the NRSV, the New Revised Standard Version change that to *mix* to domesticate the parable. You take all the punch out of it. That's the key, the clue! When you get into the parable, she hid it.

If she's just mixing up some bread, why did she hide it? Well, the kingdom of God—a community of abundance, a community of non-violence, a community of resistance—is hidden right here, right now to the kingdom of Caesar. It was a violent military occupation. We know that because they killed Jesus for talking about the abundance, like this enormous loaf of bread.

Parables are resistance text. They make you work for it you've got to work for this. It would be so easy. That's all organic and the kingdom of God is just going to grow up and be very beautiful. Has that been your experience? Have you found in your ministry that it just goes "here comes the kingdom" or you have to work for it?

Gosh, we're working for it right now. To contrast a society where people's lives and health protected. Where there's enough PPE for doctors and nurses, where essential workers lives are protected, the kingdom doesn't just happen all organically and beautifully, it's a struggle. It's a struggle. If there ever were a day, where we need the message of these parables this is it. We gotta ask ourselves which kingdom are we struggling because when you preach the kingdom of God, this abundance this whole loaf of bread is there's enough for everybody you're gonna get pushback because people in power don't want to hear the message of Jesus is there's enough for everybody. We're gonna sneak up on you like the invasive mustard seed and eventually we're gonna become a tree.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Paul Carpenter, Moderator UCC Parker Hilltop

While not a prayer these words by Leslie Dwight are more a reminder of where we are as a country.

What if 2020 isn't canceled?
 What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?
 A year, so uncomfortable,
 so painful, so scary, so raw that it finally forces us to grow?
 A year, that screams so loud finally awakening us from our ignorant slumber?
 A year, we finally accept the need for change?
 Declare change? Work for change? Become the change?

A year we finally band together instead of pushing each other further apart?
2020 isn't cancelled, but rather the most important year of them all.

SONG**“Amahoro”**

Tracy Howe Wispelwey

(“Amahoro” is a word from the Kirundi language, spoken in Burundi as well as adjacent parts of Tanzania, Uganda, and the D.R. Congo. It is a common greeting meaning “peace” and is used in this song as a prayer and blessing: “Let peace flow between us”)

Chorus: Amahoro, Amahoro Amahoro, Amahoro

Verse 1: Love, love, love show us the way

Love, love, love show us the way

Love, love, love show us the way

Verse 2: Peace, peace, peace, show us the way

Peace, peace, peace, show us the way

Peace, peace, peace, show us the way

Verse 3: Hope, hope, hope, show us the way

Hope, hope, hope, show us the way

Hope, hope, hope, show us the way

Verse 4: Love, love, love show us the way

Peace, peace, peace, show us the way

Hope, hope, hope, show us the way

CALL FOR OFFERING

(see back page)

Hello, Rocky Mountain Conference, it is such a joy to be able to join you today in a moment of communion as across the entire conference we are gathering as a people who have been challenged in the year 2020 and will continue to be challenged. In fact, broken open to new realities but also new possibilities. So, I ask you this morning to join Erin and me in this blessing of communion. Let us gather around the table this virtual table, offering to God our love and our hope in the promise of living Christ among us.

This is the welcome table of God where all who seek to be at peace with their neighbor and all who seek the mercy of God in Christ are embraced. Come for we are invited to this holy mystery. Come Holy Spirit. You invite us to come again to this table to this table that reminds us that we are all beloved, that we are all precious, and that we

all have a place in creating your incredible and bountiful kingdom on this earth. So, we thank you for this invitation again. We thank you for your reminder and for your ever-present invitation to be here at this table with one another.

COMMUNION

**Rev Erin Gilmore, Associate Conference Minister
and Rev. Sue Artt, Conference Minister**

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion that Jesus took his authority as the Christ and offered the bread in thanksgiving and we remember that as this bread is made that the very grain the shell of the grain needs to be broken open in order that it can bind together as bread in the same way that the shells that we surround ourselves with need be broken open for us to join together as the body of Christ. We remember Jesus said that night after breaking the bread and blessing it he said take and eat this is my body which is given unto you do this in remembrance of me.

And in the same way by the same authority Jesus offered this cup in thanksgiving this cup that is the promise that as we are broken open we are also offered the invitation to healing and to grace and to joy and to abundance as this grape comes out of the skin it is joined with other grapes and created into a new reality so this is the cup that Jesus invites us to drink take drink this is the cup of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins as often as you drink this cup remember me come Holy Spirit come and open our eyes to the mystery of Christ's presence in these ordinary things in our ordinary lives that we may be extraordinary emissaries of your love o Holy one and agents of change in this hurting world may these elements be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst through the broken bread we participate in the life of Christ and through this cup of blessing we participate in the new life that Christ gives let us take and drink and let us pray together

Living Christ, we give you thanks that you have prepared this table for us this table of ordinary bread and wine that we might remember that we might remember when we allow ourselves to be broken open when we allow ourselves to join together as one body you do extraordinary things through us so may we practice this ritual of being broken open not just at the table but in our everyday lives and in our communities and in our world that all who see us might wonder know what is happening there and be invited to come and join this body this beloved body that is full of your presence Holy Spirit we give you thanks.



We will pause the service here while elements are distributed.

SONG**“I Choose You”**

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Verse 1: I choose you to follow my way,
to follow my way I choose you to grow and to change,
to grow and to change

Refrain: I choose you to be my love.
Be my love in the world I choose you to be my love.
Be my love in the world

Verse 2: I choose you to live as a friend,
to live as a friend I choose you to try it again,
to try it again

Verse 3: I choose you to live as a gift,
to live as a gift I choose you to go and bear fruit,
to go and bear fruit

BLESSING & SENDING FORTH

Rev. Logan Bennett, Director of
Transformational Programming, La Foret

Thank you for joining us in this holy virtual space. I hope you enjoyed this time together, and I think that if there's one thing we can agree on these are troubled times but they are also times full of possibility so I want to invite you to close your eyes for a moment and take a breath and imagine yourself stepping up to the edge of a precipice. There is so much change at this moment in time and so much possibility envision the world as it ought to be. The Kingdom of God on earth and you're a part of it God answers prayers with people, you are an answer to some prayer of creation so in this moment of change and possibility as you imagine the world as it could be and your way in it. Step forward from that precipice, an agent of change and of love, and of peace in a world that needs. It so badly in a world that needs you right now. So go forward now knowing that you are loved and beloved, created and creating, a peacemaker and a child of God, in the peace of Christ. Go now.



*Today's offering will be divided between the following organizations. You can still donate by sending a check to RMC, P.O. Box 2616, Evergreen CO 80437-2616. Please be sure to write Annual Celebration worship offering in the memo line.

*La Foret

*RMC Racial Justice

*Colorado Covid Relief Fund (this is the charity endorsed by Gov. Polis)

<https://secure.donationpay.org/milehighunitedway/colorado-covid-relief-fund.php>

*United Ways of Utah COVID-19 Community Response Fund

<https://app.mobilecause.com/e/LF4YqA?vid=74gwm>

*Wyoming Community Foundation Covid-19 Fund : <https://wycf.org/covid19/> The COVID-19 Fund provides rapid financial support to frontline nonprofits working to offset the impacts of the virus in their communities.



**Amanda Udis-Kessler is a hymn writer, songwriter, composer, and writer. Her hymns, responsive readings, and selected sermons have been published in seven hymnals and on the ProgressiveChristianity.org and Unitarian Universalist Association WorshipWeb websites. Amanda is the featured hymn writer/composer for the Fall 2020 through Spring 2021 issues of the UCC Musicians' Association journal Worship, Music, & Ministry. She serves informally as composer-in-residence at Vista Grande Community Church UCC in Colorado Springs, where she is a Covenantal Partner. Amanda is a member of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, the United Church of Christ Musicians' Association, and the Association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries. Find Amanda's hymns, songs, and worship music at www.queersacredmusic.com and www.eversoulmusic.com; contact Amanda at amanda@amandaudiskessler.com.

Thank you to all who participated in this worship service. Your thoughtful contributions created this sacred celebration!!!!

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