

## **2021-2022 Associate Conference Minister Report**

### **Rev. Erin Gilmore**

As I come to the end of my 5<sup>th</sup> year in this position and prepare to go on sabbatical (May 22-Aug 22) I find myself thinking back to May of 2017 and having no idea what the next 5 years would hold. I am changed and changing minister. We are a changed and changing church. We are learning, adapting, dreaming, grieving, remembering, confessing, wondering, and ultimately trusting that God is with us as we listen to what the emerging future is asking us to become. We aren't going back to what we have always known and we don't yet have a clear picture of where we are going. We are living in liminal time. It is my guess that the rest of my years in ministry will be in this liminal space, learning how to lead in liminal time. I would be scared, except for the fact that as I have traversed across the 225,000 square miles to worship and break bread with you, or have logged in to countless numbers of zoom rooms with you, I continue to find myself in the presence of the risen Christ. I see Christ in the web of relationships, in the growing practice of discernment, in the willingness to ask, "what is needed now?" I am grateful and honored to be in ministry with all of you in the Rocky Mountain Conference and I am deeply appreciative for the gift of this sabbatical. I offer the following as brief highlights to the past year, recognizing at the same time that so much of our work as ACM's is not easily translatable into bullet points.

- **Provisional Conference Wide Committee on Ministry.** (COM) One of the major projects of this past year has been the launch of the Provisional Conference Wide Committee on Ministry. Four+ years in the making, we are now 3 months into our 2-year experimental phase. We have 37 people serving across the 3 subcommittees (Accountability, Formation and Authorization, Supportive Oversight), all of whom have already brought incredible insight, skill, and thoughtfulness as the committees prepare to carry out the work of authorizing and supporting authorized ministers and local churches in the RMC.
- **Congregational Vitality.** I continue to meet with congregations, church councils and staff teams as they seek to bring greater vitality to their ministries. From visioning, to relationship building, to deepening a sense of identity and purpose, I deeply value the opportunity to work alongside the congregations and ministers in our conference as they ask the questions of who are we? Who is our neighbor? Who is God calling us to be?
- **Congregational Connections.** Starting last summer I had the joy of being able to return to in person visiting and or preaching during Sunday morning worship with congregations across the conference, and continued into this year as COVID permitted us to do so. What a gift to be able to witness and worship with several of you this year! I look forward to being able to continue making visits on the other side of my sabbatical beginning in September.
- **Anti-Racism** It has been a huge gift to work alongside and support Rev. Anthony Scott in the work of building a sustainable anti-racist culture in our Conference. As part of building this sustainable culture shift, we are beginning to look at what that means for the CWCOM, and how racism is connected to Congregational Vitality, and the Search and Call Process, and our Sunday morning worship experiences.

## **Shared Search and Call Report**

With joint responsibility for search and call, Anthony primarily takes lead for search processes in MDA and SEA Associations, and Erin takes lead in WA, IMA, and PVA Associations.

### The following churches have completed a search in the last year:

First Congregational Grand Junction called Rev. Paul Ashby as Pastor.  
Parkview UCC called Rev. Debra Conrad as Pastor  
First Congregational in Colorado Springs called Rev. Lee Ann Bryce as Senior Pastor.

### The following churches are currently in search process/Transition:

Wash Park UCC, Rev. Lee Berg, Designated Term Pastor  
Parkhill UCC, Rev. Claudia Aguilar R Claudia Rubalcava, Interim Minister  
United Church of Christ, Parker Hilltop, Rev. Olive Hinnant, Interim Minister  
Salem United Church of Christ, Rev. Richard Ward, Interim Minister ,  
Rev. Joanne Buchanan, Discernment consultant  
United Church of Broomfield, searching for a part-time Interim Associate Minister,  
Plymouth Congregational, Ft. Collins, Rev. Todd Smeidendorf, Interim Associate Minister  
Christ Congregational UCC in Ft. Morgan, David Schleiter, Interim Minister  
First Congregational Church, Pinedale, WY, pulpit supply and lay-led transition  
Wheatland United Church of Christ, Lay-led transition period  
Douglas United Church of Christ, lay-led transition period  
United Church of San Juans, Ridgeway, CO, Rev. Charles Piccard, Interim Minister  
Union Congregational in Crested Butte, searching for Associate Minister  
Japanese Church of Christ, Rev. Daniel Haas, Interim Minister  
Congregational UCC of Ogden, lay-led transition period