

# RMC Nominating Committee Report for 2023 annual celebration

Position	Association preference for position	Lay or clergy	Term expiration	Proposed nominees, Association, 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Moderator	Any	Clergy	2024	<b>Rev Ken Ingram</b> PVA2 Candidate withdraws in deference to nominating committee recommendation. <b>Rev Sarah Linn</b> SEA 1 Endorsed by Nominating committee
Vice Moderator	Any	Lay	2024	<b>Mark Dutell</b> Lay MDA 2 Endorsed by Nominating committee. <b>Mary Ellen Beltracchi</b> SEA to MDA 1
Treasurer	Any	Either	2025	<b>Mark Long</b> 1 - Appt. WA Endorsed by Nominating committee. <b>Rev Kari Collins</b> 1 MDA
Board Lay Leader Liaison 2 year term, re-electable once				<b>David Bristow</b> 1 SEA Candidate withdraws in deference to nominating committee recommendation. <b>Laura Gurney</b> 1 PVA Endorsed by Nominating committee.
New Ministry Mentorship	Any	Either	2025	<b>Eleanor Downey</b> 1 PVA Endorsed by Nominating committee. <b>Rev Deb Conrad</b> 1 MDA

## **Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Linn for Moderator**

Two of my most formative experiences: For over 10 years, I served in international Christian relief and development, leading culturally diverse teams doing service projects in more than a dozen countries. Drawn to a challenge, I moved to Yemen in 2003. I wanted to learn neighbor love, and to live in opposition to the Islamophobia rampant in post-9/11 American society. I also wanted to put my earlier experience in higher ed administration to work. While living in Yemen, I started to learn Arabic, established a network of adult education centers, and was broken open in a thousand ways.

After 6 years, I returned to the States. I finished my M.Div. at Fuller Seminary, completed the ordination process with the PC(USA), and moved to Michigan to serve as Associate Pastor with a large suburban Presbyterian congregation.

In 2017, I moved to the tiny frontier town of Creede in Southwest Colorado to be the settled Pastor of Creede Community Church, UCC. I received my D. Min. from Phillips Seminary in 2022, where I developed a model for non-coercive community engagement as my capstone project.

As a member of the RMC Board, I hope to bring the wisdom of the Creede community and our congregation's commitment to identifying with and loving our neighbors, even when we disagree. I also expect that gifts gained from a wide range of settings will prove helpful, including cultural humility, radical inclusiveness, equanimity, and not taking myself too seriously.

## **Mark Dutell for Vice Moderator**

Greetings RMC. I am a retired Human Resource professional. Since retiring in 2009, I have pursued an objective to "keep my exposure to the world growing rather than shrinking" through a variety of activities including volunteer service. I am grateful to have found volunteer service on the RMC board that allows me to use skills and experience gained in my life in service to the church.

I have served 6 years on the Rocky Mountain Conference Board, currently as Vice Moderator. I also serve on the board for the UCC national setting. In 25 years as a member of the congregation of the Kirk of Bonnie Brae in Denver I have served twice on church council and as church Moderator and once as chair of a capital campaign. I have also served

on a variety of committees at the Kirk including mission, open and affirming, social justice, property, pastor search, and COVID response. In addition to church leadership, I have served on the board of directors of a local YMCA, a local hospital, a local bank, and a national pension board and a local bank.

As part of the nominating committee's efforts to promote diversity on the board, I represent the community of lesser abled people because of an eye disease that classifies me as legally blind. In this time of change for the RMC, I look forward to contributing to the diverse slate of candidates that is recommended by the nominating committee.

### **MaryEllen Beltracchi for Vice Moderator**

I have been one of the nurses caring for our conference's children at La Foret for over 20 years. This position has allowed me deep personal relationships with a less visible portion of our conference, and La Foret's nurturing of these youth over years has resulted in a significant number of our current clergy. The young people, parents of younger families, youth ministers, Members in Discernment, and the ongoing cadre of counselors represent a viewpoint that is unique. They embody all of the associations of our conference, and our mutual trust has been built over years of care and compassion.

I would love to bring that care and compassion to our actions as a conference. I would love to see trust influence a greater accountability to each other. My former experience in Child and Adolescent Mental Health have solidified my skills in communication, evaluation of systems, and implementing improvements in individual and group function.

With my spouse and family, I have been a member of RMC churches for over 20 years, and are current members at Lakewood Church. I am currently on the Council Wide Committee on Ministry, and previously served on the Outdoor Ministry Committee. I grew up in the Episcopal church, and have served in leadership positions and received volunteer awards in a number of non-profits in Education, the Arts, and Scouting.

### **Mark Long for Treasurer**

Mark Long for Treasurer I have experience in banking as a loan officer. I have expanded my expertise working as an examiner/investigator in the regulatory arm of banking within the State of Wyoming. In this role, I conducted detailed analysis of financial statements for existing loans and bank institutions. I have also served as Chief Executive Officer of a Wyoming credit union, where I actively participated in the accounting functions of the institution. Subsequently, I transitioned to the position of Cost Analyst in the Financial Services Division at the University of Wyoming. I then

ventured into entrepreneurship, successfully running my own business for 13 years, personally managing all bookkeeping and accounting functions.

I have served as the Moderator of First Congregational Church in Grand Junction for three terms that included the church budgeting and financial management process. As a member of the RMC Board of Directors for the past four years I have provided oversight to the Conference financial process. I feel a profound calling to serve the broader church community following my retirement and the Rocky Mountain Conference presented a wonderful opportunity for me to contribute my lifelong expertise and passion to the denomination.

With membership dues and OCWM contributions decreasing and the lower investment yields, the Conference needs to re-evaluate its financial priorities and activities. I believe I can be a strong voice and benefit in that coming discernment.

### **Rev. Kari Collins (she/her) for Treasurer**

I want to serve as Treasurer because I care deeply about our Conference. My call is to help “institutional church” reimagine itself, and our Conference needs to reimagine how we fund our ministry.

My desire to serve as Treasurer and the diversity that I bring to the Board are both rooted in my call as Minister of Transformative Generosity for Juniper Formation. Juniper Formation is a new way of “Being Church,” one that is not confined by geography or institutional ways, but is rooted in relationships. My call is to help discern, “How do we steward our resources so we can use them to transform lives,” which is what we as the Church are called to do. I also bring significant experience in financial ministry in church settings, including having served on our Conference Finance Committee, on the Board as the Finance Committee Chair, and on finance committees at the local church level. With both a JD and MBA, I also bring a fiduciary lens to the position.

Our Conference does not have a sustainable funding strategy. It is running significant deficits and living off the proceeds from the sale of real estate. There is no magic formula for financial health. I will collaborate with others to ensure financial oversight and transparency. If we can deepen our relationships and listen for where Spirit is at work, we can shift from a culture of scarcity to generosity, and discern together how we can faithfully fund our shared ministry to transform lives.

### **Laura Gurney for Lay Leader Liaison**

Laura Gurney (she/her) is a fifteen-year member of First Congregational Church in Greeley, CO where she has served as the Church Administrator for nearly 3 years. Raised in a tiny Southern Baptist Church, Laura is particularly aware of the way the needs and structure of small and rural churches vary from those of larger or urban churches and communities. She is passionate about elevating the voices of our churches who often feel unheard.

Laura is currently completing a Church Administration Certification program through The Church Network and is a self-proclaimed nerd about collecting and sharing resources. As Lay Leader Liaison, Laura will support lay leaders across the Rocky Mountain Conference as they equip and empower their congregations to recognize and live into God's calling for their ministries. It is Laura's desire to help the Board remember that every decision, action, and conversation affects each individual church system in its own way. As a member of the RMC Board, She will bring deep intentionality, a desire for listening and healing, and financial and administrative acumen to the Conference. In her early 30s, Laura thinks innovatively when facing challenges, bringing the creative voice of younger generations to the table.

Laura lives in Greeley with her partner, Emily. They have spent their spring converting much of their yard to a xeric landscape by rescuing native plant starts destined for the trash.

### **Eleanor Pepi Downey (she.her/hers) for New Ministry Mentorship**

I was honored to be nominated for New Ministry Mentorship position. A member of Longmont Congregational Church, I currently serve on the RMC Board representing Platte Valley Association (PV), the Tributary Fund, Anti-Racism Ministry Team, and previously served on PV Committee on Ministries. As a retired social work educator, training social workers for rural and frontier practice and living in rural Wyoming and Idaho, I believe I am familiar with the strengths and challenges of these areas and the strong need for UCC voices to be present.

Having served on nonprofit boards including the Wyoming Children's Law Center, the Wyoming Institute on Disabilities, Region2 Mental Health Advisory Board (ID), and the Mile Hi Girl Scout Board, I have experience working to align financial commitments with organizational values and missions. I have experience both writing and reviewing grants including research to locate suitable funding sources for nonprofits. This experience, I believe, lends itself to the work of the Tributary Fund and the New Ministry Mentorship.

I have been a member of the UCC since 1975 with membership in several front range and rural churches. I describe myself as a white, straight, cisgender female who also represents older adults and people with disabilities (sight and

mobility). I have a strong passion for social justice advocacy and the role of the church in achieving social justice for all people. I would be honored to make use of my time and talents as part of the RMC Board.

### **Rev. Dr. Deborah DeMars Conrad (she/her) for New Ministry Mentorship**

Ordained 35 years, I have served several denominations and I am credentialed in the DOC, UCC, ABC and the Alliance of Baptists. I have been in RMC since June 2022, having relocated from Flint (Michigan Conference). I serve Parkview, Aurora, as renewal pastor, where we have received a CASA grant for digital worship.

With a MDiv and EdD in Leadership (emphasis on organizational health) much of my life in ministry has been starting or renewing ministries; I've also served as judicatory executive for ministry development and national trainer for renewing congregations.

Church planting/renewing is hard work that is atypical and counter-intuitive. Pastors and leaders doing this work need particular kinds of support and advocacy, which I have experienced first hand from both perspectives. Congregations need support, as well, in the forming or re-forming — courage to be the church, to eschew “the way we’ve always done it,” and take on the bold task of living like Jesus. This is where my heart lies.

I have been involved at every level of church — community, congregation, institution, academy, para-church, denomination. I've served in regional bodies and have contributed to books and webinars on environmental, racial and economic justice. I blog at [mendtheworld.me](https://mendtheworld.me).

In terms of diversity: I bring perspective as a member of the queer community, as one long engaged in broad ecumenical practice, and as an outsider to the conference and the American west.