

Seeing No Stranger with Valaire Kaur

RECAP- By Rev. Logan Bennett



I have a January ritual for my ministry at La Foret. Each year I take a few days to slow down, reflect, and dialogue with some of La Foret's best thought-partners about what we want to accomplish in the coming year. I practice dreaming without limits by imagining big without taking into account *any* potential roadblocks. Logic and reason come late to this party, and I like it that way. Almost two years ago, I asked myself the question, "If we could have absolutely anyone here at La Foret to lead a program, who would the ideal person be?" My answer was Valarie Kaur.

I encountered her work for the first time in the Rocky Mountain Conference's virtual Annual Celebration, 2020. I was immediately hooked. Her life as a Sikh American, an activist, a civil rights lawyer, and an award-winning filmmaker gives her a breadth of knowledge that is incredible to see in one human being.

Fast forward a year and a half later after many improbable conversations that led to Valarie Kaur saying “yes” to a proposal to partner with La Foret. We kicked off the event on Friday evening with a commissioned poem from Pikes Peak Poet Laureate Ashley Cornelius. What followed was a heartfelt and moving keynote speech from Valarie Kaur and a beautiful Kirtan (sung Sikh hymns) and langar (Sikh community meal). Around 120 people of many faiths, many ages, and many races came together for a beautiful and moving evening.

Saturday was a very full day. Corbin Tobey-Davis and Kim Montenegro from Uncommon Grace led a morning opening to set the stage for vulnerable and brave engagement throughout the day. Our morning workshop led by Valaire Kaur encouraged us to dive deep and imagine a world transformed by revolutionary love. It was a practice in realizing our role in the world as it could be and the actions that will take us there. Mallory Everhart facilitated an afternoon session of fruitful small group conversations. In the evening we had an “open mic” where participants shared stories of revolutionary love in their own lives, and we rounded out a very full day with a dance to help us process the day and remember how important embodied joy is.

Sunday was a smaller group, as many of our participants were active members of churches and needed to return to their communities for worship. However, those who remained experienced a beautiful closing ritual led by Uncommon Grace.

As I write this full recount of the events of the weekend, I realize that the one thing that is most difficult to capture is the Spirit of the weekend. When we organize around love and use the power of love to imagine a radically transformed world, that world starts to appear right before our eyes. I do not know yet what ripple effects this event will have, but I do know this: It didn’t end when the event was over that Sunday afternoon. Lives were changed, connections were built, and the world as it could be became a little clearer.

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Once upon a time there was...
a world full of opposition

Every day...

One day...

Because of that...

Because of that...

Until finally...





