

March 16, 2023

## Pastoral Reflection: Spaciousness

I want to start by acknowledging the weight and density of this time. There is so much that I want to say and there is so much that needs tending. For the last few months my primary goal has been to simply be responsive to the ongoing needs and responsibilities of the conference. When all of this began back in November I thought back to my first months at Holladay UCC in 2003 and how the conference was also in turmoil then, and the ripple effect that had on the local church. So to the best of my ability I have tried to be present to the needs of our churches, especially those in transition, to the needs of clergy, to the Conference Wide Committee on Ministry as it carries forward its ministry among us and to begin shaping this year's Annual Celebration. I am grateful to the many words of encouragement and gratitude that so many of you have shared with me in this difficult time.

With the arrival of Rev. Diane Wieble, I now find myself eager to tend to the many layers that need tending in our conference. There are conversations that need facilitating. Relationships that need mending. Reparations that need making. Learning that needs integrating. Every week it seems the list grows. There is a whirlwind of thoughts in my mind and they all feel urgent. But when I pause, and I listen instead to my body, I remember the gift of my sabbatical this summer, and the importance of slowing down, of breathing, of creating space. I am reminded of Teilhard's de Chardin's words, "Trust in the slow work of God." I am reminded of many who have said, "Times are urgent, go slow."

Early in December I came across this poem by Rosemary Wahtola Trommer and have been carrying it with me as a daily reminder to remember to breathe and to slow down.

### *Lumbricus Terrestris*

On a day when the world is weighty,  
dark and dense with need,  
I want to be the earthworm  
that gives itself over to tunneling,  
its every movement an act  
of bringing spaciousness.  
And when minutes feel crushed by urgency,  
I want to meet the world wormlike,  
which is to say grounded,  
consistent, even slow.  
No matter how desperate the situation,  
the worm does not tunnel faster  
nor burrow more.  
It knows it can take decades  
to build fine soil.  
To whatever is compacted,  
the worm offers its good worm work,  
quietly bringing porosity  
to what is trodden, compressed.  
So often, in my rush to repair,  
I end up exhausted.  
Let my gift to the world be  
my constancy, a devotion to openness,

my willingness to be with what is.  
Let my gift to myself be patience  
as I tend what is dense and dark

There is much work ahead. It is my prayer that as we work through these many layers we can invoke the patience of earthworms and invite the spaciousness of God to accompany us as we tunnel through the weight and density together.

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## From the Board of Directors

- **Volunteer to Serve the Rocky Mountain Conference!**

The Conference Nominating Committee has begun our work of identifying those interested in serving as Officers, Board Members or Committee members of the Rocky Mountain Conference.

The committee's proposal for candidates will be presented at the annual celebration for approval by conference delegates at the annual celebration in June.

As a Nominating Committee we are committed to developing a Board and Committee structure that reflects the diversity and inclusion in ethnicity, gender, gender identity, economic status, age, disabilities, and geographic location across the three states of the RMC.

As an initial step in our process we identified all the positions that will be voted on at the Annual Celebration. Those positions are listed [HERE](#). In this list, an asterisk indicates a position in which a person is currently serving and is eligible to serve a second term or begin a first term because they were filling a vacant position. The positions without an asterisk are vacant positions, or positions with no incumbent eligible to remain in the position.

As a general practice, we are approaching all who are either completing a first term, or completing an unfilled term, and asking if they are interested in continuing to serve another term. And, in a desire to be more transparent, we are listing all positions here to let you know ahead of time what positions will be voted on at the annual meeting.

If you are interested in serving in any of these capacities or would like to nominate someone to a position with their permission, please use this [Google Form](#) to indicate your interest, or send an email to [nominations@rmcucc.org](mailto:nominations@rmcucc.org) with the following information: Name of Nominee, Position of Interest, Association, Local Church (include city) and any information regarding identity that you are comfortable and willing to share to help the Nominating Committee ensure diversity within the leadership of the Conference.

If you have questions about any of these positions, [Rev. Erin Gilmore, Associate Conference Minister](#), will be glad to answer questions you have about the responsibilities or time commitments of these positions or connect you with the appropriate committee chair for more detailed explanations. We invite all into a spirit of discernment to consider whether your gifts meet the present needs for leadership in carrying out the mission and ministry of the Conference.

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## From Our Associations

- **New & Renewing Spiritual Communities Grant Justice and Local Church Ministries, UCC**

Juniper Formation UCC of the Metro Denver Association has been awarded a New Church grant from the National United Church of Christ and office of Congregational Assessment, Support, and Advancement (CASA)!

- **Employment Opportunities**

Parkview Church, UCC of the Metro Denver Association is currently hiring for the positions; Administrative Assistant/Communications Coordinator, Worship Production Coordinator, and Faith Formation Director. For additional info visit [their website](#).

- **Solidarity Grant**

The Global H.O.P.E. Team of Wider Church Ministries has awarded a grant to Vista Grande Community Church of the Southeastern Association for their support of those impacted by the mass shooting at Club Q on November 19, 2022. This grant will train members of the LGBTQ+ community in de-escalation and nonviolent tactics for security and safety. Provide legal clinics to support LGBTQ+ people to ensure financial and medical decision-making is protected. Remunerate legal and mental health professionals for services supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Provide ongoing care and support of caregivers and crisis responders.

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## From the National Setting

- **UCC Webinar—Getting Ready for Earth Sunday: Resources for Congregations**

Many churches celebrate God's creation on the Sunday closest to Earth Day (April 22nd). To support congregations in making the most of this occasion, Creation Justice Ministries has created a resource that brings the lens of justice to food, the most immediate and tangible way that we connect with the natural world around us. In this webinar, Karyn Bigelow will introduce the resource and talk about specific ways churches can deliver a powerful message and experience on Earth Sunday. Even if you cannot make the webinar at its scheduled time on April 12th at 1 pm ET, still sign-up, and we will send you a link to a recording of it. [Register now!](#)

- **Employment Opportunities**

The Institutional Relationships Associate is responsible for providing support to the Institutional Relationships (IR) Team with prospective client development, client retention and overall client satisfaction. Duties include, but are not limited to, responding to client inquiries and requests, providing support to IR Team and clients, attending and/or providing support for client meetings, and working with other teams at UCF to create a top-tier client service experience. For additional information about this position visit [here](#).

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## Upcoming Events and Important Links

March 29: Ecclesiastical Council for Terri Bowen [Register](#)

April 27: RMC Board of Directors Meeting

June 15-17: Annual Celebration [Learn more.](#) [Register.](#)