

Too many of those I have talked with feel that there is nothing any of us can say or do that will bring healing and wholeness to this Conference because there are multiple perspectives demanding theirs is the only way forward and no one can be trusted unless we agree with them 100%. What is happening in our Conference mirrors what is happening in our society as a whole. As people of faith we say we want to offer an alternative to the all or nothing way of reacting but to say that means we have to recognize it when it is happening in our own circle. Can we find a way to love one another even as we may disagree with one another? This is our chance. It will not happen overnight. It will take hard work and it will require ALL of us to be part of the solution—working together with clarity, kindness, respect and open ears and hearts.

While there are many things that this entire situation has uncovered that are layers deep and will require time and a deep commitment of all of us to make a difference, there is one thing that we first need to resolve in order to be ready to take the next step forward. That, of course, is finding a resolution over the issues involving Rev. Dr. Scott.

Many of you have seen the letter that was sent by two of our congregations asking churches to defer OCWM giving to the Conference in order to set it aside in case the Conference cannot reach a resolution with Dr. Scott related to his separation from the Conference. There are many narratives that are circulating about why this step was needed, including that the Conference Board of Directors is not willing to give him severance. The narrative that the Board is not willing to reach an agreement is not true. The willingness was there on the day of Dr. Scott's release and is still there. As evidence of this I want you to know that I have been directed by the Board to lead a team helping us figure out how to move to a resolution and we are eager to resolve this in a way that is just for everyone involved.

For those who are considering responding to the letter by withholding OCWM giving, I want to offer a request and a caution. Like many of you, I would prefer a resolution sooner rather than later. However, my request is that you fully allow us to directly handle a resolution with Dr. Scott. We covet your prayers for all involved and hope you will encourage him to work with us for the best solution. The first step of healing for the entire Conference is that the Conference as a whole, not individual churches, complete this process in a way that is just and fair.

The caution I offer is twofold. One, the conversation about withholding money is impeding a resolution. I get that it has been many months so the urgency that is being felt now is real and that is why the letter has been released. I really do understand. And the best outcome is, still, for this to happen as a Conference instead of coming from a group of individual churches. The second caution is related to this. Should any giving from individual churches be unilaterally given to Dr. Scott, there could be unintended consequences for churches that are pledging money and for all parties involved in the transaction. There are complicated rules around how payments are characterized for tax purposes, especially for churches, and we don't want churches to run into complications with the IRS. The best outcome for all of us is for Rev. Dr. Scott and the Conference to reach a resolution together.

I wish I could answer all the questions. I cannot. I often say that there are always two sides to any story. That is true in this case as well. I have accepted the role as your Bridge Conference Minister without bias towards any side of this story. My time with you is short and will not be impacted by

our success or failure in healing and charting a new direction for this conference. However, my love for the UCC and all of its people and churches compels me to use this bridge position to help you start that journey.

Yes, I have been listening. I will go so far to say there are not just two sides to this story but there are dozens of sides. It is a sacred blessing to really listen and be invited to hold the grief and pain that our siblings experience. We have the gift in this moment to BE the church. I will continue to listen with an open heart, and I hope and pray you all will join me as well.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Diane Weible, Bridge Conference Minister

PS—I will be visiting the Rocky Mountain Conference in just a couple of weeks, and we have scheduled in-person listening sessions as follows:

April 16, 2 p.m., Berkeley Community Church, for members of the Metro Denver Association

April 18, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Laramie, 602 Garfield St, Laramie, WY, for members of the Platte Valley Association

April 25 and/or 26 for members of the Intermountain Association (details are TBA so please refer to the next Together newsletter for that information)

We are still hoping to schedule a couple more listening sessions so please do check our Together newsletter for the updated information.

Upcoming Events and Important Links

April 22: Earth Day

April 27: RMC Board of Directors Meeting

May 2, 9, 16 and 23 : Daring Greatly Book study Zoom link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3296187641?pwd=MU4yRGpMb3pEQ0MwbFFrUVFzalppZz09>

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

Previous versions of the Together Newsletter can be found [here](#).