

June 8, 2023

## **Greetings in Christ!**

I am grateful to God as I begin this journey with you, the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, serving as your Interim Conference Minister. As I pause and think about where this Conference is and where I believe God would want us to be, I think about the times I have been to a large mall, especially during the Christmas season, when so many people are going from store to store enjoying the season. Because the mall is so full of people, sometimes I need help finding where I am and where I must be. When this happens, I get discombobulated and lose focus. When this happens, my first instinct is to give up hope of finding the purpose of my visit to the mall. I first go to the "directory of the mall." Once I find the "Mall Directory," I look for the



words "You Are Here." As I focused on where I was, I began to look at the directory to find where I wanted to be. After a few moments to refocus myself and my intentions, I become intentional about my purpose and goals for my trip to the mall. We often find ourselves discombobulated in our lives and our Christian journey. When this happens, we need to pause and go back to the directory, find out where we are, and look for where we want to be. So as a Conference, let us refocus and reflect on Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." When we find ourselves in a difficult situation, take comfort in Jeremiah 29:11, knowing that it is not a promise to rescue us from our suffering immediately, but instead remember the promise that God has a plan for our lives and regardless of our current situation, He can work through it to prosper us and give us hope!

Thank you for accepting me as a part of this blessed Conference, and rest assured, I am looking forward to a joyous and fruitful ministry as we journey together to be the church that God is calling us to be.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Wooten Interim Conference Minister

## **49th Annual Celebration**

## We're just one week away from our annual celebration!

As we make final preparations and prepare to gather for this year's Annual Celebration, we give thanks for the incredible engagement and commitment of so many of you to our Conference's collective life and health. Countless people from across the 225,000 square miles have been giving of their time, skills, creativity, faithfulness and prayer to plan and prepare for our time together.

In that vein, we wanted to share some important information to help us all prepare to gather:

**Worship for this year's Annual Celebration** 

We will have an opening and closing worship service at this year's Annual Celebration. For those of you worshiping virtually, we invite to you to bring some yarn, thread, or embroidery floss and a pen and paper to Thursday's night worship, and some bread and juice or wine to the Saturday Morning worship.

### **Trivia Question**

Do you have a fun, odd, surprising, interesting, or largely unknown trivia fact from your congregation that you would be willing to share? An interesting fact about its beginning? An intriguing tale from its history? Email it to Laura Gurney We will all have an opportunity to guess which congregation it belongs to!

## **Voting and Nominating Procedures for this year's Annual Celebration**

### Voting

At in-person meetings of the Conference, there have always been a variety of ways that delegates have cast votes. In this year's hybrid setting, we have sought to find ways of having similar options for those participating on-line. We wanted to give you a heads up of how we will be voting this year, this will also be reviewed when we are together next week.

For the generally routine votes:

- In person will say "Aye" or raise hands
- On-line will use zoom's online poll.

For the more significant votes:

- In person will raise cards and be counted
- On-line delegates will be sent to breakout rooms where each group can do a quick raise hands vote or a person by person roll call vote.

For sensitive votes:

- In person will have a paper ballot
- On-line will use a special e-voting app called ElectionRunner the eballot will be sent to the delegates email to register. We will run through a test before we need to vote on an actual issue.

#### **Nominations**

#### Nominees from the Floor, Deadline end-of-day Thursday, June 15:

- 1. Nominations from the floor must be submitted by the end of the day Thursday, June 15. This will allow time to ensure that all nominees are represented on the ballot.
- 2. Nominations are to be submitted using the online nominating form found HERE.

#### Voting Procedure, Saturday, June 17:

- 1. Ballots will be the same for those voting remotely (accessing a digital ballot through a link) and those voting in-person (using a paper ballot).
- 2. The ballot is based on the report of the Conference Nominating Committee. (That report is available on the RMC website.) The Nominating Committee will speak to their process and recommendations at our Thursday evening session following dinner.
- 3. The ballot will also include any nominations made from the floor and submitted by the end of the day, Thursday, June 15.
- 4. On this ballot, you are able to cast your vote for the individuals who are candidates for five positions. Three of those positions have more than one candidate for an office (Vice Moderator, Treasurer and the New Ministry Mentorship position on the Board of Directors). Candidates are listed for two other positions which initially were contested, but where one candidate withdrew for each ofice (Moderator, and Board Lay Leader Liaison).
- 5. On this ballot, the ordering of names for each position was determined by the toss of a coin.

- 6. The ballot does not list information found in the Nominating Committee report about the nominee's Association, whether or not they are an incumbent for the position, and any endorsement from the Nominating Committee.
- 7. There are some positions of conference leadership for which a nominee has not been named. If there are no names submitted before the end of the day Thursday, you will not be voting on those positions. The Board of Directors is empowered to fill vacancies and will look to Associations to bring forward nominees for positions representing an Association and will collaborate with the Nominating Committee to fill other positions.

On-line voting in this election will close at a designated time on Saturday, June 17, 2023. Acknowledging that we may be running behind on our schedule, the designated time will correspond to the time-frame for in-person voting and will be announced when people gather for in-person voting. Please submit your ballot at that time. (And, of course, you can vote only once using this on-line system!)

Registration is still open and can be found <u>HERE</u>. Deadline to register is June 12. Business meeting information as well as other details about the gathering will be posted <u>HERE</u> scan this QR code, so please check back often.



## Combined Choir at Annual Celebration in Grand Junction

You're invited to join us for a combined choir piece during the closing worship service at Annual Celebration in Grand Junction. We'll figure out a short rehearsal time at the event (we'll find a piano somewhere) and work on it as much as we can. In the meantime, click on the link below and it will take you the song where you can hear it and rehearse with it on line. If you wish to purchase the octavo you may, but we should have enough copies of it at the event to get everyone a copy. A small group of FCUCC-GJ singers have been working on it but I hope we'll have more folks joining us. See you soon! Karen

Caton FCUCC-Grand Junction.

**COMMON GROUND by Audrey Snyder** 

# Retired Minister Boundary Training--Wednesday, June 21

Maintaining healthy boundaries is challenging at any stage in ministry--it is particularly tender and diocult attending to boundaries as we transition out of our last call and while in retirement.

Along with case studies, "A Sure Foundation," "The Ministerial Code," and Rev. Dr. Bruce Epperly's new book "The Jubilee Years" will provide the content of this three-hour training. Rev. Stephen Boyd and Rev. Tara Barber from the national setting of the church (MESA) will offer this focused Boundary Awareness Training for those entering and living in retirement.

There is no charge for this training.

Successful completion of this three-hour training satisfies the Healthy Ministry Training requirement for retired clergy set forth by the Conference-wide Committee on Ministry. (Retirees who have been granted "exempt" status are not subject to this requirement.)

If you are unable to attend this training, watch the RMC newsletter, Together, for news of upcoming Healthy Ministry Relationships training opportunities offered by Rev. Dr. Tracey Dawson and Rev. Wendy Kidd.

Should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Rev. Karen Winkel, chair of the CWCOM Supportive Oversight Subcommittee at <a href="mailto:cochairsos@rmcucc.org">cochairsos@rmcucc.org</a> or call her at 970-765-7070.

To enroll in this free June online training, click **HERE** 

# **Upcoming Events and Important Links**

June 15-17: Annual Celebration Learn more. Register.

Previous versions of the Together Newsletter can be found here.