

June 23, 2023

Greetings beloved conference!

To those of you who attended last week's Annual Celebration, thank you for your presence, your faithful and deliberative work on 5 important items of business, and your participation in the work of mending and repairing the fabric that is ours in the Rocky Mountain Conference. I know many have commented on how tired they were upon their return home, myself included, and I am grateful for the level of engagement and care I witnessed as we gathered together.

To those of you who weren't able to attend, we will be sharing highlights of the gathering along with important information to know as we continue moving forward into a new future. Please keep watch in the next few weeks.





One of the stories I want to share is this: The communion table was at the heart of our gathering, and on that table was a communion cloth gifted to us by Rev. Laura Everett, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches and co-practitioner of Mending Church. Rev. Everett preached at our opening worship and offered a powerful invitation to us through the gospel text of John 21:1-1 to join in the work of mending and repair. And then throughout the day on Friday and on Saturday morning, Rev. Everett sat at the communion table and invited people to mend the communion cloth alongside her. Where there were holes, some put flowers. Where there were tears, some put colorful stitches. By the time we left on the Saturday, the communion cloth was not the same as when it came into the room on Thursday.

I imagine the same is true for us. I know I left differently than I came. I am still finding words to describe

that difference but I know the work we did together was significant even as it was hard and messy. I also know it is not complete. The communion cloth still has some holes. And rips. And tears. We have more work ahead of us to continue naming, mending and repairing what has been broken. As I shared in my opening remarks on Thursday, there is so much I wanted to say and yet I knew it wasn't all going to be said in the few days we were together. This work will continue to take commitment and courage and vulnerability. And I believe this work is essential for us as the church if we want to live out our call from God to join in the mending and repairing of what is broken in our communities and in the world.



At the close of the annual gathering I invited a church to take the communion cloth back to their congregation, to add a stitch or a prayer or a blessing and then to send it to another congregation for them to add a stitch or a prayer or a blessing and then they will send it on. In this way the communion cloth will travel around our conference until we gather again at the annual celebration next year at La Foret. Community Spirit offered to start so they took the communion cloth with them from Grand Junction and they are sending it to First Congregational Greeley. From there it will go to Mayflower Congregational. We will share pictures as we receive them of the cloth in your churches or at your gatherings, or in a zoom screen.



I love this visual embodiment of our collective work. I love imagining the prayers of our congregations being shared over this cloth. I love knowing so many hands will bless it with their gentle touch. We are all worthy of repair. In so doing we honor those who have gone before us, we are present with those around us, and we gift those who will come after us.

Thank you conference, thank you again to all the many, many, volunteers who shared their gifts and expertise, and thank you Holy Mother, Untier of Knots for accompanying us and helping us untangle, and reweave and restitch our threads in service to your beloved community.

Rev. Erin Gilmore Associate Conference Minister

From the Board of Directors



I'm still recovering from our intense, poignant, productive, and weirdly encouraging Annual Celebration (was it just...?) last week! We on the RMC Board have hit the ground running with meetings, consultations, and about a four thousand emails. I was overwhelmed there for a day or two, but I'm starting to find my feet as the new Moderator.

I have no idea how long it will take for all of us in the Conference to untangle thorny issues or even begin to mend what has been torn. But I trust that with honest intention, commitment, and care, we will eventually but surely weave together something beautiful.

In the last couple days, I've been thinking of a poem I ran across several months ago. With apologies for the archaic language, let me offer it here as a prayer:

"Sometimes" by Sheenagh Pugh

Sometimes things don't go, after all, from bad to worse. Some years, muscadel faces down frost; green thrives; the crops don't fail; sometimes a man aims high, and all goes well.

A people sometimes will step back from war; elect an honest man, decide they care enough, that they can't leave some stranger poor. Some men become what they were born for.

Sometimes our best efforts do not go amiss; sometimes we do as we meant to. The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow that seemed hard frozen: may it happen for you.

And for all of us. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Linn Pastor, Creede Community Church, UCC Moderator, Rocky Mountain Conference

THE RMCUCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2023-2024)

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REGISTRATION CLOSES SUNDAY, June 25th For ALL La Foret Summer Camps

Summer's better at CAMP!

Summer Camp at La Foret is a safe, brave space where kids and youth can be their truest self, try new things, and make lifelong friends!

Camp Info



From the National Setting

UCC Webinar — Seeing through the Smoke: Wildfires, Climate, and a Path Forward

How can we find a path forward in addressing the wildfires that have created a landscape of crisis in our climate changed world? This webinar will feature leading thinkers and practitioners in answering this question. Panelist John Vaillant has recently released an acclaimed book entitled "Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World," while panelist Kimiko Barrett from Headwaters Economics is a wildfire research and policy analyst who has been interviewed by national news outlets for her insights. Even if you cannot make the webinar at its scheduled time on July 12th at 1 pm ET, still sign-up, and we will send you a link to a recording of it. Register now!

RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING

Registration is now open for Authorized Ministers in the Rocky Mountain Conference who wish to take Racial Justice Training with Diane Weible.

This 6-hour training will be facilitated by Rev. Dr. Diane Weible at the request of the Rocky Mountain Conference for training of authorized ministers. For questions, please reach out to <u>Diane Weible</u>.

- August 16 and 17, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Mountain Time)
- October 18 and 19, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Mountain Time)
- October 14, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Mountain Time)

To Register click HERE.

Boundary Training for Authorized Ministers

Two boundary training sessions for authorized ministers that have been approved by the Rocky Mountain Conference and facilitated by Diane Weible are open for registration. Cost is \$60. Session times listed are all Pacific Time Zone. Learn more. Register.

Communities of Practice for Euro Americans

Euro Americans have our own work to do that extends beyond the work we do with others related to anti-racism. If we don't do our own work to acknowledge and confront white privilege and white supremacy within us and begin to see how it shows up in our daily life, we cannot be authentically present in this work. Communities of Practice for Euro Americans will offer a brave space to listen to one another an challenge and support one another in this journey. Each COP group will have no more than six participants. The group will meet once a month for 10 or 11 months of the year. Each session is 90 minutes and will include checkin/reflections from each member as well as a case study brought by a different member each month. The cost for the

year is \$350. Diane Weible is a trained COP facilitator who has studied privilege in white communities and is in the midst of her own journey in confronting privilege. If you are interested, please fill out this form.

Previous versions of the Together Newsletter can be found here.