

July 27, 2023

## Our Church Has Hope and a Future

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

In my time of devotion, I came across these well-known words from the book of Jeremiah; these words always remind me of the hope God has given us all. These words are taken from a letter Jeremiah wrote to the people of Judah living in exile in Babylon. They were living far from their homes, far from their farms and fields, and far from their beloved Jerusalem. Most people who received this letter would never see their homeland again; they would die in exile. Yet Jeremiah wrote that God had a plan which gave them hope and a future. God's plan gave them hope and a future centered in His promised Messiah.

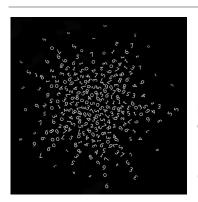


We, too, have hope and a future in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. Even though many of us have struggled to see the future, and some may have thought, has God forgotten about us. However, maybe we should consider; that God may be preparing this conference for a new beginning with God at the center.

So, I want to encourage us as we prepare for the future God has for us; let us be intentional in our purpose to be the church that God is calling us to be. Let us continue to be centered in God's promised hope.

The truths found in this passage remind us of God's love for all people, and God's assurance will provide for and care for all in the days to come.

Rev. Dr. Doug Wooten



# Calling all RMC Visionaries and Number Crunchers!

Due to the urgency of reworking the proposed 2023-24 budget that was presented at the Annual Celebration, the Finance Committee is seeking a couple of new members now, rather than waiting for the regular nominating cycle preceding the Annual Celebration next June. In the interest of getting diverse geographic voices represented on the Finance Committee, we are particularly interested in volunteers from outside of

the MDA. If you are interested in helping the RMC reimagine the way in which the Conference invests in transforming lives, please contact RMC Treasurer, Rev. Kari Collins.

If you cannot serve on the Finance Committee at this time but are interested in serving on it in the future, please watch for announcements from the Nominating Committee later this year.

#### Annual Celebration 2023

Several videos that were shown at the Celebration as well as the opening and closing worship services are available on our <u>website</u>.

This is the word art that was created during the celebration.



#### REMINDER: In the Mud

In 2016, our Conference voted to adopt a the "in the mud" program to sharing mission dollars. Instead of sending funds directly to organizations, we now grant the funds to our local churches, empowering them to build new partnerships and ministries within their communities.

For the first few years of In the Mud, we were focused on awarding grants for church-based community outreach programs. In 2020, we shifted our focus towards technology and improving online outreach efforts. In 2023 we continue supporting tech improvements as well as in-person outreach projects. The important thing is the intention of the project and how it will expand your church's reach into your community. For more information click <a href="HERE">HERE</a>. The in the Mud Grant Application form can be found <a href="HERE">HERE</a>.

The **revised** schedule for this program is:

- Application Opens: June 1, 2023
- Application Deadline: August 11, 2023
- Evaluations will be made and grants announced early in the month of September
- Grant funds will be disbursed: September 15, 2023

# Religious Leaders Track at the Religious Research Association (RRA) Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City

The Religious Research Association welcomes religious leaders to participate in our joint annual meeting with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion () on Friday, October 20 at a special discounted one-day rate of \$35! Research presented on this day will address the following topics: religion and science, religion and race, rebuilding congregations after COVID-19, and faith in the workplace. UCC denominational researchers have been long-time members of the RRA, and their research will be featured at this one-day event.

Leaders of any religious tradition can apply to attend. Scholarships are available (up to \$500 each) to assist with travel and lodging. Conference registration and meals are provided.

Please contact <u>RRA Executive Officer Dr. Gina Zurlo</u> to apply. Send a short paragraph with a brief description of your religious community, your role in it, and your interest in attending the SSSR+RRA meeting. Applications are due August 1, with a notification date of August 11. Participants must be RRA members to attend the annual meeting (see the membership page for more information).

Check out this page for more information click HERE.



This group is open to all authorized/rostered/parochial ministers born in years 1980-1995. Led by a millennial pastor and leader, it will explore the unique joys, perspectives and challenges of those serving the church in our current context, through mutual leadership development and resource sharing, as well as connection among group members.

Rev. Liz Miller will be group lead collaborator and liaison for this affinity group. A listening session will be held on Wednesday, August 23 at 1 pm for folks interested in brainstorming desired content for the group. Registration for that session may be found <u>HERE</u>. The affinity group will consist of six sessions, starting in September and occurring approximately every 6 weeks.

Register for the affinity group <u>HERE</u>



#### Boundary Training

Registration is still open for upcoming Boundary Training sessions on August 23 and 24 or September 20 and 21, each day from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time). Cost is \$60 per person. More information. Register.

If Boundary Training is required for authorization, please check with the appropriate authorizing body to make sure this training qualifies for your requirements. If you need information from me in order to receive approval, please email Rev. Dr. Weible

## Racial Justice Training

Racial Justice Trainings via Zoom are now open for registration. There are three sessions being offered. The first two sessions will be held August 16 and 17 and October 18 and 19, each day from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time). A third, all-day session, will be held October 14, 10 a.m. to 4

p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time). If Racial Justice Training is a requirement for authorization or you are just interested in this continuing education opportunity and have questions, please contact <u>Rev. Dr. Weible</u>. Cost for training is \$60 per person. Register.

## Communities of Practice for Euro-Americans

We know that when it comes to White Privilege, we all need to do our own work. And, sometimes, we need help getting started. The Communities of Practice model that supports ministers through a structured format of worship, check-ins and case studies is a model works well for the work Euro-Americans need to do. If you are interested in signing up or learning more, click <u>HERE</u> or email <u>Rev. Dr. Weible</u>.

#### Facilitated Conversations

Late summer/early Fall Facilitated Conversation opportunities will begin soon. Facilitated Conversations Groups offer confidential space for ministers to talk with others interested in a specific topic. Life After Ministry includes two separate cohorts—one for active ministers and another for newly retired ministers. There are also three separate cohorts for Burnout "Post"-COVID. For dates, times, additional registration and to register, click HERE or email Rev. Dr. Weible.

# Individual Coaching

Individual coaching is available for both authorized ministers and lay leaders and we offer a free coaching call with anyone interested to explore what coaching is and decide if this relationship would be a good fit. Coaching is not just for ministry goals. It is great for professional and personal goals outside of the church as well. Feel free to share my email address (<a href="mailto:dweible@enkei-resolutions.com">dweible@enkei-resolutions.com</a>) and I will be happy to reach out to schedule a call.

Previous versions of the Together Newsletter can be found <u>here</u>.