

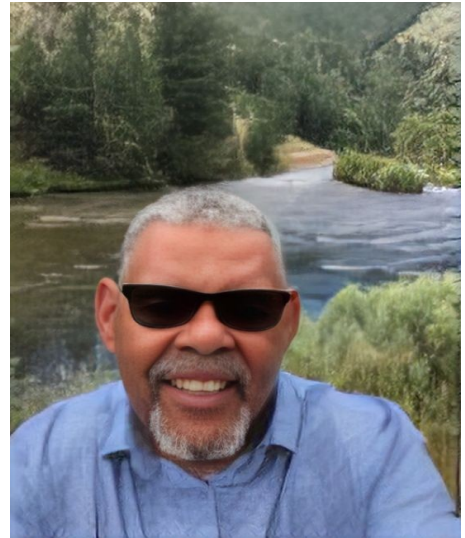


September 7, 2023

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## Living in God's Grace Our Commitment to Mission and Service

Over the past few months, I have spent a lot of time understanding and defining who we are as a conference, the things we value, and what many of us believe God is calling us to. We have recognized who we are now as a conference, and we have discerned where we will be in our future. I believe this is a part of our continued story, as we listen to the unfolding Scripture in the life of Jesus Christ, as we listen with one another, and as we listen in the world. We live out this story in so many ways, including our worshiping as an inclusive community, growing in our faith through our local congregations by serving others and being a living witness of Jesus Christ. As we continue to move forward and hear God speaking to us, let us as all begin to think about ways to live into God's grace and use our talents and time, so that we may continue to live out God's love with a faith-filled purpose of the Rocky Mountain Conference. One of the ways we are growing into the service of the Lord is through our faithful



work our Finance Committee, they have worked diligently over the past several weeks to present a budget to you at our Conference-Wide meeting in November. The prayers and hopes are, that this will be sustainable and effective. This work has been extremely time consuming and a thoughtful process. I believe this work is very important and this budget anticipates how we will use the resources God has entrusted to us to carry out the purpose God has laid before The Rocky Mountain Conference and celebrates what we envision our mission and ministries to be in 2024. This work can be fulfilled through the committed offering of your financial support, skills, and time by RMC throughout the year.

Let us all continue to live in God's Grace and commit ourselves to the mission and service of the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Grace and Peace  
Rev. Dr. Douglas Wooten  
Interim Conference Minister  
Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC

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## Mark Your Calendar – RMC Special Meeting: Tuesday, November 28



The Rocky Mountain Conference is holding a special meeting for all Conference members by Zoom on November 28, 2023, at 6:30pm. We'll send the official notice 30 days in advance with the full agenda, etc. But we plan to discuss two items for sure:

As directed at the Annual Conference in June, the Board will propose for Conference approval an Annual Budget for the 2023-24 Fiscal Year, and we will discuss and approve next steps in response to the two-year experimental Conference-

Wide Committee on Ministry.

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### RMC Board Update

If I had to describe the work of the Board at this point, I would say we are in the thick of untangling and just starting to repair (some of) our nets. If you were at this year's Annual Celebration, you know what I'm referring to. If you weren't there, I strongly encourage you to watch the [Thursday evening worship service](#), featuring Rev. Lauren Everett and her timely message to us.

Certainly, enacting the Annual Conference resolution concerning Rev. Dr. Anthony Scott was a significant act of untangling. As we continue to pray for Dr. Scott, as well as Rev. Sue Artt and our Conference, we will no doubt return in different ways and times to weave together strands that were pulled apart.

In the meantime, we are closely attending to our financial nets. Thank you to our Treasurer Kari Collins, Assistant Treasurer Teresa Campbell, RMC Office Financial Associate Brianna Gillmore, and the entire **Finance Committee** for bravely assessing our current budget. They are going through every line item, confirming and categorizing expenses and simplifying our spreadsheets. The team is on track to present the '23-'24 FY budget, as directed at the Annual Celebration, to the Conference at our special meeting on November 28. Please pray for them along the way.

Through all of this, we are discovering who we are and beginning to consider who we can be as a Conference. The Board is meeting in person on September 21-23 to take care of business items and to start forming strategies for navigating the season ahead. This will likely result in conversations in each of our Associations related to healing, identity, vision, and possibility. We expect these conversations to shape personnel structures and renew initiatives to support congregations in faithfulness, community engagement, generosity, and vitality. Watch for those opportunities. If you have ideas, concerns, or dreams to share ahead of our Board retreat – please do reach out to your **Association or ministry team Board Representative**.

Yes, we are still untangling and mending, and I expect that work to be ongoing. But in coming weeks and months I'm confident we'll start to see ways forward. Here's to working with one another to weave together something beautiful.

Blessings to you,

Sarah

Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Linn, RMC Board Moderator

[sblinn@live.com](mailto:sblinn@live.com)

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## LaForet - Valarie Kaur

This fall, join other Colorado Springs community leaders in a celebration and declaration of revolutionary love with Valarie Kaur. This transformational weekend will be located at La Foret Conference & Retreat Center on September 29th to October 1st. A coalition of diverse faith communities and organizations of all types are coming together to sponsor this weekend which features The Revolutionary Love Compass at the heart of Valerie Kaur's bestselling book, See No Stranger.

Dr. Kaur is an activist, lawyer, and founder of the Revolutionary Love Project. Her nonprofit The Revolutionary Love Project "inspires and equips people to build beloved communities where they are, centered around the ethic of love."

The Rocky Mountain Conference is proud to be a sponsor of this event. Many of us encountered Valarie Kaur first when she joined our 2021 Annual Celebration as the keynote speaker, and we are excited to deepen the conference's commitment to Revolutionary Love as a method and ethos of activism.

Anyone in the RMC may use the coupon code RMC20 to take 20% off any attendance package. Additionally, any church in the RMC that has already sponsored this event has automatically had their coupon code upgraded to take 40% off, combining the church's sponsorship and the conference's sponsorship!

As with all La Foret events, there is a tiered registration cost and scholarships available. We never want cost to be the reason not to attend- we are more than happy to provide assistance.

Students in grades 8-college get a 50% off discount with the coupon code YOUTH50

We will have childcare available for young children from infants to 2nd grade, mini-camp experiences are available for 3rd-7th graders, and a youth program facilitated by our partner organization, The Rock Center, during this retreat. It truly is an event with something for everyone.

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Registration and more information can be found at [HERE](#).

Updates about the event will be posted periodically to our Instagram and Facebook accounts, so be sure to follow us (@laforetblackforest and <https://www.facebook.com/LaForetRetreats>)

Please feel free to contact Rev. Logan Bennett, Director of Transformational Programs, [logan@laforet.org](mailto:logan@laforet.org) 719-822-7243

# SEEING NO STRANGER with VALARIE KAUR

SEPT. 29 - At La Foret Conference  
OCT. 1, 2023 & Retreat Center

"The future is dark. Is this the darkness of the tomb—  
or the darkness of the womb?"

A global pioneer and visionary, Valarie Kaur reframes the present moment in history as one of transition and believes each of us has a role in the labor of birthing a new future. Her message has inspired millions of people around the world and ignited a movement to reclaim love as a force for justice. Valarie will offer a keynote on 9/29 and a workshop on 9/30 to draw forth our deepest wisdom to explore how Revolutionary Love can transform our lives — love for others, our opponents, and ourselves. Through her renowned storytelling, teaching, and embodied inquiry, she will show us how to build beloved community, from the inside out.

✓ On-Site or Commuter Pricing

✓ Tiered Pricing and Scholarships

📷 @LaForetBlackForest

🌐 [www.LaForet.org/nostranger](http://www.LaForet.org/nostranger)



## Attendance

We are a non-profit driven by a desire to enrich lives. Don't let cost be a barrier! We have tiered pricing and additional need-based scholarships. Prices include all programming and 6 meals in the dining hall

Supporter Level .... \$408

Sustainer Level .... \$332

Subsidized Level .... \$257



## Lodging

La Foret has comfortable yet rustic cabins with 3 to 6 bedrooms and 2 shared bathrooms. Bedrooms have 2 to 4 beds each. Yurts have 6 bunk beds and a detached bathhouse. There are also a variety of hotels within a 10 to 15 minute drive. Prices include both nights. You may choose your own roommate if attending with someone you know.

Private room in cabin .... \$194

Shared room in cabin .... \$136

Yurt with up to 5 others .... \$78

Offsite/Commuter .... No cost

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The Rocky Mountain Conference is also pleased to announce that we are sponsoring the collaboration of La Foret with Pikes Peak Poet Laureate, Ashley Cornelius, with an In The Mud Grant. You can hear from Ashley about why she is looking forward to this transformational event [HERE](#).


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## **ARCHWAY COMMUNITIES PRESENTS**

A Night with Carrie Newcomer

**Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023 at 7:30pm**

First Plymouth Congregational Church



All proceeds from this event will support Archway's mission of elevating lives by providing access to affordable housing, food security and the supportive social services people need to thrive.

**TICKETS:**

**\$30 General Admission**

**\$50 Friends of Archway (including reception)**

**For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit:**

[www.archwaycommunities.org/events/](http://www.archwaycommunities.org/events/)

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**ABOUT CARRIE NEWCOMER**

Carrie Newcomer is a songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. She has been described as a "prairie mystic" by the Boston Globe and one who "asks all the right questions" by Rolling Stone Magazine.

**From CWCOM**

*Congratulations!*

Candace Woods was granted a strong endorsement for ordination, pending a call, at an Ecclesiastical Council held via Zoom on Monday August 21, 2023.

## *Jesse Ophoff - Ecclesiastical Council*

Thursday September 28, 2023 7 p.m. an Ecclesiastical Council will be held via Zoom for Jesse Ophoff. All members with standing in the RMC and Lay Delegates from every member church in RMC are encouraged to attend and offer support to this candidate as he continues the journey toward ordination in the United Church of Christ. Please register [HERE](#).

For Jesse's Marks Portfolio click [HERE](#). For a "What is a Marks Portfolio?" document click [HERE](#).

## *Nominees for CWCOC Sought*

The Nominating Committee is working on finding nominees for each of the subcommittees and if the vote is to continue with a CWCOC, they will be presenting nominees for the CWCOC. If you are interested in serving on the CWCOC, or would like to nominate with their permission to the CWCOC, please email [nominating@rmcucc.org](mailto:nominating@rmcucc.org). If you have questions, concerns, feedback, regarding the CWCOC or the process moving forward, please email [erin@rmcucc.org](mailto:erin@rmcucc.org)

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## **The 2023 Colorado Legislative Session and Gun Violence Prevention Bills: What's Next?**

**Speaker** : Eileen McCarron, President, Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action

**Sponsored by** : Lakewood United Church of Christ and Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence

**Time and Date**: Sunday, October 22, 2023, 11:30 am



The 2023 Colorado Legislative Session resulted in six gun violence prevention bills signed by Governor Jared Polis at the close of the session. Come listen to Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action President provide an overview of the laws and the challenges ahead for people of faith.

Colorado Ceasefire is the longest serving statewide, grassroots gun violence prevention organization in the State of Colorado. We are parents, teachers, students, community members, gun violence survivors and more who have been working for over twenty years to prevent and reduce gun violence in Colorado through education, outreach and legislative advocacy. Our efforts are making a difference.



Colorado Faith Communities  
United to End Gun Violence

Lakewood UCC is a member church of Colorado FAith Communities United to End Gun Violence (CFCU) Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence (CFCU) is the only faith-based organization in Colorado dedicated to ending gun violence.

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## **Wanted**

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Boulder, CO is seeking a Director of Children's and Family Ministry

For additional details check [HERE](#).

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# Congregational Library & Archives

## *History Matters*

An inventory list is one of the most important items a church can produce to steward their collections. This simple document includes basic information about the contents of a church's entire collection of records and often includes a clear description of materials in the collection and an indication of how extensive they are. A good inventory makes it easier to keep track of all of the materials within the collection and goes a long way towards expanding accessibility to interested users.

Join us for this next program in the Congregational Library & Archives Church Stewardship Initiative, a series devoted to empowering churches to steward and preserve their valuable records. In this program, the CLA's archivists, Zachary Bodnar and Billy McCarthy, will walk you through how to create an inventory list, what tools can be used to create the inventory, and how to make that inventory accessible for those wishing to view the archive.

This program will be conducted on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 1-2 pm EDT

For additional details check [HERE](#).

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## Book Study this Fall

### **Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide**

**Mondays, September 11, 18, 25 and October 2, 9, 16 from 11:30am – 1pm**

Rev. Richard F. Ward, Fred B. Craddock Professor Emeritus of Homiletics and Worship and Member of Sixth Avenue UCC and the Rocky Mountain Conference will be hosting an online discussion of a book this fall titled *Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide* by Professor Leah Schade of Lexington Theological Seminary. He specifically chose this book as way to prepare to preach through next year's election season. This will give us some time to begin with prayer for our preaching ministries and then discuss 2 chapters in the book. The topics that Professor Schade covers suggest several preaching strategies as we approach what promises to be a highly contentious election season. If you are interested in participating register [HERE](#). There is no cost but donations are welcome.

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## UCC Webinar—The Climate Strike Movement 5 Years Later

Five years have now passed from when Greta Thunberg and others launched a movement that reverberated around the world. The movement continues as organizers prepare for the March to End Fossil Fuels in New York City on September 17th. This webinar will feature faith-based organizers and activists who will reflect back on the movement and where we are today. Speakers will include Rev. Jim Antal, Aly Tharp, and Gabriela Martinez. Even if you cannot make the webinar at its scheduled time on September 13th at 1 pm ET, still sign-up, and we will send you a link to a recording of it. [Register now!](#)

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### *New Boundary Training!*

Registration is still open for upcoming Boundary Training sessions on 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](#). Two additional Sessions have been scheduled for October 10 & 11 or November 7 & 8, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. each day (Pacific Time).

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### *New Racial Justice Training Sessions!*

Two additional Sessions have been scheduled for October 10 & 11 or November 7 & 8, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. each day (Pacific Time). [More information](#). Cost is \$60 per person. [Register](#). Questions? Email [Rev. Dr. Weible](#).

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### *Request for Feedback*

We are requesting feedback on our Facilitated Conversations program. If you could spare a few minutes to fill out the survey to assess interest in this program, we would appreciate your help. Click [HERE](#) for the five question survey.

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### *Visit Rev. Dr. Weible's Website!*

Please visit her [website](#) to learn more about the services Enkei Resolutions can offer to support you and your ministry.

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