

As we continue to witness the violence and suffering in Israel and Gaza having a community with which to grieve, to pray, and to act matters.

As we witness the violence and suffering in Lewiston Maine having a community with which to grieve, to pray and to act matters.

As we experience our own pain and loss, or our own joys and celebrations, having a community to accompany us matters.

Whatever endings, beginnings and middles you find yourself in this week, I pray there is a blessing within it, offering itself to you as a gift.

Rev. Erin Gilmore Acting Conference Minister
Rocky Mountain conference, UCC

RMCUCC Proposed '23-'24 Budget

The RMCUCC will vote to approve the '23 - '24 Budget at a Called Special Meeting on November 28, 2023 at 6:30pm (via zoom). If you have any questions on the proposed budget (linked [HERE](#)), please don't hesitate to contact either of us. We're happy to make arrangements to meet with you via zoom to answer any questions you may have prior to the Special Meeting.

Rev. Kari Collins, Treasurer, pastorkaricollins@gmail.com
Teresa Campbell, Assistant Treasurer, campbelltl@aol.com

Sharing Our Stories

In last week's article I shared a hope that each week the Together Newsletter would feature a different voice across the conference as a way to share insight and wisdom from each of our particular contexts and ministries. The article could be written by a pastor, a lay leader, a group, a chaplain, a member in discernment, anyone in the Rocky Mountain Conference. It could be a recording instead of a written article. It could be a poem. A piece of art.

it can be a story about where God is alive in your ministry. It could be a reflection on a scripture. It could be an invitation to learn about something that matters to you. It could be to share an important marker in the life of your faith community or context. The invitation is to share something of significance from your context that offers a glimpse into how God is present to you in these days. If it helps, here are a few prompts.

1. Tell us a bit about who you are. What words would you use to describe (yourself, your church, your context for ministry)
2. How is God showing up in your community? How are you an expression of God's love in your community?
3. What are you learning about what it means to be church? to be Christian? To be a beloved child of God?

My hope is to have our first contribution on the Friday before the first Sunday in Advent, Dec. 1, and then continue on from there. If you would like to participate, the sign-up sheet can be found [HERE](#). The dates shown are for the newsletter within which it will be published. The deadline for the

contribution will be the Thursday prior to the publish date. You can send your contribution to connect@rmcucc.org

Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ Thank You

The mail arrived and what should be in it but a cornucopia of aloha and love for our Maui churches!

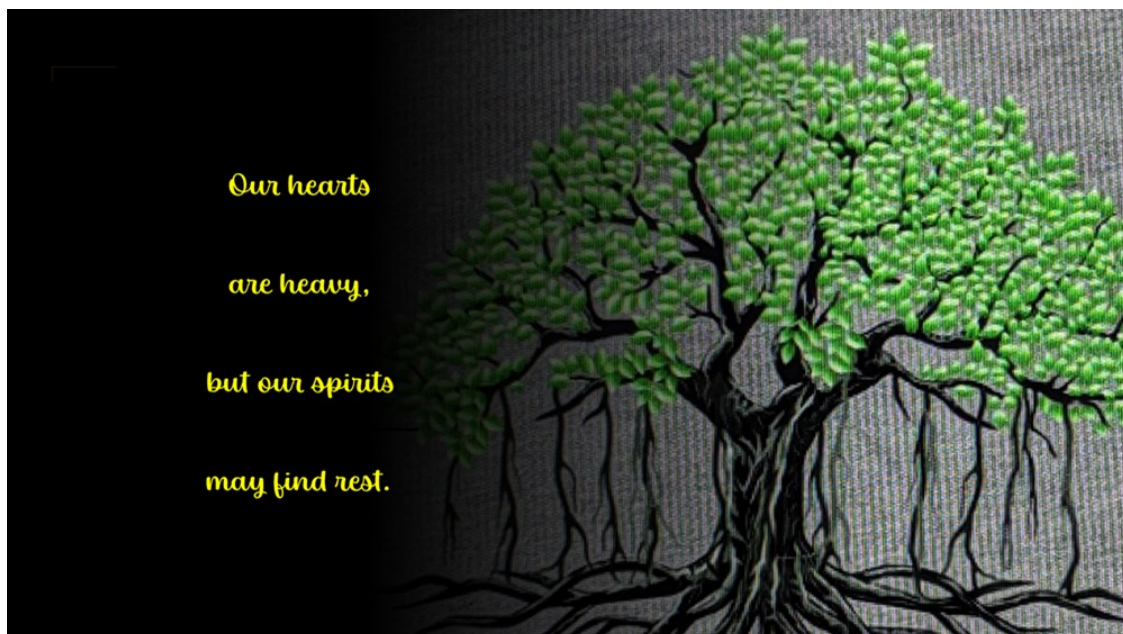
Use of the Conference Maui Fire Funds are following these lines:

- Trauma Support for Maui Clergy as they give support to the community.
- Congregation as Unit of Mission: we are supporting the larger Maui population through the work of our local congregations there.
- Emerging needs identified by our local churches and crisis centers.
- Long-Term Recovery: Our Disaster Relief Coordinator has directed us to fund “unmet needs.” For example, housing assistance for rebuilding only covers the rebuild, the assistance does not furnish the house. We are identifying where restricted assistance stop and we might help with further unmet needs. Long-term recovery is projected to be 7-10 years. Our goal is to be involved for as many of those years as our funds allow.

Below please find a token of our appreciation. On the right side is a banyan tree which has become a symbol of resilience and hope for Maui Strong. On the left side is a sentiment which I think best sums up where we are as we face this tragedy. By the way, your gift helps our souls to be at rest.

With gratitude
David

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Seeing No Stranger with Valaire Kaur RECAP- By Rev. Logan Bennett



I have a January ritual for my ministry at La Foret. Each year I take a few days to slow down, reflect, and dialogue with some of La Foret's best thought-partners about what we want to accomplish in the coming year. I practice dreaming without limits by imagining big without taking into account any potential roadblocks. Logic and reason come late to this party, and I like it that way. Almost two years ago, I asked myself the question, "If we could have absolutely anyone here at La Foret to lead a program, who would the ideal person be?" My answer was Valaire Kaur.

I encountered her work for the first time in the Rocky Mountain Conference's virtual Annual Celebration, 2020. I was immediately hooked. Her life as a Sikh American, an activist, a civil rights lawyer, and an award-winning filmmaker gives her a breadth of knowledge that is incredible to see in one human being.

Fast forward a year and a half later after many improbable conversations that led to Valaire Kaur saying "yes" to a proposal to partner with La Foret. We kicked off the event on Friday evening with a commissioned poem from Pikes Peak Poet Laureate Ashley Cornelius. What followed was a heartfelt and moving keynote speech from Valaire Kaur and a beautiful Kirtan (sung Sikh hymns) and langar (Sikh community meal). Around 120 people of many faiths, many ages, and many races came together for a beautiful and moving evening.

Saturday was a very full day. Corbin Tobey-Davis and Kim Montenegro from Uncommon Grace led a morning opening to set the stage for vulnerable and brave engagement throughout the day. Our morning workshop led by Valaire Kaur encouraged us to dive deep and imagine a world transformed by revolutionary love. It was a practice in realizing our role in the world as it could be and the actions that will take us there. Mallory Everhart facilitated an afternoon session of fruitful small group conversations. In the evening we had an "open mic" where participants shared stories of revolutionary love in their own lives, and we rounded out a very full day with a dance to help us process the day and remember how important embodied joy is.

Sunday was a smaller group, as many of our participants were active members of churches and needed to return to their communities for worship. However, those who remained experienced a beautiful closing ritual led by Uncommon Grace.

As I write this full recount of the events of the weekend, I realize that the one thing that is most difficult to capture is the Spirit of the weekend. When we organize around love and use the power of love to imagine a radically transformed world, that world starts to appear right before our eyes. I do not know yet what ripple effects this event will have, but I do know this: It didn't end when the event was over that Sunday afternoon. Lives were changed, connections were built, and the world as it could be became a little clearer.

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A NIGHT TO ILLUMINATE GRIEF

Join us on the Winter Solstice to celebrate the LIGHT movement:
Love in Grief Held Together.

Thursday Dec 21, 2023 from 7 PM - 9 PM MST

First Plymouth Congregational Church, 3501 S Colorado Blvd, Cherry Hills, CO 80113

In person and virtual | All faith and spiritual modalities welcome | This event is free for all

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We have all experienced grief and you do not have to experience it alone. This event is dedicated to reminding you that support is everywhere. Join us to encircle our world with love on solstice night. Led by Amy Pickett-Williams LCSW & 200 RYT, gifted musician Heidi Thomas, and a team of volunteers.

JOIN US IN COMMUNITY TO:



Explore the Grief Journey

Discover how grief resides within our bodies and gain tools to navigate this emotional voyage.



Embrace Community

Engage in meaningful conversations, gentle movement, breathwork, therapeutic art rituals, and the harmonious power of music.



Hold a Candlelight Remembrance

As the Winter Solstice envelops us, we'll come together in person and through a live stream to heal, remember, and honor together.

WORLD WIDE ILLUMINATION MOVEMENT

We encourage the whole world to hold grief with us through love, prayer, energy, meditation.



[FPOlighteventurl.com](https://fpolighteventurl.com)

Event is sponsored by the Worship and Well-being Committee at First Plymouth Congregational Church. Donations are optional and will be directed to non-profit grief organizations.

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