

December 15, 2023

Dear RMC Conference,

As we prepare for the third week of Advent and hear again the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 126:

"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

I want to add my own shouts of joy in celebration for the ordination of Rev. Candace Woods last Saturday, Dec. 9, at La Foret. What a beautiful, tender, joyful, worship that brought together friends and family from



across the country from various denominations, both to celebrate Candace's yes to God's call as well as the covenant between Candace, Juniper Formation and the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Rev. Woods has been called as Minister of Gender and Sexuality Liberation by Juniper Formation United Church of Christ to extend the ministry of Christ and to do so by co-creating liberatory spaces with and for LGBTQ+ people and all impacted by cisheteropartiarchy and purity culture, specifically through comprehensive sexuality education and the Our Whole Lives program and organizing and educating congregations in the Open and Affirming movement.

I am grateful to God for prophetic vision of Juniper Formation and Rev. Candace Woods as we seek to be the church and embody the love of God as the United Church of Christ. I am grateful to our Formation and Authorization Committee for their accompaniment of Candace and others through a season of discernment, and I am grateful to all who participated and who were able to come to the ordination. What a joy for our conference to be able to celebrate ordinations two weekends in a row.

In the midst of joy there is also the reality of continued grief. As we continue to hold St. Paul's UCC and the friends and loved ones of Rev. Ken Ingram in prayer, I want to let you know that a Service for the Celebration of Life of Rev. Ken Ingram will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 11 am. We will continue to share more details as they emerge.

Finally, I wanted to clear up any confusion about the sale of the conference office. We did have an offer on the building but unfortunately the buyer backed out and so we are back to having the office on the market. We as a staff will continue to explore options for where we land post sale, as well as continue to work on cleaning out the office and preparing to move.

I pray the presence of God is with you in the complexity and depth that this season can bring, and that you find yourself met by the love and grace of Emmanuel, God with Us.

With love, Rev. Erin Gilmore Acting Conference Minister Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC

Next Moderators Meeting



For All Lay Leaders - Save the Dates!

Please save the following dates for two upcoming Moderators gatherings, which will be open to all lay leaders!

- Wednesday, January 31, 6:30-8pm: Caring for our pastors well
- Thursday, February 29, 6:30-8pm: Your Church's Values in Action, with special guest Rev. Dr. Jason Whitehead, Juniper Formation

Lapp Lodge Capital Campaign

We have launched our Capital Campaign to raise funds for Lapp Lodge. This new "home away from



home" with 15 private rooms will offer quality family and adult lodging options with a variety of beds and configurations. Best of all, each private room will have its own bath! Lapp Lodge also includes meeting and community space.

If you knew there was a Place . . . Not very far away . . .

Where your body and soul could rest, renew, rejuvenate . . .

In a safe space. A Sacred Place . . .

A Place where Love is found . . . where strangers transform into friends, Where "You all are a part of me I don't yet know."

Would you long to go there?

Long to bathe in the forest, comp

Long to bathe in the forest, commune at the Table . . .

Walk the Labyrinth, center with the Source of All Life in the Chapel . . .

Hike the meandering trails, through ravines and hilltops,

finding perspective restored . . .

Take off your shoes and know you were surely on Holy Ground?

Once you found yourself Home, would you wish you could stay a day, a week . . . and be comforted in the knowledge that . . .

You can return, again and again, for a very long time?

<u>Rev. Rebecca Kemper Poos</u> from Congregational UCC of Buena Vista, and <u>Debbie Harrington</u> from First Plymouth UCC in Englewood are piloting our Capital Campaign efforts.

Watch for letters, emails and social media posts which will share the many ways you can be a part of this opportunity to create memories today, tomorrow, and forever at La Foret! We hope you will contemplate the many ways La Foret has been a part of your personal journey, or your family's history, or in whatever way our lovely forest has touched you when you consider what and how you will give. We encourage you to prayerfully consider how to support this effort, at whatever level you feel able. We hope you will want to be a partner in the construction of Lapp Lodge and take pride knowing you helped to make a difference! Gifts of all sizes from recurring monthly donations to one-time gifts, investment transfers, bequests and estate plans are all appreciated. Together we can do this!

We hope you will choose to be part of these exciting times and the building of the future of La Foret!

If you knew there was a Place Click <u>HERE</u> for the full introduction to our campaign!

2024 Boundary Training & Racial Justice Training Dates

Dates for Enkei Resolutions' 2024 Boundary and Racial Justice Trainings have been scheduled. Please see dates, links for registration and for more information below. Each training will be held via Zoom from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Pacific Time) on each of two days. Participants who complete all six hours of their selected training will receive a certificate of completion. Please verify with your judicatory body if this training meets your requirements. I am happy to send information if necessary to have these trainings approved if they are not already.

Boundary Training

- February 13-14
- April 10-11
- September 10-11

<u>Information</u> Register

Racial Justice Training

- March 19-20
- May 14-15
- October 8-9

Information Register

Questions? Email dweible@enkei-resolutions.com. Cost for training is \$60 per person per training.

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