

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Board of Directors

Submitted by Sarah Linn (Moderator) & MaryEllen Beltracchi (Vice Moderator)

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Our vitality as a conference depends on promoting the vitality of our congregations and their leaders. At the 2024 Annual Celebration, the Rocky Mountain Conference membership voiced strong support for a three-year transition plan focused on: adapting and sustaining work, internal and relational work, and strengthening our systems and structures. As the following reports show, we are generally on track. We're gaining stability—relationally, financially, and structurally. Some of our progress comes from Board actions, but much has emerged from the passion and initiative of our members. There are too many highlights to share, but here are *just a few*:

- Bringing on Rev. Leslie Etheredge as Bridge ACM to support the Committee on Ministry.
- Rev. Ginger Taylor's leadership in forming regular Retired Clergy gatherings.
- Supporting an Alternative Path to Ordained Ministry through Phillips Theological Seminary, coordinated by Lisa Stenmark.
- The conference-wide leaders' retreat, focused on grief and clarifying vision, led by Quanita Robison, allowed participants to name disappointments and tensions, hold candid conversation, and regain mutual trust.
- Providing a 6-month pilot clergy coaching program for consideration as a broader program to promote leadership excellence.
- Contracting external review of our financial books.
- Selling the conference office building and a small property in WY.
- Expanding "In The Mud" grants distributions and re-starting academic scholarships for MIDs.
- Treasurer Hunter Baker led the integration of ongoing mission and vision discernment into the budgeting process with ministry leaders, establishing that reflective collaboration as a regular practice, moving forward.
- We welcome the work of our associations, particularly conversations led by Platte Valley and Intermountain Associations as they seek to foster creative connections across the RMC by context and ministry affinity.
- Rev. Jenny Whitcher's work organizing and connecting congregations to relevant resources for justice and public witness; RMC sponsorship of the Prophetically Reimagining Church conference in September 2025.

Plans for the Coming Year

- Laura Gurney is organizing listening teams to visit our congregations in 2025. They will gather insights about our shared identity, mission, and remaining work. Their efforts will shape a comprehensive conference profile, to be drafted in early 2026, which will serve as the basis for a national search, to be launched at the 2026 Annual Celebration.
- Likewise, in 2025-2026, we plan to activate a team to respond to practical congregational needs through the full ministry lifecycle, including: welcome and belonging; navigating transitions, financial, legal or HR issues; resolving conflicts; clarifying mission; and leaving a lasting legacy.
- And, in the interest of focusing all our efforts on providing practical support to the leaders and churches of the RMC, we will continue to explore how to more effectively structure our board, by laws, and budget. As a start and in alignment with several other conferences, we have a board position devoted to year-round coordination of the Annual Celebration.

Special Thanks:

To our **2024-2025 Board Members**, thank you for your commitment, good faith, and wise leadership:

- Hunter Baker, RMC Treasurer
- Karen Caton, Western Association
- Eleanor Downey, New Ministry Mentorship/In the Mud Grants
- Marta Fioriti, Platte Valley Association
- Brent Gundlah, Intermountain Association
- Laura Gurney, Lay Leader Liaison
- Emerson Hauber, Southeastern Association
- Adam McCoy, Personnel Chair
- Peter Sawtell, Metro Denver Association
- Allyson Stauffer, Creation Justice League
- Ian Wrisley, Racial Justice Team

To our **conference office staff**, thank you for the many ways you keep the wheels on the wagon, roll with the punches, support our churches and leaders, and facilitate resource sharing across the conference.

- Brianna Gillmore, Financial Assistant
- Melissa McCarl, Executive Administrator
- Allison Radomski, Director of Communications

To our **Conference Ministers**:

- Bridge ACM Rev. Leslie Etheredge for bringing relief to everyone associated with COM through your expertise, humor, and creative problem solving.
- Transitional CM Rev. Erin Gilmore for your love of the church, commitment to the RMC, and for leading us with clear vision, strategic thinking, and abiding faith. Thank you.

Finally, thanks to *you*, the members of the Rocky Mountain Conference, for caring - for raising questions, concerns, and ideas throughout the year - and for all the ways you live out the love and justice of Jesus in covenant with one another. What a privilege it has been to serve as your Vice Moderator and Moderator over the last two years!

Blessings to you,

MaryEllen Beltracchi
Sarah B. Linn