October 2020 ENews

Our Conference Season of Harvest

Pic: quilt at Red Lodge Community UCC

Wider Church and Community Resources

Click on these logo links for resource information

- **Our Faith, Our Vote**
  - UCC voter and election resources

- **UCC CoVid page**
  - Compiled resources for churches and families
National Council of Churches Statement

_They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace._ - Jeremiah 6:14

World Council of Churches

Week of Prayer, January 18–25, 2021
_Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit._ - John 15:1-17

UCC Disaster Ministries

Fire, explosion, hurricane, derecho relief underway

Wyoming Interfaith Network Annual Meet

Restoring Hope: Combatting Racism speaker videos

AF Suicide Prevention

“Out of Darkness” online MT activities through October 2

UCC Office for Communication

Working for Media Justice in the digital age

God-seeds

Rev. Dr. Marc Ian Stewart

**Knowing Healing is Needed**

どころか、どこか他人

adapted from liturgy of Rex Hunt

is kind when others are unkind,
shares with another in need,
refuses to hate, while others hate,
is patient - and waits in love,
returns good for evil,
serves another, in love,
The 2020 Conference Annual Meeting was a wonderful time for connecting, albeit by Zoom (video conferencing). Expanding on the interactive style of gathering we have been doing in recent years, Rev. Dr. Sara Rosenau facilitated a day and a half of small group and large group discussions about the movement of Spirit amongst us and common visions for ministry. It is amazing how so fully we engaged with each other! Evaluations from CAM have consistently praised the relational connections made over the weekend.

Our responses to Spirit and relationship drew us into three groupings where energy, interest and commitment were most deeply expressed:

1. Healing the Earth
2. Developing a Culture of Wellness/Surviving the Pandemic
3. Connecting Our Justice Work

These energies coalesced as we talked and shared our hopes and interests with each other, and listened with renewed appreciation for where the Spirit might be guiding us in ministry. There is a “meta-theme” in what we have discerned and hope for together: healing. Hear how we long for the healing of creation, healing life in the midst of upheaval, healing community and nation. "Our Harvest is Plentiful" CAM notes from each table grouping suggest where we might start to deepen our relationships and ministry together.

These are the ministries in which we are called to engage, for we have listened carefully for what God has spoken to us in our time together. The Board of Directors will look to how these ministries will be supported in 2021 budget allocations and through the attention of Conference staff. FYI: The 2021 Conference budget will be available by mid-October for vote by delegates on October 29.

The “someone somewhere” liturgy from Rev. Dr. Rex Hunt, a retired minister with the United Church of Australia, reminds me that the healing work shown us through Jesus is always happening somewhere. The joy of Christian community and hope of the world is that a lot of “someones” come together for the sake of the Gospel and bring peace and righteousness wherever healing is needed. Companions on this way, our harvest in plentiful for this ministry.
Have you seen it? Have you heard about it? There's this amazing spirit rising up from the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ! It's a spirit of passion and purpose and connections and joy. It's a spirit of grace and healing.

So what's next?

The Board of Directors met on September 30 to explore that very question. In this e-news, Marc has provided some detail about the topics that caught our energy, interest and commitment (Healing the Earth, Developing a Culture of Wellness, and Connecting our Justice Work). The Board has made a commitment to keep the fire burning within these areas. We will be communicating with those who participated in the conversations and encourage them to continue the work that was begun at CAM.

We'll be encouraging, facilitating, cheering on these initial groups... whatever we can and must so these passions will transition from some great ideas into some powerful ministries. Our hope is to approach from a perspective of empowerment and support in order to continue the powerfully organic process that was begun at CAM. We want to continue to feed and nurture what was zoom–birthing by giving it time, attention, prayer, encouragement, resources.

We'll be calling on the original groups that were formed at CAM to meet within the coming month so we can have some exciting things to report when we “gather” via Zoom as a conference to adopt a budget on October 29th. If you have some ideas or connections to resources that might be useful, let us know.

Keep watching. Something is happening in the M-NW Conference of the UCC!

Be Well!
Healing the Earth

We bless:
This work that will save the planet
These people who will lead the efforts of healing our mother earth.
This conference that will inspire us to move forward together to save the world, for all the earth is sacred ground.

Haiku for Healing the Earth
We need a Green Team
Let everyone get involved now.
Creation Justice!

Core Team
Patty Martinson, Bob Miller, Cheryl Stewart, Barbara Gulick, Janet Koostra, Illa Dee Talcott, Sally Babcock, Barbara Miner and Amy Carter.

On Harvest Table #1
Start a “Green Team” in our Conference.
Conference office will create an email group for people to connect.

“Green Team” will meet again October 13, 2 pm. This meeting will focus on getting out the vote, and on ballot delivery. Various folks will do some research about the laws in Montana around ballot delivery.

Research the work and resources of Interfaith Power and Light.

Create a [www.mnwcucc.org](http://www.mnwcucc.org) page for recipes and ideas, and Green Team information.

Plan a tree planting campaign for our conference churches to participate in.

Contribute healing earth articles to the eNews and provide spiritual resources that help connect our actions to our faith.

Our Harvest is Plentiful
So Much to Partake from CAM

click on theme line for CAM notes
Education and encouragement to churches to look into becoming a Creation Justice Church.

Culture of Wellness/ Surviving the Pandemic

We bless:
The work we are given to do
This work that will...lighten the load
These people who will...share the load
This conference that will...support the load.

Haiku for a Culture of Wellness:
Counter exhaustion
Pool together resources
Energize leaders
We serve out of love
Yet the work can be heavy
And we need support

Core Team
Roger Lynn, Pam Peterson, Jennifer Yocum, Lisa Harmon, Phil Maxell, Jim Smith, Val Smith, Trudi Downer

On the Harvest Table #2

Create “pools” of churches, with Conference support, those interested in sharing worship services, technology, Bible/book studies, energy healing, prayer groups
Strongly encourage pastors to have peer mentors, pastoral counselors, spiritual directors, clergy happy hour, clergy retreats, clergy discernment gatherings
Try to figure out re-opening strategies across different communities.
Look at performance expectations with Pandemic conditions, ie how do we meet expectations when expectations have changed so much?

Connecting Our Justice Work

We bless:
This work that will...continue the work

On Harvest Table #3

Connecting churches doing book studies around race and racism – this can and should be done quickly – list
for justice being done in a collaborative fashion that embraces the heart of Jesus

These people who will... share their ideas through conference opportunities to informal network; sharing with faith formation committee

This conference that will... help us connect with each other to join the arms of the octopus to the body of the octopus - help us to use our gifts on the conference website.

Connect with Common Good.

Work with Conference office to be disseminators of information.

Faith formation.

Contact legislators about creating Indigenous People’s Day in the 2021 session.

Encourage voting!

Haiku for Connecting our Justice Work

Create Justice Now
With connections through action
Faith and Love through God

Core Team

Carol Shipley, Dwight Welch, Celeste Yeager
CAM Virtual Choir

Choir Participants (by row)

1. Dennis Dell, Brad Herron, Lynne Spencer Smith, Amy Carter
2. Karen Spencer, Carol Scovill, Barbara Miner, Julie Bishop
3. Jane Van Dyke, Jennifer Yocum, Ellen Fiscus, Marilyn Puett

Choir Conductor: Dr. Keith Hampton

CAM videos available to view and share

**CAM Sunday Worship**
Rev. Traci Blackmon
preaching, with CAM virtual choir

**Opening Introductions and Devotional**
You just have to check this out...and you will never want to be late for another CAM again!

**Rocky Mountain College**
Campus Minister, Rev. Kim Woeste shows us what is going on

**Outdoor Ministries with Axel Blodgett**
Hear from one of our youth who loves camping

**Friday Evening Devotional**
God present in a diversity of places and people

**Saturday Devotional**
Blessings, hopes, and prayers from being together, includes a streaming list of credits for all who were part of making CAM happen

**United Campus Ministry**
Rev. Dwight Welch shows us around MSU-Billings

**Meet our Board**
Board of Directors each share their hopes for the Conference
CALL TO CONFERENCE BUDGET VOTE MEETING

The Montana – N. Wyoming Association and Conference United Church of Christ Board of Directors is calling a business meeting of the Association and Conference to happen on October 29, 2020 at 7 pm. The purpose of this meeting will be to vote on the 2021 budget for the Conference.

We will meet using ZOOM, a technology that allows video conferencing by computer as well as phone dial in connections. Information about the budgets and the ZOOM connection will be sent out from the Conference office during the week of October 22. There will be a budget hearing on October 22 at 4:00 by ZOOM.

Please contact your delegates to have them set aside the meeting date/time on their calendars. Your number of delegates is stipulated by our Bylaws, Article VI 1:

A church is eligible to have three (3) lay delegates for its first one hundred (100) members or portion thereof, and a total of two (2) youth and/or young adult delegates (ages up to 25). In addition, all authorized pastors of the MT-NWy Conferences, including retired pastors, are delegates.
Committee for Outdoor Ministries

Planning is underway for our 2021 Camp and Retreat program. Chairperson, Trudi Downer, would like to add a few people to COM: 2 adults, 1 young adult, 1 youth. COM is also connecting with churches and “Firestarter” contact people to assess continued interest in camps and retreats. Share your interest in serving on COM with Trudi: kdtd48@itstriangle.com

Prayers

We lift our prayers of thanksgiving for the life of Rev. Dr. Dennis Brophy, who was hit by a vehicle on September 23 while walking in Powell, WY. Dr. Brophy was recently retired as a philosophy professor at Northwest Wyoming State College (1975–2016). Dennis was one of our longest-serving clergy in the Conference. He is survived by one brother and many friends within Powell and the MT-NWy Conference UCC.

Prayers with our neighboring Conferences and others who are in longterm recovery from late summer fires. Our CAM offering is still open for supporting the fire relief happening through the Central Pacific Conference UCC in Oregon and Idaho.

Our prayers for strength and healing are with Ken Carter and his family. Ken is Rev. Amy Carter’s brother. He was hit by a drunk driver while jogging in Seattle. He is being treated for head and spinal injuries. Amy has joined the family in Seattle in support.

Our prayers of gratitude for the lives of 2 national UCC leaders who were shared deep vision and identity of the UCC. Dr Avery Post, UCC President, 1977 to 1989 passed at the age of 96 on September 7. Rev. W. Evan Golder, founding editor of the United Church News, 1985–2003, passed on September 7 at the age of 82.

Calendar

October 4 (or Sunday chosen by churches) Neighbors in Need NIN offering
October 13  Healing the Earth MT-NWy Conference ministry, 2 pm
October 18  Marc Stewart preaching at Powder River UCC, Broadus
October 22  Conference Budget and CAM follow-up hearing, Zoom Meeting, 4 pm
October 26  Conference 2021 Budget Vote Zoom Meeting, 7 pm
November 13  MAC Connect! Virtual Gathering

November 1–6  Rocky Mountain College Virtual Black Tie/Blue Jeans Scholarship Benefit

July 11 – 18, 2021  General Synod 33 will be held using virtual technology, such as Zoom, instead of in-person in Kansas City