December 2017
Joyfulness

Youth Awakening a Nation
A thousand Sermons

monthly Justice stories
Millennials for Racial Justice

Calendar of Weekly Mission Prayers
Prayer for our Global Missionaries

Advent now begins
with hopeful preparations
as we watch for God

when darkness threatens
and chaos seems close at hand
God’s Peace is a gift

sometimes we despair
and allow fear to blind us
but joy is waiting

May the warmth of joy fill your whole lives and those you meet this Christmas season.

Blessings from your Montana - N. Wyoming Conference UCC staff!

Jennifer Penfield, Conference Administrator
Patty Martinson, Conference Clerk
Josie Caton, Mimanagish Director
Jonna Mandeville, Camp Cook
Dylan Wise, Camp Assistant
Carolyn Rosen, Faith Formation Dir
Marc Stewart, Conference Minister
but joy is waiting
- Pastor Roger Lynn, Plymouth UCC, Helena

God-seeds, reflections from Marc Stewart

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth its praises bring;
Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing...

There are some things that feel good in this Montana - N. Wyoming Conference:
All our 29 churches are doing ministries that would not happen except for them,
Our Board of Directors is committed to a mission that supports church vitality,
Our staff does wondrous and great work,
Mimanagish is not just a Camp and Conference Center, but a mission movement.

Then, there are extraordinary ministries happening among us that are better than good, known so far down deep in our heart they are felt as joyfulness:
It is joy to witness our Board of Directors own a vision for the Conference.
It is a joy to have staff who are gifted beyond their job descriptions and so bring achievements beyond all expectation,
It is a joy to experience the “Firestarter” energy that is focused on transforming Mimanagish into a ministry worthy to be called a primary mission of the Conference.

Joy is different than “feel good” things, because joy always has the unique quality of being a gift of Spirit. Joy is of God, perhaps like a touch of God. I want to affirm that inasmuch as there is joy among us, there is the touch of God upon us. Holy work is in our midst. The joy we feel assures us of this reality.

Not sure joy is there?
Joy was in the slurping of root beer floats during the fellowship time following Mickey Dooling’s memorial service a few weeks ago.
Joy is in the rewrites of our Conference stewardship case statements as we all the more clearly articulate what we accomplish together.
Joy shines in the face of a youth who has just been told she will be supported to go to the youth retreat.
Joy is in the news that one of our churches received a grant to reach out to youth in the community.
Joy is in the decision of the church and ministry commission to accept a church member in discernment for authorized ministry
Joy is in the Bibles given and received at the children's home chapel service officiated by one of our members in discernment.
Joy is in the gift of those boxes of Bibles given by Glasgow UCC when it closed.
Joy is in the face of the church member holding another’s infant during fellowship time.
Joy is in the homeless person taken to the grocery after worship to buy a few days’ worth of food.
Joy is around the board table as the church council gathers to exercise wisd decisions for the sake of the church’s ministry
Joy is another profile received by any of our three local church pastor search committees
Joy is the knowledge that joy is beheld in Spirit wherever it is seen.

The Three Mission Priorities of the MT-NWy Conference UCC:

All Congregations in the Conference will be vital and viable.
The Conference will offer transformative experiences and have an active presence in place where we are not now present.

The Conference will be appropriately staffed and the staff will be justly compensated.

Rocky Mountain College Intern, Amanda Balter

Throughout the course of the semester I had the rewarding opportunity to be part of the Social Justice Internship under the authority of Dr. Carolyn Rosen.

This teaching fellowship provided me the tools, networks, resources, knowledge, and experience that better prepared me for my future endeavors in a wide range of career channels. One of my first projects was to host an event focused on social justice issues in our community. With Dr. Rosen’s generous guidance, on August 28 I moderated a public forum titled “Power to the (Young) People: Montana Politics Today” at Rocky Mountain College which featured Ms. Stephanie Baucus, Vice President of Government and Public Affairs, and General Counsel for Perennial Strategy Group; Dr. Robert Wilmouth, President of Rocky Mountain College; and Mr. Tyler Starkweather, candidate for Billings City Council. The purpose of this discussion was to open the door for conversation about young people’s role in the community and politics, and to surface ideas about how to stay informed and involved on and off campus. Our diverse panel spoke on multiple issues present in Montana politics including age, gender, religious ideologies, leadership initiatives, community involvement, and voting. Afterwards, Dr. Rosen encouraged me to continue to reflect theologically and ethically on social justice issues in contemporary Montana politics. Moreover, the event provided the opportunity to practice some of the more abstract ideas that I have learned in my other Philosophy and Religious Studies classes like hospitality, covered in Dr. Carolyn Rosen’s French Philosophy (IDS 380), and cross-cultural religious structures, covered in Dr. Aaron Rosen’s Introduction to Religious Approaches (PHR 180).

In addition, the experience of public speaking, organizing an event, and growing my network of connections were valuable skills that gave me the confidence to host another campus event on October 24, a special showing of the Montana-made documentary, Makoshika. The award-winning film provided students, faculty, and community members an inside look at the boom-bust patterns of oil production in eastern Montana and western North Dakota. It surfaced the difficulties that rural
rigs moved into town. After the showing, the audience had the opportunity to participate in a discussion that featured the filmmakers and Dr. Timothy Lehman, history professor at RMC. The conversation centered on parts of Western life, like oil production, that oftentimes generate conflict. For instance, in the 1950’s, oil production led to a water contamination that affected tribal land. These lands hold a deeply religious value in Native American culture, and their desire to maintain connection to their ancestors is threatened by these boom-bust patterns. Who ultimately has the right to this land? What do we value more – respecting one’s religious beliefs or making a profit? Who really benefits from oil production? As a topic that will continue as long as we rely on fossil fuels, it is important that we are aware of the deeply religious and ethical issues in the oil barrels. Getting the community talking about these social justice matters is the first step to getting involved and finding solutions, and I think we did just that in our events at RMC.

Overall, Dr. Rosen inspired me to think about social justice matters in new light--one that incorporates the theological principles I am learning as a Philosophy and Religious Studies major at Rocky. Her genuine interest in my success combined with her expertise in the field made the experience a more than enjoyable one. I hope to have the opportunity to complete another internship with Dr. Rosen in the future!

Our Appreciation and Thanks to Dr. Carolyn Rosen

Dr. Rosen concludes her ministry with the Conference at the end of 2017. During her year with us, Carolyn worked with Mimanagish counselor recruitment and training, provided curriculum materials to our smallest churches, established an intern program at Rocky Mountain College, and facilitated West Region Youth Event planning. Our experiment in providing program staff was well served by Dr. Rosen, but we regret it is not financially sustainable. Best wishes, Carolyn!

Four Stewardship Letters

Columbus Community UCC church
challenging all to match a $5000 gift from Columbus Community UCC to Mimanagish. THANKS to Bethlehem UCC in Worden for matching this gift through their memorial fund! An additional letter sent out by Conference leadership this week also tells of the Mimanagish need. Our Conference stewardship letter suggests that congregations tithe for OCWM. An end-of-year special Mimanagish donation letter has been sent to over 500 homes.

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**Camp Mimanagish CHRISTMAS Store**

1. Check out our Camp Mimanagish branded merchandise store at: [https://campmimanagish2017.itemorder.com/sale](https://campmimanagish2017.itemorder.com/sale)

2. Give the gift of a full or partial Mimanagish Camp registration. (The registration costs will be $420 for a youth camp. The registration site will be active in January.)

3. Give a donation to Mimanagish in honor of a love one. (Donation link)
Come to the Water, the West Region Youth Event, will be hosted by the Hawaii Conference at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu campus, June 25-29, 2018.

- The theme is ‘Come to the water’ (Isaiah 55:1).
- There will be workshops and breakout groups, as well as opportunities for service.
- The early registration fee is $475, and after the deadline becomes $495.
- Follow WRYE on Twitter, @WRYE_2018, Instagram, wrye2018.
- As a way of getting families to save for the event, we are suggesting that churches set up a "savings account" to which participants pay $160 per month towards the airfare costs of the youth event. For those who begin doing this in October, the Conference will cover the $100 for the month of December as a scholarship towards the expenses of the event. Please note the per month increase to $160 in order to help cover chaperon expenses. [Savings Account registration link](#).

Prayers with Betty Hawthorn, wife of retired pastor (Butte UCC), as Mickey Dooling who died on November 19. A memorial service was held at Butte UCC on November 25.
December 11 Church Vital and Viable task force, ZOOM call, noon
December 14 Central Area Clergy Christmas lunch gathering, 11:30 - 1:30, Conference Office RSVP
December 14 COM Zoom call 6 pm
January 19 - 20 Board of Directors and Task Forces meeting, Billings
January 20 Mimanagish fundraiser dinner, Little Metra, Columbus 5 - 9 pm

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Shine!

*A Guide to Personal Peace and Healing, Spiritual and Psychological Insights*

A Place to Enjoy, Think, Discuss, Act.
A Place to Shine!

[a blog from Rev. Dr. Barbara Miner](#)

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**Climate Change Preaching Challenge**

Rev. Mike Mulberry, [First UCC Billings](#), offers a challenge for our MT-NWy Conference preachers and churches to participate in the 1000 sermons project. Might there be 25, 50 or even 100 sermons among to be preached in support of "Youth Awakening a Nation on Climate Change"? Send your sermon to the [Conference Office](#), as we will create an archive on our new WEB site (rolling out in January 2018).
Gary Race from [Community Congregational Church] in Absarokee receiving the Stillwater County Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year award. This year Gary started the Absarokee Area Food Bank, which delivers food boxes each month to area residents who need them. All of the churches in our area (all denominations) participate. Gary also spearheaded a Montana Wildfire Relief Fund for the community this year. We’re very proud of him.

My generation is rewriting history. We’re doing what so many people told us we were incapable of doing: holding our leaders accountable for their disastrous and dangerous actions. I and my co-plaintiffs are demanding justice for our generation and justice for all future generations. This is going to be the trial of our lifetimes.  - Xiuhhtezcatl Martinez
Did You Know...

Mimanagish Matters is our new monthly eNews all about Mimanagish. Mimanagish Matters comes out during the third week of the month. Email the Conference office to subscribe.

That we are on Facebook? Stay in touch and get all the latest news by liking our page. Click here!

And check out out Camp Mimanagish Facebook page. Click here!

That "Another Voice" community television series features some of our Billings area clergy and Conference Minister? Click here!

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