

## **Rocky Mountain Conference United Church of Christ**

Associate Conference Minister Search  
February 28, 2021

The Rocky Mountain Conference (RMC) seeks to add an additional Associate Conference Minister to its professional leadership team in the second quarter of 2021.

### Conference Background

The RMC is geographically one of the largest conferences in the UCC, spanning more than 250,000 square miles across Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. With rural, urban and frontier communities across mountain, desert and high plains landscapes, the Conference members and churches are diverse, and well represented on both a political and a faith continuum from conserving to progressive.

Among our 70 churches and 10,000 members, the Conference has spent the past seven years intentionally living the notion “to make a system healthy you connect it to more of itself.” National leaders have remarked: “RMC ‘s Annual Celebration is so joyous” and “you have something unique happening here,” and we know it is our investment in relationship among God’s people that has woven the strong fabric of the RMC which we see today.

Rocky Mountain is financially stable, with an annual budget of \$600,000 and endowments, reserves, and other assets of more than \$2.5 million. Please see the infographic below for information on our 2021 Ministry Plan.

The current staff is led by Conference Minister, Rev. Sue Artt (since 2013). Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Erin Gilmore joined the team in 2017 and handles church vitality, search and call, leadership development and crisis intervention. Daryl Schreiber is Director of Communications and Databases (2018), Financial Associate Janice Travis (2018 part-time), and Executive Assistant Melissa McCarl (2019 part-time). The Conference office is at 1140 W 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Denver, although the staff has been working remotely in response to the pandemic.

### The Call to Action

If the past decade in the U.S. has taught us nothing else, it is the brokenness of a culture where violence reigns and systemic racism is a catalyzer of division, fragmentation and injustice. This past fall, in the shadow of the continued strife witnessed in the murders of so many persons of color, the RMC Board of Directors authorized the formation of an Anti-Racism Ministry for the Rocky Mountain Conference, believing this to be the most important work we can do for the kin-dom of God. The reality of systemic racism both inside and beyond the walls of the Church alienates us from Christ’s call to oneness. Therefore, the Rocky Mountain Conference will work intentionally to shift our culture from long-instilled – and to some – invisible racism, toward a full embrace of Anti-Racism. This shift will ask deep reflection and intentional action on all of our parts, and will also entail an examination and potential retooling of every process and practice of our shared ministries. (See Pastoral Letter of Feb 17, 2021 below).

### The New Associate Conference Minister Position

The RMC is calling an additional Associate Conference Minister (ACM) to provide expanded resources to our Conference team to enable this cultural change. Alongside the current team, this additional ACM will provide direction and leadership to our Anti-Racism initiative. This new ACM will also share support for search and call, churches in transition, leadership development, and other conference offerings to ensure the integration of the Anti-Racism culture in all we do.

This valued colleague will be an ordained minister in good standing in the United Church of Christ, possess a minimum of 3 years of ministerial experience, and evidence of effective leadership at both the local and the wider level. Because of our intentional team-oriented approach, the selected candidate must be a collaborator, and able to communicate with impact and respect with colleagues, clergy, church leaders, and church members to effect the cultural change of the heart we seek.

The successful candidate will be offered a Call Agreement based on the UCC standard, a generous compensation package including health, dental, vision, annuity, leave and educational benefits. See Position Description below for additional information.

### To Apply -- All Materials Must Be Received By Friday, March 19, 2021:

- 1) Please notify the RMC of your interest with an email to [sueartt.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:sueartt.ucc@gmail.com).
- 2) Please ensure the Rocky Mountain Conference has access to your current and validated UCC profile in the Profile System; you must check Rocky Mountain as a Geographic Preference in your Snapshot on the Profile System. If you need help with this, please contact your current conference staff.\*
- 3) Please prepare a response of no more than 400 words covering these two topics: 1) your passion for the work of Anti-Racism, and 2) what your suggested approach would be to effecting sustainable cultural change. Email this response to: [sueartt.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:sueartt.ucc@gmail.com).
- 4) Once we receive your written response to these two topics (#3 above), we will pull your profile from the UCC Profiles System. When we have both of those pieces, you will receive an email confirming we have received your completed application. Again, all materials must be received by Friday, March 19, 2021.

\*UCC Covenant partners (UC Canada and DOC) and formula of agreement partners may apply. You are responsible for requesting that your judicatory executive send your validated profile with a background check no older than 18-months directly to [sueartt.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:sueartt.ucc@gmail.com); profiles sent directly by the candidates will not be accepted.

**Rocky Mountain Conference  
United Church of Christ  
Associate Conference Minister  
Position Description**

This is an exciting time to be part of the Rocky Mountain Conference (RMC) of the United Church of Christ. During the past few years the Conference Board of Directors and members reevaluated and redesigned our purpose and vision for the future. We now seek an Associate Conference Minister (ACM) to help us continue to imagine and create the future that God intends for us in the Conference and in the region.

Recognizing that we are living in a time of great transformation, not only in the church but across our world, the ACM we call will need to be enthusiastic about a future that is uncharted. The candidate we seek will help us live into the future we envision by working on the ground, with our churches, pastors and associations, to catalyze renewal and vitality throughout the Conference.

The qualities we need are those of pastor, relationship and covenant builder, motivator and educator. Our new ACM will help us realize our shared mission to advance the prophetic and revolutionary teachings of Jesus and the Spirit of Christ in the Rocky Mountain West.

**Required Qualifications**

The preferred candidate will be an ordained minister in good standing in the United Church of Christ and have a minimum of 3-5 years of ministerial experience with evidence of effective wider church involvement. The candidate selected will be devoted to UCC ethos and RMC vision (see [www.rmucc.org](http://www.rmucc.org)).

**Characteristics**

An ideal candidate will demonstrate emotional maturity and a strong faith in the transformational power of the Gospel. The ACM is expected to support a vision of new possibilities for the local and wider church. We expect our ACM to bring energy, enthusiasm and passion to this ministry, and to ...

- Delight in and work closely with our diverse congregations helping them revitalize their ministries to further realize the mission of Christ in our time and place;
- Engage congregations in strategic planning and in developing effective leaders
- Work in situations of conflict and bring conflict to constructive resolution;
- Exhibit a capacity to employ new technologies to promote remote collaboration.
- Practice and teach 21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership competencies in the performance of all activities.
- Understand the importance of continuous learning, current thinking, and substantive content in the field of ministry.
- Model your faith.

**Accountability**

The ACM will be selected by the Conference Minister in consultation with key conference leaders, and upon recommendation, called by the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Directors according to RMC Bylaws. Supervised by the Conference Minister.

**Key Responsibilities** *Note: All responsibilities may be under the direction of the Conference Minister and may be shared with the CM or a peer ACM.*

1. Church Health and Vitality
  - Use demographic tools and strategic insight to assist in developing a course of action for churches on the threshold of vitality.
  - Build healthy relationships with clergy and lay leaders in churches in the process of revitalization.
  - Develop and shepherd a process with churches in revitalization that helps them embrace, manage and bring to fruition their course of action.
  - Champion funding requests to RMC Board for church revitalization.
  - Serve as a mediator and consultant to churches as needed.
2. Association Recalibration/Realignment/Revitalization
  - Guide Associations in redefining their work and organizational structure to better serve the vision and ministries of Christ, to include plans to:
    - Align and standardize the ministerial authorization across the conference
    - Develop and/or expand intentional services and care for the churches
  - Shepherd the Conference-wide Oversight Team (Fitness Review Team).
3. 21st Century Leadership Development
  - Practice and teach 21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership mode competencies in the performance of all activities.
  - Develop an implementation plan for and oversee the leadership training throughout the Conference for lay and clergy leaders.
4. Churches in Transition
  - Coach church leaders through church transitions.
  - Support church search and call processes.
  - Identify and engage other church assessments as needed.
5. Pastoral Support
  - Encourage pastoral health and vitality and catalyze pastoral support networks.
6. Collaborate with other Conference staff and leaders to develop and implement a sustainable cultural shift embracing the values of Anti-Racism; help build and lead an Anti-Racism Ministry Team to enable this work throughout all RMC associations and churches.
7. Other projects and duties as assigned by Conference Minister.

### **Work Expectations**

This is a full time, called (exempt) position. Selected candidate must live within the borders of the Rocky Mountain Conference. Post-pandemic, this position may entail at least 50% travel throughout the Rocky Mountain Conference (Utah, western Wyoming, and Colorado). Preferred start date: May 2021.

### **Compensation**

The Board of Directors will provide a generous full-time salary and compensation package.

**To Apply**

Application directions posted on UCC Opportunities portal.

Candidates are encouraged to learn about the Conference at [www.rmccucc.org](http://www.rmccucc.org).

# 2021 INTERPRETIVE MINISTRY PLAN

## SOURCES

OCWM	\$335,000
Friends of the Conference	10,000
Per Capita	100,000
Endowment	31,000
21st Century Leadership	126,450
Miscellaneous	<u>1,000</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$603,450</b>

## USES

Ministry Development	\$249,115
Faith Development	149,485
UCC Covenant	134,950
Building Expense	62,400
Mission Outreach	<u>7,500</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$603,450</b>

41%

### MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

- Leadership Re-tooling for E-Ministry
- Search and Call
- Crisis Response
- In the Mud Community Engagement Grants
- Communications & E-Platforms Support

25%

### FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- Anti-Racism Movement
- Youth and Children Outdoor Ministry
- Spirit-based Leadership Empowerment (Lay & Clergy)
- La Foret Program Expansion

23%

### UCC COVENANT

- Supporting national and international ministries
- Supporting UCC seminaries

10%

### BUILDING EXPENSES

- Housing affiliated nonprofits such as Colorado Council of Churches and Family Promise of Denver
- Building Utilities and Maintenance

1%

### MISSION OUTREACH

- Grants to Ecumenical Partners

## **Pastoral Letter – Feb 17 2021**

### **Words Matter**

In the fall of 2017, I visited Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. Like Mesa Verde to the north, Bandelier preserves the compelling culture and landscapes of a group of cliff-dwelling people; I was surprised when no informational sign named these people what I had long known them to be – the Anasazi. Upon research, I learned that the current day Pueblos, descendants of these cliff-dwellers, asked that the term no longer be used to describe them or their ancestors; you see, “Anasazi” was how another native tribe referred to these cliff-dwellers, and the term meant “ancient enemies”.

*As people of “the Word”, we know that words matter, and continuing to use a word that means “enemy” runs fully counter to Jesus’ commission that we should all be one.*

### **What is Learned Can Be Unlearned**

The Hatfield’s and McCoy’s – two white families of European descent – settled on opposite sides of the Kentucky/West Virginia border over which they feuded for 28 years. That’s a long time to carry a grudge, and that infamous family feud could only have been continued through the teaching of the next generation that the other was to be feared and not trusted.

*The fear and disdain of another must be taught – it is not inborn – and just as it can be learned, it can be unlearned.*

### **Race is an Illusionary Dividing Line**

In America we have a notion of “race” as a dividing line between peoples. That dividing line is an illusion. Rather, “race” is a learned concept, taught by one generation to another out of fear in some cases, and to gain advantage in others. Since the colonization of North American lands from the original native inhabitants, and the first abduction of Africans brought to America to build white wealth on the backs of black slave labor, this caustic notion of race has kept us -- and continues to keep us -- from realizing a true democracy whose ambition was “liberty and justice for all.”

*What has been learned can be unlearned, and as Christians, it is our call to provide for God's peace and justice for all.*

### **RMC is Launching an Anti-Racism Initiative**

With this call to action clear, this past fall, in the shadow of the continued strife witnessed in the murders of so many persons of color, the RMC Board of Directors authorized the formation of an Anti-Racism Ministry for the Rocky Mountain Conference. Alongside them, I believe this to be the most important work we can do in our lifetimes for the kin-dom of God. Until we take seriously the reality of systemic racism both inside and beyond the walls of the Church, the oneness to which Christ calls us will never be achieved.

Therefore, the Rocky Mountain Conference will work intentionally to shift our culture from long-instilled and to some, invisible racism, toward a full embrace of Anti-Racism. This shift will ask deep reflection and intentional action on all of our parts, and will also entail an examination and potential retooling of every process and practice of our shared ministries.

To move this work forward, the Board has authorized \$450,000 over the first three years, from the Conference's unrestricted net assets, as a demonstration of our commitment to move toward a culture of equity for all. A significant part of that set-aside is the calling of an additional Associate Conference Minister (ACM) to provide expanded resources to our Conference team. Alongside current ACM Rev. Erin Gilmore and myself, this additional ACM will provide direction and leadership to this Anti-Racism initiative. This new ACM will also provide support for search and call, churches in transition, leadership development, and other conference offerings to ensure the integration of the Anti-Racism culture we seek to build.

The position posting will be finalized on the UCC Opportunities Listings by the end of the month, and we anticipate our new ACM will be onboard in the second quarter of 2021.

### **Anti-Racism Ministry Team**

Because change only really occurs when people work together to make a difference, a new Anti-Racism Ministry Team will also be put in place to help mobilize this cultural work. Initial thoughts on team membership includes a lay person and a clergy person from each association, along with a couple of at-large members.

While a call went out to the Conference in the fall of 2020 for nominees to this new team, it has now emerged that the new ACM who will provide direction for that team should help build that team, so also watch for an additional team recruitment announcement in second quarter. If you have already submitted your name or the name of another for that team, please know the RMC Nominating Committee still has notes of your interest and will include your thoughts as they seek to build the team with the new ACM.

### **For Now We See Dimly...**

The task of unlearning racism and re-learning how to love and cherish one another without the illusion of race is work for each of us to do both individually and collectively. As I envision our collective investment of time, talents, and treasure in this vital work, I see multiple entry points for congregations and associations to choose as they start their work toward a culture of Anti-Racism. Please know that this work will be more fully shaped as the new ACM, the RMC staff, and the Anti-Racism Ministry Team work together to determine needs and offerings to build this new culture. And please know that the shift that will take time does not have a "one size fits all" solution. Our work will evolve over years, and yet, every step makes a difference.

### **And with a bit more clarity...**

One thing I am clear on: we will stumble and not get it right some of the time. At the RMC Annual Meeting of 2014, the Rev. Steve Sterner admonished us to follow the path of the tech companies in Silicone Valley: "experiment, be fearless, and if you fail, fail fast, forgive faster, and get back to experimenting to find what works."

*I pray this becomes our motto: experiment, fail if necessary, forgive & learn, experiment again. Be gentle with yourself and gracious with one another.*

### **A peek in the rearview...**



It has been 60 years since Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's work to create a world of equity for all, and although strides have surely been taken, the work is not yet accomplished. Along my way toward ordination, I wrote this thought about the work toward which I felt called: "the world changes gently, one heart at a time." While I now know the world doesn't always change gently, I am still convinced change happens one heart at a time.

**The Invitation...**

So I am inviting each member of the Conference to engage in this work of changing our hearts and changing our culture toward one of Anti-Racism. Jesus knew his commission to his followers wasn't an easy path – but it is a spiritual one – and one we are all called to follow. While I am sure that achieving a culture of equity for all will not be the end of the journey, once we get there, we'll see what God has in store for us next.

Praying your wholeness, your boldness, and our oneness in the Spirit of the Living Christ,

Sue