

First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

THE HERALD

MARCH 2021

## Minister's Musings

Dear ones,

At 36 weeks pregnant, I definitely feel like a vessel -- literally the container for a life growing within. I want to acknowledge that we all have wildly different experiences connected to pregnancy, childbirth and parenting -- some joyful and some deeply painful. For me today, it is a joy to get to journey with you and our church through this pregnancy. In addition to reflecting on the vessel that is currently my body, I have been thinking about the vessel of our church community -- both the physical vessel of our building and the metaphorical vessel that is our community.

This last week of February, I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of your love for me and my family -- the cards, gift basket, music, gifts, texts, and prayers. With our biological families so far away, the vessel of our church family feels even more important as we prepare for the birth of our son. And I am so grateful for the kind of vessel it is: a vessel shaped by love, humility, generosity, forgiveness, and curiosity. No, we don't get things right all the time. Yes, sometimes processes are messy and slow. But again and again, I see us choosing to figure things out together, to stay connected through the ups and the downs. Honestly? That's the kind of family I want my son (and daughter!) to be a part of. That's the kind of church I want them to belong to. One where we don't have to conform to a particular way of being. One where our differences can be acknowledged, embraced, even celebrated. One where we are loved for who we are and celebrated as children of God.

I realize that right now, there are a bunch of moving pieces that bring uncertainty and that feel a little messy: not because things are going badly but simply because we are stepping into unknown territory, because we are being brave together. And so, I ask for your prayers for the vessel that is our congregation. As we make final preparations for my parental leave. As we continue to discuss and discern what to do with our property at 832 N Lincoln Ave. As our Open and Affirming team begins making phone calls to hear from each of you. As our Mission and Outreach Team explores the needs of our wider community and connects those with your passions and concerns.

While these are all questions about what we will do next and how, they are fundamentally linked to the question of WHY, of purpose. On February 27, our leaders gathered for a retreat to talk about this Why. And I hope you will be praying and thinking about it, too. What do you understand our purpose as a congregation to be? How are we already living boldly into that purpose? How is God calling us to risk leaning more deeply into our why?

As ever, I am so grateful to be journeying with you. To be shaped by and shapers of this community that we share and love. And I am deeply grateful for our willingness to trust and listen for God's call.

In love and gratitude,  
Thandiwe

## Sunday Morning Worship, 10:00 am

### Zoom Call-In

Dial: 312 626 6799

When prompted for the meeting ID, Enter: 966 390 616#

### Zoom Meeting By Computer

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/966390616?pwd=eXBIRC9Kc0V6S3BxM3NBQzIDaHRTdz09>

Meeting ID: 966 390 616; Password: 773088



### Sunday Worship on Facebook Live

You *DO NOT* need a facebook account to watch our worship on Facebook Live

<https://www.facebook.com/LovelandUCC>

### Sunday Sermon on Facebook Live (starting around 10:20 am)

Until Thandiwe goes on parental leave: <https://www.facebook.com/thandiwe.daleferguson>

### Church YouTube Channel

You can find previous sermons as well as some of the other worship videos we are creating on First Congregational Church Loveland UCC's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrrCKy5GPVQ6Po7hW6qOqPw/>

## Worship Opportunities During Lent

### Palm Sunday - Sunday, March 28

Virtual Sunday Worship Gathering by Zoom - 10:00 am



### Maundy Thursday - Thursday, April 1

Materials for an at home worship experience will be shared.

### Good Friday - Friday, April 2

Last year's Ecumenical Good Friday worship service can be watched here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ld5J5\\_vRy64&t=3411s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ld5J5_vRy64&t=3411s)

### Easter - Sunday, April 4

Sunrise Service - 6:30 am

Please join us at Frank and Mary Kauffman's home (502 S CR 9E) for a sunrise service. Masks and social distancing required. Bring chairs and blankets. Due to Covid restrictions, there will not be a pancake breakfast following the service.

## Daylight Savings Begins March 14

Sunday, March 14, 2 am -

Remember to change your clocks and spring forward!



## Easter Flower Orders - Due March 18

Kalanchoe plants are available to order for the church altar space. They will be on display for the Easter service on April 4. If you would like to order a plant, please contact the office ([office@lovelanducc.org](mailto:office@lovelanducc.org) or (970) 667-4884), and let Staci know if they are in honor of or in memory of someone. If you have any questions, please contact deacons John McCoy, Sheryl McCoy or Dana Stanke.



**The deadline for orders is Thursday, March 18.** Kalanchoe plants are \$14. Payment should be mailed to the church office (800 N Lincoln Ave). Please make your check to FCC and write "Easter flowers" in the memo. Plant pickup arrangements will be determined later.

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## Congregational Meeting - March 14, following worship

After two conversations exploring and envisioning possibilities for both keeping and selling our rental property, we will revisit the question of whether to move forward with selling it. Please plan to attend to participate in this vote.

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## One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering - March 14

One Great Hour of Sharing, part of Our Church's Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. One Great Hour of Sharing also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Ways to donate:

- Mail a check to the church (write check to FCC, write OGHS in the memo of your check).
- Give online via [secure donation form](https://www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/) (desktop or mobile) : <https://www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/>.
- Text OGHS to 41444 and follow the prompts to give securely.

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## Easter Candy Donations Requested by March 24

Faith Formation Board is requesting donations of candy to fill eggs for the children's Easter bags. You may drop donations at the church during office hours or at Linda Greaves home (1645 Garfield Ave, Loveland). You may also contact Linda to pick them up (970-685-4120). Thank you for supporting our events for children!



# Virtual Healthy Congregations Workshop

## Virtual Healthy Congregations: Equipping Leaders with Tools for Vitality

March 6, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm via Zoom

In this time of increased anxiety, complexity, and division, we need leaders who can calmly articulate what they think and value and to act on that basis, while staying in an active relationship with those who disagree. This practical training event teaches how you can help prevent anxiety from becoming a toxic force in your congregation and help promote health and vitality. This workshop will benefit anyone who seeks to bring greater health to their congregation.

Note: We have 9 members plus Pastor Thandiwe participating.

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## "Reading the Bible Again for the First Time"

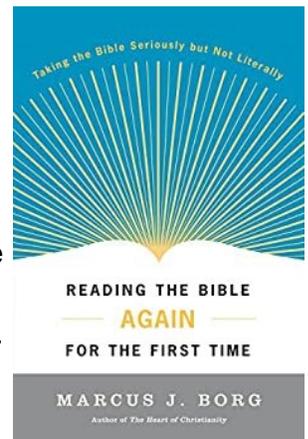
Virtual Book Study, April & May 2021

One of the vital challenges facing thoughtful people today is how to read the Bible faithfully without abandoning our sense of truth and history. Reading the Bible Again for the First Time provides a much-needed solution to the problem of how to have a fully authentic yet contemporary understanding of the scriptures. Acclaimed author Marcus Borg reveals how it is possible to reconcile the Bible with both a scientific and critical way of thinking and our deepest spiritual needs, leading to a contemporary yet grounded experience of the sacred texts.

Borg traces his personal spiritual journey, describing for readers how he moved from an unquestioning childhood belief in the biblical stories to a more powerful and dynamic relationship with the Bible as a sacred text brimming with meaning and guidance. Using his own experience as an example, he reveals how the modern crisis of faith is itself rooted in the misinterpretation of sacred texts as historical record and divine dictation, and opens readers to a truer, more abundant perspective.

This unique book invites everyone—whatever one's religious background—to engage the Bible, wrestle with its meaning, explore its mysteries, and understand its relevance. Borg shows us how to encounter the Bible in a fresh way that rejects the limits of simple literalism and opens up rich possibilities for our lives.

Please contact our [church office](#) for details about when this book study will be held. Sandra Drage will be leading it. Whether you know the Bible inside and out or simply want to know more about this great book, **all are welcome!**



## Youth Group

1st & 3rd Sundays, 12:30-1:30

March 7 & 21, April 18, May 2 & 16

NOTE: There will be no youth group on Easter Sunday, April 4.

Youth will continue gathering virtually. As always, this is a chance to connect and check in and to be reminded of the gift of community and God's love. These next few gatherings, we will work on plans for Graduation Sunday, a potential Youth Sunday, summer camp and summer mission trips or service projects. If you have any questions, please contact Youth Leader [Karen Jazowski](#).

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## Registration for La Foret Summer Camp is Open!

Kids grade 2-12 can experience a fun, Spirited summer with friends in the forest, while families can rest assured that we are doing everything we can to cultivate a "Culture of Care" and keep kids safe. Camp will be a little different this year, but it is so exciting to be together! Here are [all the essentials you need to know about camp this year](#). Go straight to [La Foret's website](#) to save your spot right away and read more. **Space is very limited, don't wait!** Our congregation has funds to enable youth to attend.

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## Thank You's

**Marlys Arndt:** I want to say a Big THANK YOU to each and every one of you who sent me cards, made phone calls, flowers, gifts, and visits and all who were in the motorcade. The motorcade was real touching to see you all smiling, waving, and chuckling as you drove by me in the big snow storm! Wow!! Mike and Linda were at Centennial School behind me getting things organized and Mark was here at my house trying to get his Mom organized! Mike and Linda lead the motorcade with 2 fire trucks behind them and friends Ken and family to follow. It was a surprise and almost brought a tear or two. Many THANKS to my friends at FCC, my kin, and my family for a job well done from my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Sincerely, Marlys Arndt



**Rotary Club KidsPak:** Thank you for your Christmas Eve donation of \$305 to KidsPak. We delivered over 165,000 meals in 2020 and with your support we can continue to meet this need.

**Alternatives to Violence:** Your generous gift will soon be hard at work, helping us provide advocacy and safety to victims of violence. Your support, along with our generous, caring community, will enable us to serve more victims who are seeking safe shelter, advocacy, and resources. Together we are making a difference in the many lives of women, men, and families we serve.

**Food Bank for Larimer County:** As we begin a new year, it's important to celebrate all that is good in our world. We are grateful for your kind gift of \$667 that allows us to assist so many in our community. Thank you for your continued support—your generosity is helping deliver hope in the new year.

## In Need of Financial Assistance?

Our congregation has set aside some funds to assist members of our congregation and extended community (your neighbors, friends, family) with money for groceries, rent, mortgage payments and medical bills. **Please reach out to Pastor Thandiwe or one of our deacons.**

## Online & Text Giving is Now Available!

**ONLINE GIVING:** First Congregational Church is now ready to accept online donations! Please go to: <https://FCCUCC.breezechms.com/give/online>



**TEXT TO GIVE:** Simply text the amount that you'd like to give (e.g. 10) to 720-674-7372. You will be directed to a secure link to give to the church!

## Serving in March

### LAY READERS:

- 3/7 Brian Schuetz and Paul Heintzleman
- 3/14 Kathy Bialy and Craig Bialy
- 3/21 Heather Jackson and Bev Laing
- 3/28 Rhonda Racicot and Brian Schuetz

## Financial Notes

Budgeted Offerings through January: \$15,299

Offerings Received: \$11,243

Donation of Goods/Services in January: \$112

## March Celebrations

### Birthdays

- 3/4 Nancy Graham
- 3/9 Kyla Schuetz
- 3/12 Chloe Ogle  
Emma Ogle  
David Ziegler
- 3/13 Robert Mugno
- 3/14 Natalie Stelwagon
- 3/19 Kody Klassen
- 3/20 Judy Brunmeier
- 3/23 Karlene Snyder
- 3/24 Charlotte Parkes
- 3/26 Elvin Spreng
- 3/28 Cheryl Schwartz
- 3/29 Kathy Bialy  
Matthew Frank

**If your birthday or anniversary is NOT listed, please let the office know.**



# MARCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Virtual Worship 10 am Virtual "White Privilege: Let's Talk" 2 pm	1	2 Virtual Lectio Divina 8 am Pastor's Office Hours 10 am Virtual Deacons 7 pm	3 Spring Creative Worship Design Team 7 pm	4 Virtual ONA Discernment 7 pm	5	6 Virtual Healthy Congregations Workshop 8:30 am
7 Virtual Worship 10 am Virtual Youth Group 12:30 pm Virtual "White Privilege: Let's Talk" 2 pm	8 Virtual Summer Worship Team 10 am Virtual Mission & Outreach 3:30 pm Virtual Trustees 6:30 pm Virtual Church Board 7:30 pm	9 Virtual Lectio Divina 8 am Pastor's Office Hours 10 am Staff Meeting 10 am	10	11	12	13
14 <i>Daylight Savings Time Begins</i> Virtual Worship 10 am Virtual Congregational Meeting 11 am Virtual "White Privilege: Let's Talk" 2 pm	15 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	16 Virtual Lectio Divina 8 am Pastor's Office Hours 10 am	17 Virtual Worship Practice 6 pm	18 Virtual ONA Discernment 7 pm	19	20
21 Virtual Worship 10 am Virtual Youth Group 12:30 pm Virtual "White Privilege: Let's Talk" 2 pm	22	23 Virtual Lectio Divina 8 am Pastor's Office Hours 10 am	24 Virtual Worship Practice 6 pm	25	26	27 <i>Thandiwe's Due Date</i> Faith Formation Easter Bag Assembly 10 am
28 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Virtual Worship 10 am 	1	2 Virtual Lectio Divina 8 am Pastor's Office Hours 10 am	3	4	5	6

## Open & Affirming Discernment Team Update

**Open and Affirming** (ONA) is an official designation of congregations and other settings in the United Church of Christ (UCC) affirming the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and non-binary persons (LGBTQ) in the church's life and ministry.

The Open and Affirming program is administered by the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition, which supports congregations and other church settings as they consider the adoption of an ONA "covenant" and maintains the official registry of ONA congregations and ministries. The Coalition encourages UCC congregations, campus ministries, seminaries, regional bodies and other settings of the church to engage their members in serious study of sexual orientation and gender identity and to declare publicly their full welcome and inclusion of LGBTQ people. With more than 1,600 congregations, the UCC's ONA program is the largest of several LGBT-welcoming church movements in U.S. and Canadian churches.

There is a similar "Open & Affirming" program in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**Background:** In 1985 the United Church of Christ's General Synod adopted a resolution encouraging UCC congregations to welcome (or consider welcoming) gay, lesbian, and bisexual people after a time of dialogue, study and prayer. Following later General Synod resolutions affirming transgender members of the church, the welcome was extended so that, today, an ONA covenant typically welcomes members of all sexual orientation and gender identities and expressions. An ONA church commits to the inclusion of LGBTQ members in the sacraments and ministries of the church, including marriage.

The 1985 resolution had no legislative authority over individual congregations, which are autonomous, but set in motion a movement that spread rapidly throughout the denomination.

The resolution allocated no funds to support an ONA program in the UCC's national office. As a result, the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns launched an ONA program in 1987, led by the Rev. Ann B. Day and Donna Enberg, which raised funds from individual contributors, sympathetic congregations and private foundations. To this day, the official registry of ONA congregations is managed by the Coalition (since renamed the *Open and Affirming Coalition*), a voluntary non-profit organization independent from the UCC's national office, although it works in close partnership with the UCC's national ministries. The Coalition publishes a wide range of resources to support congregations considering an ONA commitment and to help existing ONA churches build relationships with the LGBTQ community.

New York City's Riverside Church, under the pastoral leadership of the late Rev. William Sloane Coffin, was the first in the UCC to be listed as Open and Affirming in 1987.

According to the Open and Affirming Coalition, more than 1,600 UCC congregations with 370,000 members (about 33 percent of all UCC churches) are listed as officially Open and Affirming as of December 2019. Twenty-one of the UCC's 38 regional conferences, most new church starts, all seven seminaries affiliated with the UCC and several UCC-related campus ministries have adopted ONA statements, or "covenants."

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## Church Re-entry Team and Technology

Church Family,

I wanted to reach out and keep everyone informed of recent discussions and decisions made at the February 8 Board meeting. While worshiping via Zoom has been a help and a marvel for some, it is not accessible for all, and the Board seeks to balance that need for worship with the safety of both the congregation and the staff.

The vaccine rollout has started, and some of us may be higher on the list than others. This gives us hope, while also reminding us not everyone has equal access. Due to this, and the variants recently discovered in the UK (and now here) and in South Africa, the re-entry team has suggested we continue our present course until Thandiwe returns from her parental leave, around June 13th. This date is not set in stone, but the greatest factors influencing it are not in our control. The Board agreed with this recommendation during last night's meeting, although there was a lot of debate and concern. We will seek to hold a monthly outdoor worship in the spring, beginning with our Easter sunrise service on April 4th and an additional outdoor worship service on April 25th, although these details are not yet complete.

While the vaccines and everyone's safety are foremost in everyone's mind, the need for new technology inside the church is a goal that we will address immediately. Our vision is that streaming and in-person worship will be seamless, with people at home and abroad able to participate in worship, not just watch a video feed. This will require substantial planning and upgrades. The Memorial Committee has received graciously given funds that will offset much of these costs. I am calling together the AV team to help plan and assemble this project.

Thank you for your continued love for our church. Thank you for carrying hope towards our return.

In Christ's Love,  
Paul Heintzleman, Moderator

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## Aging in Place Resources

We have a limited number of packets of resources following our Aging in Place study. Please contact Staci in the church office if you would like a packet mailed to you.

# A Pastoral Letter on RMC's Launch of an Anti-Racism Ministry

February 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 Puebloans, 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 Hatfields and McCoys – 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 re-tooling of every process and practice of our shared ministries.

(continued on page 11)

## A Pastoral Letter on RMC's Launch of an Anti-Racism Ministry (cont.)

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.*

(continued on page 12)

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# A Pastoral Letter on RMC's Launch of an Anti-Racism Ministry (cont.)

## **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

Rev. Sue Artt

Conference Minister ~ Regional Judicatory Executive ~ CEO

Rocky Mountain Conference - United Church of Christ

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