

*If these were silent,  
**the stones  
would cry out***

**AWAKEN. CONFRONT. TRANSFORM.**

2020 Rocky Mountain Synod  
Fall Theological Conference



# WELCOME

Beloved in Christ,

Someone recently noted that this pandemic has created space/opportunity for us to face the realities of racism in a way not seen in this nation since the Civil Rights movement.

I am grateful to see so many congregations and ministries already engaging intentionally in anti-racism learning and action. My hope is that we will all heed the call of the Spirit to participate in this *kairotic* moment and movement. For many of us, this work means *unlearning* many assumptions, patterns, and narratives that have shaped our vision of “truth” and “reality” with regards to racism.

As the ELCA, we have made an explicit commitment across all expressions of our church to act together to end racism and to foster healing for all. The commitment to work for justice and peace is named in our baptismal covenant even as it is embedded in the ordination vows of every rostered minister.

I am grateful that you as leaders in the Rocky Mountain Synod have made the commitment to a part of this conference, this conversation, and to be a part of the on-going work of dismantling systemic racism in our church and in our world. This work is central to this work of *church becoming*.

I am grateful to the members of the ACT4RMS Team and other leaders in our synod for their work in putting this conference together: **Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey, Brenda Fosse, Pastor Richard Gianzero, Ihoby Rokotomalala, Pastor Gordy Sandquist, Pastor Paula Stecker, Jaen Ugalde, Deacon Sarah Bjornebo, Pastor Jeff Carlson, Kristin Carlson, Joel & Aimee’ Pakan, and Pastor Caitlin Trussell.**

Welcome to the 2020 RMS Theological Conference.

Bishop Jim



## Participating in the Conference

This challenging time of needing to be socially distant is providing a unique framework for engaging in dialogue together around racism, white supremacy, and dismantling systems of oppression with the goal of more fully becoming the beloved community. The nature of our digital conference invites more individual engagement through simply committing to logging onto ZOOM, as well as self-reflection activities and small group dialogue. As much as you are able, while acknowledging family and other responsibilities, we invite you to create and hold space to be fully present:

- Designate a space in your home or ministry setting as your space for this conference. Find a comfortable chair, close the door, etc.
- Consider using headphones to eliminate outside noise.
- Silence your phone, close your email and additional webpages.
- Ensure you have beverages and snacks needed to keep you fueled.
- Light a candle, open or close your blinds (depending on whether you need to eliminate distraction or invite sunlight!)





## **Community Norms for ZOOM**

- Please mute your microphone upon joining the zoom meeting and remain muted until invited to speak.
- Unless you have a question regarding format or logistics, please use the chat only during designated times such as Q&A sessions or community reflection. While the chat is a great way to actively engage in digital space, it can be distracting when trying to listen and engage in hard conversations
- For the sake of being fully present with our keynote speaker, it may be helpful to use the speaker view.
- Manage yourself in small group. Attend to how much you are speaking and who is not speaking.
- If you are having trouble connecting or need some additional help navigating ZOOM, please contact Dana Peterson: 970-631-2417. Please do not contact the Office of the Bishop Directly.

## Conference Elements

**Bible Study:** Each morning a leader from the Grand Canyon Synod will gather with those who would welcome an early morning grounding in scripture. This is an optional pre-morning prayer gathering. *Note: this will be a different zoom link for Bible Study*

**Morning Prayer:** Tuesday and Wednesday we will begin our day together in prayer and movement led by Cleo Parker Robinson. Cleo Parker Robinson is founder, artistic director, and choreographer of the 50-year-old Denver-based artistic institution Cleo Parker Robinson Dance.

**Plenary Sessions:** Plenary sessions will take place via ZOOM. They will be a combination of large group presentation and small group conversation via breakout rooms. Small groups will be created from the entry point you selected during registration and will be the same groups throughout the conference.

**Conference Connections:** You will gather three times in conferences: Monday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon, and Thursday afternoon. Thursday afternoon could take place either in person or via zoom depending on your geography.

**Check-in Groups:** This is an informal conversation space to simply debrief and unpack the day. Those who requested to be placed in a check-in group will log into the conference zoom. If you created your own check-in group, you are welcome to utilize the conference zoom or another platform of your choosing.

**Individual Reflection and Journal Time:** The content and the format invite both time for individual reflection, and time away from ZOOM. You are invited to engage the included journal to further your engagement in this work. There are two spaces each day for individual reflection.



## **Before we begin, a reminder of our covenant to be in community together:**

- **Listen respectfully and carefully to others.** This is your best way to begin to understand them and to keep the “public space” of this conversation safe for candid conversation. Listening helps bring out differences and helps to probe for shared values and positions.
- **Speak honestly about your thoughts and feelings.** Personal thoughts, feelings, values and experiences are as legitimate a part of the conversation as factual information.
- **Speak for yourself, only; use “I-statements” rather than “you-statements.”** Likewise, it is not fair to expect other conversation partners to represent a whole group. Remember that they are only speaking for themselves.
- **Stay open to new perspectives and trust that the Holy Spirit is present in the conversation.**
- **Embrace the messiness.** These are hard conversations. Expect to be wrong, expect that others will make mistakes, know that loose ends will be present, and the work will be unfinished at the end. You are encouraged to ask clarifying questions and disagree while offering abundant grace as we learn together.
- **Attend to your own health and self-care.** Make a plan for self-care and time for prayer throughout the week as we enter into challenging conversation. Lean on colleagues and your check-in group for support.
- **Help keep the discussion focused by sticking to the subject at hand.**
- **Maintain confidentiality about matters people share with the group when it is asked or obviously appropriate.** Remember: If in doubt, do not share elsewhere. This helps to build and maintain trust.
- **Commit to giving and receiving feedback with openness and grace.** Work to stay grounded and open when receiving feedback, using your journal and/or check-in group to process and unpack. Particularly for white folks: be willing to hold one another accountable in learning together. In these brave spaces, white folks must point out where privilege and biases show up for sake of learning and doing better.

## **Monday, September 218**

### **Morning: Journal Activity 1, Race in America**

*Supplies Needed: video link, pen/pencil, crayons*

### **Afternoon: Journal Activity 2, Putting Aside Other Things**

*Supplies Needed: pen/pencil, scissors, envelope (included in packet)*

### **3:00-4:00pm Gathering Worship**

- *Supplies Needed: Candle, matches*
- Our opening worship will take place on the main conference meeting link (ZOOM Meeting ID: 998 6127 0257). You will remain in the waiting room until worship begins at 3:00
- As a reminder, we will not be collecting a monetary offering during worship, but you are invited to make an offering via check or the RMS website sometime this week. The offering this week will benefit the RMS Seminary Scholarship Fund.

## **Opening Worship**

### **Prelude**

Mercy Everywhere, Tangled Blue



## **Before here was here**

*Diana Biggs*

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy towards creating the history and stories that led to this place and this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for generations. Truth and acknowledgment is the first step in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

I am standing on the ancient ancestral lands of the Ute and the Sioux. These lands were given to the Arapaho and the Cheyenne in the 1851 Treaty of Ft. Laramie. The Arapaho and the Cheyenne were granted the lands between the Arkansas and the North Platte Rivers – an area including most of the Colorado Front Range. The treaty did not allow for white settlement or mining within the territory. When gold was discovered by white trespassers in Little Dry Creek – the modern intersection of Broadway and Hampden in Englewood – a new treaty was forced on the tribes. The 1861 Treaty of Ft. Laramie established the reservations. The Arapahoe and the Cheyenne were forced to move to an area north of the Arkansas River and South of the Smoky Hill Trail. This area was the Sandy Fork of the Arkansas known as Sand Creek. This treaty was the antecedent to the Sand Creek Massacre of November 29, 1864.

## **Lord, have mercy – Christ, have mercy – Lord, have mercy**

We honor the legacy of the Ute, the Sioux, the Arapaho and the Cheyenne. We acknowledge the legacy of violence, displacement, and racism which were forced on the tribes. We pray for a new legacy of truth, respect, and peace.

*Silence*

This afternoon, we honor the land, the people, our common heritage of humanity, and we acknowledge all of creation as we pray . . .

**O Great Spirit, whose voice we hear in the wind, whose breath gives life to all the world. Send us your strength and wisdom. Forgive us for all thoughts and actions which have separated us from our common humanity. Forgive us for the violence and pain of our history and heritage. Teach us to live in beauty and peace. Guide us to respect everything you have made. Enlighten us to see your image in the faces of all humanity. Amen**

*Order and Prayers written using the template created by the Tribal Nations and our indigenous colleagues of the ELCA.*

## **Why racism? Why now?**

ACT4RM Leadership Team

*Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletions, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate, and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature*

— Sonya Renee Taylor

*Christianity is a lifestyle - a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared, and loving. However, we made it into an established "religion" - and all that goes with that - and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one's "personal Lord and Savior." The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great*

— Fr. Richard Rohr

Before we begin - it's been a rough six months!

Life and ministry in the season of covid is challenging!

And knowing that our theme for this conference is hard - it's challenging - and it's virtual, it may be difficult to be completely present in these sessions - and that is exactly what we are asking you to do.

So before we begin, did you put away your envelope that was sent as part of your pre-conference materials? If yes, take a moment to remember your journaling.

If not, join us now in asking yourself these questions:

Can you put down and put away all of the other business that fills your life and your head - even your heart?

Can you stop responding to the emails, the texts, the messages?

Can you put away the social media?

Can you stop looking at the weeds growing outside your door or the laundry or the dishes piling up?

Can you stop worrying about everything that is not getting done while you participate in this conference?

Can you stop?

Stop everything.

Find a position in your chair, on the floor, or standing that is comfortable.

Take a giant breath and exhale all the work that isn't done.

Take a giant breath and exhale all the things that are still bouncing around in your head.

Take a giant breath and exhale all the tension that you're holding in your whole body.

Do it again.

Settle into a gentle rhythm of breathing.

Do you remember a time when you were presented with information that forced you to question or rethink your foundational beliefs?

Have you ever created such an experience for someone else?

Maybe in your teaching, preaching, or?

Keep breathing!

This conference is going to be challenging - for all of us.

If it isn't, we're not doing the work.

Our goal is to Wake-up! Confess! Transform! and Act!

Big expectations.

And a cycle that we acknowledge is an ongoing experience: waking up, confronting, confessing, transforming, acting, and doing it again, and again, and . . .

Keep breathing.

In order to begin, we need to commit to the work.

One thing that we've learned in these covidian days is that we have to be intentional about connecting: the hall conversations, the casual conversations that can be loaded with meaning or just plain fun . . . the social and collegial conversation that we took for granted - now, we have to commit.

We have to dedicate time, space, place, and effort to be present.

We have to intentionally create the opportunity to learn, grow, and change.

What are you willing to give up this week, to be completely present?

Are you willing to be challenged?

Are you willing to learn something that might change everything?

Are you open to change?

Why racism? Why now?

If not now, when?

Has it not been long enough?

*In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern."*

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Can you allow yourself to admit what you might not know?

Can you allow yourself to be immersed in others' experiences?

Can you allow yourself to experience the emotions you would usually put away?

Can you allow the uncomfortable challenge?

Allow it - Acknowledge it - Pray for it - Embrace it

Light a candle and place it in front of your screen as a visible symbol of a covenant to be fully present and open to the Spirit - come what may.



# Mercy Everywhere

Aimée & Joel Pakan



They say the spi - rit ho - vered o - ver the  
They say the high ground is - n't so far from



deep; \_\_\_\_\_ long, long time a - go. \_\_\_\_\_ now  
here; \_\_\_\_\_ Lord, please show the way. \_\_\_\_\_ The



how ma - ny here, \_\_\_\_\_ are wet with fear, \_\_\_\_\_  
si - ren's ring - ing out with a moan and a shout,



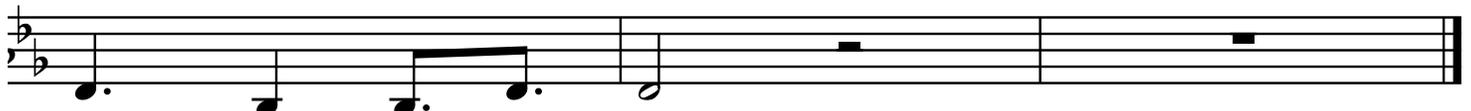
wa - ding thought that surge of so - rrow, Lord, have mer - cy  
Lord, we need you here to - day. \_\_\_\_\_



eve-ry - where. Ev-ery - where, Lord, have



mer - cy. Ev-ery - where, Christ have mer - cy. Ev-ery - where, Lord, have



mer - cy ev - ery - where.

## **WORD**

**First Reading:** Rev. Ruth Ann Loughry

### **Genesis 4:1-10**

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of God." Again she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to God an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part, brought of the firstlings of his flock - their fat portions. And God had regard for Abel and his offering but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. God said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you may master it." Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then God said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And God said, "What have you done? Listen - your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!"

**Gospel:** Rev. Mandy Achterberg

### **Luke 19:29-40**

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying: "Blessed is the king, who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would cry out."

### **Sermon**

Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, St. Paul Lutheran and Catholic Community of Faith, Denver  
Rev. Nicole Garcia, Westview Church, Boulder  
Jaen Emmanuel Ugalde Becerra, PLTS

### **Sermon Response**

*Kyrie for the Streets* - Tangled Blue

## **Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Rev. Diana Linden-Johnson and Rev. Rose Mary Sanchez-Guzman

*O God, you are my God - For you, I yearn - For you, my soul is thirsting — Psalm 62:1*

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.  
They shall spring up like a green tamarisk, like willows by flowing streams — Isaiah 44:3*

Praise and thanksgiving be to you, O God of abundant grace,  
for the waters you provide for the earth:  
for snow and dew, for oceans and wells,  
for the rain that nourishes plants and trees,  
for the arroyos and the Rio Grande  
We praise you, O God, for water  
**We praise you, O God, for water**

Blessing and glory be to you, O God of creation,  
for knitting us together in your image,  
for naming us as your children,  
for our ancestors and grandparents,  
for our parents and godparents,  
and all who came before us and are beside us on the earth,  
We are thankful, O God, for our humanity  
**We are thankful, O God, for our humanity**

Pour upon us yet again the Spirit of our baptism.  
Our roots are dry - shower us with divine blessing.  
Our fruits need moisture - renew us with vibrant growth.  
Wash away the sin within us, change our hearts and change our lives into springs of  
your grace.  
We beg you, O God, for water and the Spirit  
**We beg you, O God, for water and the Spirit**

You, O God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
You are the Water we crave;  
You, O God, are Rain and River - Green, Platte, Wind, Rio Grande,  
River and Fountain;

You are Life.  
**You are Life**

Amen.  
**Amen.**

## **Confession**

Rev. Gordon Sandquist

**Thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being, we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive. We love our friends and hate our enemies. We go the first mile but dare not travel the second. We forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves, we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against you. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know your will. Give us the courage to do your will. Give us the devotion to love your will. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray - Amen.**

*Confession written by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

## **Offering**

Deacon Sarah Bjornebo

Today, as I'm sure you have noticed, we changed the order of worship - confessing not first, but almost last. This order was intentionally created as part of our theme ACT. It is our goal to move - Awaken/Wake-up - Confront/Confess - and Transform! We want something to happen this week in each of us as we do this work together. We're on a journey rooted in justice and equality. We desperately need each other as we work together to find our freedom. The church has the power to come together and defy racism - not as an easy or cheap form of "one-ness" rather as a powerful movement of God's presence in us. We offer ourselves together recognizing the inflection point in society and church which calls each of us to defy the standard of whiteness and live the standard of the cross.

As our offering this evening, please take time now to write in the chat what you are willing to give or give-up that we can be one.

*Breathe Deep - Tangled Blue*

## **Offertory**

Rev. Richard Gianzero

**Our gathering as one defies the racism embedded in society and embedded in the church. We offer ourselves as one - the many for the one, the one for the many. Leaders of color are leaders. The evils of racism and white supremacy frame a language which defies the gospel mandate of one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. We are one. May we be one.**

### **Closing Prayer**

Rev. Richard Gianzero



#### **4:45pm: Conference Conversations**

- Please use the link provided by the dean of your conference.
- As a conference, how will you commit to engage this work individually and communally? How will you be in community together?
- In closing, please review the covenant and end in prayer together.

#### **6:00-7:30pm: Session 1: Introduction and Defining terms**

- *Supplies Needed: Glossary of Terms, twine from packet, blank piece of paper, colored pencil or other writing utensil*
- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257
- Throughout this session, you are invited to underline or circle any terms that hook you, terms you need to unpack more, etc.
- The chat will be used as a way to share learnings and wonderings when returning from your small groups. Please refrain from on-going chat during the keynote presentations.

### **Tuesday, September 22**

#### **8:00-9:00am: Bible Study**

- Led by Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka, Director of Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM), PLTS
- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 5712

#### **9:15-10:15am: Morning Prayer with Cleo Parker Robinson**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257
- You are welcome to keep your camera turned off during morning prayer as you engage in movement and dance to begin our day together.
- “Mary Don’t You Weep” an excerpt from a larger work “Spiritual Suite” by Cleo Parker Robinson and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Denver, CO. The poetry used in the piece is “The Women Gather” by Nikki Giovanni
- There will be a live talkback and Q&A with Cleo from 10-10:15

The women gather because it is not unusual to seek comfort in our hours of stress.

A man must be buried.

It is not unusual that the old bury the young though it is an abomination.

It is not strange that the unwise and the ungentle carry the banner of humaneness though it is a castration of the spirit.

It no longer shatters the intellect that those who make war call themselves diplomats.

We are no longer surprised that the unfaithful pray loudest every Sunday in church and sometimes in rooms facing east though it is a sin and a shame.

So how do we judge a man.

Most of us love from our need to love not because we find someone deserving.

Most of us forgive because we have trespassed not because we are magnanimous.

Most of us comfort because we need comforting, our ancient rituals demand that we give what we hope to receive.

And how do we judge a man.

We learn to greet when meeting, to cry when parting and to soften our words at times of stress.

The women gather with cloth and ointment, their busy hands bowing to laws that decree willows shall stand swaying but unbroken against even the determined wind of death.

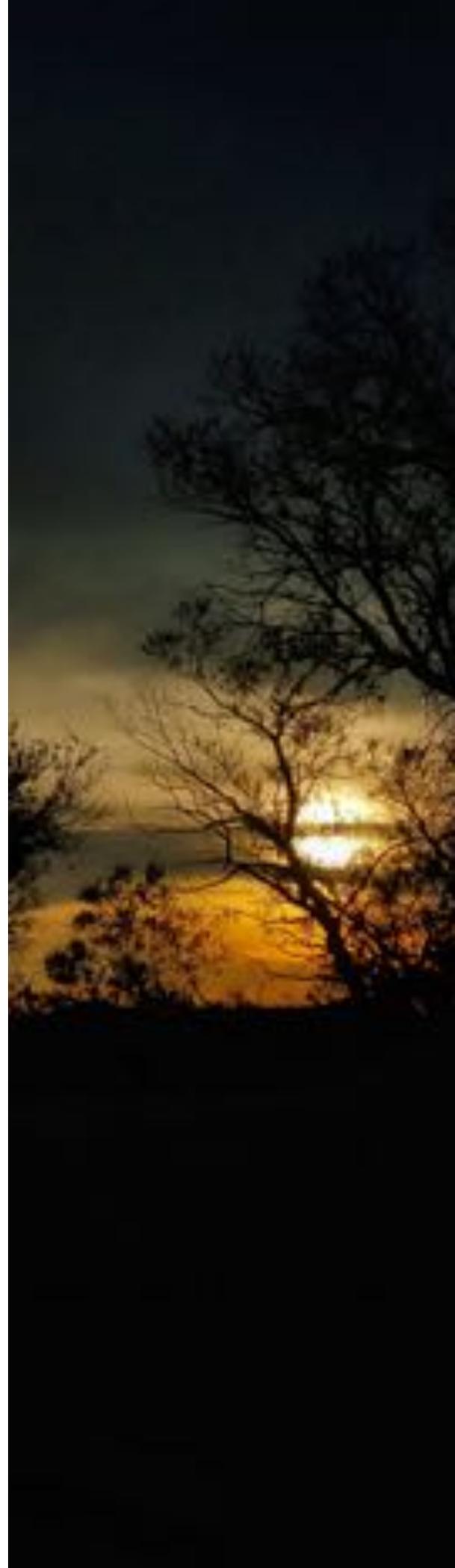
We judge a man by his dreams, not alone his deeds.

We judge a man by his intent, not alone his shortcomings.

We judge a man because it is not unusual to know him through those who love him.

The women gather strangers to each other because they have loved a man.

It is not unusual to sift through ashes and find an unburnt picture...



**10:30-12:00pm: Session 2: Keynote: What Killed Bonhoeffer?**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257
- We will utilize the chat to respond when returning from small groups, please refrain from on-going chat during the keynote presentations.

**12:00pm: Journal Activity 3, Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**

*Supplies needed: Peggy McIntosh article or Starbucks gift card*

**2:00pm-3:30pm: Session 3: Zoom Timeline Experience**

- How did we get here? You are invited on a journey through time and story as we explore the historical constructs of race woven with the experiences of our colleagues in ministry. We invite your curiosity as we embark on this journey together.
- *Preparation: What's your story? What are the defining stories in your family history that have been shaped by privilege, advocacy, prejudice, or discrimination*

**3:30pm: Journal Activity 4, Where Do You Live?**

*Supplies needed: Map links on RMS website*

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**NOTES**

**4:30pm: Debrief in check-in groups**

- If you created your own check-in group, you are welcome to use any platform such as your personal or church zoom, FaceTime, etc. If you need a space to meet, please join the conference zoom link and you will be given a breakout room.
- If you requested to be placed in a check-in group with others, please log onto the conference zoom meeting and you will be assigned a check-in group and breakout room.
- Two helpful check in formats: “I feel\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_. Or “I notice, I wonder”

**7:00pm: Zoom Game Night/Variety Show**

- Grab a beverage and join us for a good-time social hangout! Peter and Zach will be your hosts and guides for an evening of games, skits, songs, weird trivia, #Lutherfacts, and special prizes. The real grand prize, of course, is friendship. Your hosts will take you on a journey into your imagination, so who knows what might happen?
- **ABOUT YOUR HOSTS:** The Reverend Zachary Parris is an award-winning podcast host and occasional preacher. Peter Severson is an organist, breakfast chef, and noted anti-Twitter activist.”
- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257

**Wednesday, September 23**

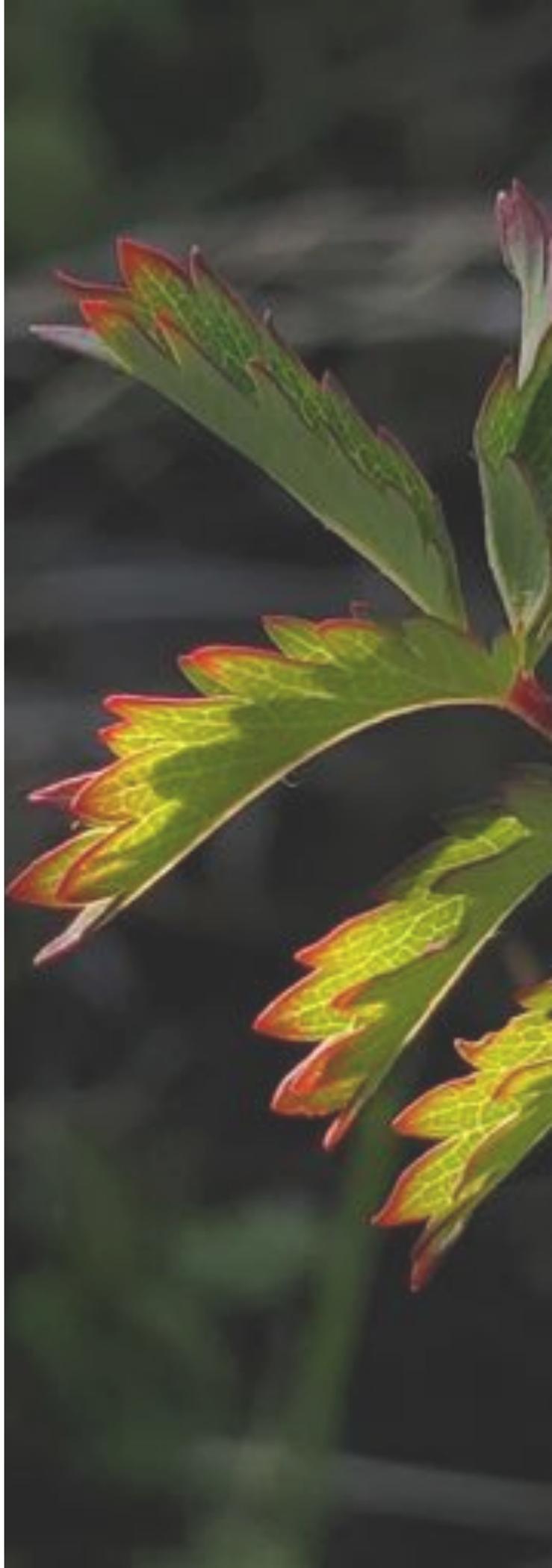
**8:00–9:00am: Bible Study**

- Rev. Jacqui Pagel, Assistant to the Bishop, Grand Canyon Synod
- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 5712

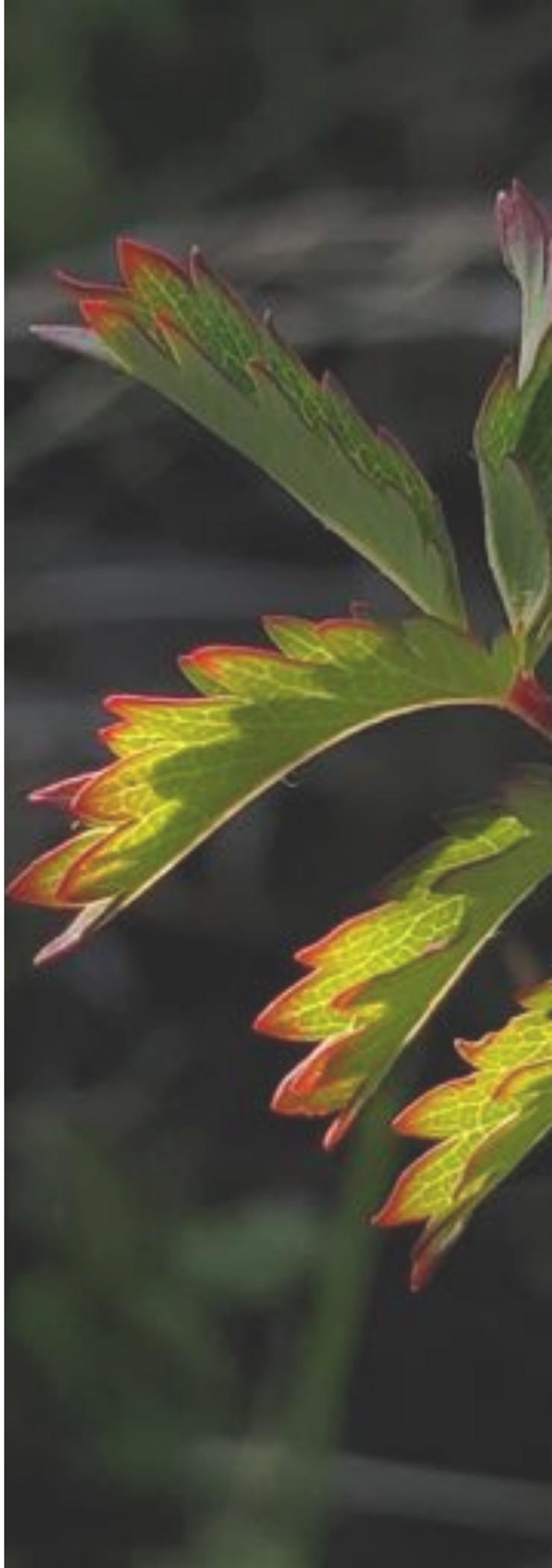
**9:15-10:15am: Morning Prayer with Cleo Parker Robinson**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257
- You are welcome to keep your camera turned off during morning prayer as you engage in movement and dance to begin our day together.
- “Healing Waters” by Cleo Parker Robinson and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance. “O the Pulse of Morning” by Maya Angelou
- There will be a live talkback and Q&A with Cleo from 10-10:15

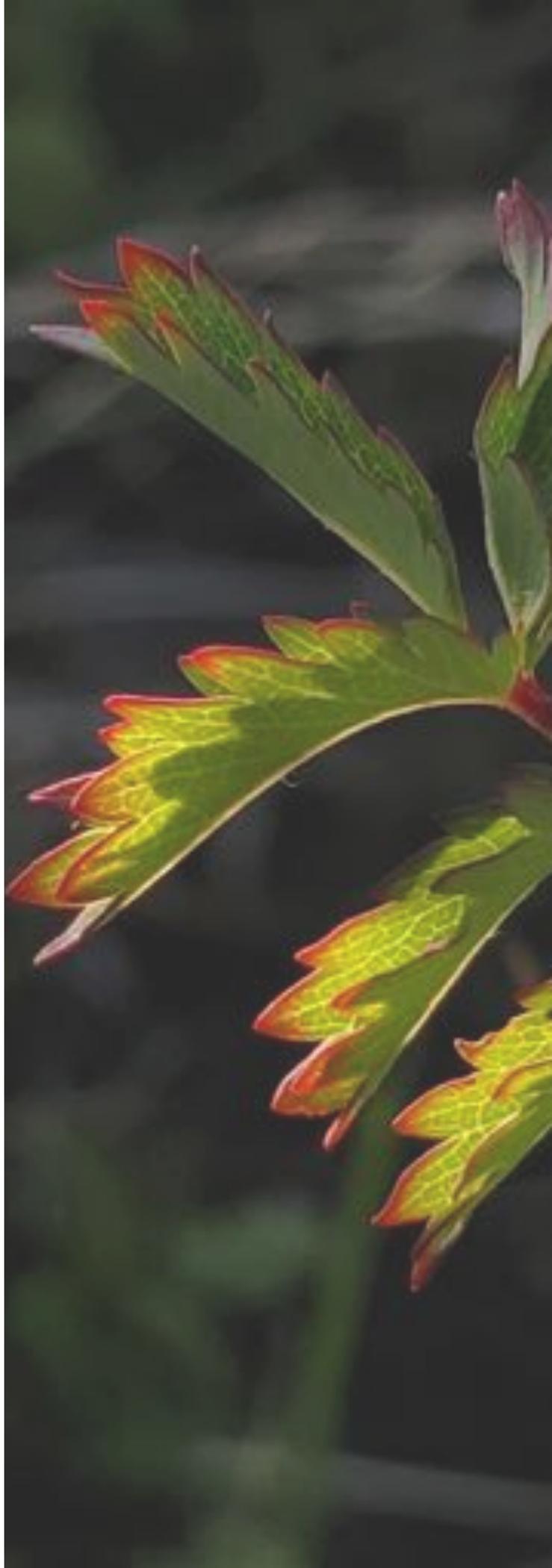
A Rock, A River, A Tree  
Hosts to species long since departed,  
Marked the mastodon.  
The dinosaur, who left dry tokens  
Of their sojourn here  
On our planet floor,  
Any broad alarm of their hastening doom  
Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.  
But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly,  
forcefully,  
Come, you may stand upon my  
Back and face your distant destiny,  
But seek no haven in my shadow.  
I will give you no hiding place down here.  
You, created only a little lower than  
The angels, have crouched too long in  
The bruising darkness,  
Have lain too long  
Face down in ignorance.  
Your mouths spilling words  
Armed for slaughter.  
The Rock cries out to us today, you may stand  
upon me,  
But do not hide your face.  
Across the wall of the world,  
A River sings a beautiful song,  
It says come rest here by my side.  
Each of you a bordered country,  
Delicate and strangely made proud,  
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.  
Your armed struggles for profit  
Have left collars of waste upon  
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.  
Yet, today I call you to my riverside,  
If you will study war no more. Come,  
Clad in peace and I will sing the songs  
The Creator gave to me when I and the  
Tree and the rock were one.



Before cynicism was a bloody sear across  
your  
Brow and when you yet knew you still  
Knew nothing.  
The River sang and sings on.  
There is a true yearning to respond to  
The singing River and the wise Rock.  
So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew  
The African, the Native American, the Sioux,  
The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the  
Greek  
The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh,  
The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher,  
The privileged, the homeless, the Teacher.  
They all hear  
The speaking of the Tree.  
They hear the first and last of every Tree  
Speak to humankind today. Come to me, here  
beside the River.  
Plant yourself beside the River.  
Each of you, descendant of some passed  
On traveller, has been paid for.  
You, who gave me my first name, you  
Pawnee, Apache, Seneca, you  
Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then  
Forced on bloody feet, left me to the  
employment of  
Other seekers--desperate for gain,  
Starving for gold.  
You, the Turk, the Arab, the Swede, the  
German, the Eskimo, the Scot ...  
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought  
Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare  
Praying for a dream.  
Here, root yourselves beside me.  
I am that Tree planted by the River,  
Which will not be moved.  
I, the Rock, I the River, I the Tree



I am yours--your Passages have been paid.  
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need  
For this bright morning dawning for you.  
History, despite its wrenching pain,  
Cannot be unlived, but if faced  
With courage, need not be lived again.  
Lift up your eyes upon  
This day breaking for you.  
Give birth again  
To the dream.  
Women, children, men,  
Take it into the palms of your hands.  
Mold it into the shape of your most  
Private need. Sculpt it into  
The image of your most public self.  
Lift up your hearts  
Each new hour holds new chances  
For new beginnings.  
Do not be wedded forever  
To fear, yoked eternally  
To brutishness.  
The horizon leans forward,  
Offering you space to place new steps of  
change.  
Here, on the pulse of this fine day  
You may have the courage  
To look up and out and upon me, the  
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.  
No less to Midas than the mendicant.  
No less to you now than the mastodon then.  
Here on the pulse of this new day  
You may have the grace to look up and out  
And into your sister's eyes, and into  
Your brother's face, your country  
And say simply  
Very simply  
With hope  
Good morning.



**10:30-12:00pm: Session 4: Keynote 2: Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257

**12:00pm: Journal Activity 5, Who Are You Reading?**

*Supplies needed: current book list, RMS Reading List Google Sheet*

**2:00-3:30pm: Session 5: Community Conversation, Ministry in Context**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257

**3:30pm: Journal Activity 6, "We Dance" by Hope Boykin and Alvin Ailey  
Dance Theater**

*Supplies needed: Video link on RMS website*

**\*\*\*Note: Preparing for final plenary session:** *The format for Thursday morning will be a modified Open Space format. It is space for you to have whatever next conversation you want to have: Anti-racism in faith formation, advocacy, anti-racism in liturgy and worship, beginning this conversation in your context, etc. If there is a conversation you would like to have, please list that conversation in the Google Doc linked on the conference website. If a conversation is listed that you would like to join, add your name to that group, otherwise start your own conversation group. Please sign up by 8:00am Thursday.*

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**NOTES**



**4:30pm: Debrief in check-in groups**

- If you created your own check-in group, you are welcome to use any platform such as your personal or church zoom, FaceTime, etc. If you need a space to meet, please join the conference zoom link and you will be given a breakout room.
- If you requested to be placed in a check-in group with others, please log onto the conference zoom meeting and you will be assigned a check-in group and breakout room.
- Two helpful check in formats: “I feel\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_. Or “I notice, I wonder”

**5:30pm: Conference Check in and Happy hour**

- Please use meeting link provided for by your conference dean

**7:00-8:15pm: Evening Worship: Embracing the Mess**

- *Supplies Needed: finger paint, finger paint paper, knotted twine, wet cloth/paper towel*
- **Please have finger paint, paper, and wet cloth ready. We will be painting together during the opening litany!**
- ZOOM Meeting ID: 998 6127 0257. Using the “speaker view” is strongly encouraged.
- You are invited to make an offering via check or the RMS website sometime this week. The offering this week will benefit the RMS Seminary Scholarship Fund.

# Messy Worship



## Prelude

“Baltimore”- Prince

## Litany for a Mess

Rev. Alison, Brendon, Ian George

Please be ready to finger-paint or have your ball of knotted yarn ready!

Gracious God, this beautiful world that you created has become a mess of problems.  
Help us to understand that being awake and aware of the tangled mess is a gift.

*A Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” — Matthew 15:22*

How do we live fully in the mess?  
How do we bare the burdens of messiness?

*Don't tell me no.  
I have seen you feed the thousands,  
seen miracles spill from your hands  
like water, like wine,  
seen you with circles  
and circles of crowds  
pressed around you  
and not one soul  
turned away.  
Don't start with me*

Help us to understand that confronting and confessing our  
role in the knot is a path to freedom.

*I am saying  
you can close the door  
but I will keep knocking.  
You can go silent  
but I will keep shouting.*



How do we begin to pick at the strings?  
How do we fray the edges?

*You can tighten the circle  
but I will trace a bigger one  
around you,  
around the life of my child  
who will tell you  
no one surpasses a mother  
for stubbornness*

Help us to become a whole new church - a people who actively love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Help us to truly become the hands and feet of Christ in a tangled, hurting world.

*I am saying  
I know what you can do with crumbs  
and I am claiming mine,  
every morsel and scrap  
you have up your sleeve.  
Unclench your hand,  
your heart.  
Let the scraps fall  
like manna  
like mercy  
for the life  
of my child,  
the life of  
the world.  
Don't you tell me no. — Jan Richardson*

How do we unravel the knot?  
How do we loosen a thread?  
How do we set it free?  
How do we become the hands and feet of  
Christ in our hurting and wounded world?



## **Confession**

Rocky Mountain Synod Jesus Collage

*What do you need to confess? We teach that whoever does not go to Confession willingly and for the sake of obtaining the Absolution, may as well forget about it. Yes, whoever goes around relying on the purity of the act of making confession, let them stay away. Nevertheless, we strongly urge you by all means to make confession of your need, not with the intention of doing a worthy work by confessing but in order to hear what God has arranged for you to be told. What I am saying is that you are to concentrate on the Word, on the Absolution, to regard it as a great and precious and magnificently splendid treasure, and to accept it with all praise and thanksgiving to God*  
— Martin Luther

## **Detroit Youth Choir - “Glory”**

*Silence for confession*

**Lord have mercy,  
Christ have mercy,  
Lord have mercy.**

God forgives us all our sins. God, who is infinite in mercy and grace, loves us when we are unlovable. God breaks down the dividing walls, heals all our wounds, and creates us into a new humanity - Amen

## **WORD**

**First Reading:** Kina Nordstrom-Kemp

### **Ephesians 2:13-22**

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

**Gospel:** Rev. Dr. Reggie Williams

### **Matthew 16:13-16**

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but other Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

**Sermon:** Rev. Dr. Reggie Williams

### **Sermon Response**

*How Long?* by Heatherlyn

## **Prayers of the People**

Bishop Jim Gonia

Confident in the power of your grace, O God, we pray for the church, the world, all humanity.

Please open your chat window and offer your prayers now...

...all these prayers and more we lift to you, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

## **Blessing and Sending**

Bishop Jim Gonia

Go, get in good trouble!

**Thanks be to God**

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## **Thursday, September 24**

### **8:00–9:00am: Bible Study**

- Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta, Director for Evangelical Mission, Grand Canyon Synod
- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 5712

### **9:15-10:15: Session 6: Open Space, Closing Reflections**

- Please log on using the meeting link that ends in 0257
- The format this morning will be a modified Open Space format. It is space for you to have whatever next conversation you want to have: Anti-racism in faith formation, advocacy, anti-racism in liturgy and worship, beginning this conversation in your context, etc. The list of conversations can be found in the Google doc linked on the Conference Resource page. If you forgot to sign up for a conversation before 8:00am, please message Kristen Lee using the chat to let her know which group you would like to join.
- This will be a modified open space due to breakout room limitations on zoom. Instead of leaving to join another conversation, if you done engaging the small group conversation you will simply re-join the main meeting room and join whatever conversation is happening there.

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## **NOTES**

### **Closing Worship and Conference Gatherings**

- Conferences will gather either digitally or in-person for closing worship and conversation.
- The dean of your conference will share the details of this gathering.
- If you are not a member of a conference, or you are not able to join the gathering planned by your conference, you are invited to join in a zoom worship at 10:45am using the conference zoom link.

### **Thursday afternoon: Journal Activity 7, All the Things I Left in God's Care**

*Supplies needed: Envelope from Monday's journal activity*

### **Friday: Journal Activity 8: The New Normal**

*Supplies needed: New Normal video on RMS website.*

*Thank you for being a part of this conference. Recordings of the keynote sessions and other resources from the conference will be available on the Theological Conference website. Our prayer and commitment is that this work of anti-racism and dismantling systems of oppression will continue both individually and collectively as church. We welcome your feedback and leadership in discerning and implementing next steps.*



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## Worship Resources and Credits

### Monday Evening Worship

*Before here was here* - written using the guide “Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgment” [usdac.us/nativeland](http://usdac.us/nativeland) and “Native American Liturgical Celebration”

ELCA - written by Kelly Sherman-Conroy, Oglala Sioux

Confession by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. published in Thou, Dear God: Prayers that Open Hearts and Spirits edited by Lewis V. Baldwin, Beacon Press, 2012

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Offertory written by Rev. Richard Gianzero

Liturgy written by Deacon Sarah Bjornebo

Music written and performed by Tangled Blue - Joel Pakan, Aimee Pakan, and Emmanuel Philor; [joel@tangledblue.com](mailto:joel@tangledblue.com) - [aimee@tangledblue.com](mailto:aimee@tangledblue.com)

### Wednesday Evening worship

Litany for a Mess poem: “Stubborn Blessing” by Jan Richardson © [janrichardson.com](http://janrichardson.com)

“A Brief Admonition to Confession” by Martin Luther - originally published in the 1529 revised edition of the Large Catechism

Liturgy by Deacon Sarah Bjornebo



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A Reconciling in Christ Synod  
An AMMPARO Welcoming Synod



**Rocky Mountain Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.