



JULY/AUGUST 2024

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

I am not much of a gardener, but every year we try. We plant both perennials and vegetable gardens and do our best to cultivate beauty. Some years our bounty has been large. Others? Well, let's just say I am glad we can buy groceries at the store!

Just this week, I left the house and noticed something spectacular. We are growing a thriving blackberry bush, which happens to be one of my most treasured fruits! I am guessing that, in the years of owning the property, it lay dormant, until just the right water and sunshine and weather allowed it to return in its full glory.

One of the things I love about summer and my gardens is that it is often full of surprises. One year, a pumpkin plant began flourishing on top of the horse manure pile. Now if that isn't a wonderful metaphor for hope, I don't know what is!

As I look back at past summers, I see a trail of beautiful and bittersweet memories. There have been summers that overflowed with joy and summers filled with deep sadness and pain. The common thread is that every summer was unique and had its own tale to tell.

Just as every natural summer has a story, so does every spiritual

summer. We will each walk through the spiritual seasons many times. If our spiritual lives match the seasons: Fall is a time of change, Winter is a time of barrenness and preparation, Spring is a time of rebirth, and summer is a time for bearing fruit and embracing the abundant life that surrounds us.

Summer is a season known for cultivating and bearing good fruit. Just



as my new blackberry bush is bearing an abundance of fruit, the challenge for people of faith is to work toward bearing an abundance of spiritual fruit. What are spiritual fruits? Our spiritual fruits are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The gospel of John says the following:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit..." (John 15:5 NIV)

I like the way the Message says it:

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant..." (John 15:5-8)

The word abundant in the Greek means MORE THAN.

My prayer for you in the dog days of summer is that you will find abundance—more than—and know you are deeply loved.

See you in church,

— PASTOR CLAIRE

IN THIS ISSUE

- Worshipful Moments from Spring and Early Summer Events
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- Celebrating Summer in July and August with Outdoor Events
- Mission Design Team Events For The Summer

WORSHIPFUL MOMENTS



A Pack of Blessings

What an amazing turnout we had for the Blessing of the Animals last Sunday! Many dogs were in attendance—and one caterpillar! Everyone received special blessings to see them into the summer and through the year.



Embracing Doubt

The Embracing Doubt study group began meeting in June. Look at those massive water bottles! The group is staying hydrated during deep and interesting discussions.



Perfect Day for a Hike

It was a perfect day for a hike for new and old HOL friends at Button Rock Dam in June. Join us for our next hike on Saturday, July 13, at Heil Lake Ranch. Look for a sign up sheet in the gallery and if you have any questions, contact Dawn Desai or Tricia Grafelman.



Healing Hearts with the Help of Horses

Pastor Claire's first For The Love Of A Horse event was a hit with attendees! They learned about horses and the special spiritual connection that can form between humans and equines. There is one more horse event this year on July 10. Space is limited, so please check in the gallery for the sign up sheet. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Claire.



WORSHIPFUL MOMENTS



Teaching Souls To Dance At The Breckenridge Women and Trans Women Retreat

Our 2024 retreat for women and trans women was a boon to our spirits. If you would like to know more about our time together in Breckenridge, please ask Becky Vancura, Kerri Hickman, Davon Cook, Joan Riggins, Sue Shipp, Hermine Ngomire, Sarah Blackburn, Linda Crawford, Chris Mason, Helen Robbins, Tricia Grafelman, or Rev. Claire McNulty-Drewes.

If you were unable to attend this year, we hope you will consider joining us next year!





SUMMER BREAK AND END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATIONS FOR THE YOUTH GROUP

BY EMILY FARRENKOPF

As the summer sun shines brightly, our youth group is taking a well-deserved break. We had a couple of wonderful events to wrap up the school year and mark the beginning of our summer hiatus.

On May 5 we celebrated Youth Sunday, a special occasion where we honored our two graduating seniors, Baylor Spaulding and Michael Mathes. Their presence and contributions have greatly enriched our group, and while we will miss them, we are excited to see them embark on their next adventures. I am very proud of all the youth for putting in the hard work to provide a beautiful service filled with great music. A special thank you to Kevin Lattu, Haleigh Bird,

and Pastor Claire for all their help and support in putting everything together.

Then, on May 19, we had an exhilarating water party in the courtyard to officially end the school year. The event was filled with fun and laughter as our youth engaged in spirited water balloon fights, enjoyed the thrill of the slip and slide, and participated in various team challenges. The kids' competitive spirit was on full display, and while everyone had a great time, there were a few minor injuries! Overall, it was a joyous occasion that allowed everyone to unwind and celebrate their hard work throughout the year.

At the time this newsletter is

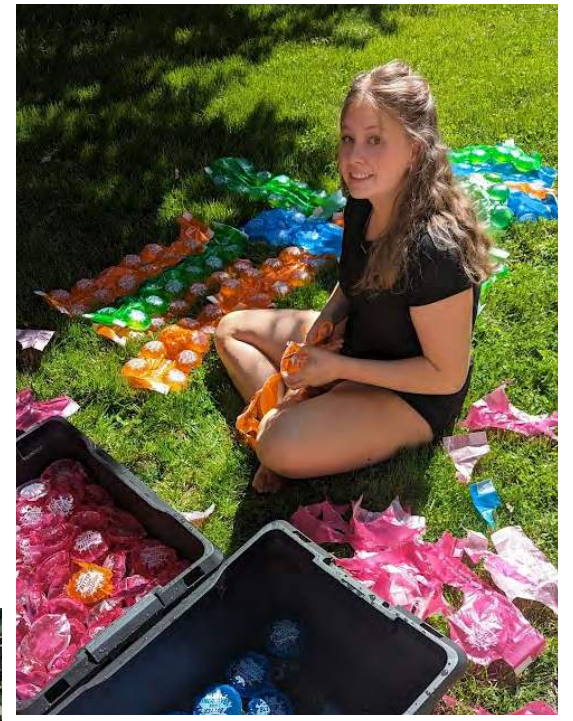
published, our youth group will have just returned from our Rapid City, SD, mission trip. I will share full details of our adventures in the next newsletter, but for now, we have included a photo from the start of our trip. Stay tuned for more updates!

As we enjoy this break, we look forward to reuniting with renewed energy and enthusiasm. We will be meeting in July and August for some fun summer activities and to get to know our new incoming 6th graders.

Have a wonderful and blessed summer, everyone!



Youth Sunday Senior Speech from Baylor Spaulding and Michael Mathes



Charlotte Farrenkopf helped to fill 250 water balloons before the courtyard celebrations. Being the youth leader's daughter has its pros and cons.



NOTHING SAYS SUMMER QUITE LIKE OUTDOOR WATER GAMES AND BUBBLES!



BASIC Youth On A Mission

Please pray for the teenagers and the leaders of our BASIC Youth group as they serve the residents of Rapid City, South Dakota, on their mission trip. We look forward to hearing about their adventures when they return!



Volunteers Whistle While They Work And Complete Many Tasks For The Maintenance Of Our Church Building!

So much was accomplished during the work week in June. Among the many tasks accomplished during the week, we:

- installed smoke detectors and LED lighting in the Chancel area (required two sets of scaffolding and some daring moves!)
- cleaned the flat roof and gutters
- installed a ladder guard for the new gutter
- removed the hospitality desk
- shortened a spare pew to use the wood for the new Connection Center
- replaced door stops
- replaced the light above the friendship post and on the south side of the Miracle Window
- repaired or replaced sprinkler heads
- ground down a concrete seam in the



- Outdoor Learning center
- removed active wasp nests
 - repainted curb striping
 - replaced fascia covers
 - trimmed dead or low hanging tree branches
 - cleared the downed branches and leaves on the north side of the parking lot
 - hauled all yard waste to the city compost
 - replaced gutter spikes with screws
 - cleaned carpets

Our church building is older and needs regular maintenance as well as upgrades. Having so many volunteers does a lot to whittle away at this intimidating undertaking. Thank you again to all who participated in all the ways that you were able to use God's gifts.

A big thank you goes to all the volunteers that made this happen: Tricia Grafelman, Shirley Andrews-Sharer, Donna Gratton, Scott Greenhalge, Lynn Greenhalge, Tim Bradley, Clint Schahrer, Chris Medaugh, Linda Meyer, Tom Meyer, Dick Elder, Edissa Nicolas, Chris Mason, Paul Lloyd John Grafelman, Linda McDaniel, Sandy Rabenhorst, Sue Shipp, Jim Shipp, Marty Allison, Ray Allison, Kerri Hickman, Jimmy Hickman, MaryAnn Watson, Keith Watson, and Jean Malchow.



Poolside Fun!

Thank you to Mark Vancura and Debra Brenner for sharing their amazing backyard and swimming pool with the Sunday Kids and their families. We had a wonderful time splashing and jumping and connecting with new and old friends. Memories are being made with Heart of Longmont friends this summer! What a wonderful way to kick off the summer.

Francine Berkey's grandson Liam said, "This is the best backyard ever" and Rowan McKay commented that "this pool is way better than the lake I had to swim in yesterday". Cameron McKay explained that it helps not to have dead fish floating in the same water. LOL!



FOND FAREWELL

by Pastor Claire

On June 2 we said goodbye to our amazingly talented and gifted Sunday morning children's director, Kevin Lattu.

Kevin walked into my office in August 2022, carrying his guitar, and I immediately knew he was God sent. His spirit was gentle and his passion and love for faith formation palpable. Soon after his arrival, he agreed to begin a children's choir and has led them for the past two years, adding such joy and beautiful music to our Sunday



his last Sunday: "I would not have worked for just any church. The fact that Heart of Longmont is so committed to our community was a big draw. My first Sunday was the Sunday the Wesley Townhomes were introduced and I knew this church was the right fit for me."

We send Kevin back to Minnesota with all of our love and prayers as he begins his next season of life.

Come see us soon Kevin! We miss you already!

morning worship experience.

Not only did Kevin lead our Children, but he was also deeply gifted in worship leadership. He often offered beautiful music during our service and added depth and beauty to many a Sunday morning.

Kevin has spent the last two years in a fellowship at CU-Boulder in Social Work, and has a deep faith in Jesus Christ. Kevin helped catapult our church's children and family ministry back into existence. With his fellowship ending, Kevin is taking a position in social work back in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, which also allows him to be back near his beloved family.

To say we will miss Kevin is an understatement! Kevin told me on



BRIDGING CULTURES

The Heart of Longmont Mission Design team is thrilled to announce that our grant proposal to UMCOR's Global Ministries for a Mustardseed grant has been accepted.

This grant supports projects aiding immigrants. Our proposal includes offering Spanish classes to HOL members who will then be paired with Spanish speakers learning English through El Comite's ESL classes. This initiative will create opportunities for participants to practice their new language skills and connect with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

The classes and conversational interactions will start in September and run through November.

If you would like to participate, please contact the church office at 303-776-3523 and leave a message for Joan. Class size is limited to 12 participants.



AUGUST RENEWAL LEAVE

Pastor Claire will be on renewal leave the month of August. In lieu of a pastoral raise in 2025, Pastor Claire was offered renewal time with her family for the month of August as a way to honor her work at Heart of Longmont.

Please be aware that this means Pastor Claire will not be available in person, by phone, text, or email for the month. There is pastoral support available for the month from clergy in the area. Please contact the church office if you have any needs.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Year-to-Date Comparison

Category	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Income	\$202,658	\$169,100
Expenses	\$211,741	\$190,873
Income (less than) expenses (deficit)	\$(9,083)	\$(21,773)

by Rod Edmonds

Overview

I am pleased to present the financial update for the first five months of 2024, reflecting our commitment to transparency and stewardship. Your continued support and dedication are vital to the ongoing success of our church's mission.

Financial Highlights

Income Performance:

- Through May, our income exceeded budget by \$40,248, showcasing the generosity of our congregation.
- Two significant one-time income items contributed to this favorable variance:
 - A grant from the Peaks New Ministry Council: \$16,658 (unexpected)
 - Annual distribution from our General Endowment Fund: budgeted
- Even without these items, our income remains above both the budget and prior year levels.

Expense Management:

- While expenses through May were slightly below budget (\$4,807), they have increased by 10.9% compared to the same period last year.
- Key areas of increased expenses include:
 - Facilities maintenance
 - Music ministry
 - HVAC loan interest
 - Long range planning consultant

Outlook

As we conclude the second quarter and enter the summer months, we anticipate that expenses will likely continue to exceed income, following historical patterns. We remain committed to prudent financial management and will continue to seek opportunities to optimize our resources.

Call to Action

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to Heart of Longmont. Together, we are making a positive difference in the lives of many and fulfilling our mission to put more of God's love into the world. As we navigate the financial challenges ahead, we encourage you to continue your generous contributions.

If you have any questions or need further details, please do not hesitate to contact Rod Edmonds.

WESLEY TOWNHOMES UPDATE

Dear Congregation,

We wanted to share the latest updates on our Wesley Townhomes project. Over the past couple of months, The Inn Between (TIB) has been diligently working through the final stages of the planning process.

First, TIB received the City's "final" comments on their submissions. Although addressing these comments has taken a bit longer than anticipated, we're pleased to report that we have successfully finalized the minor subdivision plat, the language for the restricted deed, and the shared space agreement between TIB and the Church.

While the timeline hasn't progressed as quickly as we had hoped, we are making steady progress. The next major milestone is the completion of the architectural work (anticipated early August) which will then allow the contractor to submit for building permits. It's expected it will take 4-6 weeks for permits to be received. That puts us at the end of September.

Given this timeline, TIB is going to work towards a groundbreaking celebration on September 26, most likely late afternoon. This event will mark the beginning of the construction phase and a significant step forward in providing much-needed affordable housing in our community. Mark your calendars, and watch for more details on timing in the Weekly Pulse as we get closer to the date.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the project or would like more details, please feel free to reach out to me, Joan Edmonds, Jean Malchow, Tricia Grafelman, or Clint Schahrer. Thank you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm for this important project.

—Rod Edmonds and The Wesley Townhomes Team





READINESS 360

Multiply your impact.

Dear Congregation,

We are excited to share the latest progress in our long-range planning efforts. Recently, we conducted the Readiness 360 survey with guidance from Paul Nixon, and we are pleased to report that 84 members participated. The results reveal some truly inspiring insights:

- **Spirituality and Cultural Openness:** Our church excels in both areas, which is quite rare among American churches. Paul Nixon believes this dual strength is a key driver of our growth and will continue to enhance these aspects as we move forward.
- **Readiness to Innovate:** Among the

over 1500 churches that have taken the Readiness 360 survey, Heart of Longmont ranks in the top five percent in readiness to embrace new initiatives and reach new people.

Below is the overview that details our readiness in four key areas measured by the survey: Spiritual Intensity, Dynamic Relationships, Missional Alignment, and Cultural Openness. (If you would like a copy of the original document, please contact the church office.)

Our leadership teams have received an Executive Summary that evaluates our strengths and challenges in each area and offers practical tips

for leadership based on our survey responses.

Paul Nixon will facilitate further discussions with our leadership teams to delve into the survey results on Sunday, July 28. We will share more about these conversations in August.

Let's celebrate the vibrant presence of the Holy Spirit among us! As Paul Nixon says, "It truly is a Pentecost moment at Heart of Longmont Church!"

With gratitude,

—The Long Range Planning Team
Pastor Claire, Francine Berkey, Jeff Brown, Rod Edmonds, John Grafelman, Scott Greenhalge and Edy-Kay Ward

Overview

Congratulations for being willing to engage in a serious conversation about your readiness to reach new people in new ways! The Christian movement in North America was strong for so many generations because churches planted new churches that planted new churches—untold thousands of churches, decade after decade, state after state! Only a small percentage of today's churches still have multiplication of ministry on their radar. Your church does—and that sets you apart!

Heart of Longmont United Methodist Church asked several of its leaders and participants to participate in the Readiness 360 process. The survey many of you took assesses your church's spiritual and practical readiness for faithful and effective ministry in the 21st century. 84 persons took the Readiness 360, a mix of staff, key leaders, and active ministry participants.

Readiness 360 assesses four critical capacities for multiplying thriving ministries. In the rating system below, our church's level of multiplication energy is indicated by the number of rabbits (God's most adorable multipliers). The more multiplication energy your church has, the more ready you will be to start something new. Heart of Longmont is strongest in terms of Spiritual Intensity and is most challenged in terms of Dynamic Relationships.

Spiritual Intensity

There is some fire in people's hearts at Heart of Longmont, but it isn't burning as brightly as it should. Heart of Longmont has some work to do in strengthening the personal connection between your people and God and God's mission for you in the world. It would be wise to spend some time reconnecting with God through renewing

spiritual practices both personally and as a church body.

Dynamic Relationships

In some respects, your church has seen some amazing relationships and friendships across the years. However, the DNA of these relationships is not currently indicative of the church as a whole. You have some work to do in terms of cultivating trust within the church and relating effectively to folks who are different from the majority of the members.

Missional Alignment

Many folks at your church have a good sense of where God is calling you to go, but others are not aligned with this point of view. There is seldom enough personnel or financial resources to run in many directions at once. Now is a time for serious conversation about Heart of Longmont's priorities.

Cultural Openness

On one hand, many in the church want to reach diverse people, but many in the church still have great apprehension about what this might mean in terms of changing the face of Heart of Longmont. There may be some limitations in terms of how far the church is able to reach toward different kinds of people in the next few years. Open communication will be critical.

Your church's leaders have received a more detailed report with recommendations about how your church might quickly move itself into a position of greater readiness for birthing a new God-thing!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH READING PROGRAM BOOK REVIEW

by Sharon Yonkees



look at America's class divide, a description of the tightrope many families walk just to get by, and a reminder of the dignity of all work."

It isn't a book of self-pity or haranguing about how difficult it is to apply for and finally receive government benefits,

Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive by Stephanie Land. (Nurturing for Community)

Maid was listed on President Obama's Summer Reading List in 2019. The quote from him about the book pretty much sums it up: "A single mother's personal, unflinching

although it could be. Stephanie Lang was 28 and working several jobs in Port Townsend, Washington. Her goal was to save money and go to Missoula, Montana, to go to school and to get into a writer's program. Her boyfriend, Jamie's, plan was to take a bike ride down the 101 to San Francisco. They moved in together and she eventually becomes pregnant.

Ultimately, Stephanie has the baby and things get very bad, so she moves out. The book tells the story of trying to support a child with government aid for food and housing (oddly, she won't go to food banks because she thinks they are for people worse off than she is) and working by cleaning houses and balancing that with finding adequate childcare and trying to earn enough to sustain them without losing needed aid, and eventually taking online college courses at night toward her goal of getting into the Montana writing program to make a better life for herself and her daughter, Mia.

Stephanie writes about the different houses she cleans and the people she meets while working. She talks about trying to make a life for Mia and the good people she meets along the way. It is a book instructive about poverty, attitudes toward those who need help, and how difficult it is to get out of the cycle of poverty, no matter how hard you work.

This book is part of the UWF's 2024 Reading Program and is located on the library table in the Gallery. Please feel free to check it out when available. You don't need to participate in the reading program to check it out.



COMPASSION OFFERINGS

July

The July compassion offering will support Days For Girls. Days For Girls addresses period poverty. Around the world, including the US, people who menstruate lack access to menstrual supplies and menstrual education.

Days for Girls supplies reusable menstrual kits to allow girls and women to attend school and work. Heart of Longmont collects and buys materials and puts kits together to send to those in need. Recently kits were taken to Guatemala for ODIM to disperse.

August

The August compassion offering will benefit Safe Shelter of St. Vrain.

Safe Shelter provides services and programs to help those experiencing domestic violence, elder abuse, human trafficking, and teen dating violence. Services include a 24 hour hotline, counseling, emergency shelter, and more, all free of charge.

TRUST IN THE LORD AND DO GOOD; DWELL IN THE LAND AND ENJOY SAFE PASTURE. TAKE DELIGHT IN THE LORD, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART.

—PSALM 37:3-4



The Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé (left), Bishop Karen Oliveto (in blue jacket) and her wife, Robin Ridenour (front, center), join in embracing delegates and visitors at the 2024 United Methodist General Conference in Charlotte, N.C., after the conference voted to remove the denomination's ban on the ordination of clergy who are "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" — a prohibition that dates to 1984. (Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.)

CELEBRATING A HISTORIC MOMENT IN OUR DENOMINATION

A Note from Pastor Claire

May 1 was a momentous day in the life of our denomination, where the general conference of the UMC voted to remove harmful language against LGBTQ+ persons from its book of discipline. Our denomination has been embroiled in a divisive and difficult dialogue for 52 years over biblical interpretation and our understanding of human sexuality. It is my fervent hope that we as a denomination can begin to heal and move into fruitful ministry together.

There is still much work to do to move toward full inclusion, but today we celebrate this historic day in the life of our church. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Bishop Karen Oliveto posted this after the vote:

The church that nurtured us in the faith, helped us experience God's grace, encouraged our relationship with Jesus Christ, and helped us hear our calls into ordained ministry has now allowed us to respond in faithfulness to our calls as the restrictive language has been removed.

It is a beautiful day in The United Methodist Church, as we welcome those who possess the gifts and graces for ordained ministry to serve in our church, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. #UMCGC

You can read more about this historic decision on UM News and Western Jurisdiction UMC Communications:

[Incompatible no more: Delegates celebrate adoption of revised social principles by Kristen Caldwell, WJ Communications](#)

[WJ delegates celebrate removal of ban on LGBTQIA+ ministry by WJ Communications](#)

[History in the making by Evelyn Warren, WJ Communications](#)

[United Methodists remove same-sex wedding ban by Heather Hahn, UM News](#)

[Church ends 52-year-old anti-gay stance by Heather Hahn, UM News](#)



HOL at Longmont Pridefest 2024

The gala event was heavily attended even with wind and some rain challenges. The Heart of Longmont booth was visited by many of the attendees. Bracelet and key chain creations were popular with younger folks. Flower seed packets with the HOL QR code were greatly appreciated.

Inquiries about HOL stimulated conversations that were both brief and involved. Only one other church had a presence at the event. We are being recognized as a safe place to grow in spirituality for individuals who have been harmed by Christian groups. One step at a time to growing loving kindness in our community!



FROM MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE NEXTGEN & INCLUSIVENESS MINISTRIES

PRIDE CAMP 2024: REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Calling all LGBTQ+ clergy and laity: have you ever found yourself asking, "what if church camp was a little more...gay?" We've got you covered.

You're invited to join fellow LGBTQ+ faithfuls for Pride Camp taking place August 30th-Sept. 2nd, 2024 South of Bozeman, MT.

In recognition of the increased violence that LGBTQ+ people are experiencing across the nation, LGBTQ+ laity and clergy in Montana have come together from various faith communities to create a space by and for LGBTQ+ beloveds to be in community, renew their spirits, and strengthen their relationship to their faith and spirituality as a tool and act of resistance against the experiences of oppression in our world.

Pride Camp is open to LGBTQ+ folks who are 18 years of age or older. (To our allies: we love you, and we ask that you sit this one out. You can help us out by sponsoring an attendee! Read on for more information.)

LGBTQ+ couples/families/guardians with children aged 5 and under are welcome to attend, and are responsible for looking after their own children. Minimal childcare during some of the camp days may be provided, but is not guaranteed.

Cost to attend is \$300, and covers the cost of food and lodging. Attendees are encouraged to seek sponsorship to attend from their local faith community. If additional financial assistance is needed, please contact event organizers. SCHOLARSHIPS ARE



AVAILABLE!

Churches and local faith communities are encouraged to sponsor the cost to attend for camp participants. If you're an individual seeking sponsorship, OR an individual or local faith community in the Mountain Sky Conference seeking to sponsor attendance, please contact Court at nextgen@mtnskyumc.org for more information. For other sponsorship/scholarship inquiries contact minister@uccbozeman.org or jpenfield@mnwucc.org.

Pride Camp will take place at a camp located just South of Bozeman, MT. The location will be released following registration; this is to protect the safety of our attendees.

Attendees will need to test negative for COVID 48 hours before the start of camp, as well as on the day of camp. N95/KN95

Masks will be encouraged during camp, and some will be provided. If you need assistance in accessing a COVID test, please contact event organizers. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID or other illness, please plan to stay home. (Thank you for helping us to look out for the health and safety of all our attendees and their loved ones!)

The site is not wheel chair accessible, and paths around camp can be steep at places. There is a golf cart on site for travel around camp based on availability. Dorm-style, bunkbed sleeping areas are available (4 rooms with 6-8 beds each). Tent camping and some camper parking is also available (no electric hookups).

Restrooms with private shower/ changing and toilet stalls will be designated gender-neutral for the duration of Pride Camp, unless the camp community makes other agreements on site together.

You can register for Pride Camp at <https://www.mnwucc.org/pride>.

Please do not hesitate to request a scholarship from your own faith community, the Mountain Sky Conference, or the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ. Everyone should be able to come to camp. Especially Pride Camp!

For more information, contact Court at nextgen@mtnskyumc.org or Laura at minister@uccbozeman.org

BEYOND PRIDE WITH ROCKY MOUNTAIN EQUALITY

Beyond Pride is a conversation series that highlights local LGBTQ+ organizations throughout the Mountain Sky Conference. The intention is that by listening to conversation from local LGBTQ+ organizers, local faith communities may be inspired to foster more authentic relationships with LGBTQ+ organizations and persons within their community.

Our first organization to highlight is Rocky Mountain Equality (formerly OUT Boulder County) in Boulder, CO. Rocky Mountain Equality works collaboratively to create connection and provide advocacy, education, research, cultural events, and responsive programs and services that ensure LGBTQ+ people, families, and communities thrive.

[Click here to view the 27 minute interview.](#) Engage the conversation deeper with your congregation or small group by [downloading our discussion guide here.](#)

Want to take your support a step further? Support the work of Rocky Mountain Equality by making a donation as part of their Give OUT Day campaign [here.](#)

You can continue to support Rocky Mountain Equality year round and learn more about their work by visiting their website at <https://www.rmequality.org/>

Beyond Pride

with OUT Boulder County of Boulder, CO



A conversation series for supporting LGBTQIA+ community beyond the month of June



“LIFE IS GREAT NOW”

A CONVERSATION ABOUT TRANS LIFE AND GENDER EUPHORIA WITH RACHEL DWYIER

by Devon Towry

I met Rachel for the first time on a Wednesday morning at MeCo Coffee Collective in Longmont. She walked up to the table with a smile as warm as the sun coming through MeCo's front windows, dressed for summer in a tropical-patterned dress, orange shot with blue, with Pride flag teardrop earrings. As Rachel sat down and said hello, it was like meeting an old friend. We fell easily into conversation, moving from “hi, how are you?” and “how was your week?” to various other topics at what might seem to others a breakneck pace.

Rachel is a captivating speaker, weaving stories and personal anecdotes into the conversation with ease, sharing her story with an open heart. I'd read the version of her story shared in Sal Skog's Trans Voices and marveled at how much that story told and yet how much it left unsaid, ready to be revealed by getting to know Rachel herself in more of her own words. How much of a person can you know by one story? By three? By Twelve? By a brief meeting or hours-long conversation?

Like many trans folks, Rachel once stood at the crossroad of choosing to live in acceptance of her true self—choosing transition and all the uncertainties and fears that came with it—or choosing the path of oblivion. She told a story of going to see a friend with whom she felt safe, arriving in her “real life” guise, disappearing into the bedroom, and reappearing *herself*. Having a safe place to crossdress and be herself was necessary, even if the joy of it could only last a few hours. Her friend took photos of her as she arrived, when she left the bedroom, and when she returned to the costume she had to wear to go home again. The difference was stark, how depressed and shadowed she seemed in “real life” versus how bright and alive she looked expressing herself in women's clothing. The difference was so striking, Rachel saw the branching paths clearly.

“Life is great now,” Rachel said with a smile. She made her choice, and the joy of living life as herself, in the manner of her

choosing, shines from her. The road of life is still unrolling but no longer through thorn-choked lanes, but through a wider and brighter fields.

Our conversation ranges all over those lands. Rachel shares one of the secrets of her life in transition: Creating expectations. It's advice she gives to those preparing to transition or in transition, no matter their age. She knew she would run up against difficult and even frightening situations and thought over how to handle those situations if they arose. Those expectations, and how to handle different situations, will be different for everyone, depending on how they identify and where they are in their journey. Rachel observes nonbinary folks have a unique set of challenges and there's still work needed to fully embrace and recognize them inside the trans community and within society at large.

To that end, Rachel tells me a personal anecdote about the importance of pronouns. “It is so important to ask about pronouns!” she said. “Even if you think you know them, ask anyway!” She told me about a clerk at her local grocery store with whom she spoke nearly every time she was out shopping. It occurred to Rachel one day that she'd never asked the clerk their pronouns, and did so. The clerk burst into tears. They had never been asked before, and it meant the world to be asked so they could answer: “they/them”.

In focusing on the struggles trans folks face in society day to day, and especially in the last few years, I fear it's easy to lose sight of our humanity, that we're people just like anyone else, that amidst our pains we have joys, too. Rachel and I spoke a little about that, what aspects of life bring joy and, especially, gender euphoria. Rachel's smile brightened as she told me the euphoria of putting on lipstick in the morning, of putting on a summer dress and feeling the skirts flutter around her legs.

“When men open and hold the door for me,” she said, a twinkle of mischief in her eye. By doing so, they acknowledge her as a woman. Any time something or someone acknowledges her woman-ness, she feels joy. ♥



RACHEL IN HER OWN WORDS

Devon Towry: Your original interview with Sal [Skog] was in 2021, I think?

Rachel Dwyier: I believe that's correct, yeah.

DT: That's about three years ago.

RD: Yeah, three or four years.

DT: What are the biggest differences, what's changed, between then and now?

RD: I'm much more comfortable. I feel more accepted. I feel more *me*, now. Some of my views have evolved, which I think is normal for anybody but especially for people under the trans umbrella. I think our views and ideas and philosophies evolve more so than others.

DT: In the very beginning of your story in Sal's Trans Voices, you said: “God doesn't make mistakes, society does.” Did you always feel God didn't make mistakes? You said earlier in our conversation you'd always had a kind of religious line of thinking, even if you weren't practicing.

RD: Religiously I was raised to believe in God as all-knowing and all-loving, and I still hold that true. For me, when I look back at history, a lot of the bad things that happened are because society allowed them to happen. Society didn't take the steps to correct what they saw coming and just ignored it. So, yeah, I think that's always been there. Mankind can really think stupidly sometimes.

DT: Boy, don't we know it! You kind of touched on this earlier: What words of comfort or advice might you share with trans folks in transition, especially those folks who are older and came to realize their truth later in life?

RD: We're always told that transition is a journey, and to express it, live it, and enjoy it. And that's what it is. A butterfly doesn't transform overnight. The caterpillar hatches—it's a caterpillar—then it goes into its cocoon for X amount of time, and then it comes out as the butterfly.

We're very much the same. In other words, it takes time to get to the end goal. And even when you're at the end goal, you still have society to fight or to educate, depending on how you look at it.

DT: It's still a process.

RD: I think that's the single biggest thing to try to get across to people, especially all the people who are transitioning that haven't had that support as a younger child or young adult.

DT: I love the metaphor of the butterfly, especially with how the caterpillar makes the chrysalis and then it melts to become something else. It feels like that fits so well.

RD: That's one reason I like this necklace so much. It's the butterflies.

DT: We talked about this a bit earlier, too: What things bring you joy? We talked about the euphoria of putting on lipstick in the morning, wearing a dress in spring, men holding the door and being very chivalric.

RD: Virtually anything that shows I'm being accepted out in the world. Being more emotional. As a woman we are more emotional. Even that brings joy after whatever happened is over and I can reflect on it. There's a lot of joy in that because I wouldn't have been able to express that emotion or depth of emotion if I hadn't transitioned. In addition to all the other stuff.

DT: Since this will be in the newsletter for the church, is there anything you want to communicate to the church community and the community HOL touches as it expands and grows?

RD: This is geared more to the outlying area, not just the core church... I think the church has done a fantastic job so far. As with anything, we still have steps to go and things to do. But for the outlying community, people it goes out and touches... Keep in mind, you may think we're different than



Photo and text courtesy of Sal Skog [instagram.com/celebrate_trans/](https://www.instagram.com/celebrate_trans/)

TRANS VOICES INTERVIEW

God doesn't make mistakes, society does, so listen to me: I may have been born a boy, but I'm not a boy. I'm telling you: I'm trans.

I grew up in a white, conservative community in the sixties. When I was in kindergarten, my teacher wouldn't allow me to play house with the girls. She said I could only play with Legos or Lincoln Logs. I threw such a hissy fit that they had to call my mom to pick me up. Everything changed after that. My mom wouldn't let me have stuffed animals, wear her jewelry, or dress up in her clothes anymore.

Today's parents need to have open minds if their children have gender issues. Otherwise, they're going to have unhappy kids.

I had a 21-year career in the Marine Corps. I was married at the time, and when I knew my wife would be gone for a couple of hours, I'd close the blinds, lock the doors, and dress in her clothes. It was freeing and satisfying, and I did it to maintain my sanity, even though I knew I would be court-martialed if someone caught me. Eventually, I decided to transition. Fortunately, I had mental toughness from serving in the military. You have to be mentally tough to transition, or it's going to eat you up and spit you out on the other end.

I have a very masculine face, and when I first transitioned, I was constantly misgendered. I wanted people to see me as a woman, but what they saw was a guy in a dress. It was incredibly frustrating, and I got so tired of it all. After I got top surgery, 99.9 percent of the misgendering stopped.

I recently had bottom surgery. People ask me what that means, and I tell them, “Think of it this way: they're taking an outie and making an innie.”

Before I transitioned, there were times when I contemplated suicide. Most of us who are trans have had that barrel in our mouth. I'm glad I didn't do it, though, because I've achieved everything I've imagined. I'm comfortable as I am. I'm living as a woman, and I'm happy, productive, and part of society. My body fits me. I'm finally, fully and completely Rachel, as God meant me to be.

— Rachel Dwyier, she/her, 62, Lafayette, Colorado (2021)

you, but in reality we're not. We're still part of humankind. And to show us respect, consideration, and compassion.

DT: This is a kind of fun question: What are your favorite media stuff right now? Music, film, anything?

RD: Although I'm not one of these people who can remember lyrics or artists, I do love music. I'm a firm believer that if you can't feel your music, you're not listening to it at the proper sound level.

DT: Goodbye hearing but hello music! Do you have a favorite genre of music?

RD: Rock and roll. I'm a rock'n'roll girl. When it comes to shows... I think hands down one of my most favorite movies is *The Matrix*. There's so much meaning. I mean, every time I've watched it—and I've lost count of how many times I've watched it—something new that's relevant really resonates.

DT: I love *The Matrix*, it's one of my favorite movies, too.

RD: That section with the red pill and the blue pill. The connotations of that are just... And don't we just wish we had that red and blue pill when we were trying to figure this stuff out?

DT: And that's the dichotomy earlier you were talking about: There are really only two choices: either transition or end it all. That's the red pill and the blue pill.

RD: Yeah.

DT: I mean, you just have to realize the truth: there is no gender.



Rachel seated with Manilda G. Raffe at Roosevelt Park, Longmont

RD: Oh, let me throw this one in, because I've been asked this before. This was actually asked in *Trans Voices* and I never got a chance to actually answer it. The question was asked, "What do I think about transgender in sports?" My response to that is that I think both sides of the aisle are 100% wrong. Physically there is a difference between men and women, so if you take someone who's in their 20s who has been raised as a male, competed as a male, and they decide to transition—which good for them!—it takes a while for everything to level out. So I don't feel that's right for them to compete at that stage of the game. That doesn't mean that down the road they can't. But we need science to let us know and start comparing and find out. Where's that break point, what creates it to where a trans woman is at the same basic level as a cis woman? Because then they could compete there. Because the problem isn't against trans men, it's solely against trans women, let's get that on the table here.

DT: Yeah, it's that trans-misogyny.

RD: Yeah. You need to help figure this out. Don't just exclude us. Figure out a way to be inclusive. That's my answer on that. Both sides are wrong. We need science to really step it up. And sadly, the people who are against it generally don't like science.

DT: Anything else you want to throw out there?

RD: Just remember we're human, too. We're all part of humankind. We're all on the third rock of the sun. Be nice to each other. ♥

YOU KNOW WHAT'S QUEER?

by Devon Towry

Queer is a word, that much is immediately apparent, and you may have heard or read this word used in many ways over the years. You may be hearing it a lot lately, too, especially in reference to LGBTQIA2S+ folks. Depending on where you're from and how old you are, that might make you feel uncomfortable, but queer is a word with its own storied history, and is a term that has been reclaimed in defiance of "traditional" norms. Let's learn a bit about it together.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, queer is of uncertain origin, and may have come into English from German. It is first attested in the early 1500s, meaning "strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric," and



it held this meaning for a long time. The added connotation of "doubtful nature" or "suspicious, dubious" came into use in the 1700s.

It's not until the late nineteenth century that queer (as a noun) gains an association with homosexuality or gender expression outside accepted norms. The first attestation of queer used for a homosexual person is in a letter written by the Marquess of Queensberry in 1894 denouncing "Snob Queers" in an unambiguously pejorative fashion. Queer as an adjective meaning homosexual or relating to homosexuality appears in US English in the early twentieth century. From this point, the word takes on the pejorative meaning and connotations that many associate with the word today, either from using it or having the word cast at them as a slur.

But, as the OED states "although frequently used derogatorily, queer in this sense [as referring to homosexuality or gender expression outside accepted norms] may also be used as a neutral or positive term, esp. of self-reference". While queer can still be used as a pejorative, depending on speaker's intent, the word has been undergoing a process of reclamation by the LGBTQIA2S+ community since the 1970s.

During the 1970s and 1980s, queer begins to gain the meaning "having a sexual or gender identity that does not correspond to, or that challenges, traditional (esp. heteronormative) ideas of sexuality or gender", beginning in reference to queer activism and activists and then becoming a larger umbrella term for the LGBTQIA2S+ community, covering many sexual and gender identities. The OED adds "this sense emerged alongside queer theory n. in the early 1990s. Originally used provocatively by LGBT activists such as members of the Queer Nation organization, it was intended to convey an assertive and radical alternative to conventional notions of sexuality and gender as part of a wider campaign in response to the AIDS crisis." Queer Theory is "an approach to social and cultural study which seeks to challenge or deconstruct traditional ideas of sexuality and gender, esp. the acceptance of heterosexuality as normative and the perception of a rigid dichotomy of male and female traits." It is a relatively young branch of study and analysis, but an important one, and one of its offshoots is Queer Theology, which seeks to challenge heteronormative and cisnormative ideas in faith traditions and religious texts, drawing attention to the fact that queer desire and queer gender have always been present across the world and across history.

Queer is an incredibly important and empowering word for folks who challenge or don't fit under traditional definitions and norms for sexuality and gender identity. The word is still used by some in hurtful and demeaning ways, of course, but the process of reclaiming the

word cannot—and should not—be denied, especially for those who use the term to describe themselves, their place in the world, and their experiences.

Not everyone in the LGBTQIA2S+ community wants to be referred to as queer, and that's okay! But many who don't take the label for themselves acknowledge that it is meaningful for others. If you're not sure how to refer to someone—ask! Normalize asking a person's pronouns and using your own. Normalizing asking how someone wants to be referred to, what they want to be called.

When in doubt, queer in its adjective form is acceptable to use when referring to queer folks and the queer community, but don't use the noun form for someone, as it still retains its pejorative



sense, especially coming from someone outside the queer community. You may hear younger people in the queer community referring to each other by the noun form as a type of in-group colloquialism, and that's okay, too!

Don't fear the queer! Language is always evolving and changing. Some terms fall out of use, and some change their meaning, just like queer. Some terms become pejorative and negative and then regain life again in a more positive light, just like queer.

So, what's queer? Queer is queer. Queer is different. Queer is strange. Queer is outside the norm. Queer challenges tradition. Queer is beyond any binary. Queer is wonderful and new. Queer is all over the world and queer is throughout history. Queer is one and queer is many. Queer is quintessentially human. ♥



QUEER THEOLOGY BOOK LIST

Would you like to read more about Queer Theory and Queer Theology? Here is a selection of book titles! For the complete list and for resources on Queer Theology, Gender Identity, LGBTQIA+ Allyship, and LGBTQIA+ Groups, check out [Mountain Sky UMC Conference's Resource Library!](#)

- *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* by Patrick S. Cheng
- *From Sin to Amazing Grace: Discovering the Queer Christ* by Patrick S. Cheng
- *Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality, and Spirit* by Patrick S. Cheng
- *Queer Theology* by Linn Marie Tonstand
- *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians* by Austen Hartke
- *Queering Wesley, Queering the Church* by Keegan Osinski
- *The Black Trans Prayer Book* co-edited by J Mase III & Lady Dane Figueroa Eddi
- *Beyond Worship: Meditations on Queer Worship, Liturgy, & Theology* edited by James Admans
- *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology* by Pamela R. Lightsey
- *Beyond the Gender Binary* by Alok Vaid Menon
- *Outside the Lines: How Embracing Queerness Will Transform Your Faith* by Mihee Kim-Kort
- *Our Strangely Warmed Hearts: Coming Out into God's Call* by Karen Oliveto
- *Called Out: 100 Devotions for LGBTQ*
- *Christians* by E. Carrington Heath
- *Welcoming and Affirming* edited by Leigh Finke
- *Queerfully and Wonderfully Made* edited by Leigh Finke
- *Transfigured: A 40-day journey through scripture for gender-queer and transgender people* by Suzanne DeWitt Hall
- *Queers the Word: A 40-Day Devotional for LGBTQ+ Christians* by Brian G. Murphy and Shannon T.L. Kearns
- *Black Queer Ethics, Family, and Philosophical Imagination* by Thelathia Nikki Young
- *Queer Religiosities: An Introduction to Queer and Transgender Studies in Religion* by Melissa M. Wilcox

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS SUMMER?



Summer Celebration Cookout - Sunday, July 7 after Worship Service

The Ministry Design Team is inviting you to join us for a cookout in our courtyard on July 7 right after worship service. Meat and drinks will be provided by the Ministry Design Team. Bring an appetizer, side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Bring a blanket to spread out on the grass or you can eat at the tables in the Gallery or Parlor, as the doors will be open to both. If you have questions, please reach out to Allyson Bowland.

Coffee with the Pastor - Sunday, July 14 at 11:15 AM in the Parlor

If you have questions about our church or about our Methodist denomination, we would like to invite you to join Pastor Claire McNulty-Drewes and Tricia Grafelman to learn more. Meet other people that are new to our church and find out how you can get connected!



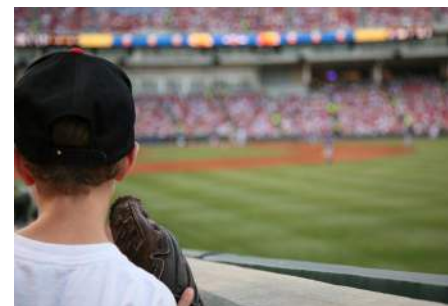
Lake McIntosh Saturday Picnic - Saturday, August 3 at 12:00 PM

Let's have some summer fun together in August! Summer is coming to an end so, before school starts up, we invite you to bring your own picnic lunch, a lawn chair, and any games you would like to play and join us for a picnic at Lake McIntosh. If you have any water toys (kayak or paddle board) bring them along as well. Join us near the playground at the cross streets of Harvard and Lakeshore Drive at 12:00 PM on August 3.

Rockies Faith Day - Sunday, August 11 at Coors Stadium

Are you ready to sing along? "Take me out to the Ball Game! Take me out with the crowd! Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack's, I don't care if I ever get back! So it's root! root! root! for the home team, if they don't win it's a shame.... For it's one! two! three! strikes, you're out! at the ole ball game!"

Join us for a family day of fun while we watch the Colorado Rockies take on the Atlanta Braves on Sunday, August 11, at Coors Stadium. Contact Tricia Grafelman or Sara Kearse if you are interested in going! Zach Williams will be performing a concert after the game. (Check out some of his songs on [his YouTube Channel](#).) Look for a sign up in the Gallery!



Reentry Initiative Presentation - Sunday, August 25 at 8:45 AM

Come hear some good news taking place right here in our community! The combined Sunday adult discussion groups invite you to hear news of The Reentry Initiative, a service to Longmont people returning to society after serving time in prison.

The presentation will be on August 25, 2024, at 8:45 AM in the chapel. For more information on the Reentry Initiative see their website: www.reentryinitiative.org



JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY

If you want to be a part of our church family and a church that is doing meaningful things, we invite you to consider formal membership. Our church has grown 43% in the past 2 years! This is truly unheard of "in this day and age" for denominational churches.

The Heart of Longmont is passionate about social justice, embracing all of God's beloved children, serving God by serving others and growing spiritually together through small group discussions, meaningful worship services, and connections to others that want to grow in their faith as well.



We have many ways to get connected in small groups like our Pack and Unpack Tuesday afternoon Bible Study, Adventurer's and Faith and Reason Adult Ministry classes on Sunday mornings, Embracing Doubt study on Monday evenings, United Women of Faith Circles, and Men's Fellowship group on every other Wednesday night. We also serve many non-profit organizations in our community like HOPE, OUR Center, Recovery Café, Habitat for Humanity, Wild Plum Head Start, and The Inn Between, to mention a few.

We invite you to attend the Coffee with the Pastor on July 14 and learn more about what is involved in church membership, or you can reach out to Pastor Claire McNulty-Drewes or Tricia Grafelman directly.



WE ARE A COMMUNITY THAT PRAYS

Send your prayer requests to prayers@heartoflongmont.org

SUBMISSIONS?

Do you have a worshipful moment, memorable experience, story, photo, or other interesting Heart of Longmont tale you'd like to share with our community? Send them to digitalcontent@heartoflongmont.org!

Give Online



Scan here to give to HOL programs and compassion offering.
Thank you for your generosity!

WORSHIP WITH US!

Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:00 AM in person or online on our YouTube channel! We look forward to seeing you there!

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HOL CARES ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

A return to "normal" is a precarious place for many of our friends and neighbors, especially those who are immunocompromised, disabled, or otherwise at risk.

Please continue to show love and respect for all our friends, neighbors, and siblings in Christ and stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness in order to curb the spread of disease. We still encourage you to wear a mask and practice social distancing.



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www.heartoflongmont.org

OUR MISSION

Putting More of God's Love Into The World; Helping all persons find deeper meaning and God's purpose for their lives as committed Christ-followers.

Serving as the Heart of Longmont means:

We will welcome all persons, without reservation or judgment, just as Jesus Christ would do.

We will work tirelessly by entering into intentional acts of compassion and social justice to make our community a place where God's love is known by all, where poverty and deprivation are unknown by any, and where respect for the worth and dignity of each person is the norm.

We will respect and honor other religious traditions while choosing Christ as our way of knowing God best.

We will emphasize life-long learning so that we may engage our world from a dynamic and creative perspective.

We will work to protect God's creation.

We will practice stewardship of all aspects of our lives, including time, talent, financial resources, and spiritual gifts.