

# Progressive Spirit news

JUNE 2020 – VOLUME 11, ISSUE 6

ST. PAUL'S United Church of Christ  
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## Pastor's Post

**With Guidance from our Rocky Mountain Conference, and the national setting of the UCC, we will continue to meet on-line for the month of June. Our COVID-19 task force will present recommendations to us when they have them developed. Until we meet in person, we are hoping you continue to join us via zoom. We will revisit the situation at the end of June, and determine what our plans will be moving into July and beyond. Thank you for understanding.**

We have created a task force to look into how and when we can reopen for in person worship. As those suggestions are presented, I will be sure to update all of you. If you have any thoughts about returning to worship in the sanctuary, please let me know, and I will get them to the task force.

I'm heartbroken. I'm scared. I'm feeling inadequate. And so much more. I started working

## June

- June 7
  - Pajama church – come to worship in your pj's if you wish
  - Genesis 1:1-2:4a
- June 14
  - Aeslin's Parade 2:45, LaBonte Park, east side
  - Exodus 19:2-8, psalm 100
  - Matthew 9:35-10:8
- June 21
  - Father's Day
  - Jeremiah 20:7-13, Psalm 69:7-10,16-18
  - Matthew 10:24-39
- June 28
  - Jeremiah 28:5-9, psalm 89:1-4,15-18
  - Matthew 10:40-42

on this newsletter and this post, before Memorial Day. A day which feels like it is so long ago. Just like the beginning of this pandemic feels like it was long ago.

Our response to the events of the past week, for me, are still being defined. Our conference and the national setting are developing some resources for us. I will keep you updated as things are released by the national setting and our conference.



## June Birthdays

- 1 – Don Denham
- 13 – Taylor Ballard
- 15 – Collin Ballard

As I write, some of these materials are already available for us. One thing that is taking place is a course, "Sacred Conversations To End Racism." I will post information about this course which is being offered by our conference currently. One of the main leaders is Rev. Clare Twomey from Colorado Springs, a seminary classmate of mine. Look for more information coming soon. UCC.ORG also has resources, and I am posting one below in the newsletter. The event I have posted for is happening on Thursday of this week.

Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?: NRSV

After our worship yesterday, we had an open dialog during joys and concerns. I want to thank you all for joining in the discussion, and for your support, as I admitted I was not sure what to do, or where to go, but I do know you are with me. Together, we can help each other. While I oppose violence, looting, and the destruction of property, I also understand that this is a way many people feel is all they can do to be noticed. I cannot support this behavior, but I will not condemn those who are on the front lines of this struggle. My one caveat is those who are coming in, creating violence, doing damage in areas that are not their homes area, inciting riots and violence to lead a political agenda forward. And, we are seeing this in many areas. I don't always condone what the police do, but in some cases, they are doing what they do because they are fearful for their lives. I can't take much more, so I am not watching the TV news. I could only watch the murder of George Floyd one time, because my heart was breaking, I was physically sick while I saw it. I DO NOT have a solution, but I feel that as a white man, it is my duty to educate myself, educate others, and be kind to all other humans, and stand up for every life that is taken, every person who is harmed in some way by all this violence. Peaceful protests often are changed by the police who escalate. May we see an end to this behavior. This is my prayer for right now.

Proverbs 21:15 "When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but dismay to evildoers." Proverbs 21:15

As I re-write this newsletter article, on this a beautiful day in Laramie, my heart does remain heavy. It's sunny, warm, and surprisingly not too windy. Originally, I started writing this newsletter from my home, because the fumes from varnish were strong in the building. I will say that the team that is working on the sanctuary are real craftsmen, and I think you will be happy with the work that is being done. I am amazed at how they try to reuse many of the original materials, and how good they are at matching stains.

This month is the start of the season when we usually go on our summer trips, attend yard parties, and watch graduations. June is celebrated around the world as Gay Pride Month. For many of us, we will venture out, but if you are like us, you will stay closer to home than you have in the past. I really want to go see my father, but I'm not, at this time, wanting to be on an airplane. As you travel and expand from stay at home to safer at home, remember to wear your mask when you are out. We want everyone to be able to return to worship when that is feasible for St. Paul's.

Aeslin is our lone graduate this year, so let's all let her know we are happy for her. If you want to send her a card, or a gift, her address is in the directory. If you don't have a directory, send me an email, and I'll get her address to you. We will also honor Aeslin with a car parade on June 14. It's not a secret, we needed to be sure she would be home and not at work. What will be a surprise is how many of us come out to honor her. We will meet at the east side of LaBonte Park and then drive past her house. Meet at 2:45 at the park, and we will move out at 3PM. I encourage as many of you as possible to come join us in honoring Aeslin. If you decorate your car, put signs, etc. on the drivers side, so Aeslin can see you as you drive past.

During this COVID time, I have been trying to make worship together meaningful. We have worshipped with other UCC congregations, we have worshipped with leaders from all around our denomination, and this past week we worshipped with other Laramie churches. As our worship at home continues, I will be trying out other ideas. The council and I will be working on something for St. Paul's birthday. Look for updates on that coming soon. If you have suggestions for worship, please let me know. Ginny has been sending some musical numbers for inclusion in the weekly update. If you have a song, poem, or something that has struck you, please send it to me. I am always looking for ways we can connect with each other, and including something in our weekly update that had meaning or beauty to you, and you wish to share with the congregation, would be nice.

The Rocky Mountain conference continues to host clergy gatherings weekly, and I attend as often as I can. I am learning a lot and am able to interact with many others from around the conference I would not have the opportunity to see in other times. I am finding these weekly meetings to be valuable, and to let me see what else is going on. It has helped lift my spirits when I feel I'm the only one who can't stop feedback during a service, I can't format the slides correctly, I mess up on the zoom schedule. I am a pastor, and together I'm learning with my fellow pastors how to be and do more with regards to technology. I am serving on the conference nominating committee, and we are putting together a slate of candidates for open positions within the conference guiding and governing bodies. Next month, I will begin a year long (or there about) process with five other clergy. This is called Communities of Practice, and is a deepening of call, providing resources for pastors, and whatever else comes up. This

was to be a monthly in person meeting, but was put on hold, and now will be done via zoom. I will keep you updated as I move through this process.

I continue to learn and grow as I navigate new territory for me. As someone said a few weeks ago, I'm a pastor, not a videographer or producer. Well, that may have been true when we took our calls, but it seems to be the norm now. When you watched the interfaith service on Sunday, (if you did not, the link to the video is in the weekly update for last week, and the email I sent) I hope you appreciated the sense of community that I and my clergy partners have here in Laramie. I don't know if our online worship is meeting your needs. I hope it is. If so, tell me. If not, tell me. I am very open to making any changes to worship to reflect our current situation, but more importantly, I want you to continue to stay connected and part of our family. Those who are attending on Sunday, tell me why. Those who have stopped attending on Sunday, tell me why. If you haven't attended a zoom worship service, give it a try. Invite your friends as well.

I can't do this in a vacuum, and your input helps to inform and direct me.

I am going to close with a list of names. I doubt I have to tell you why I am listing these names, these men and women are just a few of the black men and women murdered recently by police. I ask that you read them aloud at some time in your prayers. I am doing that.

George Floyd  
Ahmaud Avery  
Breonna Taylor  
Oscar Grant  
Trayvon Martin  
Tamir Rice  
Eric Garner  
Walter Scott  
Michael Brown  
Freddie Gray  
Jamarion Robinson - shot 76 times  
Amadou Diallo - shot 40 times even in bottom of feet  
Ryan Twymam - shot 37 times

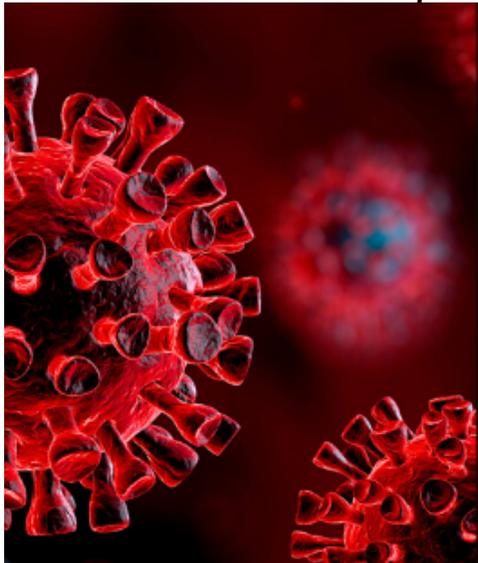
**“Look at me—I shout ‘Murder!’ and I’m ignored;  
I call for help and no one bothers to stop.” Job 19:7 The Message**

I look forward to seeing each of you, hopefully in the very near future. Please call me, email me, or text me if you need to talk.

I give you my blessings, and my heart,

Rev. Ken

The Governor has released updated orders and guidance. You can read them here:



## Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

- Clean your hands often
- Avoid close contact
- Stay home if you're sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wear a mask if you are sick
- Clean and disinfect

### Family Promise of Albany County is having their Pizza Fundraiser this Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, at Papa Murphy's!

Order online on THURSDAY using the code **Love**

25% of proceeds will go towards Family Promise of Albany County!

We are very grateful that Papa Murphy's is able to continue these "Raise the Dough" fundraisers while being able to follow social distancing practices.

*Thank you for your support! Enjoy your pizza!*

[Order Online](#)

### Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline available

The Laramie Suicide Prevention Hotline is a 24-hour crisis line that you can call or text if you are feeling scared, depressed, alone, angry, or any other painful feelings that are hard to deal with by yourself. Call or text. 307-977-7777. Sometimes the last thing you want to do is talk about the way you are feeling, but often that is the one thing that will help you feel better.

Calls are free and you will be connected with someone in Laramie who is trained to talk or text to those in crisis.

**Remember to stay safe by washing your hands, not touching your face, especially your eyes, and continuing to wear a mask when you go out in public. We want you to be with us when we return to worshipping together.**

## Worship and church calendar: June 2020 Worship Calendar and Church Happening

- June 7
  - Pajama church – come to worship in your pj’s if you wish
  - Genesis 1:1-2:4a
- June 14
  - Aeslin’s Parade 2:45, LaBonte Park, east side
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One of the many resources presented for us by our national setting. You can find the registration link at [UCC.ORG](https://www.ucc.org)

# Addressing Systematic Violence Against African Americans in Contemporary America

An Interactive Webinar hosted by Religions for Peace

Thursday, June 4, 2020, 12:00 noon ET

Please join us for this interactive webinar to learn about contemporary dehumanization of African Americans in our nation and how to contribute towards systematic change to address this pandemic.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Featuring:



Rev. Aundreia Alexander



Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer



Rabbi Jonah Pesner

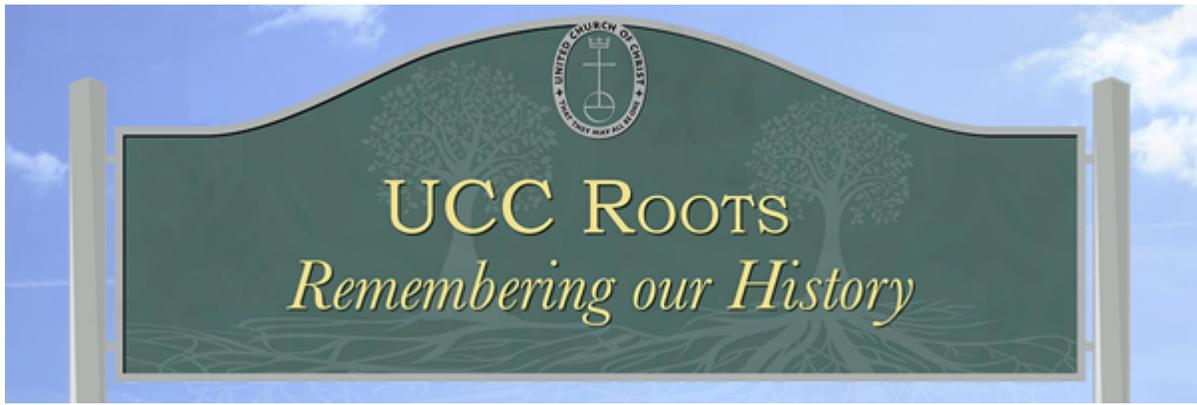


Imam Khalid Fattah Griggs



Rev. Susan K. Williams Smith

From the UCC Historical Council



## “Building Bridges, Sustaining a Legacy”



As thousands of American pioneers spread West on the frontier in the 1800s there was great need for pastoral leadership in churches. Congregationalists were committed to justice and inspired by an ecumenical spirit. They joined others to form seminaries to prepare clergy leaders. Seminaries developed curricula to address the political and racial issues of the nation, through the lens of faith. They combined rigorous classroom study with active engagement in the public square. By the 20th century clergy had become key civic leaders, building and sustaining bridges of justice and mercy in troubling times.

Kenneth B. Smith, Sr. (1931-2008) was a key African American leader. Born in Montclair New Jersey, Smith graduated from Virginia Union University and Bethany Theological Seminary. He began his ministry in Chicago in 1954 as the Associate Pastor at the Congregational Church of Park Manor; he later became the organizing Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in 1961; and he eventually served as Senior Pastor of The Church of the Good Shepherd in 1968.

In 1984, Smith was called to become the tenth president of Chicago Theological Seminary, serving until 1998. CTS had been founded in 1855 and carried on the historical commitments of Congregationalists. Smith upheld that legacy and strengthened the seminary’s ecumenical and programmatic connections with church and community. He formed a new and diverse faculty -- upholding his vision of “enlightened, theologically trained leadership.”

Kenneth B. Smith Sr. “was able to successfully navigate and connect three critical sectors in the public square including the church, the academy, and the civic-business sector. He was a beloved pastor, scholar, and community builder.” He knew how to build bridges. Furthermore, because his leadership coincided with the founding of the United Church of Christ in 1957, his work as an important African American leader enriched the diversity and strengthened the witness of the United Church of Christ.

*Contributor: Julia M. Speller*

**St. Paul’s**

United Church of Christ

602 Garfield St.  
Laramie, WY 82070

## Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.



### St. Paul's UCC

#### Our Mission:

*To be an emphatically inclusive,  
progressive community  
on the Path of Christ,  
seeking justice and peace for all Creation  
through creative ceremony and celebration,  
soulful questioning,  
and acts of compassion and service.*

**Rev. Kenneth Ingram**

**720-289-2394**

**[revken1957@gmail.com](mailto:revken1957@gmail.com)**

**Rev. Ken's hours:**

**Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri and Sunday  
mornings – call first to confirm**

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY  
ACTIVITIES AROUND TOWN  
THAT YOU WOULD LIKE  
MENTIONED IN THE WEEKLY  
UPDATE OR THE NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE SEND THE  
INFORMATION TO REV. KEN AT  
STPUCC@GMAIL.COM