



ZING!

In This Issue

- ❖ [Path to Restoration Summer Series](#)
- ❖ [With Care...](#)
- ❖ [Defund the Police](#)
- ❖ [A True Homeless Sanctuary](#)
- ❖ [Get to Know Jen Dudenhefer](#)
- ❖ [RMMC](#)
- ❖ [End](#)

Gun Violence Round Table

Planned schedule for the weekend:

- Friday, June 25: Screening of Beating Guns at Boulder Mennonite Church (indoor capacity with masks is about 50 at current COVID guidelines)
- Saturday, June 26: Workshops and Panel discussion with local organizations and leaders working to end gun violence
- Sunday, June 27: Worship service at Boulder Mennonite with Shane Claiborne and RAWtools + gun to garden tool demo

*Saturday and Sunday we expect to have a large tent outside for the panel discussion and Sunday service, with the ability to breakout in smaller groups outside and in the church for workshops.

Registration is open! www.surveymonkey.com/r/TGRSLRX



Path to Restoration Summer Series

By Zach Martinez, Pastor of Sojourn Mennonite Church

Colorado may be known for its blue skies, but last fall, there were very few clear blue skies to found, at least not in my neck of the woods. From August through mid-November, a near constant haze hung in the air. It was a grim reminder of what was happening less than a hundred miles west of my home in Greeley: the two largest wildfires in Colorado history, the Cameron Peak and the East Troublesome fires, were burning simultaneously. Hundreds of thousands of acres were burned, homes and loved ones lost, and beloved natural areas closed, maybe forever.

These fires, of course, were not the only fires that burned last year. Across the country, urban centers also burned in the wake of the public lynching of George Floyd, as protestors filled the streets crying out for racial justice and basic human rights for BIPOC, a promise long withheld in this country.

Disconnected as they may seem initially, I've come to believe that they are perhaps symptoms of the same problem: centuries old broken relationships between people, the earth, and the Creator. As I reflected on these fires, I was reminded that God often speaks through fire. In one instance, on the slopes of Mount Horeb, God spoke to Moses through fire, saying, "I have heard the cries of my people." Might the fires that burned in Minneapolis and Detroit and DC or the fires that burned throughout the mountain west be indications that we too have stumbled onto holy ground? That perhaps God has something to say to us as well? If so, how might we respond?

These are some of the questions I set out to answer this summer along with Todd Wynward and Daniel "Ryno" Herrera of the Taos Initiative for Life Together (TiLT). As three men from different settler/colonial heritages seeking to re-place ourselves, we came together to confess our ancestral legacies of violence toward First Peoples and the earth, how we have benefited from and perpetuated this violence, and what toxic habits and mindsets we might need to change in ourselves to make right relationship possible, so that we might learn how to become a people of place once again.

The result of these conversations was an idea for a 10-week interactive series alternating between podcasts and live Zoom sessions. During this series we invite a conversation about living into right relationship with the places we call home, about listening to and honoring the original ways of being in a particular region and living in a way that make a path to restoration possible.

We've called our series The Path to Restoration. Beginning on May 31st, we will release a new podcast every other Monday. Following the release of each podcast we will host the live Zoom session to dive deeper into the questions raised in the podcast and of listeners who are looking to find the path to restoration in their own backyard. It is our hope that this would be an inwardly transformational time and that will lead to outwardly transformative ways of living in a particular place.

For more information on the podcast and live session dates visit: taostilt.square.site/. There you can also learn more about the mission of TiLT and donate to their ongoing work.

FIVE ORIGINAL PODCASTS. FIVE LIVE ZOOM FORUMS.

Join us on a TEN WEEK SUMMER SERIES:

THE PATH TO RESTORATION

To register go to: taostilt.square.site



On The Path to Restoration, long-distance trail runner Zach Martinez interviews Todd Wynward and Daniel “Ryno” Herrera of TiLT about ways we all can live into a new normal. Join others across NM and CO on a formative journey together, exploring practical ways to restore right relationships with Spirit, ourselves, others, and the Earth.

Every other Monday evening starting June 7,
the trio will host a live Zoom Forum, encouraging responses by participants to the themes introduced the previous week’s podcast.

Podcast 1: **Becoming a Person of Place**

Podcast 2: **Walk the Watershed Way**

Podcast 3: **Grow a Robust Local Food Web**

Podcast 4: **Hyperadobe Home Building & Repurposing Plastic**

Podcast 5: **After Devastation, Regeneration**

Questions? Contact toddwynward@gmail.com

“With Care...”

Alice M. Price, member of the conference Dialogue Resource Team and member of the Anabaptist Fellowship of Alamosa. As part of the MSMC Dialogue Resource Team, she brings a history of leadership in mediation, group facilitation, and restorative justice processes.



The power of imagination -- the ability of our minds and spirits to receive and form new images and concepts -- feels especially important as we reckon with how our and others' lives and understandings have been upended and injustices have been exposed in new ways this past year. Sociologist Ruha Benjamin, professor of African American studies at Princeton, offers this critical insight: The goal of imagination is not just to reproduce ideas and structures that already exist. As we imagine the future, she exhorts us to consider *whose* imaginations -- and knowledge, experience, hopes, and anxieties -- are allowed to be fully materialized in such imaginings, rather than captured or lost in the limitations of our or other's minds and hearts. Many of us have

led or witnessed the hard work of holding space for bravely inclusive imaginings. And we can all recall when talk of “re-imagining” how things *might* be has greatly discomfited us or others invested in the status quo. This tension between *stasis* and the impetus of visions that drive change or renewal is real and ever present, whether in intra-personal, family, church, or social dynamics, or in our ever-expanding global sphere.

The Bible is filled with the transformative power of images, visions, signs, and dreams, while never underplaying the realities of human blindness and discord. Wendell Berry has called imagination “our way into the divine Imagination, permitting us to see wholly -- as whole and holy -- what we perceive as scattered, as order what we perceive as random.” Mission Network's recent SENT conference centered a few folks on the ground imagining Anabaptist peace churches. As one who has lived and walked alongside others' struggles to define and sustain congregational life, I was surprisingly moved by this handful of stories of people stepping out from old visions of church to more clearly see and embrace creative new forms of faithful and life-giving communities. May we not shy away from new lenses the past year may have brought to bear on the imaginings of our own minds and spirits. And may we be inspired by these closing words from Ruja Benjamin: “Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within.”

SAVE THE DATE • ASSEMBLY 2021

Blessed Unproductivity

Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. —*Luke 12:27 (NIV)*

July 30 - August 1, The Abbey, Cañon City, Colo.

—Virtual and In-Person



Join us for Assembly. Registration coming soon!

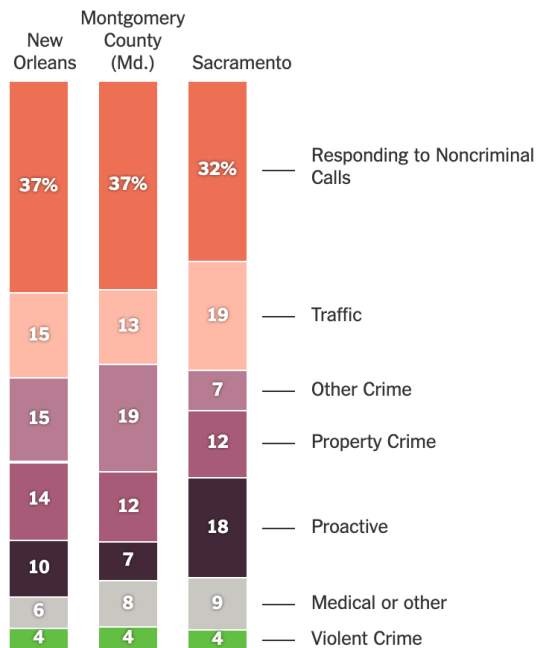
Conference Minister's Corner

Defund the Police: An Anabaptist Idea?

By Rev. Amy S. Zimbelman, Conference Minister



I've spent the last 10 years looking the aftermath of state violence right in the eye: bodies and psyches irreparably damaged by car bombs, rape, machetes, and gunshots. This violence happened to my clients through no fault of their own, often based on their race or ethnicity. These uprooted lives became fellow Coloradans and given a specific status: refugees. Refugees were invited here by the U.S. government for their safety, and each one hoped that the violence could become a distant memory left behind in their home country.



HOW POLICE SPEND THEIR TIME

But as Americans turn on the news recently, we've been horrified (though probably not shocked) to see the same story of state violence finally getting airtime in our country - lives ended before their time, communities terrorized. In 2015, a quarter of those shot by the police were having an emotional or mental health crisis at the time of their death¹. And from 2013-2017, Black people in the U.S. were more than three times more likely than White people to be killed in a police encounter². The recent Derek Chauvin guilty verdict was something, but it felt a little bit like a hiccup in the long labor pains birthing justice. Not only individuals, but the entire system they represent needs to change.

Various ideas are circulating of what to advocate for. One idea is defunding the police - in fact, Mennonite Church USA has just come out with [a curriculum with that title](#). But is that too extreme? What about reforming or reimagining the police?

So, I've been trying to wrap my mind around the topic of state violence against American citizens on American soil and what we can do about it.

I started close to home by asking a couple questions to resident expert Mike Martin, who has done a lot of work to imagine alternatives to violence as a solution to problems on an individual, community, and national level through [RAWtools](#).

Amy: *What exactly is meant when folks call for the police to be abolished?*

Mike: When it comes to talking about police abolition, people can have the impression that we flip a switch and have a turn-key system to replace it. Police abolition looks more like grassroots organizing to allow transformative justice practices to be learned in communities that allow neighbors to facilitate their own conflict resolution. Abolition can also look like sending social workers and mental health professionals in place of police officers to respond to situations. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

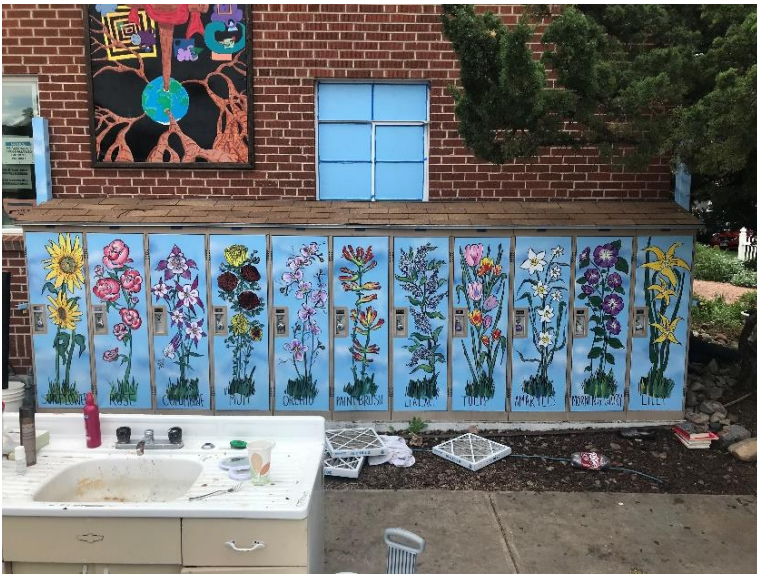
¹ Stephanie Russell-Kraft. "Alternatives to police exist. You just haven't heard of them." Sojourners March 2021.

sojo.net/magazine/march-2021/alternatives-police-exist-you-just-havent-heard-them

² Harvard School of Public Health. "Black people more than three times as likely as white people to be killed during a police encounter." Accessed May 7, 2021 at www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/blacks-whites-police-deaths-disparity/

A True Homeless Sanctuary

By Martha Roden, member of Ft. Collins Mennonite Fellowship



Large-size outdoor lockers for the homeless, lovingly painted by a local artist

Imagine never knowing where you were going to sleep at night or where your next meal would come from, and not being able to take a shower and wash your clothes for weeks at a time!

This is a reality for those experiencing homelessness and here at Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship in Fort Collins, CO, we take serving the homeless seriously.

Over 9 years, we have constructed shower and laundry facilities, added free outdoor lockers, provided weekend meals, served as a warming center, and hosted homeless families on a rotating basis. We have a reputation in our community as real advocates for the homeless!

However, when COVID-19 hit, everything changed. We decided to approach some of the most vulnerable homeless individuals we knew and invited them to live in our church. Since

March 2020, we have provided ongoing housing for at-risk persons in our church.

Those living at the church the longest have become caretakers of our building and grounds. They also serve as “homeless outreach angels.” Nearly every day, they open the church doors to other homeless individuals so they can take hot showers, wash their clothes, and grab a snack. Our church also offers free personal hygiene items, warm clothing, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

As our Pastor, Steve Ramer says, “I believe our church building, a place of worship, has finally become a true sanctuary, a place made Holy by those who come in, off the streets, and grace us with their presence.”

But our “Homeless Sanctuary” comes at a cost. With our building open 24/7, our utility bills have skyrocketed, and costs for supplies, clothing, and food, keep increasing. We recently started a GoFundMe campaign to raise the money we need: www.gofundme.com/f/true-sanctuary-for-the-homeless.



One of our homeless members with Pastor Steve and our beautifully painted outdoor lockers

Please help our Homeless Sanctuary continue by donating and sharing our story with others!

Get to Know MSMC Leadership

Jen Dudenhefer: Open, kind, and friendly (and not one to sit still)

By Rev. Amy S. Zimbelman



Jen with Koda, her first dog walking client

When I ask Jen Dudenhefer what she wants to teach her three kids, what sort of legacy she'd like to leave them, she answers that she hopes they become compassionate people who are "open, kind, and friendly."

"My girls can trip and fall while figuring out what kind of career paths they want—but if we can raise good humans in the midst of so many screens and so much privilege, then we've succeeded," she says.

The likelihood of Jen succeeding in that venture is quite high, considering she is practicing what she preaches. Not only is Jen herself open, kind, and friendly, but she also tirelessly and humbly serves others. As Mountain States Mennonite Conference's Administrator, Jen is the person behind the scenes setting up registration for events, sending out emails to churches, compiling articles for this newsletter, scheduling Zoom meetings, etc.—and doing all this with a smile.

Jen first found her way to the area in 1993. She grew up in Ohio but after graduating from Muskingum College (now Muskingum University), a Presbyterian school, she moved west to work at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp. From there, she served in Mennonite Voluntary Service at Boulder Mennonite Church (BMC), and was part of the church's founding VS unit.

Being part of BMC through the years has been a mainstay in her life, forming her and challenging her to be the person she is today.

"There have been so many things that make me proud to be a part of Boulder Mennonite Church," she says. "We put our faith in practice and walk the talk. We pay attention to big, important, current issues. Every pastor we've had there has been amazing. The church is on the cutting edge of things I need to challenge myself on—we're troublemakers."

While BMC has been a constant in her life (at one point she also served as their church administrative assistant), Jen is not one to sit still. She could be called a Jen-of-All-Trades who has had many different interests and jobs through the years.

Jen has served the next generation through various jobs, paid and unpaid. After VS, she nannied for a couple years. In 2002, she met and married her husband David, a software developer, and then took some time off from outside employment to do the important work of raising their three children. Jen eventually became the treasurer for her kids' elementary school's Parent Teacher Organization, and worked for their after-school care program.

But while she has a heart ready to serve adults and kids alike, she's also got a competitive edge to her. Jen spent much of her 20's competing in a women's ultimate frisbee team that traveled to various states including California, Arizona, and Texas. (When asked if she was any good, she laughed and said, "I was on a good team and a not-so-good team. The good team did win some games. The not-so-good team always lost but we had fun.") As a natural athlete, she's participated in many snowshoe races, triathlons, running and biking events. Her current challenge is yoga.

Jen has not only exercised her body but has also exercised her business savvy over the years. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

News from:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MENNONITE CAMP



709 County Road 62
Divide, CO 80814

719-687-9506
info@rmmc.org
www.rmmc.org

SUMMER CAMP SEASON RETURNS

The other day, I was reflecting on the past 13 months and the journey (thus far) the Rocky Mountain ministry has experienced because of the coronavirus pandemic. Canceling summer youth camps last year was excruciating, especially having everyone and everything in place. Everything except COVID-19.

While I won't begin to compare our journey to the experience of the Israelites spending 40 years in the desert or even the experience of Noah and all spending 40 days and 40 nights on the ark, I am greatly inspired by the faithfulness demonstrated by those believers in times of difficulty and unimaginable unknowns.

Despite all the time that has passed since these amazing Bible stories, camp has experienced the same faithfulness of God's people (i.e., donors, campers, guests, volunteers, board, and staff), though this coronavirus challenge. Because of this faithfulness and improving circumstances (i.e., easing of restrictions, availability of vaccine, tests, etc), camp is anticipating offering summer youth camps again. And Lord willing, we will be able to enjoy a mountain top experience at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp this summer.



Youth campers and staff celebrate their ascent of Raspberry Mountain.

MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE RETURNS FOR CAMP SAFETY

On May 23-29, 2021, Mennonite Disaster Service and Rocky Mountain continue their critical partnership in the work to remove beetle infested Engelmann Spruce trees from camp. Roughly ten volunteers are needed each day to accomplish and support the effort. Dead trees in and around camp facilities and hiking trails are the first priority for the safety of people and facilities. Beyond that, trees are cut and removed to avoid the spread of the beetles to surrounding trees and help slow down their spread. Please know that foodservice volunteers are just as welcomed as those helping in the forest. Please visit the camps volunteer page and select "Signup for Maintenance" or "Signup for Foodservice" for 1 or 2 days or the whole week.

For additional information, please contact Paul Unruh (phunruh@gmail.com, 316-772-6308) or Marc Yoder (marcyoder1@gmail.com, 719-942-3276). Hope to have you join us!



‘SEW’ FUN TO HAVE FOLKS HERE FOR QUILTING RETREAT AGAIN

The weather was good, the food was great, and women were glad to get together again and share their love of sewing. There was much chatter and laughter as the 20 participants renewed friendships and made new friends. Ideas were shared, and spiritual input was given. It was a weekend of spiritual, emotional, and physical renewal.

Participants gathered just long enough for a group photo.

PAYING THE LEGACY FORWARD CAMPAIGN FULFILLED!

YOU DID IT! Donors have reached and exceeded our ambitious goal of raising \$180,000 two months early. To directly respond to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic last summer which cancelled our summer youth camp programs and numerous guest groups including wedding, the “Paying the Legacy Forward” campaign was created. Camp estimated that it would take \$30,000 each month (\$15,000 from reserves, and \$15,000 from donor support) to sustain and care for camp operations (i.e., staff, programs, guest groups, facilities, etc.) from July 1st, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Despite the abundance of uncertainty of the future, the desire was to ensure that camp would be able to offer a 2021 summer camp season. THANK YOU!

THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S CREATION

Don’t forget to take the time to notice and appreciate the big and little things the Creator has offered us all here at Rocky Mountain. The Candytuft flower is one of the little things that signify the arrival of spring in the mountains. Amazing how something so small and delicate can blossom out of decomposing granite on the side of the road up to Emmental. When was the last time a dime actually looked big?

➤ Click [here](#) to read the full May 2021 Newsletter.



MSMC Communication Updates

Zing! Please note the 2021 deadlines and schedule:

Jun – Release Date: Jun 10; *submission deadline: May 31*

July – Release Date: July 10; *submission deadline: Jun 30*

Aug/Sept – Release Date: Aug 31; *submission deadline: Aug 15*

Oct – Release Date: Oct 10; *submission deadline: Sept 30*

Nov – Release Date: Nov 10; *submission deadline: Oct 31*

Dec – Release Date: Dec 10; *submission deadline: Nov 30*

Bulletin Announcements – We email MSMC congregations every Wednesday with bulletin announcements. If you have something to share out to our community, please email Jen, [MSMC Administrator](#), by 9am Wednesday morning.

ZING! is published for the congregations of Mountain States Mennonite Conference and can be [viewed on the website](#).

Conference Website: MountainStatesMC.org

*Email contributions as Word files to Jen Dudenhefer at administrator@MountainStatesMC.org
Articles should be 300 words or less in length.*

Conference Calendar

June 25-27,	Gun Violence Round Table, BMC, Boulder, CO
July 30-Aug 1	Annual Assembly – Canon City, CO and Online

MSMC Staff and Leadership

Conference Minister, Amy Zimbelman
AmyZ@MountainStatesMC.org

Moderator, Ryan Koch
RyanK@MountainStatesMC.org

Editor/Conference Administrator, Jen Dudenhefer
Administrator@MountainStatesMC.org

Bookkeeper, Rita Balzer
Treasurer@MountainStatesMC.org