

The Ring Lake Carillon

Ring Lake Ranch • Dubois, Wyoming • Spring 2017

An ecumenical retreat center offering “renewal in sacred wilderness.”

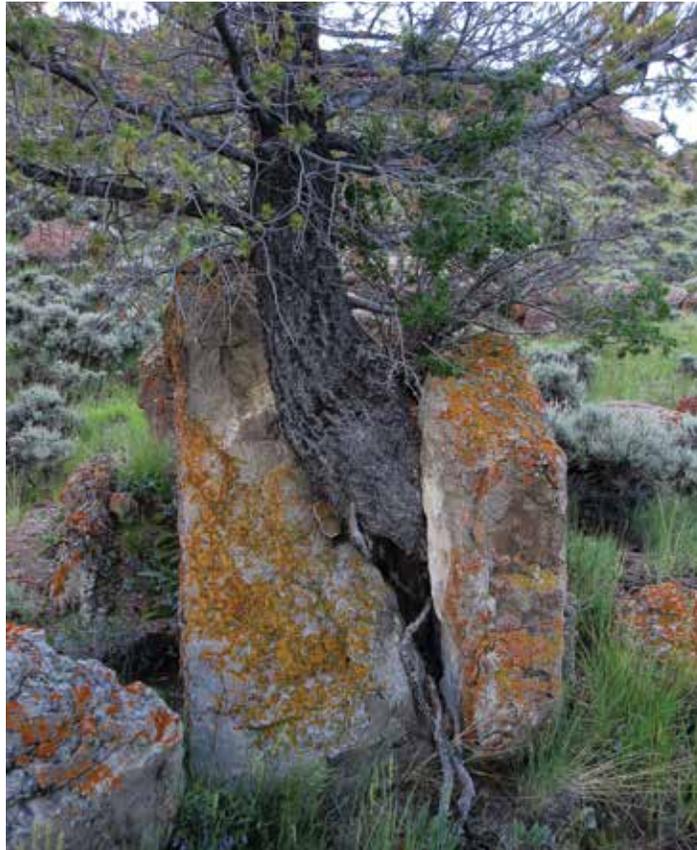
Part of the grandeur of wilderness is that it cares so little about the things that absorb us so much. We find a glorious, disarming indifference in its grand vistas and hidden niches. It shares its gifts with a prodigal extravagance, even as it ignores our imagined self-importance.

Belden Lane,
Backpacking with the Saints

Lessons

I've been struggling with what to say in this newsletter. I would like to skip over politics altogether when I talk about Ring Lake Ranch, but it feels like denying reality if we don't acknowledge the distress and division many people have felt over the last few months. Yet the Ranch is a place for retreat and renewal and for some people that means a needed escape from the events and weight of this time. So I hope these reflections – which are entirely my own thoughts on my own recent experience – walks the line between acknowledging this time and not wandering too far from the essential Ranch experience of renewal in sacred wilderness.

Because, to be honest, it's been a difficult time for me. The rancor and anger leading up to the election made my spirit cringe. The time since the election has left me wondering about many issues that will likely affect friends, family and the world around us for years to come. There have been some days when I've struggled to beat back feelings of depression and anxiety. And as I looked for resources to help me, I turned to Ring Lake Ranch – to the wilderness and to the gathering



of friends at the Ranch (both human and non-) that I have come to love so dearly. I have scenes in my head that I carry with me when I'm away from the Ranch: Middle Mountain off in the distance, the enormous rainbow trout that lives in the bend of Torrey Creek, the tracks of mule deer left in the dust of the Ridge Trail. In the hardest of these recent days, I've wondered, "What good is all of this? In the face of so much fear and anxiety, how does this help?"

And then I remembered a prayer from the Ute tradition that I've shared several times around the Ranch. Here are a few lines:

**Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands alone.**

**Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls
on the ground.**

**Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.**

**Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.**

**Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises
in the spring.**

This prayer always brings to mind the junipers that grow by sheer determination out of the rocks around the Ranch and the osprey who return to their nest each spring, sure that this spot is where they belong. This winter, I have

Learned

needed such reminders about strength and hope from these valued teachers.

And I thought about what our friend Belden Lane has said about the Christian desert monastics: "They went into the wilderness to learn what matters, to learn what to love, what to hold on to and what to let go of." Retreat in the wilderness can be many things for us: a chance to clarify our values, a time to heal and rest, an opportunity to leave exterior trappings and see who we really are. Maggie Kahin knew this when she founded Ring Lake Ranch 50 years ago. The fact that this beloved place continues on suggests another lesson; namely, that this time of struggle is hardly new. Life inevitably contains hard days and fears, but it just as surely holds days full of beauty and joy and "gifts of prodigal extravagance." The community that gathers and the wilderness that surrounds Ring Lake Ranch make it one of the most powerful places I know to be reminded again of what matters. I hope you will let the sacred wilderness – be it visited in person or in your imagination - give you the lessons you need this season.

• Andy Blackmun, Director



New Wheels!

After almost fifteen years of faithful service, the white Ranch van has been replaced with a great new vehicle, a 2013 Yukon XL. We've become more adventurous in the last couple summers with our hiking and fishing expeditions, so the increased passenger capacity and four-wheel drive is just what we needed. Everyone will be welcome to hop in for a ride this summer!

Update on the 50/50 Capital Campaign: Preserve the Experience

We are excited to announce that pledges and gifts to the 50/50 Capital Campaign have reached \$1 million!

This is great progress for the first year of the campaign. Many thanks to everyone who has already offered their support. If you haven't pledged to the campaign, we invite you to do so to help us secure the future of Ring Lake Ranch for another 50 years. We welcome pledges of unrestricted donations, donations specified for particular purposes, and planned gifts. Pledges can be fulfilled over five years, or in a shorter time if you wish. If you would like to pledge to the campaign or if you have questions, please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or call 888.458.5253. We are pleased to acknowledge the generous pledges that supporters have already made to the 50/50 Capital Campaign:



RING LAKE RANCH

FIFTY YEARS

Fossil Ridge Society

(Up to \$999)

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Becky Brown
Julia Campbell
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Suzanne Seaton and Kathy
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Arrow

(\$25,000 - \$99,999)

Jerry Campbell
David Petersen and Sara
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Big Whiskey

(\$100,000 and over)

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Petroglyph Society

(Planned Gift)

Carl Koch and Joyce Heil
Sheila and Carlyle Richards
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The Estate of Priscilla Marsh

The Ring Lake Ranch Carillon

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Designed by

Roderick Robertson

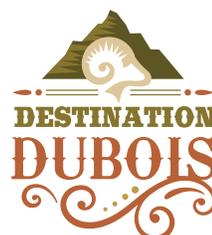
Selected photographs by

Amanda Verheul, Linda Bryant,
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Ring of Friends

We offer thanks for the many generous friends who supported Ring Lake Ranch with financial donations in 2016.

HEF indicates a gift in honor of Henry Everding to the Henry Everding Memorial Fund, which supports the riding program.

We apologize if any gifts have been missed or attributed in error. Please let us know if any information needs to be corrected.

Ross Lake Donors

(\$5000+)

Patty and David Bomboy
Jay Kemmerer and the Kemmerer Family Foundation
Samara Kline and Andy McCarthy
Dan Kreimer (Elder Student Scholarships)

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(\$501-\$1000)

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Stacey Van Laanen
John Van Nuys (HEF)
Paula Wellnitz
Dana and Linda Wilbanks (HEF)
Beverly Williamson in memory of Joan Guntzelman
Sue Wish

Special thanks for the generous gifts of Sean Roche for managing our website and Roderick Robertson for designing the Carillon and our print advertising.



Spring Sale!

The Ring Lake Ranch gift shop is having our biggest store sale ever! Everything is 40% off. Please visit ringlake.org/store to help us make room for new inventory.



Ring Lake Ranch



May 21 - May 27 Volunteer Week

Every year, the Ranch relies on volunteers, both individuals and groups, to clean, do major repair and upkeep projects, open the kitchen, and anything else needed to prepare for guests. Please consider joining us for a week of work, fun, and fellowship!

We also have a few volunteer spaces open during our seminar weeks. Contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org if you are interested in volunteering.

Scholarships Available

Scholarship assistance is available, particularly for first-time guests to Ring Lake Ranch. Please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org for more information or to request our simple scholarship application.

June 25 – July 1 Sandra Smith and Lee Ensign Ways of Being, Ways of Change Engaging the Wild Within and Beyond!

This advanced Enneagram-meets-Somatic-Healing retreat invites us into our full dimensionality as we deepen self-awareness and honor our gifts and resourcefulness. We will learn how we are hard-wired for healing, if we have the right relationship to our instinctual body and to change. Land, sky, sun and stars will companion us as we bravely face points of stuckness, points of orientation, and internal stories that no longer serve us. Our learning will be facilitated by the natural world and through poetry, movement, inquiry practices, live demos, small group discussions, and lecture. **Sandra Smith** creates and leads workshops and staff trainings using the Enneagram Personality System as a map for deepening self-understanding, communicating more effectively, and lessening reactivity. **Lee Ensign** is a clinical psychologist and certified Enneagram teacher who brings to her traditional training a lifelong fascination with exploring the interface of psychological, spiritual, and somatic experience.

July 9 – 15 Roberta Bondi Julian of Norwich

There are few writers in the history of the church more beloved than Julian of Norwich, the fourteenth century English mystic, and with good reason. This woman's insistence on God's extravagant and tender love of us, along with God's refusal to take any interest in our sin, is a message of hope for our modern broken hearts. Her deep understanding of the Trinity as the Power of Love, the Wisdom of Love, and the Goodness of Love, or as God the Father, God the Mother, and the Goodness of the Love between them, introduces us to a God beyond our deepest longings and imaginings. **Roberta Bondi** is retired from Candler School of Theology, where she was Professor of Church History. Her books include *To Love as God Loves*, *Memories of God* and *Wild Things*. She continues to teach with the Academy of Spiritual Formation.

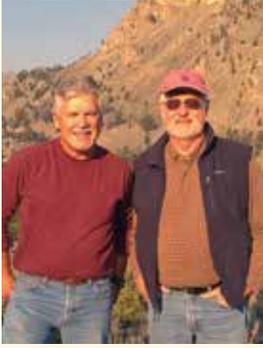
July 16 – 22 Ray Buckley Dancing with Words: Storytelling as Legacy, Culture, and Faith

Storytelling has special meaning for people of faith. We seek to identify and share our stories in nearly everything we do. Storytelling is a relationship between the speaker and the listener that may best be described not as a telling, but as story-sharing. Storytelling can enable hearers to more easily assimilate and remember history, values, culture, faith, and life-lessons. Through an understanding of the history of storytelling and of storytellers as keepers of beliefs, traditions, history, and values, we can find new meaning in the stories of our faith traditions, as well as learn what makes an effective story. Author/illustrator **Ray Buckley** is of Lakota/Tlingit/Scots descent. He currently serves as the interim Director of the Center for Native American Spirituality and Christian Study and worked as a staff member of The United Methodist Publishing House and Director of the UMC Native People's Communication Office. He is the author/illustrator of several books, including *The Give-Away: A Christmas Story in the Native American Tradition*, and *Dancing with Words: Storytelling as Legacy, Culture, and Faith*.

July 23 – July 29 Eric Barreto A People for God's Name Believing and Belonging in Luke

Survey after survey demonstrates that ethnic diversity is only increasing in recent days, and yet many of our churches remain culturally homogeneous. What might a church that invites diversity look like? Too often, our tendency has been to imagine that our faith "solves" the "problems" of diversity by making us all one, all the same. In contrast, the author of Luke-Acts views our differences as a gift to be treasured, not a difficulty to be overcome. We will turn to the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles to wonder together how God's gift of diversity might take root in our lives together. **Eric D. Barreto** is the Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary and an ordained Baptist minister. The author of *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16*, the co-author of *Exploring the Bible*, and editor of *Reading Theologically*, he is also a regular contributor to ONScripture.org, the Huffington Post, WorkingPreacher.org, and EntertheBible.org.

2017 Schedule of Programs



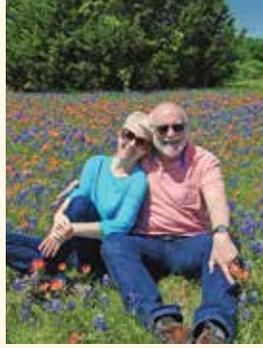
July 30 – August 5 Ron Dunn and Ed Farrell-Starbuck A Line Upon the Water Sharing the Experience of Fly Fishing and Faith

There is often more to fly fishing than meets the eye. By pursuing fish in the pooled depths of a stream one can discover not merely the presence of a fish, but also the very presence of the Holy. In this respect, fly fishing can express our longing for the God who waits for us in the depths of our own life experience. In the evenings we will explore the theological connections and the faith implications of fly fishing. We'll also cultivate the "experiential theology" of wetting a line together in the remarkable waters of the Wind River Mountains. Experienced teachers and gear will be available for anyone wanting to learn the basics or improve her or his techniques. **Ron Dunn** is currently Lead Pastor of the San Ramon Valley UMC in Alamo, California. **Ed Farrell-Starbuck** retired from full-time ministry in 2013 and now serves as part-time pastor of Harwich UMC on Cape Cod. Both Ron and Ed have been exploring the connection between fly fishing and faith for more than forty years.



August 6 – 12 Kate Campbell Comfort Language

Some writing is like comfort food! For singer/songwriter Kate Campbell the work of Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, and Harper Lee is like that. They are all from the South, and reading their work is like comfort food or "comfort language" each with their own recipe twists. Their work in particular has profoundly influenced Kate's own songwriting voice. She will be reading and singing and hopefully opening up further conversations about these writers and the notion of comfort language and finding our own voice in this seminar. Maybe we'll talk about comfort food as well! As the daughter of a Baptist preacher from Sledge, Mississippi, **Kate Campbell's** formative years were spent in the very core of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the indelible experiences of those years have shaped her heart, character, and convictions ever since. Her endearing, clear water vocal delivery, eloquent gift for storytelling, and easy command of a full range of American music styles, combine to earn Campbell recognition as a formidable talent by critics, musicians, and a discerning public.



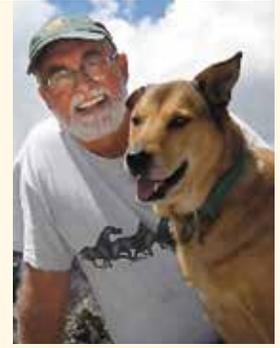
August 13 – 19 Diana and John Holbert Seeking the Psalms Today

When you hear the word "Psalms" what do you think of? Trust, peace, poetry? In fact the Book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible is a rich resource for the full range of human emotions and the complete possibilities of human behaviors. As a way of approaching the Psalms for today's world, John and Diana Holbert will facilitate our in-depth exploration of this literature by reading and responding to chosen texts, using the spiritual disciplines of Holy Listening and Lectio Divina, and by helping the participants create various kinds of presentations (movement, songs, poetry) of Laments, Songs of Thanksgiving, and Hymns of Praise in small groups. **Diana Holbert** is a liturgical dancer, a spiritual director, and a long-time pastor in the UMC, having served in England, suburbia, an all-African-American congregation, and the inner city of Dallas, Texas. **John Holbert** is the Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics Emeritus at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. John has published eleven books, the most recent being a novel, *King Saul*.



August 20 – 26 Ashley Zauderer The Great American Eclipse! Session is Full Wait List Only, Please

Ring Lake Ranch lies directly under the path of the total solar eclipse that will happen on the morning of Monday, August 21st. Locations like Little Whiskey and the ridge of Torrey Valley will offer excellent vantage points for this once-in-a-lifetime event. Approximately two minutes in duration, this event is an example of one of the most extreme observable changes in the sky with the naked eye. But, what else changes in the sky? Together we will explore everything from planetary motion, asteroids and comets, to flaring stars, exploding stars, and the remnants from these explosions -- including black holes and the spinning remnants from the burned out embers of old stars. **Ashley Zauderer** is the Assistant Director of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at the John Templeton Foundation, as well as a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University. She earned a BA from Agnes Scott College and her PhD from the University of Maryland.



August 27 – Sept. 2 Belden Lane For Love of a Tree Finding Spiritual Guides in the Natural World Session is Full Wait List Only, Please

Belden will lead us in exploring various teachers in nature and the saints (or sages) who have sought them out as spiritual guides. Examples include Hildegard of Bingen and trees, Teresa of Avila and water, and Ignatius of Loyola and caves. We'll look at these and others in relation to developmental life stages along the spiritual journey. How might one's whole life be shaped by a life-long practice of learning from teachers in the natural world? Thomas Berry, the Passionist priest and ecotheologian, complained that we've dropped out of the Great Conversation. "We're talking only to ourselves," he said. "We aren't talking to the rivers, we aren't listening to the wind and stars. We have broken the Great Conversation." This closing retreat of the season will invite us to listen once again—picking up our end of the dialogue through storytelling, ritual work, and time spent in nature. **Belden Lane** is Professor Emeritus of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University and author of *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality* and *Backpacking with the Saints*.



Transportation Fees for 2017

We are happy to pick up guests from Jackson Hole or Riverton airports by prior arrangement. PLEASE SELECT YOUR FLIGHT TO ARRIVE PRIOR TO 3:00 P.M. Airport transport fees for the summer: \$65 per person one way, maximum \$130 one way per family or group registered together. We want to make getting to the Ranch as convenient as possible, so please let us know your flight schedule well in advance.



Welcome Martha Stahl, Lynn Williamson and Michael Norman!

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new members to the RLR Board of Directors:

Martha Stahl is the CEO of Planned Parenthood of Montana and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana. Martha has been coming to the Ranch since 1999, and one of her favorite memories is attending the session when the labyrinth was built. She and her husband Bill, a fishing and hunting guide, have two children, Eva, 11, and Waylon, 8.

Lynn Williamson has been the pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church in Casper, WY, for 11 years. She is a native of South Carolina. Her husband, Dan Hauck, got her to Wyoming as fast as he could, but it took seven years. Their favorite thing about Wyoming is Ring Lake Ranch.

Michael Norman has been Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for Sojourners for 13 years. Michael and his wife Sally Baycroft live in Ottawa, Canada and have been visiting Ring Lake Ranch since 2015. Michael has more than 20 years experience in business finance and management and just as much experience as a volunteer in advocacy, activism, justice, faith-based organizing and peace work.

We also say farewell from the board to Judy Plows and Bill Brown, who completed their service on the board in 2016. We thank them both for their leadership and support in so many areas of Ring Lake Ranch life.

2016 Ring Lake Ranch Financial and Program Summary

Through nine seminars, volunteer week, and five youth retreats in 2016, we hosted a total of 446 guests, including 213 youth and children. Our seminars had 230 guests and volunteers, 43 of whom were new to Ring Lake Ranch.

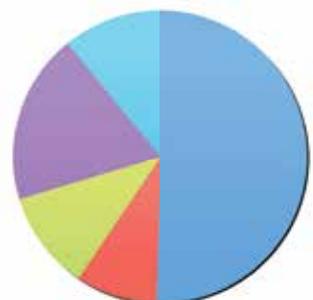
2016 Total Income \$505,664

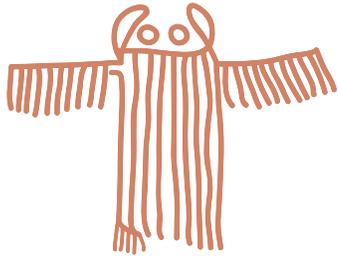
Seminar Programming	\$126,800
Youth Retreat Programming	\$151,730
Personal Donations	\$61,430
Income From Endowment	\$140,469
Other Income	\$25,235



2016 Total Expenses \$505,664

Staff	\$255,365
Riding Program	\$45,343
Administration	\$56,104
Facilities	\$95,282
Summer Program	\$53,570





RING LAKE RANCH

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La Crosse, WI

Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for “renewal in sacred wilderness.”



For more information about our programs and the Ranch community, please visit our website: www.ringlake.org