



A LETTER OF WELCOME

Dear Kindred Retreatants,

Welcome. We are delighted that each of you has set aside time this September for deeply replenishing yourself in the alpine refuge of the Rocky Mountain Eco-Dharma Center. This precious opportunity to slow down, simplify, and connect deeply with ourselves, each other, the Earth and the more-than-human world will allow us to co-create a unique sacred space to experience interdependence and wisdom.

In this mostly silent time together, we will rest into the wisdom and nourishment of the Land. Meditation, ritual, and teachings from the Dharma and other wisdom traditions will support our hearts as we lean into the vulnerability and uncertainty of these complex and challenging times in which we live. Through the embodied acknowledgement of both love and loss, courage and fear, we will explore our heart's capacities for resilience and wise response.

To support a felt sense of safety, we will practice the five precepts of non-harming, and we will emphasize equality, acceptance, and belonging as we learn from and support one another. You are invited to sit, walk, eat, hike, rest, practice gentle guided mindful movement, journal in quiet, and listen to what the wild offers to you. It is our intention that in opening the heart to life with deep presence and care that we will then step back into our lives, families, and communities with courage, clarity and compassion to transform not only how we relate to life but also to transform our world.

We look forward to our time together,
Jean, Sarah and Katherine

P.S. We share our biographies below so you may familiarize yourself with the team who will be supporting YOU, and invite you to bring yourself fully to this circle of practice, along with your gifts.

Sarah Heffron (Teacher) – I share Margaret Wheatley's conviction that "No matter what is happening around us, we can discover practices that enliven our human spirits." What is happening is often unfathomable, especially in the speed, disconnection, and bombardment of our senses of these times. I am grateful for this time to slow down together, share sacred space together, join in the profound gifts of Nature, and cultivate our hearts together, that we may touch what is indestructible within ourselves. That we create capacity and community to meet this moment with love, compassion, equanimity, and yes, joy. Towards this intention, I wholeheartedly offer my decades of Buddhist practice and teaching, and my years as a therapist, activist, and leader. So grateful to be joining all of you and my dear friends Jean and Katherine for this retreat!

Jean Leonard (Teacher) – It is an extraordinary time to be alive as we are on the cusp of what can feel like collapse. As Clarissa Pinkola Estes says "we were made for these times." Collapse can be transformed into creation through a mix of clarity, compassion and courage. I am delighted to be returning to this sacred land at RMERC to continue co-creating women's sangha with my beloved Dharma friends and fellow eco-chaplains, Sarah and Katherine, and with each of you. I am honored to be supporting your practice and holding space for a deep exploration and experience of the heart. I offer my many years as a psychologist, Dharma teacher and practitioner, and my passion for RMERC and EcoDharma in service of our collective well-being. I look forward to collaboratively cultivating restoration and resilience in this magical place so that we can go forth with creativity and a commitment to care more deeply for ourselves, each other and the Earth.

Katherine Harrell (Retreat Manager) – At the end of another heartbreaking Summer of hearing Earth's cry I feel such honor and privilege in joining our retreat space as your manager. Expanding and harboring in our Dharma community committed to deep listening and wise response feels like a path towards restoration. I bring my full heart to making our retreat space one that can hold more than we could on our own. As a child and family therapist and eco-chaplain, my passion for enduring and holding our difficulties while recognizing the unceasing beauty all around us in a playfully reverent way will be core to serving you as retreat manager. I look forward to tending the space for the mountains and lands around us to access our hearts so that when we part, we may know that we are infinitely loved, and have all that it requires to love endlessly in response.