



Mountain Sky Area

Rocky Mountain Annual Conference
Yellowstone Annual Conference
of The United Methodist Church
Bishop Elaine J. W. Stanovsky

Bishop's Sand Creek Massacre Blog

Entry #9

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“On a Mission from God?” – the School of Congregational Development

In the summer of 2013 the School of Congregational Development was held in Denver, Colorado. Hundreds of United Methodist ministers and lay people came to learn how to start new churches or to strengthen existing churches. We call them “church developers” or “church planters.” We think of them as pastors whose faith is so strong, and whose personalities are so generous that the love of God pours through them to touch people in winning, transformative ways.

As the bishop in Denver, I was invited to preach at the opening worship service. The Rocky Mountain Conference is the product of a church developer. Within months of the discovery of gold in Denver in 1858 Methodist missionaries were sent to the “gold country” of Colorado. In 1861 Rev. John Chivington, was sent as a “Presiding Elder” to organize churches. He was sent as a church planter, but as we know he left active ministry for the military. As a Colonel in the US Cavalry he became a Civil War hero at the battle of Glorietta Pass, and then he led the slaughter of peaceful innocents camped under the supposed protection of the U.S. Government at Sand Creek. How could a man of God lead a massacre of the innocents?



Pastor Charles Brower, Community UMC, Nome, AK

Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, Mountain Sky Area, UMC

My job, as the preacher, was to welcome and encourage a new generation of church planters who came to Denver to be trained. I couldn't let them come to Denver without telling the cautionary

tale of John Chivington, church-planter-turned-Indian-killer. Charles Brower, Inupiaq local pastor in Nome, Alaska, shared his own story of abuse in a boarding school. Follow the link to a video of Charles' testimony and the sermon.

<http://vimeo.com/yacumc/review/87374478/a4a9c63880>