FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

For 70 years, Rolling Ridge has been transforming lives. On Sunday, September 30th, we had the opportunity to remember the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future at our 70th anniversary. With over 150 in attendance, our Jubilee celebration included an afternoon of activities, tours, a program, and dinner. The restored steps around the Fletcher Steele fountain, the pool house converted into the new Center for Spirituality and Leadership, and the unveiling of artwork by Mico Kaufman around the property were highlighted as some of the improvements made over the past few months.

During the pre-dinner program, previous directors of the Ridge were recognized along with staff past and present. Former Rolling Ridge Board Member Katherine Robinson was honored for over 30 years of service with the Loaves and Fishes Award by Board Chair, Rev. Rachel Fisher. Camp alumna Bonnie Spicer shared how the Ridge has been a significant part of her life through the years. To remember those who once considered the Ridge their spiritual home but who are now at rest in their heavenly home, Rev. Dick and Myrna Evans lit a candle of remembrance. Bishop Devadhar brought greetings and an invocation with Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson blessing the meal.

To wrap up the program, I shared the new vision for the Ridge. Once known for its youth camping, Rolling Ridge now seeks to be known for its adult programs. (See back of this newsletter for 2018 programming highlights.) With the Ridge now recognized as New England’s premiere Christian retreat and wellness center (thanks to Boston Magazine), the new Rolling Ridge vision is to become the premiere Christian retreat center for training in spirituality and leadership, with an emphasis on Earth literacy, creation care, and eco-spirituality, connecting people with God, others, and creation to restore beauty and peace to our world.

As new ministry streams flow into the ministry of the Ridge, I believe the best is yet to come. I hope that you will consider joining us as our "venture in faith," launched 70 years ago, continues flowing forward as the Ridge keeps rolling, “rolling on the river.”

Peace,
Lawrence Jay

The cutting of the 70th Anniversary cake. Pictured L to R are David Grainger, Bonnie Marden, Jim Todd, Lawrence Jay, and Larry J. Peacock.
Celebrated Sunday, September 30, 2018

Former Director Rev. Larry J. Peacock (left) and Rolling Ridge Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Jay

Board Chair Rev. Rachel Fisher presents Katherine Robinson with the Loaves and Fishes Award for her outstanding service to Rolling Ridge.

Former Directors, (L to R) Bonnie Marden (interim), Rev. David Grainger, Rev. Jim Todd, and Mrs. Demaris Kooker representing former Director Rev. Frank Kooker

Executive Director, Lawrence Jay delivers the address: Rolling on the River: a New “Venture in Faith”

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar delivers a welcome and opening blessing celebrating the Jubilee Anniversary of Rolling Ridge.

Lawrence Jay receives a portrait from Director of Operations, Danny Smith on behalf of the Rolling Ridge Staff.

Bonnie Marden, Jim Todd, David Grainger, Demaris Kooker, Larry Peacock, and Lawrence Jay

Demaris Kooker receives an award on behalf of her late husband, Rev. Frank Kooker in honor of his years as Director at Rolling Ridge.

Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson delivers the blessing.

Bonnie Spicer delivers a heartfelt message about her years spent at Rolling Ridge

Demaris Kooker delivers a heartfelt message about her years spent at Rolling Ridge.

Rev. Dick and Myrna Evans light the candle of remembrance, honoring the memory of many names mentioned by those in attendance.
The Rolling Ridge Staff
“All hands on deck” for the 70th Jubilee Celebration

Director of Operations, Danny Smith once again served as the MC for the event

Over 150 people in attendance, a beautiful day to sit on the grounds or under the tent.

The Guest Services Staff awaits the program end before serving the Jubilee Dinner

Charles McCrea Board Member

Former campers and camp leaders in front of the bell

Jana Marie Whitten and Larry Peacock

Trails and Sails: Fletcher Steele Landscape Tour was a part of the afternoon

Reunions from near and far

Sam Johnson, David Grainger, Katherine Robinson

Grounds tours viewing the newest artwork and outside sculptures by Mico Kaufman
Dear friends,

In October 1948, when Bishop John Wesley Lord consecrated Rolling Ridge, he called it a "venture in faith." For 70 years, this "venture in faith" has transformed countless lives through youth institutes in the early years to Day Apart Retreats and our annual Peace Conference today. From a run-down youth facility to New England's premiere Christian retreat and wellness center, the transition and transformation of this historic site have been realized.

Today, Rolling Ridge is recognized for its gracious hospitality, excellent guest services, and delicious food as an oasis of beauty and peace. But as we move into our next chapter, Rolling Ridge desires to be known for something more than "just a pretty place." We want to be known for our ministries, our programming, our retreats, as we seek to create a spiritual network and provide a spiritual community for this "spiritual but not religious" generation.

Our new vision is to be the premiere Christian retreat center for training in spirituality and leadership, with an emphasis on Earth literacy, creation care, and eco-spirituality, connecting people with God, others, and creation to restore beauty and peace to our world. A new venture in faith begins.

Rolling on the River

The ministry of Rolling Ridge is like a river, a river initially flowing with ministries for New England United Methodists in the early years, and continuing today with BOOM, PLA, and other organizations of the NEUMC alphabet soup. Though there have been drought years over the past 7 decades, when the Methodist river was a mere trickle, other streams fed into the river of ministry, strengthening the flow, allowing the river of the Ridge to continue.

In our hosted programs today, we are thankful for a growing number of guest groups who continue to feed into our flow as partners in our ministry, creating a financially sustainable operating budget. To put it very simply, Rolling Ridge is now financially healthy, stable, and a viable retreat center. With new streams of programming feeding into the Rolling Ridge river, we are excited about our future as we partner with cutting edge ministries and prepare to launch new programs.

However, as we pursue our vision to become the premiere Christian retreat center for training in spirituality and leadership, we need additional funding sources to invest in our ministry and to assist us in paying off our loan for the renovation of the Larry J. Peacock Carriage House. Because a few donors are unable to honor their pledges, we need to raise $21,000 to complete our Restore, Rebuild, Renew Capital Campaign and because new programming is expensive requiring an ongoing investment of funds, we would like to raise an additional $28,000 to provide seed money to supplement our grants.

For our 2018 Year-End appeal, we are seeking to raise $49,000 in cash and pledges to help the Ridge flow forward towards its vision. While the financial needs are real, what is more important than the cash flow is the people flow. We are hoping to raise a ground swell of people who believe in our ministry and are willing to give just $70 a year over the next 7 years to help us realize our goals. If 100 people gave $70 a year for 7 years, we would reach our goal of $49,000. Or if 70 people gave $700 by year-end, we would also reach our goal. Along with financial partners, we are also looking for Rolling Ridge champions who would be our ambassadors by publicizing our programs in their churches and communities.

Faith Flowing Forward on the Ridge

While the grounds and buildings of Rolling Ridge are improving, we now seek to strengthen our ministry programming as we look ahead to the future. In this “spiritual but not religious” context in which we live, with church attendance on the decline, we know that this will not be easy. But the miracle of Rolling Ridge continues, as this venture in faith continues.

As the river continues to flow, new streams are feeding into our waters, allowing us to be more effective and relevant in our programming. As we bring life and hope to our communities, we continue our legacy of transforming lives as we flow forward on our way towards becoming the premiere training center for spirituality and leadership, Earth literacy and creation care in New England.

As the Prophet Ezekiel wrote in 47:9, "Everything will live where the river goes." The river of the Ridge flows forward through faith, bringing life to a new generation. We hope that you will join us on this new “venture in faith” and pledge your support to keep the Ridge “rolling on the river.”

Peace, Lawrence Jay, Rolling Ridge Executive Director

In celebration of our 70th anniversary as we seek to bring new life to a new generation with programming in spirituality and leadership, Earth literacy and creation care, please consider:

☐ pledging $70 a year for 7 years
☐ being one of 70 people to give $700 by year-end
☐ serving as a Rolling Ridge champion by publicizing our programs in your church/community

Thanks for your prayers and support of the Ridge!
Mico Kaufman artwork and sculptures are now a permanent fixture at the Ridge thanks to Elsie Howell and the Mico Kaufman Estate. Absent Diana and the missing Birdcage have been replaced with “Walking Man” & “Climbing”.

The Center for Spirituality and Leadership (CSL) located in what was the women’s changing room at the pool house.

What was once a shower at the pool house is now a coffee station and restroom for the CSL.

The Rolling Ridge Ecology Center at the Vernal Pool

“Emily’s Island” is just one example of the continued success and beauty created on the grounds of Rolling Ridge

High above the ground is Will Kerr painting in preparation for the 70th

Flags blowing gently in the breeze greet guests as they enter the Ridge.

Returned to it’s original status, the fountain in the courtyard again greets guests as they enter

Not sub-standard any longer, this model bathroom in 7A is the shape of things to come at the Ridge

Formerly located atop the once-retired fountain in the courtyard, this bell has been the call of youth and groups for decades. It has now found a new home aside the Exedra. Stop by for a ring!

Removed, leveled, repaired & restored steps at the fountain thanks to an anonymous donor & the Methuen festival of trees.

Room 4 of the main wing, having had an overhaul is now the model room for guest rooms at the Ridge as we continue to improve comfort for our guests.

Respecting the conservation limitations, while protecting the wetlands and vernal pool, we are thrilled to have a paved entrance to Rolling Ridge and road to the main parking lot.
This year, at our 8th annual Peace Conference (July 21-22), Rolling Ridge hosted an interfaith forum to consider creation care as a way for peace as we work together to protect our common planetary home. Over 40 people attended the weekend event which featured Shua Khan Arshad, Muslim instructor at Merrimack College and President of the Groton Interfaith Council; Rev. Norman Comtois, ordained Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate; and Scott A. Tepper ("Reb Zisha"), a lay religious leader and teacher in Boston’s Jewish community. Rev. Margaret Bullit-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the United Church of Christ, Massachusetts Conference, served as panel facilitator.

Each panelist highlighted creation care in their faith traditions, and following small group discussion, they answered questions and further discussed "The Tie That Binds" their common work for environmental justice. With an outdoor concert Saturday evening by Unitarian climate minister and folk singer, Rev. Fred Small, delicious vegetarian and vegan meals, and Sunday afternoon workshops, the weekend was full of renewing rest, meaningful learning, and inspiring conversations. As one conferee noted, “I loved the openness of participants, and exposure to multiple vantage points on the same, profoundly important, issue.”

In April, Rolling Ridge celebrated 18 people who completed our two-year Gateways to God Spiritual Direction Training program. With their commissioning, we also blessed Rev. Wendy Miller, who has now retired as the faculty instructor with Gateways. Dr. Heidi Miller will begin as the new instructor for our fourth session of Gateways which begins in February 2019. Registration continues through January 15th. Heidi brings to Gateways a new missional approach, which recognizes that all encounters have the potential to become spiritual conversations, a necessary skill for ministry in this "spiritual but not religious" culture in which we live.

New programming planned at the Ridge includes:
- Richard Rohr Action and Contemplation small group
- The church and recovery group leader training
- Earth Day Intergenerational Celebration
- EcoAdventure summer educational day program for kids
- Earth Literacy Public Lectures and Nature Encounters for adults
- Matthew Fox Creation Spirituality retreat
- Lakefront Stations of Creation, vernal pool walks, rhododendron tours
- And many other new initiatives in process to become relevant to the “spiritual but not religious” generation.