



# NoCo Beet

June 1, 2021

## Swords into iron plows.

Two months ago we led this newsletter with spiritual resources to respond to the mass shooting that had just occurred at a King Soopers market in Boulder. Mass shootings have not stopped. But neither have churches' efforts to thwart them. Only a quarter-mile from the scene of the tragic killings, the Boulder Mennonite Church, 3910 Table Mesa Drive, will host a Roundtable on Gun Violence June 25-27.

The church will work in collaboration with [RAWtools](#) to host author/activist Shane Claiborne, pictured at the right, in their pulpit that Sunday, said Pastor Randy Spaulding. RAWtools founder Michael Martin will bring a forge and anvil and invite people to take a turn hammering a gun into a garden tool. The inspiration comes from Isaiah 2:4: *God will judge between the nations, and settle disputes of mighty nations. Then they will beat their swords into iron plows and their spears into pruning tools. Nation will not take up sword against nation; they will no longer learn how to make war.*



Such work is in keeping with Anabaptist/Mennonite principles of peacemaking and nonviolence. The events are expected to be live-streamed. Check the [church website](#) for more details on a documentary film screening and workshop schedules.

In preparation, Community United Church of Christ in Boulder will conduct a gun buyback event at the church, 2650 Table Mesa Drive, 1-4 p.m. June 13. Individuals will receive gift cards of \$100, \$200 or \$300, depending on the type of gun. Detailed information on how to participate is available through the [CUCC website](#).

**David W. Reid, editor**

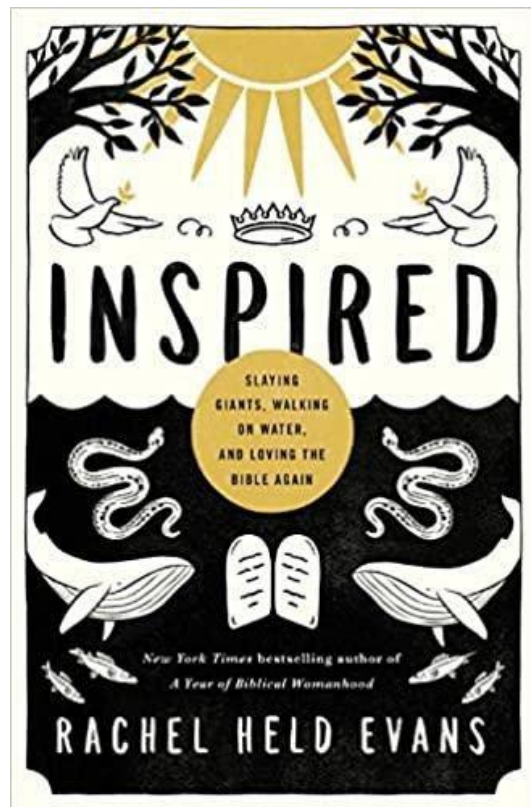
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# Northern Colorado

**If the Bible isn't a science book, instruction manual, or position paper, then what is it?** *New York Times* bestselling author Rachel Held Evans invites readers on a journey of rediscovery as she explores the magic of the Bible, engaging the old, familiar stories in new ways that honor the past and enlighten the present.

A seven-week study of *Inspired: Slaying Dragons, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again* begins the week of June 14. Two sections led by First Church member Whitney Pennington: Mondays at 7 p.m. (virtual, young-adult specific) and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. (virtual, all welcome). For questions, to RSVP or for help obtaining the book: davidreid24@gmail.com or 970-581-2707.

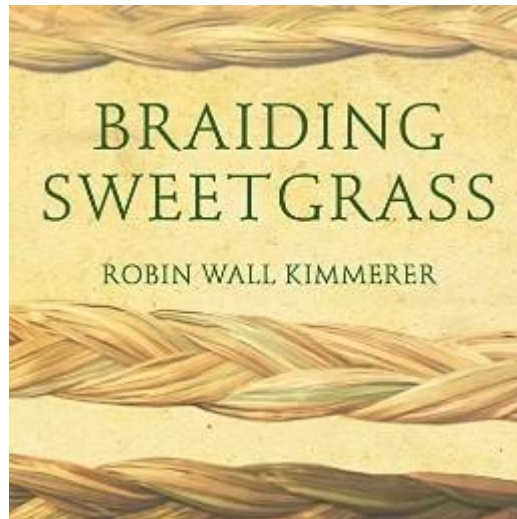
A blog about *Inspired* and Evans, who died in 2019, is available [here](#).



First Church member *Whitney Pennington* will lead a seven-week book study of "*Inspired*" by Rachel Held Evans starting the week of June 14.

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**The Spirituality Book of the Month group** plans to host three discussions of the book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer during the summer. The first is scheduled for 3 p.m. June 13. For details, contact Martha Conant at [marthaconant@gmail.com](mailto:marthaconant@gmail.com). Founded in 2016, the group will meet in members' homes during the summer.



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The **Men's Bible Study group at First Church** recently launched its latest "out of Bible study," a look at Cynthia Bourgeault's *The Wisdom of Jesus*. Her thesis is that Western Christianity has included the usual two categories of religious leaders—prophets and priests—but has neglected the third category of "Wisdom Teacher." The facilitator is Rev. Bob Firebaugh.

Weekly meetings continue on Zoom at 7 a.m. Thursdays. To link up with this group, contact David Reid at [davidreid24@gmail.com](mailto:davidreid24@gmail.com) or 970-581-2707.

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**Fort Collins Baha'i Community** invites all members of the human family to celebrate racial unity 1-4 p.m. June 13. The location is Spring Canyon Park, northwest pavilion, south of Drake Road on Overland Trail. Refreshments and children's activities will be provided.

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**Celebrate Juneteenth 2021 with a sing-along.** Call it Freedom, Jubilee, Liberation or Emancipation Day. Juneteenth commemorates the landing, on June 19, 1865, of Major General G. Granger and Union soldiers at Galveston, Texas, to inform Texas slaves that they were freed as of January 1, 1863, two and one-half years after Lincoln's Proclamation.

Lincoln's Proclamation was intended to end slavery in the rebellious Confederate states in 1863. However, in keeping with the obstinate and

notorious intentions of slave owners plus other beneficiaries of slavery, the 719-word document was not immediately made public in those states.

The two Spirituals below were written during or appeared shortly after the end of the Civil War. The middle two verses of *Oh Freedom* are old lyrics and reflect the painful lives of slaves (Tommin' refers to Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom, a featured character in her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852).

Although *Amazing Grace* was written by John Newton, an Englishman, it became popular in the United States in 1882. It is a universally loved hymn and expresses personal responsibility and repentance for the sin of slavery. Most people know the lyrics. The Scriptures that inspired it are Psalm 66:16, Romans 5:15 and John 9:25.

It is traditional to eat and drink something red to celebrate Juneteenth. The red represents the blood shed by innumerable African Americans in the struggle for freedom. Traditional items are Big Red Soda made in Waco, Texas, and a juicy, ripe watermelon. Newer options include red velvet or strawberry cake, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Give thanks and enjoy!

The Stover Street Stompers graciously offered to perform the Spiritual music. Feel free to sing along with the lyrics below.



*Oh, Freedom!* performed by the Stover Street Stompers.

## **OH, FREEDOM**

Oh! Freedom! Oh, Freedom!

Oh, Freedom over me!  
And before I'd be a slave  
I'll be buried in my grave,  
And go home to my Lord and be free.

O, what preachin'! O, what preachin'!  
O, what preachin' over me!  
Before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave,  
And go home to my Lord and be saved.  
No more tommin'! No more tommin'!  
No more tommin' over me!  
Before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave  
And go home to my Lord and be saved.

Oh, Freedom! Oh, Freedom!  
Oh freedom over me!  
And before I'll be a slave I'll be buried in my grave,  
And go home to my Lord and be free.



*Amazing Grace performed by the Stover Street Stompers.*

### **AMAZING GRACE**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe this far and grace will bring me home.  
The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope ensures;  
He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.

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## Regional

**Dr. Girim Jung**, left, visiting assistant professor of comparative religion and textual theologies, and **Dr. Jacob Kinard**, professor of comparative religions, will lead the final Renewal Conference offering of the year at Iliff School of Theology.

More information is [here](#). Registration for the June 14 event is [here](#).



*Dr. Girim Jung, left, and Dr. Jacob Kinard.*

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## National/International

**A year ago, the world was bubbling with protest in the immediate aftermath of the death of George Floyd.** One under-explored aspect of the protests and the Black Lives Matter movement is a connection to ritual and religion, a connection that BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors has [confirmed](#).

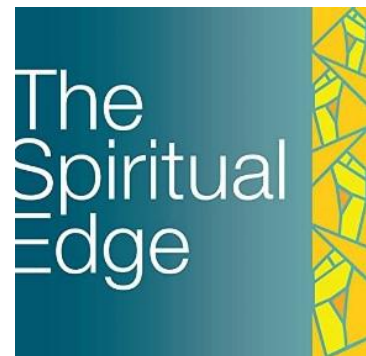
[Here's](#) a perspective from Hebah Farrag, assistant director of research at the University of Southern California Center for Religion and Civic Culture. Her current research focuses on spiritual exemplars, measuring impact in community groups and new spiritualities emerging from Black Lives Matter-affiliated organizations.



*Black Lives Matter co-founder **Patrisse Cullors**, left, and **Hebah Farrag**, assistant director of research at University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture.*

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**The Spiritual Edge** podcast recently launched from KALW Public Radio in San Francisco. The podcast promises a series of inspiring stories of humanitarians. NPR has [this summary and link](#) to the podcast.



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Spend a Saturday with **Diana Butler Bass** on June 19 through the [Franciscan Spirituality Center](#).



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