

Roots of Care - Biographies

Creating Roots of Care was a massive team effort. Here is a collection of their biographies with links so you can connect with them and their work. On the Table of Contents below, simply click on the name of the person you want to read about and connect with, and it will scroll directly to their information.

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Meditation Creators

MARYANGELINE MEDENAS

MaryAnngeline Medenas (She/Her/Hers) is a Movement Instructor, specializing in Yoga and Dance. She created her virtual studio, Movement by MaryAnngeline, in 2019 to raise awareness of the many benefits movement brings to the body, mind and spirit.

MaryAnngeline dedicates her passion for the art and healing power of movement to restore balance and creativity in those inspired by yoga and dance. She has led three Yoga Teacher Training programs, assisted in many others, which allowed her to guide her students in the ancient wisdom of yoga. MaryAnngeline is an E-RYT 500, and holds a Master's of Arts in Dance from St. Mary's College in California, as well as, a Bachelors in Communication and Dance from California State University, Fullerton. Her love for fluid, creative movement and transitions influence and aid her students in understanding their body on deeper levels. MaryAnngeline lives by her motto 'breath, awareness, balance and versatility in movement' not only in her teaching style, but also, in her own personal life.

Enroll in her Virtual Studio: www.movementbymaryanngeline.com (includes 7 Day Free Trial) PLUS 20% off first month or monthly membership or 20% off annual membership, use code SELFCARE

Instagram: [@maryanngeline](https://www.instagram.com/maryanngeline)

Live-streamed classes: <https://www.vagaro.com/maryanngeline>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRgpYgPqFWUecBv2NaZCOVQ>

REV. DR. JOHN T. MYERS

Rev. Dr. John T. Myers, D. Min., (He/Him/His) is Associate Conference Minister, Eastern Virginia Association, Southern Conference UCC. Founder and CEO of Fruit of the Spirit, LLC devoted to sharing spiritual practices that heal and transform. Rev. Myers is available for zoom calls to discuss and share spiritual practices, perform life coaching and reiki. Find more of his practices online [here](#).

REV. AMY LUNDE-WHITLER

Rev. Amy Lunde-Whitler (She/Her/Hers) is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and the Lead Pastor at South Acton Church, UCC. She earned her M. Div. from Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. Amy resides in Newton, Massachusetts with her partner and their child.

Instagram: [@alundewhitler](https://www.instagram.com/alundewhitler) and Twitter: [@alundewhitler](https://twitter.com/alundewhitler)

Movement Creators

MARYANGELINE MEDENAS

(see bio on page 2)

REV. MAHOGANY S. THOMAS

Rev. Mahogany S. Thomas (She/Her/Hers) is a native of Columbia, Missouri and an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. She serves as the Executive Minister of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) in Washington, D.C. Before Peoples Congregational UCC, Rev. Mahogany served as the Minister of Youth and Families at First Church UCC in Middletown, Connecticut, in the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Mahogany graduated from Yale Divinity School with a Master of Divinity degree, as well as a diploma from Andover Newton Seminary and a certificate in Black Church Studies. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri and graduated summa cum laude. Her undergraduate studies focused on Religious Studies with an emphasis on sex and gender in the Christian tradition.

Rev. Mahogany was the inaugural recipient of the Martin B. Copenhaver Prize for Preaching from Andover Newton Seminary. She received other prestigious awards from Yale Divinity School, including the Henry Hallam Tweedy Award for the student with exceptional promise for pastoral leadership. Most recently Rev. Mahogany wrote a piece entitled, “We Need Faith Narratives that Heal—Now” for the Spring 2021 issue of Yale Divinity School’s Reflections Magazine.

Rev. Mahogany’s ministry gifts are extensive, including a passion for administrative leadership and youth ministries, but preaching is her first love. She wrote her first sermon at age seven on an airplane and continues to enjoy preaching the Gospel wherever it takes her.

<https://www.facebook.com/mahogany.thomas.mt/>

CECILIA CLASEN

Cecilia Clasen (She/Her/Hers) has been dancing all her life and takes great joy in dancing with others. She obtained her 5 Zumba licenses while living in Guatemala City, Guatemala in 2013-2015.

BYB CHANEL BIBENE

Byb Bibene (He/Him), an MFA graduate and award winner is a dance educator, choreographer and performer working in theater, ethnic, urban, and contemporary dance forms. His own technical and aesthetic sensibility is rooted in the culture and dances of his country of origin, the Republic of Congo. He has toured the world and performed internationally with companies and choreographers originating from Africa, Asia, Europe and the USA. Bibene owns a Bachelor in Science, Economics/Finances from Marien Ngouabi University/Congo, an MFA in Dance Creative Practice, earning the Dean's award for Academic Excellence from Saint Mary's College of California. He is the artistic Director of Kiandanda Dance Theater and Mbongui Square Festival.

Outside of his professional careers of Theater and Dance, Bibene has a passion for writing. He is author of numerous poetry and shorts and winner of poetry contests.

Bibene is the facilitator of the monthly Talk series called Tracing Africa Circle-African Dance Histories and Philosophies.

Company website: www.kiandandadt.com

Festival website: www.mbonguifest.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kiandanda/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KiandandaDance>

Instagram: [@kiandandadt](https://www.instagram.com/kiandandadt)

HOLLY HANCOCK

Holly Hancock (She/Her/Hers) of Holly Hancock Yoga is a full time yoga and meditation teacher based out of Washington, DC. She firmly believes that self-care is community care, and that yoga should be accessible to all people, all ways, always. During covid, she pivoted to teaching private and group classes on-line, and hopes to open her own studio soon. She is active in the UCC and currently serves as Moderator for Cleveland Park Congregational UCC. She is also co-directing a UCC senior high camp this summer, 2021. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in her class.

HollyHancockYoga.com

[YouTube.com/HollyHancock](https://www.youtube.com/HollyHancock)

Instagram [@HollyHancockYoga](https://www.instagram.com/HollyHancockYoga)

Facebook [@HollyHancockYoga](https://www.facebook.com/HollyHancockYoga)

WHITNEY HOSEIN

Whitney Hosein (She/They) had countless dalliances with yoga before embracing the practice as a lifestyle. Once she acquiesced, it went far beyond any stretching or balancing exercise; it freed her dependence on various medications, and opened a perspective beyond intellect. Always a student more than a teacher, she seeks to remind practitioners of all abilities that all which we require is to be discovered within, as a process of remembering. The more we can show up to our practice with relish, the closer we come to unfurling the layers of conditioning and narratives which obscure the spark of our divinity.

To keep up with Whitney you can follow her on Instagram [@whitcherie](#)

CELANGE BECK

Celange Beck's (She/Her) curiosity for yoga started in college, really as a fun way to wrap up her senior year; thereafter she started working full-time while going to grad school and needed to find a reprieve. And of course- ask and you shall receive! She stumbled upon a hot yoga studio in her neighborhood which very quickly became a second home for her. Struggling with her disillusionment with the corporate world, clarity struck in the middle of class that she was meant to be a yoga teacher. After leaving her job, Celange combined her two passions for travel and yoga and took off to teach in Germany and then later completed her 250hr Hot Yoga Training in Bali, January 2020. Awakened, aligned, and thriving, Celange has returned to her childhood home in MidCoast Maine where she is taking the time to complete courses in both Life Coaching and Herbalism.

To keep up with Celange you can follow her on Instagram [@celangebeck](#)

Ritual Creators

MIN. BLYTH BARNOW

Min. Blyth Barnow (She/Her/Hers) serves as the Harm Reduction Faith Manager for Faith In Public Life in Ohio, where she works to bring clergy and people who use drugs together to end the racist war on drugs. She is a preacher, harm reductionist, writer, and community organizer. She is the founder of Femminary, an online ministry offering spiritual support for queers, femmes, people who use drugs, and harm reductionists. Everyday she finds divinity in the profane, in the ordinary. She has brought her worship service, Naloxone Saves, to several states. Blyth graduated from Pacific School Of Religion where she received a Master of Divinity and the Paul Wesley Yinger preaching award. She also serves on the leadership team for Faith In Harm Reduction, as well as the Overdose and Drug Use Ministry of the United Church of Christ (ODUM), and Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

Websites: <https://www.faithinpubliclife.org/> and <https://femminary.com/>

Instagram: [@femminary](https://www.instagram.com/femminary)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/femminary>

TEÑA T. NOCK-HOPE

Teña Nock-Hope (She/Her/They) is originally from Washington, DC and currently resides in Tampa, FL. She has lived all over the US from the East Coast to the Mid-West because of having served in the United States Navy for 8 ½ years. Teña holds a B.A. in Psychology from USF (GO BULLS!). Teña is also a graduate of PATHWAYS Theological Education Inc. Teña is currently a member of First United Church of Tampa, UCC where she is a Member in Discernment. She also chairs the Congregational Care Committee and is expanding the ways in which the committee can meet the congregations needs as they navigate the current pandemic. She formerly chaired the Communications Committee and was instrumental in helping the church expand its social media presence.

Teña is currently pursuing the path to ordination as she believes she is called to be a Pastor in the UCC. Teña has a passion for God's people and God's creation. Teña is a current member of ARM which is the Anti-Racism Ministry team of the Florida Conference of the UCC. Teña is also currently in training to become a certified facilitator of Sacred Conversations to End Racial Injustice, for the UCC. Additionally, Teña is active in the African American Women in Ministry (AAWIM) Conference of the UCC. Teña is married to the beautiful Laurie Nock-Hope, who is accomplished in her own right and has been in marital bliss since September 2015.

REV. PEDRO SILVA

Rev. Pedro Silva (He/Him/His) is a USAF Veteran and trained linguist who currently serves as an Associate Minister at the First Congregational Church Boulder, UCC. He has a passion for using expansive conversational models to engage subjects such as spirituality, race, ethnicity, and political discourse. He is married to Kelly FitzSilva with whom he is parenting their daughters Calista and Mikayah. In addition to parish ministry, Pedro serves as a poet, blogger, and burgeoning rapper.

His writings can be found at itsallinme.com and therooflesschurch.com.

REV. HEIDI CARRINGTON HEATH

The Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath (she/her/hers) is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. She holds a BA from William Smith College (the women's half of Hobart and William Smith Colleges). She has a Masters of Divinity from Andover Newton with a certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling. Heidi also holds a professional diploma in Leading Spiritual Diversity in Higher Education from NYU.

Heidi is a public theologian and teller of hard truths, someone who holds pain and joy with the same breath. She is a Spiritual Director, writer, preacher, speaker, and activist. She is also a proud queer femme, the wife of Rev. Dr. Emily C. Heath, and slightly codependent cat mama to Atticus and Windsor.

Website: revfemme.com and revfemme.medium.com

Facebook: [Notes from the Chaplain](#)

Instagram: [@revfemme](#)

Twitter: [@revfemme](#)

MIN. AMY JOHNSON

Amy Johnson (She/Her/Hers) serves as the Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice in the national setting of the United Church of Christ. She also is a Commissioned Minister for Sexuality Education and a member in discernment. Amy is the co-author and developmental editor of some of the Our Whole Lives resources and a trainer for all levels of Our Whole Lives/Sexuality and Our Faith nationwide and internationally. She is passionate about helping faith communities provide high quality, comprehensive and inclusive sexuality education as a part of being and becoming healthier places to belong.

Website: www.ucc.org/owl

Twitter: [@OurWholeLives](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ourwholelives>

REV. DR. SARAH LUND

Rev. Sarah was that kid who the teacher called on to stay inside during recess to help students who needed extra time taking tests. No wonder she grew up to be a minister! Ever since college she knew she wanted to dedicate my life to serving God and helping others.

Rev. Sarah's formal education includes degrees from Trinity University (BA), Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv), Rutgers University (MSW), McCormick Theological Seminary (DMin) and the certificate in Fundraising Management from the IUPUI School of Fundraising.

Since 2003, Rev. Sarah has served large and small congregations in Brooklyn, Minneapolis, and New Smyrna Beach, Florida, and Indianapolis, Indiana. In 2018, she was called to serve as the first woman Senior Pastor at First Congregational United Church of Christ of Indianapolis. In addition, she serves on the National Staff of the United Church of Christ as the Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice.

Music Creators

RACHEL TEIGEN BRACKETT

Rachel Teigen Brackett (She/Her) is a lifelong UCC camper/counselor, singer and churchgoer. Her father is retired UCC Pastor Terry Teigen. She has taught K-6 music in public schools for 19 years, directs her church children's choir, community youth choirs, performs music for children around Seattle and also teaches music education workshops and classes at the college level. She has camped and counseled at UCC summer camps most of her life and some of her happiest memories are making music at camp!

<https://www.facebook.com/treblemakerRachel>

RHINA RAMOS

Rev. Rhina Ramos is an ordained United Church of Christ (UCC) minister leading an open and affirming Spanish speaking congregation, [Ministerio Latino](#), in Oakland, CA since 2011. Rhina also coordinates [Proyecto Encuentros de Gracia y Bienvenida](#) for the UCC, which is an initiative that seeks to engage the faithful in prayerful dialogue, particularly within Latinx communities, guiding all churches towards becoming open and affirming of the LGBTQ+ community. You can find them on Facebook [here](#).

Rhina was born in El Salvador and grew up during the civil war. Embedded in her heart is the voice of [San Romero de Las Americas](#) denouncing oppression from the pulpit. Rhina graduated from Hofstra University Law School in 1995. She also obtained a Masters in Divinity from the Pacific School of Religion in 2003. While in New York, she practiced labor law for 5 years recuperating thousands of dollars in unpaid wages for immigrant workers. Rhina is also an experienced Community Organizer who has led programs and campaigns for educational equity, labor rights, LGBTQ human rights, international solidarity with El Salvador, and domestic violence prevention.

Curator

REV. KELSEY BEEBE

Rev. Kelsey Beebe (She/Her/Hers), MFA Dance, MDiv, believes firmly in an all-loving God, embodied Christ, and ever-moving Holy Spirit that connects us all. She is a trained dancer, yoga instructor, as well as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. She serves as a solo pastor at two churches just south of Milwaukee, WI, and is the Executive Minister and President of [Dancing Pastor Ministries](#) and host of the [Lady Preacher Podcast](#). She has performed, preached, and led retreats all around the United States and even in Costa Rica.

Kelsey holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Dance, a Masters of Divinity, and has multiple yoga certifications, including a 200hr certification through Yoga Alliance, Trauma-Informed Yoga, and Kids Yoga.

Kelsey loved curating the *Roots of Care* and connecting with all of our amazing collaborators. If you have questions about the space or want to connect more, please send her an email at revkelsey@dancingpastor.org!

Facebook: [@pastorkelseyb](#)

Instagram: [@pastorkelseyb](#)

Website: dancingpastor.org