



The Ring Lake Carillon

Ring Lake Ranch • Dubois, Wyoming • Fall 2015

An ecumenical retreat center offering renewal in sacred wilderness

"The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God."

•John of Damascus



The mission statement of Ring Lake Ranch, "Renewal in Sacred Wilderness," is both a compelling vision and an invitation to a profoundly moving experience. The meaning of "sacred" in the Ranch context is a great source of conversation and reflection each summer, so here are some thoughts on the word from a range of people who know well the Ring Lake Ranch experience.

Bill Brown

Think of something that describes Ring Lake Ranch and the word "sacred" may come to mind, and for good reason. Stunning vistas, crystal lakes, towering mountains, soaring osprey, the smell of sage, holy petroglyphs, and delectable meals all conspire to impart a sense of wonder, awe and, yes, sacredness. For many who have stayed at the Ranch, encountering the divine is a serendipitous outcome.

To treat something as sacred is to set it apart from ordinary experience. A sacred time is set part from the routine. A sacred place is set apart from the places we inhabit daily that

can renew and sustain us. It is the occasional "mountain top" experience that enables us to thrive while we labor in the valley. For many of us, Ring Lake Ranch is that "mountain top." That one week (or two) is something to which we look forward every year and something that we remember with great fondness. But perhaps the most important part of RLR's sacredness is the community that is formed, a new community, in fact, each week. RLR is a place where all are welcomed as pilgrims, and the meals are subtly sacramental.

The sacred is rooted in an experience of wonder, and wonder is whatever takes us out of ourselves and brings us back, transformed and renewed. Wonder is what takes our breath away for just a moment and returns our breath for a lifetime. Ring Lake Ranch is that place to learn how to breathe again, to breathe in the sacred, and to do so gratefully.

Judi McMillan

Ring Lake Ranch has become a sacred place for me because it has enriched my relationships and allowed me new ways to wonder at God's

creation. Each time I visit the Ranch I'm more open to the beauty around me. It might be the way a wildflower glistens, the way the hummingbirds buzz by and then sit on the laundry line, or the way we humans marvel through the lens of the camera to watch the osprey "flap hop" in their nest. This time I saw for the first time the bighorn sheep skip on top of the high rocks. The teenage boys in our hiking group were doing a different kind of bouldering. We smiled at the youthful sheep and teens, playing around the ranch.

Perhaps "sacred" is when we force ourselves to slow down and allow ourselves the joy of paying close attention. I feel more creaturely here, filled with wonder and laughter. I've spent a few summers at RLR with my teens. Caleb and I were able to volunteer a week, and my daughter, McKayla, was a staff assistant for the first time, working with horses, growing in her knowledge. I enjoyed drinking coffee atop the rock and watching the wranglers work.

Sacred means we touch places inside ourselves that we may have hidden elsewhere. I get to draw, look, read, and converse

with others who have a variety of passions. We study in the evening with creative minds. We have plenty of time for fellowship at mealtimes and while enjoying the mountains and lakes. I've been enriched by the Ranch, the leadership, and the way we are allowed to be ourselves. Thank you for the work and talent it takes to maintain a safe place to journey with others who are asking faith questions.

Ellen Halperin

I have been thinking of Ring Lake Ranch in relation to the themes explored this summer with Diana Butler Bass and Brian McLaren: God in location, God in language. It's hardly a stretch to locate God at Ring Lake Ranch. Unavoidable, no matter how hard you try. The native peoples knew it those eons ago, and they know it now. It's God in creation, only more so! High mountains,

lakes, streams tumbling into the river, boisterous flowers and grasses, ancient trees, house-size boulders, an amazing array of creatures: osprey, eagles, otter, deer, hummingbirds, trout, chipmunks, and on and on. God deemed it all good, and it can only be approached and celebrated with awe and reverence. The other theme—God in language—points us to the people who come to Ring Lake Ranch, staff and guests. Whether first-timers or old-timers, each one is seeking an experience of the holy or sacred, which are both words that have their roots in wholeness. The beauty and power of the physical creation, the awe and reverence that it inspires, quickly create bonds among us as we share the joy of each day's adventures and receive challenge and inspiration from gracious and generous presenters. By the end of the week, bonds of affection and admiration have formed. There is an unexplainable ease in being here. One dares to be who one is, and—lo!—whoever that is, is not only accepted, but embraced. What I find, then, at Ring Lake Ranch is beautifully expressed in the Pope's Prayer for our Earth: "Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in

the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you." And, I would add, continue to bless Ring Lake Ranch and all who come here with "the wonders you have shown us."

Lily Schulz

Ring Lake Ranch will forever be my home. Regardless of what has changed in my life, the Ranch has always been a steady and strong place for me. Always there as a reminder to take a step back from the crazy everyday dramatics and re-center around what truly matters in life. Sacred spaces are where community can be found with all living beings: past, present and future. This space has been a part of so many lives from the Sheep Eater Indians whose spiritual journeys continue to be expressed through the petroglyphs to our current existence as a retreat center. Community can be found whenever you need it: taking a solitary walk to reflect with the petroglyphs, sharing meals with staff and guests, enjoying evening session discussions, hiking up to the ridge, or late night star gazing. People come together in this space because there is and has always been the desire for community.



The Ring Lake Ranch Carillon

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*In Memoriam:
Dr. Marcus J. Borg*

*March 11, 1942 –
January 21, 2015*

*“Reality is permeated,
indeed flooded, with
divine creativity,
nourishment and care.”*

- Marcus Borg

As many of you know, Dr. Marcus Borg passed away on January 21st, 2015. Marcus led seminars at Ring Lake Ranch many times during his career and had a deep influence on everyone who came to hear him speak. Lin Knight, a former Director of Ring Lake Ranch, offered this reflection on Marcus and his impact on Ring Lake Ranch:

Marcus was a rare combination of an internationally known theologian with a worldwide following who was also a very approachable person. Those of us who sat in the Ranch Living Room listening to Marcus remember a person who was soft-spoken, yet offered engaging presentations. Whoever thought that theology could be so much fun! Of course having Marianne along to share her spark and lead opening

meditations was an added treat!

Marcus was a believer, with a strong faith that was intellectually arrived at and personally felt. Marcus was a regular attendee at services at Trinity Cathedral in Portland, listening to his wife Marianne preach and participating in the life of the congregation. I've heard him describe his own personal experiences of God, which lie at the foundation of his intellectual explorations. For a theology professor and author of umpteen books, he could still say in all sincerity that faith was a matter not of the head but of the heart. Religion is what we do, he insisted, not what we believe. That particular emphasis of Marcus' has had a huge effect on my own preaching and my Christian life.

Marcus had a way of bridging the gap between old-time Protestantism and

new theological wisdom. His conviction was that Christianity makes sense, and his clear logical way of presenting Christianity bears that out. His passion was to communicate this way of seeing to those for whom an earlier understanding of Christianity made little or no sense. Reading or listening to him, I found myself saying, "Yes, of course, that's what that really means."

Unlike many theologians, Marcus had experienced the presence of God and was able to communicate that experience of the Transcendent. For him, God was real. His seminars at the Ranch were memorable, jam-packed, and we will miss him.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Marcus J Borg Foundation, PO Box 189, Powell Butte, OR 97753, <http://marcusjborgfoundation.org/>

There's a bug going around... and I think I've caught it!

Although I've been a resident of Fremont County for 40 years, I'm a "newbie" to Ring Lake Ranch. In 2013, I saw a notice in the Carillon mentioning a need for volunteers. "That sounds like fun," I thought, and I applied and was accepted. Well, IT WAS FUN, and I've been infected by the RLR bug ever since. And, for the past two years, my husband Fred has joined me as a volunteer, and

he has caught the bug as well!

What makes the Ranch so special? Is it the interesting people you meet from all over the country and all walks of life? Or is it the amazing scenery before you as you sit on your front porch and watch the ospreys glide over Trail Lake? Maybe it's the new hike or ride that takes you to a spot that seems to be at the top of the world where you can view mountains and lakes and

more mountains for as far as your eye can see. Or, perhaps it is the sense of peace and calm that fills you as you watch the horses grazing in the meadows in the evening. I guess it's all of those things that keep drawing us back.

Whether you have been coming to the Ranch for decades, or a newbie like us, the Ranch needs all of our support to keep going. You can help by encouraging

your friends and families to come spend a week at the Ranch. You can volunteer your time throughout the summer. And, you can really help by making a tax-deductible donation in whatever amount you are able to help the Ranch to continue infecting people with the RLR bug.

By Alice Nicol, Ring Lake Ranch Board Member



Ring Lake Ranch



May 24 - May 30

Volunteer Week

Every year, the Ranch relies on volunteers, both individuals and groups, to clean, do major repair and upkeep projects, open the kitchen, and anything else needed to prepare for guests. Please consider joining us for a week of work, fun, and fellowship!



June 12 - 18

Leah Vader and Jen Ottinger

Something in the Air: Birds at Ring Lake Ranch, Birds and the Human Spirit

From awe to annoyance, delight to disgust, birds have long evoked a full spectrum of curiosity and responses from the humans who share their environment. Join a seasoned ornithologist and a perennial novice as we consider the birds around us, and what it is about birds that most stirs our souls. **Jen Ottinger** holds a BS in Zoology and has 20 years' experience in a variety of ornithology and other wildlife field projects. She has worked at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Thunderbird Wildlife Consulting in Gillette, Wyoming. Jen has completed eleven seasons with the Arizona Bald Eagle Nest Watch Program. **Leah Vader** finds that her background in Religious Studies (University of Minnesota, 1982) and community education/field biology/natural resource interpretation combine wonderfully in her work as hike leader/housekeeper at Ring Lake Ranch. She has worked with the Arizona Bald Eagle Nest Watch Program since 2009.



July 10-16

Norman Wirzba

Living and Eating in God's Creation

Our conversations this week will explore the wide and deep meaning of God's creation, and how best to live and eat appropriately within it. We will consider how a world described as creation differs from a world described as nature, and examine scripture, theology, and poetry as a way to open up the world's significance. Food and agriculture systems will be the primary lens through which our world will be explored. As we will see, eating is one of the most practical and enjoyable ways to contribute to the healing of the world and its human communities. **Norman Wirzba** is Professor of Theology and Ecology at Duke Divinity School and Research Professor of Theology and Ecology at Duke's Nicholas School for the Environment. He is the author of several books, most recently *From Nature to Creation and Way of Love*.

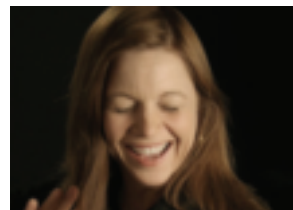


July 17-23

Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Reading the Bible with Question Marks: Midrash as a Tool for Spiritual Reflection

What would it mean to understand the Bible as a living text that spoke to every generation of readers differently, as it continues to speak to us? Throughout the ages, spiritual seekers, authors, musicians and visual artists created literature (midrash), sculpture, painting and composition to enrich the Biblical text and keep it fresh and vital. During our session we will explore the ways in which the human imagination has illuminated sacred stories. We will use music, view art, read poetry to see familiar stories in a new light -- as expressions of the universal spiritual struggle. **Sandy Eisenberg Sasso** was the first woman to be ordained from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1974. She served as spiritual leader of Congregation Beth El Zedeck in Indianapolis with her husband, Dennis C. Sasso. Rabbi Sasso also served as the Director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University and Christian Theological Seminary. Rabbi Sasso is the award-winning author of 14 children's books and two books for adults: *Midrash: Reading the Bible with Question Marks* and her latest, *Jewish Stories of Love and Marriage: Folktales, Legends, and Letters*.



July 24 - July 30

Carrie Newcomer and Faith Hawkins

Traveling from Certainty to Mystery: Navigating Shadows and Light

Most of us don't live completely in the shadows, or completely in the light, but experience life like the overlapping phases of the moon. Our culture -- and often our spiritual communities -- are uncomfortable with the idea that times of blessing and sorrow can overlap. But, when something in our lives shifts, we encounter the limits of certainty and enter uncharted territory. The easy answers don't work, the old maps are too confining. This retreat will explore what it means to navigate our lives with a sense of mystery and wonder, so that we can consider the complexities of the Sacred in new and life-giving ways. We will draw on multiple spiritual sources and practices to explore together the journey from certainty to Sacred Mystery. **Carrie Newcomer** has released fifteen acclaimed albums and facilitates workshops internationally on songwriting, creative writing, activism and spiritual vocation. She has collaborated with a wide range of artists and writers, including Alison Krauss, Indian sarod master Amjad Ali Khan and Parker Palmer. **Faith Hawkins** is an administrator at Indiana University. She served on the theology faculty at Gustavus Adolphus College and Candler School of Theology, where she directed the Youth Theological Initiative, a program of theological engagement for high school students.

2016 Schedule of Programs



July 31 – August 6

Maggie Kulyk and Wendy Farley

Money: A Guide to Soul

The human relationship to money is complex and full of emotions. What we have and what we believe about what we have influence our decisions about how we live and what we will risk to live a soulful life -- a life dedicated to our most cherished principles and our heart's deepest longings. This retreat will combine periods of discussion and meditation on compassion with interactive workshops addressing our relationship with money. Our hope is that connecting the symbols and practices of money with a deeper sense of the divine compassion will contribute to spaces of greater freedom. After working for six years in the business world, **Maggie Kulyk** received an MDiv from Candler School of Theology in 1996. Since 2002, she's worked closely with individuals and families helping them put their money in the service of their dreams and values. **Wendy Farley** is Professor of Theology and Religion at Emory University, teaching contemporary and classical Christian theology and ethics, medieval contemplative women, and Christian-Buddhist dialogue. She is the author of various books on Christian theology, most recently *The Thirst of God: Contemplating God's Love with Three Woman Mystics*.



August 7 - 13

Terry Fretheim

God and the Messiness of Creation

God's engagement in the process of creation has, from the beginning, been more dependent upon the creative involvement of the creatures than is commonly suggested. Our conversations this week will look at how the biblical texts on creation suggest a relational model of creation. The creation is given a degree of openness and unpredictability wherein God leaves room for genuine interdependence in the creative process. What the creatures do counts and gives shape to the future! **Terry Fretheim** is Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He has written more than twenty books and over one hundred articles for both church and academy. His latest book is *What Kind of God? Collected Essays of Terence E. Fretheim*.

Scholarships Available

Partial scholarships are available to anyone needing assistance to come to programs at the Ranch. All people are welcome at Ring Lake and we don't want the cost to keep anyone, especially first-time guests, from attending a session. If you have any questions or would like a copy of our simple application, please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.

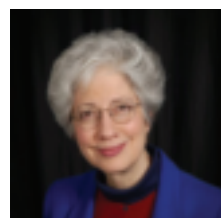


August 14 - 20

Jacob Kinnard

Places in Motion

Pilgrimage is one of the most important aspects of religious life. Indeed, life itself can be considered to be a pilgrimage. This session explores the dynamics of pilgrimage across several different religious traditions - Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, as well as more secular forms of pilgrimage in the United States and elsewhere. We will look closely at several key pilgrimage sites from a number of different angles - religious, social, artistic, political - and the actual pilgrims who visit these sites. **Jacob N. Kinnard**, Professor of Comparative Religions at the Iliff School of Theology, teaches courses on the religious traditions of India and comparative religion. Among the topics he writes about are Buddhist art and ritual, temples and pilgrimage places, and the ways in which religious communities understand and negotiate religiously significant places. He is the author of several books, including most recently *Places in Motion: The Dynamic Lives of Images, Temples, and Pilgrims*.



August 21 - 27

Marjorie Thompson

Exploring the Non-Dominant Divine

How does an individual in the spiritual climate of 2016 relinquish the concept of a God who is in control? What is the importance of the Philippians passage that describes Jesus as one who humbled himself rather than grasping at the power of the Divine? How might that influence the lives of those who would follow Jesus? Marjorie's seminar will provide thoughtful prompts for consideration and conversation about the implications of a God whose majesty issues from vulnerability rather than dominance. **Marjorie Thompson** is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church USA. Marjorie has served as adjunct faculty for several seminaries, including McCormick, Auburn, Wesley, and Vanderbilt Divinity School. She taught in The Upper Room's Academy for Spiritual Formation and directed the foundational program for Stillpoint (Programs in Spiritual Direction and Contemplative Prayer) in Nashville. She is the author of *Family, The Forming Center and Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Her writings have also appeared in Weavings, Worship, The Upper Room Disciplines, and The Abingdon Preacher's Annual.

50th August 28- Sept. 3
Anniversary Week

Instead of the traditional speaker, our 50th Anniversary celebration week will honor connections between the past, present, and future of the Ranch. Evening sessions cover aspects of local and Ranch history with various Ranch friends. We particularly hope those who have been long-time supporters and have helped create this unique experience will come. This week is designed, like all weeks, to connect guests to what is life-giving to you in our unique context.

For more details on all these programs check our website:
www.ringlake.org



Many Thanks to our 2015 Volunteers!

Our 2015 season welcomed a record number of guests to the Ranch, so the support provided by our volunteers was more important than ever. Our Volunteer Week crew included: Dan Hauck, David Petersen and Sara Myers, Sally Ervin, Mary Fraser and Steve Bellon, Mike McKee, Becky and Harold Walker, Bev and Jim Young, and Ted and Renette Laase. These hard-working folks completed a long list of tasks: They finished the Dining Hall porch screening, screen doors and log slabs, regraded the canoe beach, built a new deck on Cabin 1B,

planted flowers, cleaned all cabins, reshelved library books, hung a new projection screen and set up new PA speakers in the Living Room, repaired the bunkhouse roof, cleaned and set up the recycling center and refurbished the RLR sign at the old Cabin 2 driveway, among other tasks.

The rest of the summer was just as busy with volunteers. Thanks to all these folks for their willingness to pitch in wherever need: Steve Bellon, Amy Cottrill and Ken, Hannah and Lydia Wheeler, Alice and Fred Nicol, Becky Brown,

Jean and Bill Wolfe, Mike Morris, David Turpin and Amelia Carrell, Carl Koch and Joyce Heil, Lesley Stugelmeyer, Bill Hill, Maria Bastista, Judi McMillan and Caleb Koplen, Linda Gee and Martha Howard, Lexi Hatalski, Dan Hauck, Marilyn Bouldin, Jim and Patti White, Dwight Haberman and Becky and Harold Walker.

If you are interested in volunteering during the 2016 season, either during our Volunteer Week, May 22nd – 28th or during one of our sessions, please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or call him at 888-458-5253.



Staff Assistants

The Ranch welcomed several enthusiastic staff assistants last summer. A hearty thanks to Elizabeth Blackmun, Sabrina George and McKayla Coplen for pitching in around the Ranch.

Young people between the ages of 13 and 18 are welcome to apply to be staff assistants during the 2016 season. We ask staff assistants to work between 20 and 30 hours per week. In return, staff assistants receive room, board and a small stipend during their stay. Depending on rooming arrangements, staff

assistants usually stay for one or two weeks; more weeks may be available at the discretion of the Director. Staff assistants need to have come to the Ranch as guests at least once. The work can vary each day: sometimes we need help around the kitchen, sometimes down at the corral, sometimes covering the back of a group on a hike. Teenagers interested in working as staff assistants should contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.

Ranch Store Sale: We are excited to announce that the Ranch Store is having an online sale to finish out the year. Everything is on sale! Please visit ringlake.org and click on "shop" to see new store items and find savings from 15 to 50% off! *Order by December 18th for Christmas delivery.

2016 Registration

2016 RATES

All rates are per person and based on double/multiple occupancy

Includes lodging * meals * seminars * horseback riding * guided hiking * boating.

No charge for children 12 & under.

Scholarships are available: Contact **Andy** at mailing address below or andy@ringlake.org

ADULT FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Basic cabin with shared bath.....\$882

Basic cabin with private bath..... \$1002

Large Family cabin with private bath..... \$1047

YOUTH FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17).....\$667

Child (ages 12 and under).....no charge

ADULT FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Basic cabin with shared bath..... \$ 1538

Basic cabin with private bath..... \$ 1753

Large Family cabin with private bath..... \$ 1821

YOUTH FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17).....\$ 1150

Child (ages 12 and under).....no charge

All fees exclude sales & lodging taxes. Contact **Amanda** at amanda@ringlake.org or 307-455-2663 to inquire about daily and off-season rates. To guarantee a private room, contact **Amanda** about additional fee & availability.

Receive a 10% discount on your session fees by bringing someone new to the Ranch with you.

Please indicate on your registration form who the new guest is. When they register, we'll record the discount. Thank you for spreading the word about Ring Lake Ranch.

Deposit:

To hold your reservations, we request a deposit of \$260/adult and \$150/youth for 6 day sessions or \$450/adult and \$250/youth for two sessions. The deposit is refundable (less a 20% handling charge) up to 60 days in advance of the session for which you have registered. After that time, the deposit is refundable (less 20%) only if we can rebook your space in the session.

No. of Registrants:

_____ Adults @ rate _____

_____ Youth (13-17) _____

_____ Children(12 & under) *no charge*

TOTAL (without taxes) _____

Deposit Amount _____

Session

Dates _____

Registrant Name(s) _____

Names & ages of children (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Cell () _____ Email _____

Accommodation preference:

Basic/shared bath Basic/private bath

Large Family/private bath Cabin #

Roommate preference (registering separately)

One bed? Two beds?

Is walking over steep or rough terrain difficult for you?

Yes No

Any other physical limitations?

Dietary restrictions/food allergies:

Will you need transportation from the airport?

(see spring Carillon or website for charges)

No Yes Jackson/Riverton

How did you hear about Ring Lake Ranch?

Signature _____

Date _____

We accept Visa, Mastercard and Discover. Pay by cash or your personal check and receive a 5% discount in fees. For security purposes, please do not include your credit card number on this form. Please use the online store at www.ringlake.org/store to pay deposits and fees.

Return form to:

Ring Lake Ranch

P.O. Box 806

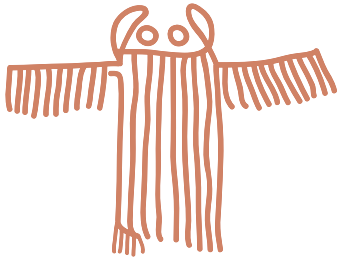
Dubois, WY 82513

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Permit No. 25

La Crosse, WI

Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for "renewal in sacred wilderness."

*Here and now the fog sifts over the limber pine branches
the still stones, the ancient petroglyphs.*

*Now the horse herd lopes across the sagebrush flats
toward the corral, and oats --
and this day's work carrying scared
sixteen year old boys
up and down the sides of mountains.*

*Here is sacred ground
where the Sheep-eaters set traps for bighorns,
built their huts high up Whiskey Mountain,
and, wise ones waited for visions
to guide them to healing.*

*Now people come to seek
new visions and find
what peace seeps from*

*Sago lilies, paintbrush, sage,
Torrey Creek and Middle Mountain.*

*Here are cougar, otter, moose, and mule deer,
wolves over the ridge, badgers and beaver.*

*Soaring above the lakes
osprey – looking,
looking.*

*Here and now,
dream dreams,
breathe peace.*

-Carl Koch

