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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Online “Of the Spirit” Conversation About Faith, Race, and Ethnicity

Greenwood Village, CO (January 13, 2021)

On Sunday, January 17 at 7 p.m. **Adrian Miller, Executive Director of Colorado Council of Churches**, will moderate the third online Changing the Legacy of Race & Ethnicity panel conversation titled “Of the Spirit,” with live Q & A. Faith leaders in Colorado Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities will discuss racial justice through a theological lens. Featured panelists are Diana Thompson, Joan Bell-Haynes, Carlos Zarur, and Kamel Elwazeir.

Rev. Diana Thompson is a Kaikyoshi minister at the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, the same temple that she grew up attending. She earned a degree in Religious Studies from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 2007 and a Master of Arts from the Institute of Buddhist Studies/Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA in 2012. She received her Tokudo (primary) ordination in 2010, her Kyoshi (teaching) ordination in 2012 and became a confirmed Kaikyoshi in 2013. Rev. Thompson is a native of Colorado but has also lived in New Orleans, LA, Albuquerque, NM and Berkeley, CA.

Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes, a native of Macon, GA, is Executive Regional Minister of the Central Rocky Mountain Region, Christian Church, Disciples of Christ (DOC). Prior to graduating from The University of Chicago Disciples Divinity House, she was Associate Dean of Academic Administration for Georgia State University’s College of Health Sciences in Atlanta, GA. She is a founding member of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Atlanta and served pastorates in Kansas City, MO, Hyattsville, MD, and Reston, VA. She also served as Associate Regional Minister for The Christian Church Capital Area where she directed the Women’s Ministries and Camp and Conference Programs.

Carlos Zarur is an anthropologist and Sephardic studies/Jewish educator. He was born in a Syrian-Turkish Sephardic family and has lived in several countries, including the United States, Morocco, India, Mexico, Israel, Canada, and Brazil. Carlos has Rabbinical Studies and holds Masters’ Degrees in Jewish Studies, Middle Eastern Jewries, Peripheral Jewish Communities, and Marranism Studies (Crypto Judaism). He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology and History, and was a professor at the University of Colorado in the Anthropology Department and The Jewish Studies Program.

Kamel Elwazeir was born in Doha-Qatar to Palestinian parents, lived in Qatar, graduated with Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Ajman University in the United Arab

Emirates in 1998, and earned a Colorado Technical University MBA in Colorado Springs in 2001. Elwazeir left corporate America in 2006 to start his business, Colorado Auto Traders, and owned several business ventures in Colorado Springs. He has been a volunteer speaker and imam at the Islamic Society of Colorado Springs since 2002. President of the Islamic Society of Colorado Springs since 2019, he is married to Feda Jodeh and has 3 boys, ages 15, 12, and 8.

Colorado Humanities and partners present the “Changing the Legacy of Race & Ethnicity: Conversations for One America” series with the goal to encourage understanding and drive a broad discussion about the legacy of race in America and how to make changes now for a more just future. The first two panel presentations were broadcast live on the Colorado Humanities’ and select partners’ [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, and can be viewed by clicking those links.

This series is free thanks to our growing list of community partners and sponsors.

Our community partners include NAACP Aurora Colorado, History Colorado, Colorado Anti-Defamation League, Aurora Public Library, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Pine River Library, Colorado Council of Churches, and Mexican Cultural Center Denver. Our sponsors are Arapahoe Libraries, Tate Law, and GroundFloor Media | CenterTable. Our media sponsors are Rocky Mountain Public Media and The Durango Herald.

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To learn more, visit coloradohumanities.org or call 303.894.7951.

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