

Jolynne Locust Woodcock on the meaning of Four Winds

We know what's under the foundation—it's the land, it's our ancestors.

by [Jolynne Locust Woodcock](#) in the [March 11, 2020](#) issue

Read [Terra Brockman's article about the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod and the Four Winds American Indian Council](#).

My furthest memory of Four Winds? I was in and out of there all the time just because it was a gathering place. But my biggest memory of the place . . . that goes back 25 years . . . when my daughter died. We released her spirit from that building. We all gathered to have our ceremony and our prayers with her. And that was the last place that I was able to be physically with her.

And through the years there have been a lot more people that have had to do the same thing. My nephew Black Horse four years later. . . . And that's the place we chose because of what Four Winds means to us. It's a place of comfort, of respect—where we know nobody's going to interfere with how we want to relate our everyday life to traditions of our past. It's the whole circle from life to death—it's all there.

It's kind of weird to attribute all that to a building. It is the people, but it is also the building . . . we know what's under the foundation—it's the land, it's our ancestors.

Just to have that place, somewhere that we can gather for birth and death and all that comes in between, is a gift.

Read [Sky Roosevelt-Morris on the meaning of Four Winds](#).

A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title "Native Voices on the meaning of Four Winds."