

*“There is a Balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole; there is a Balm in Gilead, to heal the sinsick soul.”* The lyrics of this traditional spiritual, based on a verse from the prophet Jeremiah, have special significance for The Chapel at Beaver Creek.

Many years ago a grove of Balsam Poplar trees, a locally rare relative of the Aspens and Cottonwoods so common in the valley, was discovered at the base of Beaver Creek Mountain. It was suggested this would be an appropriate site for a chapel. Vail Resorts (then known as Vail Associates), donated the grove to the newly formed Beaver Creek Religious Foundation and planning for an interfaith chapel, to be shared by many different faith traditions, began.

On July 14, 1988, the Beaver Creek chapel community celebrated the raising of the steeple, which had been built on the ground beside the new chapel. A crowd, which included President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford, gathered to watch, but had to go inside the chapel as it was too dangerous for them to stand close by while the mighty crane did this awesome task. Inside, a magnificent cake awaited President Ford, honoring his 75th birthday.

By early Fall, services began with a bare floor and folding chairs as Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Lutherans each took their own worship hour.

The Beaver Creek Religious Foundation was formed with each congregation’s pastor sitting on the Board and appointing one lay person from their congregation to serve as well. Vail Associates appointed a director and at-large directors were also elected to serve. This Board still oversees the operation of the chapel.

The Chapel quickly became a popular place for young people to begin their marriage journey. The community often gathered to celebrate life’s milestones through baptisms, funerals, bar/bat mitzvah’s, vow renewals, etc.

The Chapel is a story about people who shared a vision, possessed the dedication and personal courage to unwaveringly stay that course in the pursuit of that vision, and applied the craft skills and will to achieve their goal of shared worship space in Beaver Creek Resort. It is the heart and soul of the Beaver Creek Resort community shared by the wider Eagle Valley residents.