



The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ



Purpose (from the Gospel of Matthew):

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves

Vision:

United in Christ's love, a just world for all

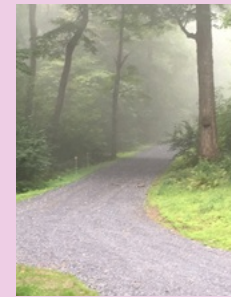
Mission:

United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all

Weekly E-News Winter "

February 25, 2021

Message from the Conference



Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

We are on the journey through Lent. It's a time for reflection, silence, confession and a "return to the land of our souls."

We are also on a journey not of our own choosing through this pandemic. Perhaps this is also a good time for reflection on this journey as well. On both journeys while we know some things much is still hidden, like a foggy path.

I want to share with you two tools proposed by my colleague, Mike Denton, Conference Minister in the Pacific Northwest Conference. First, a look at the possibilities going forward regarding the pandemic.

- 1. The pandemic continues** more or less as it has.
- 2. The pandemic enters into a significant transition stage.** Either:
 - Enough people are exposed, and enough people are vaccinated that we're on the way towards herd immunity of some sort. We're not out of the woods, but things are going in the right direction.
 - The vaccine or previous exposures do not temper the variants and recombinants, and we move into a new round of needing to be cautious.
- 3. The pandemic is behind us.** COVID is still around but, between treatments and vaccines, we learn how to manage it. It becomes more like the flu. There are also ongoing health problems for those who were infected as well as ongoing economic and social fallout.

Three Key Questions

- What information would confirm the stage we're in?
- What information would be helpful to know about that stage?

- What resources might we need to live into that stage?

One of those needed resources is the consent of your church leaders and members. **The second tool is four questions to ask each other.** We have all been changed by this pandemic in some way. It will be essential to ask each other some questions about who we have become and who we are called to become.

1. What is something you did before the pandemic that you are looking forward to doing again?
2. What is something you started to do during the pandemic that you hope to continue?
3. What is something you did before the pandemic that you want to let go of?
4. What is something you started to do during the pandemic that you will be happy to stop?

Answer the above questions from the perspective of your role in your church. As a pastor ... as the BOD chair ... as a member ...
Reflection, asking important questions, seeking the face of God in the midst of pandemic, racial inequality, political madness - all sound like fertile ground that may both return us to what we have lost and challenge us to become something more.

In peace and hope,
Lynn

Act Now! **UCC Yearbook Reporting Closes Next Week!!!**

If you are the pastor, clerk, administrator, or treasurer for your local church, it is now time to submit your 2020 Annual Yearbook data. The reporting cycle for the UCC 2021 Yearbook & Directory opened January 6th and will close on March 3, 2021 at midnight. The process for entering your church's data is done completely online. The national office of the UCC has recently updated the [Church Yearbook Instructions](#) to help guide you through the process.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Elise at the Vermont Conference Office either by email (vermontconference@gmail.com) or phone (802-728-4999).



Lent is the sacred season in the church that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Sunday- [Read more here!](#)

We invite you to reflect during the next six weeks/40 days of Lent on where you find hope. As you reflect, please share an original poem, perhaps a short piece of writing, a photo you have taken, or piece of art, that we can post on Facebook and our E-Kit with others. Please send anything that moves you to vermontconference@gmail.com

Week 1: Where do you find hope in your life?

Week 2: Where do you find hope in your work or vocation?

Week 3: Where do you find hope in your church?

Week 4: Where do you find hope in your local community?

Week 5: Where do you find hope in giving and serving?

Week 6: Where do you find hope in the world?

PEACEMAKERS' PULPIT FOR FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Friends –

This monthly submission to E-KIT has been happening for many years now. We would love to have some new participants, as many on our roster are very definitely “old-timers.” We like to think that we may have some wisdom from experience, but it is so important to hear fresh voices. If you would be willing to make a submission, once a year, please be in touch with me at bedson30@gmail.com.



Due to a goof on my part, there was no submission last month, so this is the first Peacemakers' Pulpit since 2020. What a year that was! I personally was affected minimally, as I live in an Independent Living Facility where I do get to see people every day, even though our dining room is closed, as is our building to outside visitors. It doesn't feel like minimal, though, when you haven't been to an in-person worship service in close to a year, and seeing family, if it happens, requires all kinds of quarantining and planning, even though one knows in one's heart that others are dealing with physical suffering, loss of loved ones, exhaustion, and economic struggles. Inner peace is something we've all had to work on!

And then came January 6. This nonagenarian has never lived through anything like the pandemic and surely never expected to see our capitol taken over by armed rioters, yelling words of hate. I struggle with how “outer” peace can be accomplished, when our country is so sadly and completely divided. It is so easy for those of us in either half to see the other half as the enemy. They aren't. They are all children of God. Information which is not factual needs to be called out as untruth, but in our day to day interaction with people who are in a different “half” than we are, God helping, may we LISTEN, and share gently as we talk about our differences. It can be painstakingly slow, this procedure, but over a Scrabble game, a day or so ago, I felt like a tiny piece of a bridge was created.

I wish you well with this. It's not easy. It is helpful to me to keep in mind Fred Buechner's comment that peace is not the absence of struggle, but the presence of love.



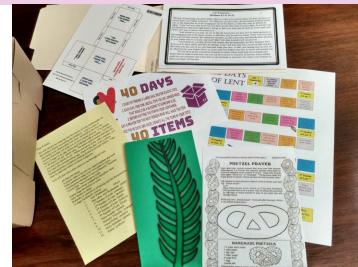
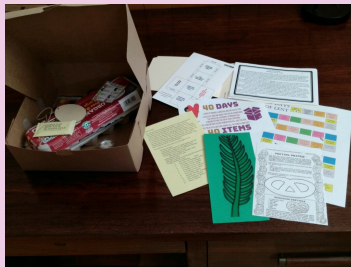
Vermont Conference **REGISTRATION OPEN!!!**

[Find all the details and register HERE!!](#)

We absolutely cannot wait to see you!

Lent in a Box!

United Community Church in St. Johnsbury has sent out or delivered over 100 'Lent in a Box' kits to members and friends of the Church. Just take a peek at all the neat things they included! How fun!



UCC Issues Appeal in Response to Winter Storms

The United Church of Christ is issuing an appeal to assist people affected by this year's Winter Storms.

The impact of massive and intense storms is being felt across a wide swath of the United States. So far Texas has been particularly hard hit, and the situation there is terrifying.

Learn more about the appeal or read the UCC News Story about how churches are already responding.



A member of Friends Congregational UCC tends to the aftermath of ceiling damage in the church's kitchen in College Station, Tex.



Disabling Lent – An Anti-Ableists Devotion for Lent

Disabling Lent is an amazing collection of reflections on the scriptures for each Sunday of Lent as well as every day of Holy Week.

You can find the PDF [here!](#)

You can find the full audio collection [here!](#)



Online Boundaries Training, May 19 & 20

LeaderWise's online boundaries training workshop is lively and interactive, full of reflection and conversation. Attendees have given us feedback that our boundaries training was a great experience, AND caused them to re-evaluate some of their own practices.

This live online boundaries training is 5 total hours split over 2 consecutive days (1:30 pm to 4:00 pm Central each day). Following the first session, participants are asked to engage in a bit of reflection work in preparation for the second session. This online boundaries training will be conducted via secure Zoom video conferencing.

[Click here to register \(\\$75\) for the May 19 & 20 Boundaries Training with LeaderWise.](#) LeaderWise can also bring a Boundaries Training session to your judicatory tailored to your specific schedule and needs. Please [contact Mary Kay](#) for more information.

Antoinette Brown Award Nominations

Celebrating the life and ministry of Antoinette Brown and all women in ordained ministry

Nominees for Trailblazers should be ordained clergywomen in the UCC who honor Antoinette Brown's vision of women in leadership in church and society. Nominees for Catalysts are projects, collectives, congregations or organizations that serve as provocative places that advance and empower women in ministry.



The Rev. Loey Powell in Oberlin, Ohio

Find the Official Nomination form [here!](#)



Active Shooter Preparedness Webinar 3/4 and 3/12

Preparing employees for a potential active shooter incident is an integral component of an organization's incident response planning. Because active shooter incidents are unpredictable and evolve quickly, preparing for and knowing what to do in an active

shooter situation can be the difference between life and death. Every second counts.

Please note this active shooter preparedness training is for member denominations affiliated with Insurance Board. As a member, you will have priority access to sign up for the training as there are only 150 spots available per training session. Ministries are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.

It's All About Being A Middle School Teen

An Open and Genuine Youth Discussion Series for
Middle School Youth Grades 6-8.



Wednesdays 5:30pm - 6:30pm
February 3rd - April 7th

2/3 - Understanding Teens' Needs
2/10 - Building My Positive Communication Skills
2/17 - Love and Dating
2/24 - My Beliefs and My Parents' Beliefs
3/3 - Becoming Aware of MySelf
3/10 - Why is Body Image Important to Self-Esteem?
3/17 - Building My Positive Self-Worth
3/24 - Friends, Peer Pressure and Bullies
3/31 - My Cyber World
4/7 - Managing and Expressing My Feelings



This is a drop in series with Registration
Please contact Justin Hoy (justin@essexchips.org)
or Heather Niquette (hniquette@pcavt.org).

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont- Family Support Offerings

Each year, the Family Support Team at PCAVT coordinates a variety of Nurturing Parenting Programs (NPP) and Circle of Parents Support Groups (COP) throughout the State. Starting in March, we are adding the Strengthening Families Programs (SFP) to our offerings! At this time, we are not meeting in person, but we are continuing to offer these groups virtually. These are groups for parents who are looking for extra support and/or want to learn additional skills around parenting.

You can find a schedule of meetings [here!](#)
You can find the referral form [here!](#)



COVID Care Kits make UCC National Facebook Page!

East Arlingtons own Kathy Clark has made the UCC Facebook page with her COVID Care Kits! The pastor of Federated Church of East Arlington heard there were some grants available to help their neighbors through the pandemic. In order to serve vulnerable adults 65+ and those with disabilities, they created \$10,000 worth of "Covid Community Support Kits" that can be picked up at a no-touch drive-thru. You can watch the video [here!](#)

CELEBRATE AFRICAN DESCENDED PEOPLE

During Black History Month



Black History Month and the UCC: Looking back while moving forward

“It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten.” That African proverb is summed up by the word “Sankofa.” It is also a tip about Black History Month from the United Church of Christ. Using the theme “Celebrate African Descended People,” the UCC is pointing to online resources for the annual February focus. The web links lift up the genius of African Americans today and throughout history — and their struggles, too.

You can read more [here!](#)



Welcome to the UCC, Adelaide!

Adelaide Frances Merriam

Daughter of Pastor James Merriam and his
wife Kendall Lambert

Born January 29, 2021

7lbs 6oz, 21 inches long

She loves sleeping, eating, and snuggling.

The dog is also adjusting well.

Spring Boundary Training Opportunities

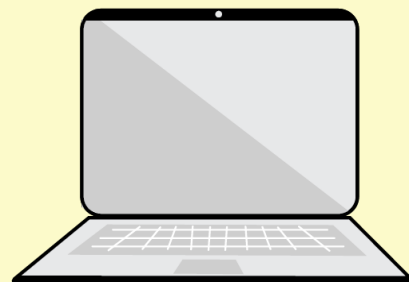
Leave-Taking Boundaries

Thursday, March 11th, 9 am to 1 pm

Via Zoom

Facilitated by the Reverend Peter Ilgenfritz

Registration Fee: \$25



The Foundations of Understanding Boundaries

(This is the basic/initial boundary training and should be taken before engaging in other boundary training opportunities.)

Saturday, May 1st, 9 am to 1 pm

Via Zoom

Facilitated by the Reverend Gordon Rankin

Registration Fee: \$25

To register for either of these Boundary Training opportunities, please send an email to: events@nhcucc.org. Instructions for making the registration payment will be provided.



[Resources for resilience support clergy through COVID-19](#)

It's been almost a year since COVID-19 irrevocably changed United Church of Christ churches.

Members have become ill. Many never recovered. Countless buildings remain closed—some reopening, only to shut down again.

Congregations worship and gather virtually. Clergy have to find ways to cope and carry on. As Americans line up for vaccinations, health experts warn against darker days ahead.

Eleven months of uncertainty. The pandemic is taking an emotional toll on mental health and ministers are not immune.

Continue reading [here](#).

EVENTS AROUND THE CONFERENCE

(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to

VermontConference@gmail.com .

You may just see yourself or someone you love in the eKit or our Facebook page!)



Summer Outdoor Ministry Camps

Registration is OPEN!

Going into 5th – 8th in the fall?

**@ the Lake for 2021 is changing to ... VT Takes a Hike to the Mtn
July 18-24, 2021**

Join Laurie Chipman (VT) and Diane Tinkham (NH) as they co-dean this fun week. Come see some familiar faces from @ the Lake and explore all the fun on top of Pine Mtn outside of Gorham, NH at Horton Center Camp!

VT @ the Lake is taking a hiatus from the lake at Rock Point and hiking to the Mountain! Come unite with middle schoolers from the Green and White Mountains (VT & NH).

God's spirit will be in all we do at camp this week as we hike, rock climb, go caving, pray, sing, arts and crafts, and discover our own courage through games, challenges, and much more!

Three camps offered the week of July 18 :

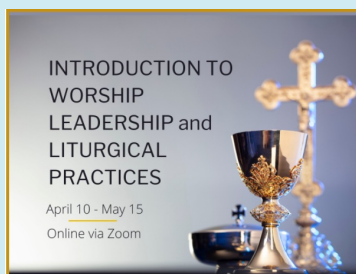
[Information for Incoming 3rd, 4th, and 5th Graders!](#)

[Information for Incoming 5-8th Graders!](#)

[Information for Incoming 9th-12th Graders!](#)

Like our *Vermont Outdoor Ministry UCC* Facebook page to help you connect more with God and camp before summer.

Recruiting counselors who are 18yrs or older. Email Laurie at lchipman@fccej.org or [find more information here!](#) Due to COVID guidelines, more counselors are needed for 2021 summer!



Introduction to Worship Leadership and Liturgical Practices

The Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary is delighted to offer a new, six class series: **Introduction to Worship Leadership and Liturgical Practices.**

Taught by the Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma, this class will prepare worship leaders to **plan, prepare, and practice** congregational worship, rites, and rituals, especially **baptisms, weddings, and funerals/memorial services.**

The six-week online class runs from **Saturday, April 10 through Saturday, May 15.** Five of the classes meet Saturdays from 10:00 am until noon. One class will be held on Thursday, May 6 from 6:00-8:00 pm.

You can find out more and register [here!](#)

To the Pastors and Voting Delegates for Annual Meeting:

Over the past year the Board of Directors has been working on a revised set of Conference Bylaws. The major work was done by Dick Dale and Jeanne Zammataro. What arose out of the discussion was not a technical fix of a few lines, but an entirely different way to envision the work and ministry of the Conference. In order to give the proposed Bylaws the attention needed, the Board has decided to set aside a date in October for a special meeting. In this way, we can keep the focus of Annual Meeting on systemic issues of race and the intersection with other justice issues along with our keynote speaker, the Reverend Traci Blackmon. A small amendment to the current Bylaws is necessary to call a special meeting. The attached will be presented for a vote at Annual Meeting.

[The Amendment can be found here.](#)

COVID-19 NEWS

In light of: the growing number of Covid-19 infections in Vermont, increased hospitalizations, the onset of flu season, the potential spreading of the disease during holiday gatherings and the advice of our Governor and experts in infectious disease, we strongly urge that **worship not be held in person until criteria for safe in person gathers have been met.**

[For more info click here](#)

The Vermont Department of Health has provided new guidance specifically for Communities of Faith including holidays, services, and events. This includes (but is not limited to) precautions and actions for organizational leaders. It can be found [here.](#)



Need Extra Support During the Pandemic?

COVID Support VT is a statewide program offering free and confidential emotional support and connections to resources for anyone needing help. They offer a wide range of supports on their [website](#).

SAVE THE DATE!

ANNUAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS!


The deadline for Annual Meeting resolutions is February 28th. Please put your resolution in the correct format and remember to number the lines. Resolutions should be submitted by email to both Lynn (llbvct@gmail.com) and Board Chair, Doug Carter (DCarter36@charter.net).



The 50th Annual NEAUCE Conference!

The 50th Annual New England Association of United Church Educators Conference is Virtual this year! The Keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Gay Byron addressing "Racism in the Bible". You can find more information [here!](#)

New England Association of United Church Educators
registration February 2021 auce-ucc.org



NEAUCE 2021
Tear down, Transform, **Transcend**,
A Call To Action

Virtual 50th Celebration!
Jeremiah 18:1-4 The Potter and the Clay

SAVE THE DATE
Friday April 30 6:30-9:00 pm
&
Saturday May 1 8:30am-1:30pm

keynote
Rev. Dr. Gay L. Byron

worship & plenary
Rev. Dr. Jason Brian Santos

music
Dan Brownell

workshop
Rev. Suzi Townsley

AUCE members \$50
non-AUCE members \$55
Scholarship fee \$25



GENERAL SYNOD 2021

Since 1957, when the first "uniting" General Synod gathered in 1957 in Cleveland, Ohio, to the meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2019, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has faithfully convened a meeting every two years in physical locations throughout the United States.

2021 will be different. We are moving through a pandemic that has taken many lives. This pandemic has disrupted our routines and many of our well-established practices as we adapt to the new demands for safety and social distancing. The meeting of the General Synod is no different, and the 2021 gathering of the General Synod will take place entirely online.

[You can find all the information you need here!!!](#)

RESOURCES FOR ONLINE MINISTRY!

Do you need help with getting your church services online?
Find resources and help here:

[Click here for WorshipWell information and resources](#)

[Worship Resource Links for How to Live Stream- from the Southern New England Conference UCC](#)

[Free-Use, No-Licensing Music and Worship Materials here](#)

[How to prevent Zoom Bombing](#)

If you have additional resources to share please email the conference office at VermontConference@gmail.com !

DEADLINE for E-Kit News must be received by **Tuesday of each week.**
Please send any and all information to Elise at vermontconference@gmail.com.

Thank You for Your Support!

Our Churches Wider Mission Basic Support, Association Dues, and Friends of the Vermont Conference make this communication possible.

[Donate](#)

Connect with us



<http://www.vtcucc.org/>
