



# 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*

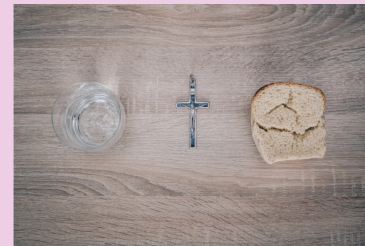
## Mission:

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

Weekly E-News Winter "

March 4 , 2021

## *Message from the Conference*



## New Church Start Coming!

Our Conference has some exciting news-there is a new church start among us! Lava Mueller, who was ordained in our Conference this past year, will be the planting pastor. In the fall of 2019 Lava, who is also a hospice chaplain, was one of the original members of the New Ministry Team of the Conference. This team of seven pastors has been meeting since then to pray and think about different ways that the churches of our Conference can connect with unchurched people in Vermont, and new ways that we can be church in the future. After much prayer and many conversations, Lava is ready to start her alternative worship experience called Love Church, and she has formed a launch team of 8 people consisting of mostly unchurched seekers including four people in their early 20's. Lava and her husband Andy are members of Bethany Church in Randolph, and Bethany is supportive of this new venture and interested in ways that both churches can learn from and grow with each other.

In her own words, this is how Lava sees Love Church. "Love Church is open for anyone (we are UCC after all!) but is especially geared toward attracting unchurched and younger members. Worship will include dinner/breakfast/pizza church (worshipping around a table), drama church, art church, music church, nature church, and oodles of workshops! Love Church will seek to support our unchurched friends as they discover the amazing grace that can be found in a worshipping community. The focus will be on the ever present Holy Spirit of Love and how we can offer this same love and support to our neighbors. A huge priority is to create an online presence and to make sure that people can attend the weekly dinner church worship services whether in person or not. We begin in prayer, we end in prayer. In between, we have a lot of fun!"

Please be in prayer with Love Church as they seek to embody Jesus' love with unchurched young adults as well as anyone else that they encounter. They will be spending several months networking and focusing on their mission before they regularly offer their weekly worship services. The Conference is helping to support Lava by providing a Coach. You can contact Lava directly if you have any questions or comments at [lavamueller@gmail.com](mailto:lavamueller@gmail.com).



## The 226th Vermont Conference Annual Meeting will take place April 23 - 24 on Zoom!

We are excited to welcome our keynote speaker and preacher the **Rev. Traci Blackmon**, Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO.

Also, on Friday, April 23, the Vermont Conference presents a special panel discussion:  
*"What is the Minority Experience in Vermont?"*

For more information on both of these exciting Conference Events, [click here!](#)  
You can also [Register Here!](#)



### Vermont Conference Racial Justice Task Force!!!

The Department of Justice and Witness Ministries is hosting a discussion about how churches and members of the Vermont Conference can address issues of racial justice in our state and beyond. In 1993, The Nineteenth General Synod called upon UCC congregations in all its settings to be a true multiracial and multicultural church. In 2008, the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting approved a resolution titled Becoming a Multiracial and Multicultural Conference. Much good work has been done since then, but, at the moment, there is no dedicated task force on this issue. We hope that interested folks will consider how we can best share information and action to fulfill our commitments of the past and our call to the future.

This meeting will be held via Zoom from 9 to 10 am on Thursday, March 18.

[REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT HERE!](#)

### A Message from Norwich Congregational Church's Climate Action Group!

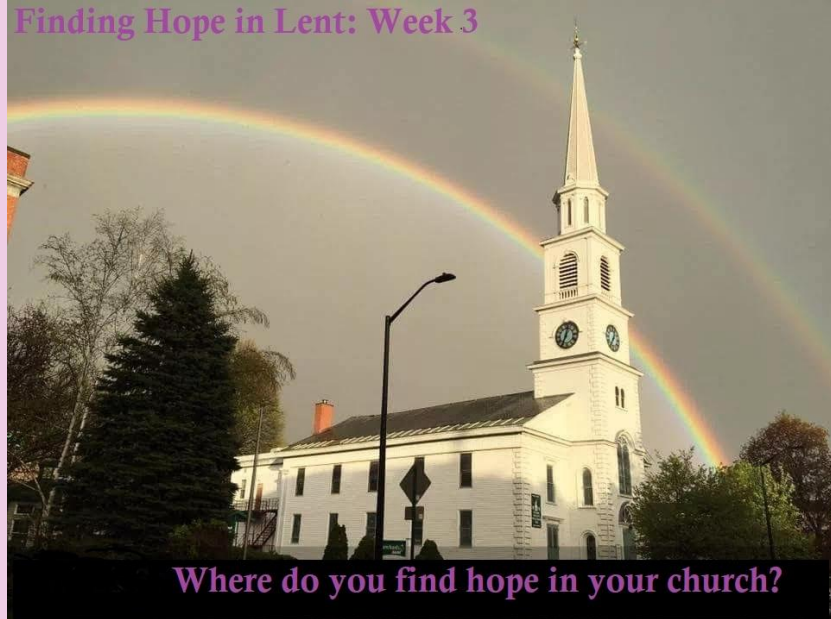
Our group was founded in 2019 on the premise that the Church is uniquely positioned to both lead the transformation of our society necessitated by global warming as well as to provide comfort and relief to our congregations

and broader communities as they are increasingly affected by the results of climate crisis. We are interested in joining forces and sharing ideas with groups at other churches as we work advance this critical mission.

To read more, [CLICK HERE!](#)  
To contact Pam directly, [CLICK HERE!](#)



### Finding Hope in Lent: Week 3



**Where do you find hope in your church?**

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](mailto: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?

## Churches ready for OGHS offering in unique ways

Challenging church members, creating calendars for kids, using personal

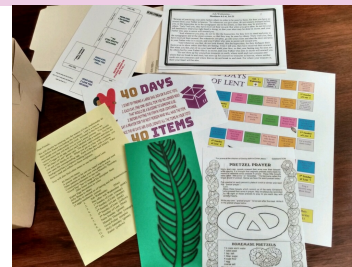
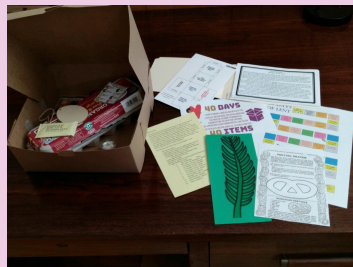
experiences to drive home good reasons for giving. These are some of the ways United Church of Christ congregations are supporting the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering.

That commitment, always important, is especially so in 2021. You can read more on OGHS 2021 [here!](#)



## 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.

## **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](mailto:justin@essexchips.org))  
or Heather Niquette ([hniquette@pcavt.org](mailto: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!](#)

# EVENTS AROUND THE CONFERENCE

(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to [VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto:VermontConference@gmail.com) .  
You may just see yourself or someone you love in the eKit or our Facebook page!)

## 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.



COVID Care Kits Ready

## 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!](#)



## 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](mailto:lchipman@fccej.org) or [find more information here!](#) Due to COVID guidelines, more counselors are needed for 2021 summer!

## **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!](#)

## **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 meet.**

[For more info click here](#)

# Self-Care in a Pandemic



## [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](#).

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!**

### **Spring Boundary Training Opportunities**

**Leave-Taking Boundaries**

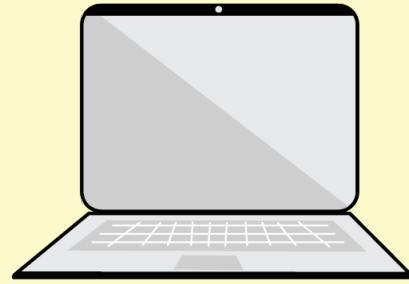
Thursday, March 11th, 9 am to 1 pm



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](mailto:events@nhcucc.org). Instructions for making the registration payment will be provided.



## 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.

You can find more information, including how to register [here](#).



## 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**.

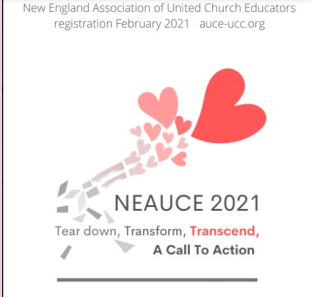
Taught by the Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma, this class will prepare worship leaders to **plan, prepare, and practice** congregational worship, rites, and rituals, especially **baptisms, weddings, and funerals/memorial services**.

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!](#)

## 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

**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

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

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](#)

[Zoom Worship Laboratory Video Tutorial](#)

## How to prevent Zoom Bombing

If you have additional resources to share please email the conference office at [VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

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