



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 11 , 2021

Message from the Conference

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

This week has offered us many gifts. The days have been warmer, the birdsong sweeter, the sunlight brighter. We know there is more cold weather to come, but for now this is a welcome respite and harbinger of hope. Likewise, as more vaccine becomes available and more of us are vaccinated, we can catch at least a glimpse of a time when we will be able to be together, to laugh and sing and hug. That time is not yet, but it is coming.

As we continue to live in the year-long Lent, perhaps it is time to believe that resurrection is on the horizon and to remind ourselves that death and alienation and isolation will not have the last word. If we open our eyes and the eyes of our hearts there are signs of resurrection all around.

We are already changed by what we have lived through with COVID. We are already seeking ways to live into gathered AND virtual worship, a gift from this wilderness time. Here I repeat four questions to help us along the way:

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?

May we have eyes to see the great and small signs that point us to resurrection.

In peace and hope,
Lynn

**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!](#)

Yes, there will be

Peacemakers Gathering at Annual Meeting!

Friday, April 23 beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Meeting via Zoom will make attendance possible for EVERYONE who has a story to tell! What kind of story? We want you to share about a project, program, initiative or action your church is involved in that increases peace with justice in our world. Have you recently been working on or learning about: climate change, global ministry, food insecurity, advocating for marginalized groups, housing issues, racial justice, gun violence or the violence of war, human trafficking, migrant or refugee ministries, or just bringing people together to promote peace and love in your community? These are examples – the sky's the limit! Your brief presentation will inspire others to consider how they and their churches might get involved in some form of peacemaking.

We will also pay tribute to the late Rev. John Nutting, who originated Peacemakers Breakfast decades ago. This will be the first Peacemakers event since his death on June 10, 2020.

Please email [Theresa Lever](#) with your idea for a presentation!!!

Thank you!

ARE YOU A PRESENTER AT ANNUAL MEETING?

All Presentations (this includes but is not limited to: PowerPoints, Documents, PDF's, anything Prerecorded, Workbooks for Participants, etc.) are due no later than

Friday, March 26th at 6 pm.

If you need any help with anything having to do with your presentation, please reach out to Elise (vermontconference@gmail.com) and she will do everything she can to make sure your presentation is exactly as you picture it to be!



Rev. Paul Nickerson

Nickersonp@comcast.net

Nickersoncoaching.com

8 Iverson Road, Beverly, MA.
01915

508-930-9327

VITALITY EVENT!!!

As churches re-open, there is a great opportunity to do church differently and to engage many people.

Sat, May 22nd, from 10am to 3pm!!!

Come and learn:

- How to do hybrid worship, both in-person and online. This is possible for even the smallest of churches.
- How to identify the “next group” your church is called to reach
- How to have a month of celebrations as you re-open for public worship
- How to adjust staff and structure for the “new normal” of post-Covid
- Each church will develop an Action Plan

This workshop will be followed by 6 months of coaching!!

Read more about this [HERE!](#)

REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT HERE!

Hybrid Worship Webinars!!!

Some time after Easter, mid to late April, the Indiana Kentucky Conference will offer a two part webinar series on hybrid worship. The first webinar will be on best practices for engaging multiple audiences through hybrid worship and some ways to structure that for local churches.

The second webinar will focus on equipment needed for this kind of venture, plus a focus on smaller churches, larger churches, financial budgets to meet the needs for equipment depending on your church size, etc.

We will keep you posted as more details are released!!!

Annual Candle Lighting Ritual - COVID-19 pandemic

March 11, 2020 – World Health Organization declares global pandemic

March 13, 2020 – United States declares national



Molly G. Hicks created a Candle Lighting Ritual to mark one year since the beginning of the pandemic. It is designed to be used annually, if desired. Please feel free to use it and share it with whomever might benefit. It was inspired by the Four Candles ritual, with which many of you may be familiar.

"We light this first candle to represent our past. We could not have conceived of how profoundly our lives would be affected by this virus. Our grief is complex, and we mourn for the ways in which life has changed."

You can read the entire ritual [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!](#)

Nonprofit Security Grant Program Application Extension to March 12th, 2021 @ 3PM

Brief summary of changes to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program:

- FEMA has increased the total maximum award amount for sub-recipients under the Nonprofit Program. The original amount was \$100,00.00 and it has now been increased to \$150,000.00 with applicants able to apply for up to three sites totaling \$450,000.00
- In addition to equipment in category 14 and 15 of the FEMA Authorized Equipment List (AEL), they will also allow equipment in the following areas:
 - Notification and Warning Systems
 - Radios and Public Address Systems
- Vermont Application extension from March 5th to March 12, 2021 at 3pm.

Please see the video below for more information.

IJ: Part 1

1. Applicant Information (DHS/FEMA provided webform)

- Legal Name of the Organization
- Physical Address of the Facility
- County
- Year the Original Facility was Constructed
- Organization Type
- Membership and Community Served
- S01 (c) (3) Number or EIN
- DUNS Number – <http://fedgov.duns.com/webform>
- NSGP-S Federal Funding Request (amount TBD)
- NSGP Total Project Cost
- Any Current Contract with DHS (yes/no)
- Investment Phase – New or Ongoing



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!](#)

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?

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!](#)



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.

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!)



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!](#)



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@fcej.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 met.**

[For more info click here](#)



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

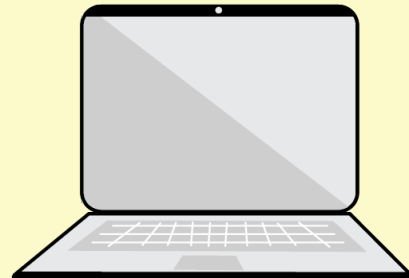
Leave-Taking Boundaries

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.)

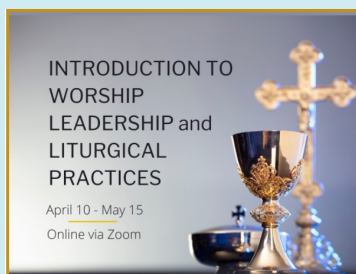
Saturday, May 1st, 9 am to 1 pm

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. Instructions for making the registration payment will be provided.



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
<i>Virtual 50th Celebration!</i> Jeremiah 18:1-4 The Potter and the Clay	keynote Rev. Dr. Gay L. Byron worship & plenary Rev. Dr. Jason Brian Santos music Dan Brownell workshop Rev. Suzi Townsley
	 AUCU members \$50 non-AUCU 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



visit our website at <http://www.vtcucc.org/>
