



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 Spring Edition

May 6, 2021

Message from the Conference

Relaunching as a Hybrid Church-May 22nd!

This week on our Tuesday Conference Clergy Call, the conversation was in part about hybrid church. One pastor shared that she met with her leadership board this past week, and they told her that they did not want the church to be a hybrid church when the church returns to in person worship. Even though the church's attendance has grown during Covid because people can connect to the church online, they want to go back to the way things were, and have anyone who wants to come to their church come in person.

I think this is a common enough viewpoint in many of our churches. And yet, the post pandemic church does offer us an opportunity to reach out to people that we could have never dreamed of being in touch with in the past. But how do you best do hybrid church? What obstacles do you need to overcome? What are the opportunities in hybrid worship to share with church leaders? These are the questions that Paul Nickerson will be dealing with in his upcoming seminar with the Vermont Conference.

It is called "Relaunching as a Hybrid Church", and it will be on Saturday, May 22nd from 10-3, with breaks and a lunch break included. Paul is a gifted church consultant, and has helped many of our churches in the Vermont Conference become more vital in their ministry and mission. I promise you that it will be worth your time. In addition, Paul will then provide 6 months of coaching to all the churches who sign up, helping each church think through in consultation with the others about how to handle all the practical issues of how to best do hybrid church. I find that it is the coaching that really helps a seminar to have a long lasting impact on a church.

We already have 6 churches signed up, so I invite you to join us! Each church should bring a team of at least one pastor and three lay people. The cost is \$395 per church, but if that amount is really preventing you from signing up, please email me. You can register here on Ekit. I hope your church can be part of this exciting day!

Faithfully yours,
Paul

NICKERSON COACHING

Congregations Moving Forward



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!](#)



How to Contact Conference Staff

We are having some TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES with the email servers, so until further notice the only emails that are working at the conference are:

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak llbvtc@gmail.com

Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree sangreepucc@gmail.com

Office Administrator: Elise Foster vermontconference@gmail.com

Ministries Coordinator: Rev. Jackie Lingelbach vtconmincoor@gmail.com

Bookkeeper: Tanya Frazier vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com



How can you help Williamstown United Federated Church?

Williamstown Federated Church lost everything in a fire last Monday night. While they were able to reopen in person worship last Sunday, it was in a different Church with limited supplies.

They lost all of their sanctuary things:
Cross on the altar
Paraments
Altar Bible
Sound system (speaker, wireless mike)
Communion set

If a church has these to give, they should call Pastor Doug
on his cell phone: 802-356-0578 or email: doug9927@gmail.com

There is also a **Fire Donation Fund** at Bar Harbor Bank and Trust. Anyone can donate either anonymously or with recognition. Please tell the teller or note on your check that you are making a deposit to the United Federated Church of Williamstown Fire Donation Fund.

You can also mail your donation to:
P.O. Box 346
Williamstown, VT 05679

Thank you so much to the United Church of Chelsea for their generous donation of hymnals!!!

226th Annual Meeting



Everything 2021 Annual Meeting!!!!

Did you miss Annual Meeting this year?

That is ok!

We will be uploading the video recordings as they become available to our YouTube channel.

[click here for youtube videos](#)

Also, if you did attend, please feel free to give us as much feedback as you can here:

[2021 Annual Meeting Survey!](#)

(Don't be shy with your opinion. The only thing we value more than positive feedback is honest feedback!!)

Are you in this photo?



The above photo shows Rev. Max Webster, former Conference Minister standing in the doorway. If you recognize any of the seminarians surrounding him, please contact Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno [here!](#)



The Racial Justice Task Force Needs You!!

"I joined this group because I've come to realize that all the issues of justice are interconnected, in the spirit of Traci Blackmon's keynote on Crossroads. My own passion is the environment, and you can't separate a healthy environment out from racial justice, since unhealthy environments have disproportionate impacts on communities of color, causing immense suffering. In the group, I appreciate the way we've explored many facets of activism around this issue, ranging from self-examination and book study, to political witness, to community collaborations, and as an activist myself, I've gained insight into the ways these different forms of racial justice advocacy all work together." - Fred Taylor

You can learn more (including how to join!!!) [here!](#)

Peacemaker's Pulpit, May 2021:

Help Kids India



For centuries the hill people in South India's high verdant mountains lived in isolated villages surrounded by terraced fields. Then colonists discovered the refreshing climate and stunning beauty. They surveyed, bought, and appropriated land, built churches, schools, hospitals, and brought their skilled servants. Caste Hindu and Moslem shopkeepers monopolized production and established a cash economy.

Illiterate and Dalit ("Untouchable"), the hill people lacked the skills, status and opportunity to take part in the new order. They became paupers in their own land and their children grew stunted.

Village mothers approached Hilda Isaac, newly married and from the plains, where she'd grown up in a Lutheran orphanage. Dalit like them, and a college graduate, Hilda knew the little children were the best hope to improve matters.

Together, Hilda and the mothers started a crèche, or preschool. Safety first, but nutrition, health care, play, exercise, and early education followed. Local women were hired as teachers and helpers. The project has grown to five crèches serving 270 children, a community farm and health center, and employs 35-45 people. Hilda remains the director, a servant leader whose faith and love are the guiding principles of the entire project.

Donors to Help Kids India fund three of the preschools. We believe grassroots organizations are the best agents of change; we share reports, audits, news and visits. Crèche graduates are completing high school, trade school, and college. They are raising the health, literacy, and economic stability of their families and villages. The crèches are breaking the cycle of poverty.

Hilda says, "The low poverty children not respected. Only you get a good education, you get a good job, they giving the respect. Now low caste want a good education, changing the world, changing India. I dedicated my life, I love my Indian children. Everything God is planning."

If your church would like someone to come to speak about this program, please contact Catherine Kidder, West Newbury VT, 802 429-2632, info@helpkidsindia.org
helpkidsindia.org, a non-profit organization.

[A Study on Congregational Singing during Covid-19](#)

"As of today (April 19th, 2021), we have some important updates on the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and congregational singing. Many of you will be aware that a large number of public education organizations have been sponsoring a scientific study out of the University of Colorado Boulder and the University of Maryland. That study has just released

another update on their findings and updated their recommendations."

You can find the rest of this article, the study, and the summarization [here!](#)

GETTING THE COVID-19 VACCINE!!!

The Vermont Forward Plan ties reopening to specific vaccine milestones in the state. All Vermonters are encouraged to get the vaccine when it is their turn. At this time, Education, Health Care, Sports/Organized Sports and Youth Summer Camps will retain individualized guidance and not move to universal guidance.



[You can find more information here!](#)

[You can find an appointment time here!](#)



Outdoor Ministry Camp

Register online for a week at Horton Center this summer!

www.hortoncenter.org

Watch this! <https://youtu.be/rLZm8fzCV2Y>

Join us for... **VT Takes a Hike to the Mtn**

Deans: Laurie Chipman & Diane Tinkham

for those going into 5th – 8th in the fall

July 18-24, 2021

VT @ the Lake is taking a hiatus from the lake at Rock Point and hiking to the Mountain! Come join us up at Pine Mountain and unite with middle schoolers from the Green (VT) and White (NH) Mountains. God's spirit will be in all we do at camp this week as we hike, play, pray, sing, rock climb, do some arts and crafts, and discover our own courage through games, challenges, and much more!

We have 2 awesome counselors lined up so far!
Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters (Greensboro Congregational) & Jeffrey
Tuper-Giles (Barre Congregational)!

These are two fun guys who have a big heart and a love for God,
youth & nature!

Are you 18yrs or older? Love the outdoors and spending time
helping young youth? Watch this

one! <https://youtu.be/gecZ0v3BGZk> Then reach out to Laurie
Chipman lchipman@fcej.org Counselors get a reduction in cost
for their own child/youth to attend a camp this summer. No cost for
counselors. Volunteering will be the most fun you've had in a real

long time. You'll be exhausted every night and will sleep deep, breathing in the fresh
mountain air, not to mention worship on Chapel Rock! Click on 'volunteer' on their website for
more information. (*College youth – this looks great on your resume!*)



NEWS UPDATE from Horton Center

NOTE: *We are ready to go for in-person camp this summer! However, if any camp session must be cancelled, you can get a full refund.*

Check out the latest Camp COVID19 Info at: <https://hortoncenter.org/COVID>

IMPORTANT NOTICE of changes:

1. Our Spring Workdays Weekend will happen one week later than planned on the schedule. It

will now be May 21-23. No registration needed but let us know if you're coming so we have enough food! No charge, donations welcome.

2. Open House will NOT be happening in-person after all, due to preparations for in-person camp sessions We will be doing a virtual Live Open House from camp June 19th so be on the lookout for how to attend from home!

ALSO if you're 18 or older you could:

- Be a Counselor for a week and change the lives of our young people at camp. Check out the [video](#) to find out why "We Need You!"
- Be part of the Summer Staff! Get more info and details [Here!](#)

Churches: We have provided two 'Virtual Bulletin Inserts' ([Come to your camp](#) and [Come to your camp2](#)) for you to add to your church e-news letter, your Sunday bulletin, or your Sunday worship videos to help us get more campers to camp!

See you on the mountain.

As always you can contact Tim Hughes with any questions at: thughes@nhucc.org or 603-545-9660.

DISASTER RESPONSE WORK: HELP REBUILD PHILLY NEIGHBORHOOD

In 2018 and again in 2019, quite a few VT UCC volunteer groups went to help rebuild Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. I am hoping to recruit more VT UCC mission teams for rebuilding help again.

I was recently called to re-up as a UCC Partner in Service in order to help with an urgent need in the Philly area, in the Eastwick neighborhood. At the beginning of the pandemic, this lower income area of Philadelphia was hit by Tropical Storm Isaias. Immediate assistance was given, but rebuilding has yet to happen due to Covid. We are now searching for volunteers to come and help rebuild this area (about an 8 hour drive).

We welcome volunteers for 2 or more days (including weekends). We are looking for teams of 2-5 members, 18 years and older, with a skilled team leader. Job assignments can be matched to your skill area. We do not have housing to offer due to Covid and so teams will need to find their own housing. Eastwick is near the Philly airport and therefore also close to many hotels and a direct train service to Eastwick. Eastwick is also an area of great interest with historic sites, a nature reserve and great hiking.

We welcome volunteers and, of course, donations.

Please get in touch for more information:

Judy Moore

802-299-8290

isaiasrecoveryvolunteers@gmail.com

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!)

[New York School of Ministry](#)
[April & May 2021 Offerings!](#)

Saturday, May 15, 2021, 9:00 AM – 1 PM
Speaking of God in the Depths of Suffering

Saturday, May 22, 2021, 9:00 AM – 12:15 PM
Working with Spiritual Struggles

You can learn more about these offerings [here!](#)

You can register for these courses [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!

UCCMA Conference 2021 - Registration is now open!

Join the UCCMA online for workshops, worship services, a wonderful concert, vendors and networking. We will be virtually hosted by the First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC in the historic town of Glastonbury, Connecticut. From Thursday evening through the Saturday 4 pm closing worship service, we provide a plethora of activities that will enhance your music skills and give you resources and ideas for new ways of expressing God's Spirit in these pandemic times. We also provide glimpses of the historic scenery around the church in Glastonbury, which you would have enjoyed if you had come in person as originally planned. Join us instead online for a mental reset and spiritual refreshment with a taste of Connecticut.



[Find out more and register HERE!](#)



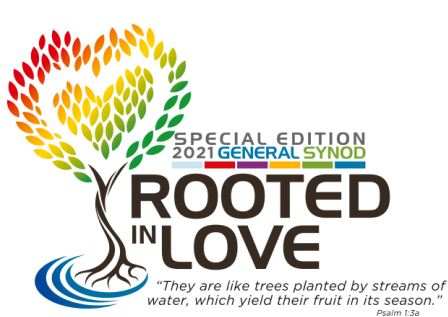
Online Boundaries Training, May 19 & 20

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.

GENERAL SYNOD 2021



Since 1957, when the first “uniting” General Synod gathered in 1957 in Cleveland, Ohio, to the meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1919, 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** !

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.

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