



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 27, 2021

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Message from the Conference

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

In my family, Memorial Day was an important day. We remembered those who died in war and in service to our country. It was also a day to generally honor our dead. In Southern Illinois everything was in bloom and we would cut flowers from our yard and make them into bouquets, one for each relative who had died. It was a time for telling stories about our loved ones and teaching each new generation the importance of remembering. After the flowers were arranged, we would go to the cemeteries where our relatives were buried, carefully set up the metal vase that was attached to each grave, fill it with water from a nearby spigot and place the flowers. Often, we would look for the graves of more distant relatives and friends of our parents.

In Frederick Buechner's book, *Telling Secrets* he writes:

"My story is important not because it is mine, God knows, but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours... it is precisely through these stories in all their particularity, as I have long believed and often said, that God makes himself known to each of us more powerfully and personally. If this is true, it means that to lose track of our stories is to be profoundly impoverished not only humanly but also spiritually."

On this Memorial Day, in addition to BBQ's and baseball, take the time to listen and share the stories of who came before you, how they lived and loved and stumbled. Take the time to tell your own story and listen to another's story. Perhaps in this way, God will be known both powerfully and personally.

In peace and hope,
Lynn



New News!!!



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!!!](#)

One Year Since the Passing of George Floyd

This video was created by the Presidents of the Windham and Rutland NAACP chapters for use in memoriam of George Floyd and others who have died.





FEMA

COVID 19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

As part of the federal funds allocated for COVID relief, there are monies for funeral assistance for the families anyone who dies of COVID. The number of those filing a claim is much less than the number eligible, and because of privacy rules, the state can't just email a list of families. We need help getting word out there to clergy and funeral homes that this assistance is available, (and retroactive). Please share the attached document with anyone that seems appropriate to help raise awareness about this.

Please read more about this [here!](#)



How can you help Williamstown United Federated Church?

Update from Pastor Doug Cameron:

"We have received so many items and donations from many different churches from in state and out of state. From a piano to a pulpit bible to candle stick holders, communion sets, hymnals, altar, desk, Sunday school supplies and books, etc. etc. We at this time have all the items to conduct a church service. We are still of course taking donations to our fire fund."

The **Fire Donation Fund** can be found 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 438
Williamstown, VT 05679



Return to Congregational Singing Panel Discussion

Tuesday June 1, 2021
3:30 – 4:30 PM Eastern

Join us for resources and ideas to help your congregation return to singing in a way that is safe and practical for you. We realize this is a deeply contextual issue, so we can't give you all the answers, but our panelists will provide resources, ideas and plans from their own work, encouragement and advice.

Leaders:

Brian Hehn - Director of the Center for Congregational Song
Karrie Rushing - Music Director, First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, NC and board member for Presbyterian Association of Musicians

Also after I had a long conversation with Christian Copyright Solutions I realized that even with a streaming license we might not be in compliance with copyright rules. I should be using a Content management program!! (Not YouTube or Face Book). So I asked Karen to schedule a webinar with CCS and CCLI.

[Register Here!](#)

36th Annual Karl Barth Seminar

The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers will be hosting its 36th annual Karl Barth seminar via ZOOM over two days, **June 14th and 15th**. Each day will feature two sessions: morning (10AM -12PM) and afternoon (1PM-2PM)



Our guest speaker this year will be Dr. Ian McFarland of Emory University who will guide our morning sessions as we discuss this year's reading from Church Dogmatics.

Our primary topic will be Church Dogmatics IV/3.2. "The Doctrine of Reconciliation" - discussing Paragraph 72 "Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community" (pp. 681-729)

During the Monday afternoon session we will also discuss Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock's lecture "Let My People Go" originally published in the Harvard Divinity School Bulletin.

This seminar is open to the general-public. Please feel free to join us for one or all the sessions. The discussion readings can be requested by contacting our Moderator, Rev. Dr. Kazimierz Bem at kdebem@gmail.com.

A free-will donation of \$20 for pastors and \$10 for students & retirees is suggested.

We hope you will join us for some lively theological discussion and fellowship.

If you would like to attend, please register [here!](#)



WANTED: PART-TIME OFFICE COORDINATOR

Greensboro United Church of Christ is seeking a multi-skilled individual to manage the office of a small, progressive, socially engaged church.

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

In Our Prayers

Please add Marisa Laviola's brother, as well as former Vermont Conference Minister Hal Harrison to your prayers.



They are both experiencing health challenges.

Thank you.



TWO SPECIAL EVENTS!!

PRC will be partnering with Jason Moore of Midnight Oil and Convergence, formerly The Center for Progressive Renewal to bring you these two events.

Both/And: Maximizing Hybrid Worship Experiences For Online and In-Person Audiences

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

2:00 - 3:30 PM Eastern

Leader: Jason Moore

As we begin to think about reopening our church buildings, we want to consider how we can create worship for two audiences at the same time: those who are in the pews, and those who are on their couches. How do we keep both audiences engaged so that neither one feels like they're spectators?

The Online Church Conference with Convergence

Bringing the future of the church into the present.

12 voices | 2 days | June 9-10, 2021

Join PRC's own Karen Ware Jackson

The internet is no longer a new idea for the church and it is essential to the future of our faith communities.

What's the difference between "church online" and "online church"?

As churches begin to return back to their sanctuaries, how can we carry our new practices and what we have learned forward and institutionalize them and weave them into the fabric of our ministry and church cultures?

What if TikTok is the newest iteration of telling parables and faith formation could happen 15 seconds at a time?

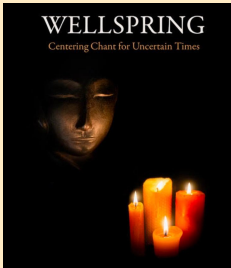
What does it mean to YouTube your church?

How is social media replacing religious institutions and how can faith leaders capitalize

on this reformation moment of transformation into a virtual reality?

[Learn more about both events here!](#)

[Register Here!](#)



WELLSPRING CHANTS are Published!

Kathy Wonson Eddy's collection of 25 chants has been published by Subito Music Corporation, just in time for when churches are making plans to gather in person!

You can order copies of WELLSPRING: Centering Chant for Uncertain Times for your church, choir, or for gifts at store.subitomusic.com (Type "Kathy Wonson Eddy" into the search bar.) The cost is \$13.95 each.

As you know, the chants may be heard on Kathy's website: kathywonsoneddy.com (click on "chant"), and these recordings may be used by churches for free.

Faiths⁴Vaccines National Summit



Join us at the National Summit for the largest multi-faith gathering to support equitable and far-reaching vaccine distribution in the United States. Faith leaders and faith-based organizations in attendance will receive training, resources and empowerment to engage their communities to ensure equitable vaccine access, combat hesitancy and potentially use their houses of worship as vaccination sites.

Faith leaders, faith communities, and medical professionals are leading efforts to respond, recover from the unprecedented health crises facing our nation and the world. Now, equipped with a life-saving vaccine, we have the chance to bring this devastating, and all the suffering it has caused, to an end.

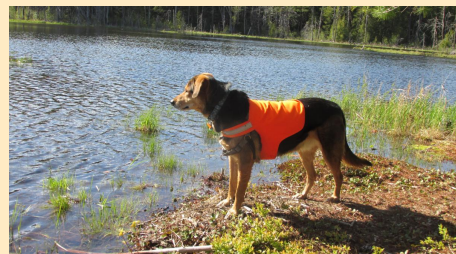
Now is the time to partake in open and honest dialogue between faith leaders and county, state and national health officials to identify opportunities for faith-based institutions to further engage and support local communities to increase vaccination rates.

[Register Here!](#)

A WILD WALK IN SPRING

By Fred Taylor

Once again it's a beautiful spring day, and I'm out with Charlie for our afternoon walk. I thought I'd go to Kilburn Pond, my



favorite hike for such a beautiful day. But when I get to the parking lot, the cars are lined up on the main road, at least 50 of them, so I'm sure the trails are going to be crammed with people. It's the first really beautiful spring day, and a Sunday afternoon, and everyone's gone stir crazy from being isolated at home because of the pandemic. But that's also why I don't want to take Charlie out on this trail – too many people to run into, and he just doesn't understand social distancing.

A friend recently mentioned the Horseshoe Road trail in Pisgah, and it's only another ten minutes up the road, so I decide to give it a try. At the parking lot there are maybe half a dozen cars at most, and several people are sunning themselves in lounge chairs in a field. So these trails will be almost empty.

We head down the main trail, encountering a woman with two young kids trotting along beside her. Then a couple comes by with a dog who wants to play, so Charlie and the dog get to run around a bunch, while the couple orients me to this new trail. They suggest the Lily Pond Trail if I have time for a short loop to get to a nice pond.

On we go with not a soul in sight, and I feel so grateful for this sense of solitude that I've so yearned for. It's hard to find a trail these days where you can just mosey along and not think about running into people. An opening appears in the woods up ahead, and we come to an abandoned beaver pond right beside the trail. We stop for a look and a sniff. I scan the expanse of open water and rough vegetation starting to grow in again, with clumps of blueberry and red leaves left over from last fall. A few young saplings grow up around the edges where the soil's begun to build up. And overhead, the maples have just begun to open their flower heads, those amazing miniature red explosions. Out here in the woods, they're several weeks behind the ones in the cemetery, so they're just popping out. Across the pond the trees hold a faint haze of green where the young leaves are just beginning to unfurl. This landscape feels just right for today: decay and decomposition in the abandoned pond, dead stumps sticking up out of the water with new green appearing around the edges. And overhead the promise of spring once again just beginning to appear. Today's world feels so decaying in so many ways: climate change, coronavirus, and our social patterns totally thrown into chaos. And yet here is the promise of spring emerging around the edges, even out of the midst of decay.

[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!)

Lunch Grants for your Summer Programs!!

The Department of Justice and Witness Ministries, through the Vermont Conference of the UCC, will again be

giving grants for Summer Lunch operations. Please check with your local school district to find out what they already have planned. Please have your application in by June 10th. Applications can be mailed to Mary Lou DeCosta, 353 Prim Road, Colchester, VT 05446; or emailed to colchsummerlunch@aol.com.



Fill out an application 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!](#)



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:

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](#)

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!](#)

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](#).

[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!](#)

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



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

RESOURCES FOR ONLINE MINISTRY!



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



The Hybrid Congregation

(from Alban Weekly- to read more, press any link!)

One of the changes that the pandemic has brought to many congregations is that geographic proximity is no longer a primary factor in determining who participates in our congregational life. A [family-sized congregation](#) reports that former members who moved across the country years ago log on most every week to Sunday services. A [program-sized congregation](#) has had people participating in worship and Bible study from overseas week after week during the pandemic. A [corporate-sized congregation](#) is finding a deepened relationship with a global mission partner because they gather together regularly online -- something they could have done before the pandemic but didn't think to.

As I listened to each of these stories, what I heard from the leaders of these congregations is that they don't want to lose these gifts even as their buildings reopen and in-person activities resume in greater number. They see their future as congregations as hybrid, and they are excited about this prospect. They also know that this will challenge and change the way they have been together. In this Weekly, we continue thinking about the future of hybrid congregations. First, my colleague Alaina Kleinbeck asks that, [as we move into this space, we rethink our past relationship with time for the sake of justice and transformation](#). John Wimberly, author of the new book *Managing Congregations in a Virtual Age*, asks us to [re-examine our understanding of productivity](#). Finally, David Brubaker reminds us [what won't change about congregations even as we adapt to a hybrid future](#).

[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 !



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

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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Connect with us



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