



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

June 3, 2021

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Message from the Conference

How many committees does it take to change a light bulb-or lead a church?

A couple of weeks ago, we had our church vitality event that 15 Vermont Conference churches attended called "Relaunching Your Church", with Paul Nickerson. Among the topics that Paul covered was the issue of church governance. He noted that as churches have gotten smaller, our bylaws covering committees have not changed, so that we sometimes face the absurd situation of having a congregation averaging an attendance of 30 people with 70 committee slots to fill! Obviously, being on several different committees tires out the key leaders of a church, and drains the enthusiasm of everyone. This is as true for us as we near the end of this pandemic as it is has been in the past.

If your church is in this situation or something similar, Paul does not recommend that you form a bylaw revision committee and change your bylaws right away. Instead, he recommends that you seek to suspend your bylaws for a period of a year or two, while the church experiments with how many committees it really does take to lead a church. One thing I found effective in my ministry was to form teams rather than committees. Younger people today often do not want to make a 3 year commitment to serve on a committee, but they are eager to serve on a ministry team that is doing

something that captures their interest. Two churches in our Conference that have trying out different things in church leadership are Mallets Bay and Springfield, and they would be good churches to talk to if you are considering a change in the leadership structure of your church.

In my own ministry, I sought to limit the number of committees in the church to three (Church Council, Deacons and Trustees). Everything else in the church's life, I sought to accomplish through teams, where people did not make a long term commitment, but joined or left as their life and interests dictated. It is important not to have all your committees and teams focused on the inner workings of your church, but to have teams focused on the needs of your community and area and how the church can help to meet the needs of people around you in Jesus' name. As we in a sense start anew as churches during this Post-Pandemic era, is it a good time to consider doing something new with your church leadership?

Hopefully yours,
Paul



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!!!](#)

Mourning and prayers follow find of remains at Canada Indigenous school

United Church of Christ leaders are reaching out to colleagues at The **United Church of Canada** in prayer and support after the remains of hundreds of Indigenous children were found buried on the grounds of Canada's largest residential school.

Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation said in a news release that the remains **were discovered last weekend** — at a school for Indigenous children taken from their families, run by the Roman Catholic Church — with the help of ground-penetrating radar.



[Continue Reading 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!](#)

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!](#)

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.



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!)



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



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!](#)

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@fccej.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

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](#)

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!](#)



[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!](#)

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

EVERYONE HAS A CALLING. OURS IS HELPING YOU.
WWW.PRCLI.ORG



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?

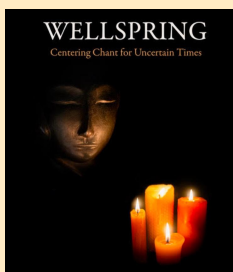
What does it mean to YouTube your church?

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!](#)

RESOURCES FOR ONLINE MINISTRY!



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.

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 !



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!

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