



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

July 15, 2021

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Message from the Conference

This week is General Synod for our denomination, as 2600 people are registered at this first ever online event! About 700 of them are delegates, but the rest are people from around the country who want to be part of it. General Synod happens every two years, and is the ultimate governing body for our Church. It is a chance for leaders of the church from around the country to gather together, but due to Covid, we are doing so online.



The worship services are open to the public, including the one this Sunday night the 18th at 6 PM! Look for the Zoom link at UCC.org!

Part of the work of General Synod is to consider resolutions that have been brought before the body. As we consider these resolutions, we remember that the Synod does not speak for the churches of the United Church of Christ, but to the churches. One resolution that we considered the very first night of Sunday was the resolution to define racism as a public health crisis. A number of proponents of this resolution spoke eloquently about how racism is not just a personal issue between people in our country, but something that affects the structures of our society. There is no doubt that racism affects the health of so many people of color in our society, and so it was good to have this be highlighted at our Synod as we overwhelmingly passed this resolution.

We also listen to inspiring speakers at Synod, and the keynote speaker on Monday night was Valerie Kaur. She is a social justice activist who leads campaigns for civil and human rights. She challenged all of us to be part of communities of revolutionary love, and based this call on our spiritual heritage. As a Sikh, she is called to this kind of

love, and we all know that Jesus calls us to this kind of love as well. What would it be like, she asked, if all UCC churches were known as communities of revolutionary love, love that not only reached out to others, but to opponents as well? Her inspiring story and words gave all of us much to think about!

Faithfully yours,
Paul



New News!!!



Highlight from General Synod:

From hip-hop flow to Pentecostal outpouring, water theme energizes worshipers

by [Hans Holznagel](#) | published on Jul 15, 2021

In the logo of the United Church of Christ's 2021 General Synod, water flows by the roots of a tree.

That water was the focus of the Synod's midweek worship service July 14.

Images of moving and still water flowed through the internet and into viewers' homes, carried over a riverbed of changing music. Leaders invited worshipers to fill a pitcher with water, and later led them in a hand-washing ritual.

And water showed up repeatedly in the video experience. It cleansed and sustained. And it symbolized two other themes of the service: resilience and resistance.

[Read more here!](#)

[Find this inspirational Worship Service here!](#)



Highlight from General Synod:

Traci Blackmon: Embrace the power of the WE in the UCC

by [Connie Larkman](#) | published on Jul 12, 2021

As the Rev. Traci Blackmon asked for the blessing and support of the General Synod to continue in her role as Associate General Minister, she spoke about the work of the “We.” The “We” the church must be to effectively follow God’s call.

[Read more here!](#)



What can we do to prevent sickness in our churches?

As our churches head back inside, and as the cold weather approaches, this article about portable air cleaners and masking will be very relevant to many. HEPA air cleaners consist of a filter capable of removing $\geq 99.97\%$ of particles from the air and a fan or blower to draw air through the filter. HEPA air cleaners are commercially available, relatively inexpensive, and easy to use!

[Read about preventative measures here!](#)

The Peacemakers' Pulpit- July 2021

Dave Ransom

As veterans we are sometimes approached by a person who says, "Thank you for your service." We may reply, "Thank you. If you really want to thank me, please write down what you do to create peace."

Creating peace is scorned, blocked by laws, avoided. Few religious groups are named “peace”. We have an opportunity now to create peace though Black Lives Matter. A friend and I recently swapped stories of working with the men who murdered others

and later reconciled. His story was of two men, one Black, one White. The Black man murdered White men. The White man, a Ku Klux Klansman, murdered Black men. My story was of a man, drunk, propped up on a lamp post, with a gun placed in his hand by his "friends" who had robbed the store. The first paid, the White Man and the Black Man, hated each other; in chains, they were led to be able to talk, then meet socially as friends. My guy began as inmate's pre-release program and eventually worked for the State, with juveniles. Pease through the use of the tongue. Today, war veterans are returning to lands where they murdered men, women, and children, are well received, cry and hug a lot, help with flood relief and schools for the survivors.



All guys, right? Julia Ward Howe was born in New York City in 1819. Julia wrote the non-commercialized version of the "Mothers' Day Proclamation", yes, as well as the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". Julia's version of the proclamation would have all the mothers of the world meet on a particular day each year to share how best to create peace. The "Battle Hymn.." envisions an army of pacifists armed with love-in-action.

In Vermont we have created "Indigenous People's Day". We can re-create Julia's version of "Mothers' Day". We can return "Veterans Day" to "Armistice Day". We can put them all to work, rather than submit to the blood/sugar lobby. Mom? Sis?

Hybrid Worship- What are your thoughts?

Please take a moment to complete this super quick survey if you have ever attended an online church service by any VTCUCC church OR if you have ever helped produce/been featured on a VTCUCC church service that has been streamed online or broadcasted otherwise.

[The survey can be found here!](#)

Thank you so much!!



United Church of Thetford featured on VPR!!

"When Erika Hoffman-Kiess first heard about people applauding for frontline workers in big cities, she didn't think that would work so well in her town of Thetford. "There are some places in Vermont where you can go outside your door and bang a pot and pan and nothing's going to happen

because nobody hears you," she said. "But we do have a lot of churches."

And those churches have bells."

[Read "These Vermonters Came Together To Help Their Neighbors During The Pandemic. But When Can They Stop?"](#)

The Second Marathon: A Thought For Pastors On Walking the New Normal

by Jenny Smith



" I'm hearing this refrain in every corner of my pastor world.

Today felt like a day to name it out loud.

Pastors are tired. On a soul level.

It's tempting to think we can solve it with a few days off. But we know we can't.

This is bigger than individuals.

This is systemic.

The oppressive thing about capitalism and consumerism (and white supremacy culture, for that matter), is our utter inability to listen to our need to rest. More on that in a moment.

But first, my brother runs marathons. It's amazing to see the training and preparation that goes into this accomplishment. I ran 20 minutes without stopping a year or two ago and it felt like I crossed the finish line at the Olympics! I cannot even imagine what it feels like to run for 26.2 miles and feel absolutely depleted at the end.

Well, maybe my soul does know that feeling. Maybe yours does too.

We just ran a marathon."

[Continue reading this moving piece here!](#)

[2021 Clergy Convocation Registration is OPEN!!!](#)

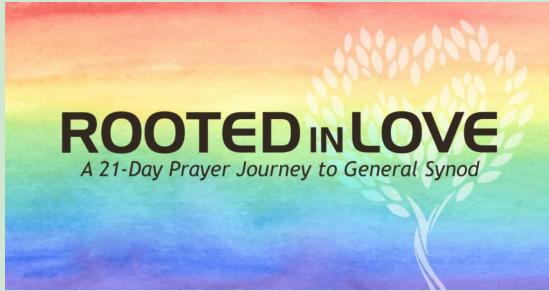
Monday, Oct 4th – Wednesday, Oct 6th
At The Craftsbury Outdoor Center
(****note the NEW location****)

Theme: *"Leaning Into Change When We Don't Know Where We Might Land"*

Just like riding a bike, when the roads ahead of our communities shift, we need to both turn and lean into the turn to keep our balance. In this post-Covid season, we know we need to turn, but knowing how and which way to lean is both essential and hard to imagine when we can't see the path ahead. This convocation is about learning how to lean into a turn in community, discerning the path together and building the muscles and practices to stay balanced and agile in the face of turns.

You can currently register at **Early Bird** prices, however these will go up by the end of the summer.

[REGISTER HERE!!!](#)



UCC officers: 'Join us in prayer for our time together'

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of

God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6-7

Each biennium the United Church of Christ gathers as the General Synod to discern the Spirit's calling to the church in this present day. **General Synod 33** will begin on July 11, 2021, with opening worship and will continue through July 18, 2021. Although General Synod convenes to conduct the business of the Church, we approach this work in a spirit of worship. In that spirit, beginning June 20 and continuing throughout Synod, we invite the entire church to join us in prayer for our gathered time together.

[Read More Here](#)

HAL & BETTSY

KNEW THE JOYS & COSTS OF SEMINARY.

THEY MET AT ANDOVER NEWTON; WERE ORDAINED;
AND THEN MENTORED, COUNSELED & ENCOURAGED
GENERATIONS OF CLERGY.



TO HONOR HAL & BETTSY,
WE ARE ESTABLISHING A FUND IN THEIR NAME
THROUGH THE VERMONT CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

*"A scholarship in my parents' name... would be the height of immodesty.
And the family's great joy." - Jeremy Harrison*

ONCE FUNDED TO SIZE, THESE GIFTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED
TO ANDOVER NEWTON SEMINARY AT YALE
WITH THE INTENT OF FUNDING AN ENDOWED
HARRISON SCHOLARSHIP.

YOU MAY SEND GIFTS TO: HARRISON FUND
c/o VTCUCC, 36 NORTH MAIN STREET, RANDOLPH, VT 05060 OR WWW.VTCUCC.ORG

Rev. Thomas D. Steffen

1934 - 2021



"Rev. Thomas Steffen passed on to eternity June 14, 2021. Tom faithfully served Second Congregational Church of Bennington as pastor 1965-94 and pastor emeritus 1995-2021. A memorial service is planned for Fri. July 30, 3pm at Second Congregational Church and will be livestreamed online."

-Rev. Mark Blank

[Read his full obituary here](#)

In Need of Your Prayers

Please continue praying for Marisa Laviola's brother who remains gravely ill.



Robin Hoag's son Matthew, just 22 years old, is being treated for Ewing's Sarcoma. This is a recurrence after a year of chemotherapy and radiation to the tumors in his pelvic/abdominal area, lungs, and bones. Robin is the Office Administrator for Second Congregational Church in Bennington.



AROUND THE CONFERENCE

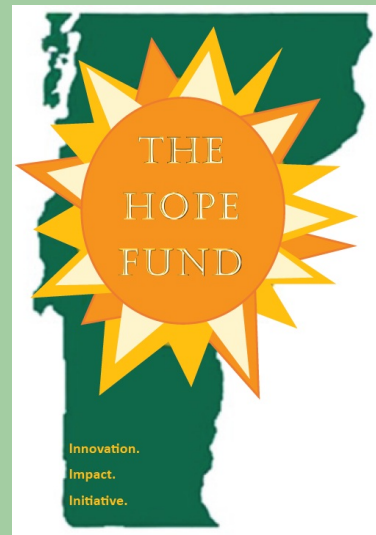
(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to VermontConference@gmail.com .

You may just see yourself or someone you love in the eKit or our Facebook page!)

Follow The Hope Fund!

The Hope Fund now has a live page on the Vermont Conference Website! It is a great place to find information about the Fund, as well as see what Churches within the Conference have done to make their communities a better place!

[You can read all about it 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!](#)



We Are All Children of God - creating intergenerational church Online, In-Person, and Hybrid

Tuesday, August 17

2:00 - 3:00 PM Eastern

Leader - [Rebecca Stevens-Walter](#)

How do we create church (not just worship) where all ages are truly invited? How do we do this online? in person? hybrid? Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." In this directive, we are called to create church that leaves no one distanced or left out from learning about and experiencing the love of Jesus. This webinar will explore some of the opportunities churches have to engage people of all ages in the life of the community. We'll look at worship models, community standards, and safety measures meant to create space, both online and offline, for congregants to come together and practice faith in the ancient way of intentionally intergenerational community.

Find many more offerings from Practical Resources for Churches [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

****COVID Testing Update****

NEW: Anyone who is fully vaccinated does not need to get a COVID test completed before coming to camp. This applies to volunteers and campers. Everyone will still be tested upon arrival on the mountain, but if you're two weeks or more out from your last dose of a COVID vaccine you no longer need to provide proof of a negative test result within 7 days of arriving! This means that we will need a copy of your vaccine card or some other way of proving you are fully vaccinated on hand. Please email me a copy of your proof, and have your counselors do the same. If we do not have proof of your vaccination, you will need to get tested within seven days of your arrival at camp.

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.



SAVE THE DATE!

Boundary Training 101!

SAVE THE DATE: September 1st, 2021

**The Vermont Conference will be offering an in-person boundary training on
Wednesday, September 1st, during the day - details to follow.**

**Please note that all clergy - licensed and ordained - need regular Boundary Training, so
Save the Date!**

VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS



Gorgeous FREE Pulpit!

Laurie Krooss (Minister of Second Congregational Church in Londonderry) was recently given a handmade pulpit. It is made of Aspen! Sadly, they do not have room in Londonderry for it, so she would love to pass it on to someone who can use it. She is also happy to assist with transporting it to its new home. If you or your church are interested in this marvelous piece, please contact Laurie [here!](#)

BRIDGE MUSIC DIRECTOR NEEDED IN CHARLOTTE!

This is a “bridge” position until our settled music director is found.

The “bridge” will be needed from the last week of August through approximately Jan. 2022, or until a settled music director has been found.



[Read more and apply here!](#)

Seeking Church musician/music director for

North Pomfret Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



Music Director/church musician shall be responsible for organizing and directing church choirs and coordinating special music. Musician will also have the responsibility of providing the sources of music used in the worship services, working with the Minister in selecting the weekly music.

Send resumé and inquires to Npomfretcc@gmail.com or North Pomfret Church, PO Box 308, North Pomfret, VT 05053

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 !



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 lbvtc@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.

Donate

Connect with us



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

