



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 Summer
Edition**

July 22, 2021

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Message from the Conference



Our 2021 General Synod, "Rooted in Love", came to an end on Sunday. I know that some of you had the opportunity to watch parts of it online. Our 8 Vermont Conference delegates represented our Conference very well, and worked hard serving on committees and participating in the Synod. The Synod passed several resolutions over the final weekend, which I encourage you to check out. For one of them, the resolution on calling out Israel as an apartheid state for their treatment of the Palestinians, our own Elliott Munn was the chairperson of the Committee. Elliott is our pastor in Vergennes, and reported to the Synod that the Committee had softened the language of the original resolution, but the Synod as a whole chose to vote for the stronger wording in the original resolution.

Our second keynote speaker of Synod was Adam Russell Taylor, the President of Sojourners, the Christian community in Washington, DC. He shared that he grew up in a UCC church in Bellingham, Washington, and how that will always be an important part of his spiritual legacy. He currently is ordained in the National Progressive Baptist Convention and by the American Baptists.

He shared that a thirst for Biblical Justice and the radical inclusive love of Jesus need to be at the heart of the Church, and they both flow out of a commitment to Scripture and a personal faith. In his recent book "A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community", he draws on Dr. King's language, and lays out five stones that are that community's foundation. We should be a church of love and community and interdependence, a church of radical welcome that seeks to protect this world's environment, and a church that protects the dignity of all. His words effectively summed up so much of what was said and done at Synod. Maybe you can be there for the next Synod in 2023!

Faithfully yours,

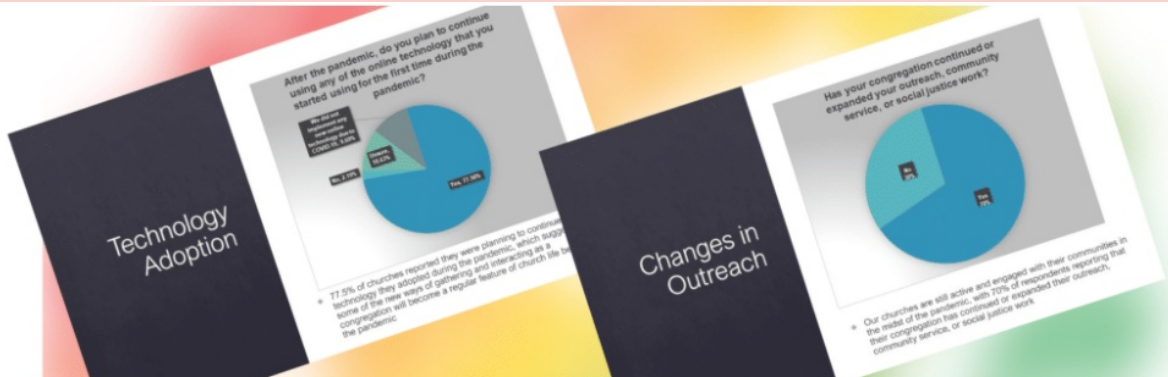


New News!!!



Highlights from General Synod

Synod hears what research says about COVID's church impact



by Hans Holznagel | published on Jul 17, 2021

Most churches went online for the first time ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And most plan to stay online, at least in part, even after COVID is gone.

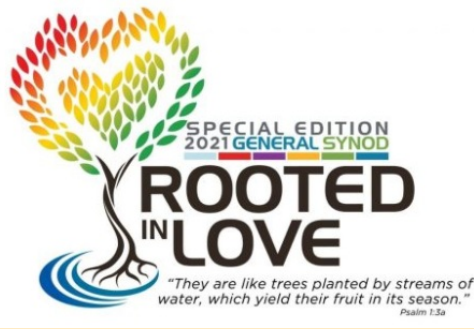
Those facts and many more about the pandemic's impact were part of a research report to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

Erica Dollhopf, who directs the UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Development, and Data, gave a video address to the online Synod on July 16.

[Read the entire story here!!](#)

Highlights from General Synod

Synod changes decision, passes resolution on occupied Hawaii



by **Hans Holznagel** | published on Jul 18, 2021

The governing body of the United Church of Christ doesn't usually change its mind about a vote it has taken. On July 18, it did.

General Synod delegates voted to reconsider **a resolution about Hawaii that they had narrowly defeated the day before**. This time the resolution got 72.9 percent approval — comfortably more than the two-thirds required to pass. The vote was 328-122, with 34 abstentions.

The resolution calls on church leaders to ask that the U.S. recognize its own presence in Hawaii as an “illegal occupation” according to international law. On July 17, a majority — but not the needed super-majority — had voted for it.

[Read the rest of this story here!](#)

Boundary Training 101!

In-person Boundary Training 101

Facilitator: Rev. Gordon Rankin

Date: Wednesday, September 1st 9:00 - 3:00

Participants required to provide their own lunch.

There are many lovely local places to purchase lunch if you do not bring your own!



Location: Bethany Randolph Church
Cost: \$25.00

This training fulfills the Boundary Training requirement for Authorized Ministers. Please note that there will be a second level in-person Boundary Training offered in late November. If you need a Boundary Training and can not attend an in-person event, there are on-line courses available, please contact the Conference offices for the list of online Boundary Trainings.

[Register here!!](#)

Vermont Interfaith Action
Transforming People and Communities



COVID-19 Memorial

To honor Vermonters lost to COVID-19 and to process our grief, Vermont Interfaith Action is hosting a memorial service on the Vermont Statehouse Lawn in Montpelier at **4 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 19**. Please save the date now. The heart of the event will be a ceremonial reading of the names so that each individual who has died of COVID-19 is recognized. In addition, various clergy will offer brief interfaith prayers and readings. Governor Phil Scott and Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine have also been invited to participate. For more information, contact Debbie at debbie@viavt.org or 802-651-8889



Christian Education Coordinator Needed

The United Church of Hinesburg is looking for a Christian Education Coordinator to work 8 hours/week, mid-August 2021 to mid-June 2022 (42 weeks/336 hours). The CE Coordinator would be responsible for coordinating the Christian Education programs, facilitating the recruitment and training of Sunday School leaders, welcoming new families and assisting with Sunday School registration, and assisting with teaching classes when required. Hours include three Sunday mornings per month from 9:45-11:30am. The individual may work from home for the additional hours. \$16-\$18/hr. For a complete job description, go to: <https://www.ucofh.org/employment-opportunities.html>

If interested, send resume to unitedchurch@gmavt.net

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MMWR

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 through 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. Peace 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!!

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!](#)

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

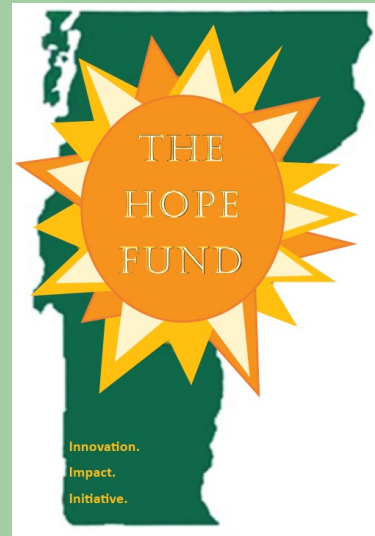
(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to VermontConference@gmail.com .

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!](#)

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



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?"](#)



SAVE THE DATE!

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.

Read 2021 Clergy Convocation brochure [here!!!](#)

REGISTER HERE!!!

Practical Resources for Churches
consultants | workshops | webinars | resources

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!](#)

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 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.

[Donate](#)

Connect with us



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