



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 29, 2021

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Message from the Conference

This week on our Conference clergy call, the topic of “Critical Race Theory” came up. Over the past several weeks, there have been several events across Vermont with politicians and others attacking “Critical Race Theory” and saying that it should not be taught in our schools. Perhaps you have already had an event like this in your area, but if not, you are likely to.

This is an important topic for us in the UCC, as we have made it clear in our General Synod pronouncements that we are an “Anti-Racist Church”. Rev. Leigh McCaffrey of Barre and Rev. Josh Simon of Essex Junction pointed out that very few people really understand what “Critical Race Theory” is, so the best approach for us as UCC church members should be to avoid getting into a discussion about that, but simply to say that we in the UCC stand for honesty and truthfulness in education. Our children should be taught the truth, both good and bad, about racism in this country and what impact that has had on all of us and all of our structures in society.

Rev. James Mills of Fairhaven pointed out that it is ok to recognize both the good and bad in our country. As he put it, “We can hold 1619 (the year slaves were first brought into our country) and 1776 (the year the Declaration of Independence said that all people are created equal) both as true. We don’t have to pretend like either one didn’t happen-our history is not all good or bad, but the good and the bad have always lived in tension with each other.” It of course comes as no surprise to any of us that our country is flawed, but has the capacity to do great good-the same thing can be said of anyone of us. That is what our Christian faith has always taught us.

Faithfully yours,

Paul



New News!!!



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](#)

[Link to Service- 3 PM THIS FRIDAY](#)



[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!!](#)

[Exciting Pastoral Transition!](#)

Michael Dwyer was called to be the settled pastor of the Pittsford Congregational Church, UCC, this past Sunday. We rejoice with Michael and their congregation!



Vermont Interfaith Action

Transforming People and Communities



COVID-19 Memorial

Updated Time!!

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 **3 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

Have you removed the pews from your worship space?

If so, Bethany Church in Montpelier would like to talk with you. Please contact Theresa Lever at thelevers@comcast.net. Thank you!



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

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!!

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.

Please add Susanna and Michael Griefen your prayers. Michael is living with a progressive illness and this is a particularly bad time for them. Susanna is a retired Pastor who served Dummerston Congregational Church for many years.

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!)



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?"](#)

[by reporter Lexi Krupp 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!](#)



[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

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!](#)

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 llybvtc@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/>
