



# 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 Winter Edition

December 2nd, 2021

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## Message from the Conference

A couple of weeks ago, I saw an article headline that caught my attention. The headline said that the majority of American Christians agree with welcoming LGBTQ people into the church and with supporting a woman's right to choose. This is of course not the way the news media portrays Christians, so I read the rest of the article. The author referenced a poll which said that approximately 80% of mainline Christians agree, about two-thirds of Catholics and two-thirds of the black and ethnic church, and 30% of the evangelical church. Now since the leaders of many of these churches do not support the inclusion of LGBTQ people into the church or a woman's right to choose, we often assume that they are speaking for everyone in their church, but this poll made it clear that that is not necessarily the case.

And that made perfect sense to me, since I certainly know of or have read of people in all of these expressions of Christianity in the United States who hold different views on these important issues from their leaders. You know, sometimes we in the United Church of Christ can feel like we are off on the fringe of American Christianity. (And sometimes, that suits us just fine!) But this article reminded me that the positions that we hold are actually held by the majority of our fellow Christians throughout the country. I think there is hope in that-don't you?

Hopefully yours,  
Paul

## Latest News



**Lakota People's**  
LAW PROJECT

## The Canadian Standing Rock

You've witnessed our struggle at Standing Rock to stop the Dakota Access pipeline

and the Anishinaabe resistance to the Line 3 pipeline. You've been a friend to us, and you've come to know many Indigenous water and land protectors fighting for our sacred lands and waterways. What you may not know is that, for years, **our Wet'suwet'en relatives have undertaken a similar struggle** in their own territory, to our north in what we now call Canada. They need our attention and support, too.

On Friday, **Royal Canadian Mounted Police raided an Indigenous-led blockade** with dogs and assault rifles. They arrested two journalists and at least 13 others at the frontlines, the latest in a series of arrests dating back to 2019. The Wet'suwet'en are doing all they can to stop construction of TransCanada's 670km Coastal GasLink pipeline, because a third of this pipeline would cross their homelands on its way to a facility in coastal Kitimat.

Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs have refused to give consent for the project, and, crucially, they have never signed a formal treaty with the provincial government or relinquished their land. Much like our #NoDAPL fight, this is both an environmental and a sovereignty issue; the Wet'suwet'en are also attempting to protect sensitive headwaters.

**Find out how to help here!**



**\*New Workshop!\***

**Skills For Psychological Recovery:  
Secondary Trauma & Strengthening our Workforce**

**Wednesday, December 1st, 3:00 - 5:00pm**  
with UCLA expert Melissa Brymer

**Register Now**



**WINDHAM COUNTY  
VERMONT NAACP**

**NAACP**  
*Rutland Area Branch*

**[naacprutland.org/gift-guide](https://naacprutland.org/gift-guide)**

The Racial Justice Task Force wanted to share this Vermont **BIPOC Holiday Gift Guide** put together by the NAACP. These are all BIPOC owned businesses in Vermont. Feel free to use this as you plan your gift giving!!!

## Peacemakers Pulpit

November 2021

Mary Brownlow

We are coming to the end of the Season After Pentecost, and I find myself thinking about the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in our life and work. Specifically, I meditate on the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John, where Jesus promises his frightened and confused friends that they will not be abandoned. He gives us new names for the Holy Spirit: he speaks of the Paraclete, the ‘one who is called beside us’ to comfort, teach, advise and advocate. But we are not merely recipients of this gift. We learn to emulate these attributes in our caring for others. We are called to walk beside our neighbors when they are frightened and confused and grieving. We are called to “act out the very agenda of the Son of Man” as Walter **Brueggemann** writes, in “areas of life that are disordered and disadvantaged, and subject to violence, deception, and exploitation...that is where neighbors are to be found.” (from his October 13 blog). This means that whenever I volunteer at the local food shelf, I can remember the gift of the paraclete and stand beside the one who hungers. Whenever you are called to a place of pain and grief, you are called to comfort. Whenever you advocate for racial justice, the paraclete is with you. Wherever you teach others to care for the health of our fragile world, the spirit of truth echoes in your words. We are witnesses to the gift Christ gave to the disciples; we are witnesses to “areas of life that are disordered and disadvantaged.” With our presence, with our voices, with our prayers, the Holy Spirit comes near. The promise rings true: “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.” (John 14: 18) Thanks be to God.



The graphic features the title "How to Get Your Student Loans Forgiven" in white text on a dark blue background. To the right, there is a cartoon illustration of a person in an orange shirt and blue pants carrying a large blue chain labeled "STUDENT LOAN \$". Above the illustration are logos for "Sponsors: UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST" and "National Council of Churches". At the bottom, it says "Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> | 2PM Eastern" and "Click Here to Register".

## **BIG NEWS!!!**

Religious Workers and Clergy now qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program!! We have partnered with the National Council of Churches to sponsor a webinar on December 3rd at 2pmEST to

walk you through the process and answer any questions about how to get your student loans forgiven. The discussion will be led by Attorney Ashley Harrington, a senior official of the Federal Student Aid Office of the US Department of Education.

Please register at [https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UUuOriG4QGaeB-sl-m8iJQ](https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UUuOriG4QGaeB-sl-m8iJQ). I have also attached an infographic that has a hyperlink to the registration as well.

Share this invitation with your networks, clergy, religious workers, commissioned pastors, parents, grandparents, etc. All that have student loan debt are welcome! #BiblicalDebtJubilee



Through a combination of participating in a Camp-In on the Statehouse steps, a Clergy Sign-On letter signed by 86 clergy across the state, and a Press Conference, we have won victories for our precariously housed neighbors.

We have been trying to get the Scott Administration to extend motel stays for unhoused Vermonters, using Federal funds.

Our Clergy Sign-On letter was delivered last Tuesday, November 9, to the Governor, and the press coverage can be seen [here](#).

The delivery also motivated questions from Stewart Ledbetter (WPTZ) and Peter Hirschfeld (VPR) at the Governor's COVID Press Conference on Tuesday last week.

So far we have won an extension through March 1, 2022 -- cause to celebrate!

However, VIA leaders in our Affordable Housing and Homelessness Organizing Committee will continue to press the Scott Administration until we ensure that:

- 1) all the FEMA money available to shelter the homeless is used by the state, which means extending assistance until April 1,
- 2) the administration develops a comprehensive, long-term plan to move people in need from temporary to permanent housing with supports for mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and
- 3) that the Governor provides leadership in the rapid development and construction of affordable housing so that no one reverts back to homelessness.

Please see this coverage of Monday's Press Conference:

[WCAX](#)

[WPTZ](#)

[Brattleboro Reformer](#)

And keep an eye out for a story by Kevin O'Connor soon to be published in VT Digger.

Thank you all so much for answering our Calls to Action to call the Governor, support the Camp-In, and sign the Clergy Letter! Your compassion and sense of justice are leading to important results.

## **Advent and Christmas Resources!!!**



**Practical Resources for Churches** has put out a plethora of resources for [Advent and Christmas!](#)

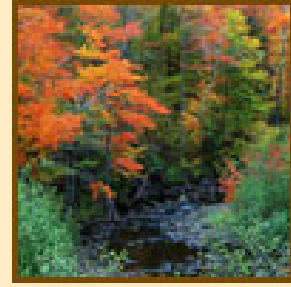
You can find them all [HERE!](#)

Advent Daily Prayer for Reflection Week 1 Revised Common Lectionary Year C can be found [Here!](#)

Update from Fred Taylor, Environmental Justice Rep.

As we enter the dark times of November, with much news on the climate change front, I wanted to share these two resources that I think you'll find inspirational.

The first is a very moving speech that renowned naturalist/filmmaker David Attenborough gave at the first week of the COP 26 conference in Glasgow: [Sir David Attenborough address to world leaders at COP26 – speech in full - Bing video.](#)



### **ATTENTION CLERGY**

To: All Authorized Ministers (ordained, licensed, commissioned) with standing in the Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ

The 2021 Information Review is now available for your updates. The information review is a part of the covenantal responsibilities for all authorized clergy in the United Church of Christ and updating it helps the Conference and associations keep in contact with you and your ministerial needs.

[For documentation and more info click here](#)

**Deadline Dec. 15th**

### **STEWARDSHIP THEME MATERIALS 2021 "ROOTED IN LOVE"**

[click here](#)

Looking for more Stewardship Resources: [click here](#)



### **Please Remember in Your Prayers**

Please keep our *Conference Minister Lynn Bujnak*, her spouse, Peg and their family in prayers as Peg continues to recover from emergency surgery.

Our *Associate Conference Minister Paul Sangree's* mother-in-law has passed away. Please keep him and his family in your prayers at this time.

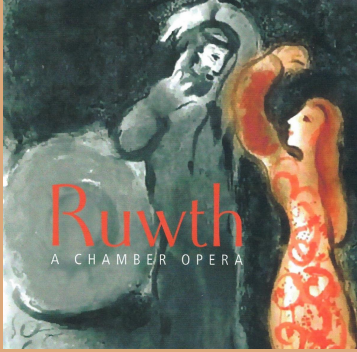
### **AROUND THE CONFERENCE**

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

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

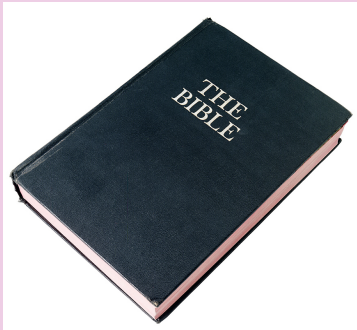
### **Live Re-Broadcast of Ruwth: A Chamber Opera** by Lotta Suter and Rob Griffin

Please join us on Sunday afternoon November 14th at 4 pm for a Zoom re-broadcast of the premiere performance of Ruwth, a



chamber opera with libretto by Lotta Suter and music by Rob Griffin. Premiered at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge MA in October 2014, *Ruwth* tells the biblical story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz from the perspective of the community that must overcome their mistrust of foreigners and learn to welcome strangers from another land. Lotta and Rob will host the re-broadcast of the video recording of the premiere performance, directed by Mark Latham with soloists Maria Ferrante, Jayne West and Donald Wilkinson. The 90-minute Zoom event, offered jointly with FCCB, is free and open to all. Please contact Rob and Lotta at [griffinsuter@hotmail.com](mailto:griffinsuter@hotmail.com) to register and get the Zoom link for the event. For more information on *Ruwth*, see the article by Lotta Suter in this Corner Chronicle.

***Don't forget to click below in your email to view the entire newsletter***



### **Windam Congregational Church offering Hymnals/Bibles to a church/churches:**

19 New Century Hymnals + 2 Musician Hymnals  
12 Pilgrim Hymnals + 1 Musician Hymnal  
31 Chalice Hymnals + 2 Musician Hymnals  
21 NRSV Bibles Regular Print  
26 NRSV Bibles Small Print, Brand New  
Contact Virginia Crittenden at 802-874-4049 or email at [gcrit@hotmail.com](mailto:gcrit@hotmail.com)

## **Farewell, Welcome and Blessings**

**Pastoral Transitions since the 2021 Vermont Conference Annual Meeting**

**[For the most up to date information click here](#)**



**SAVE THE DATE!**



### **TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR ONA AND NOT-YET ONA CHURCHES**

This webinar explores how and why congregations can become ONA—in ways that do not divide, but unite the church. Applying the basic ONA principles of “graceful engagement” and “covenant,” ONA 101 has helped hundreds of congregations successfully navigate through an ONA process.

**[REGISTER](#)**

## **TAKE THE ONA SURVEY! HOW DOES YOUR CHURCH COMPARE?**

Complete this survey, and see how your congregation compares with other ONA churches! If you answer “NO” to some of the questions, don’t worry! Your honest answer just means there are exciting opportunities awaiting your church! Use our **Self-Evaluation Tool for ONA Churches** and other resources throughout our website to discover new ways to strengthen your ONA commitment! Our goal: a church that’s 100% Open and Affirming! **[click here for survey](#)**

## **FREE ONLINE TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

Church extends beyond any four walls. From human resources concerns to legal questions and

property maintenance, Insurance Board offers a variety of resources to protect the church and its ministries. [Click here](#) for interactive webcasts that address a wide variety of topics essential to keeping churches and ministries safe; these trainings are led by industry experts from Insurance Board and its partners, including our denominational partners.

## [Copyright Concerns For Ministries](#)

During these challenging times, ministries rely heavily on the virtual environment and various electronic mediums to share the printed forms of inspiring poetry, quotes from prayer books and daily affirmations, as well as words from songs during worship and through other forms of ministry. As a result, some ministries have been shocked to discover they are actually in violation of copyright infringement; join us as Heather Kimmell General Counsel, United Church of Christ, offers valuable information on how to help your ministry avoid this situation.

[For pre-recorded video webinar click here](#)  
[additional resource click here](#)

## [VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS](#)

## [VT CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES](#)

### **Christian Education:**

[Christian Education Coordinator- United Church of Hinesburg](#)

[Faith Formation Coordinator- Barre Congregational](#)

### **Administration & Finance:**

[Office Coordinator- Greensboro UCC](#)

### **Music & Other Lay Ministries:**

[Music Director- North Pomfret Congregational](#)

[Church Musician- Tunbridge Church](#)

[Music Director- First Congregational, Burlington](#)

[Music Director- Charlotte Congregational Church](#)



[Signs, symbols abound at interfaith call for bold U.S. social programs](#)  
[Join the Movement 'griot' will collect anti-racist stories from across the UCC](#)  
[Report to the church from the United Church of Christ Board, October 2021](#)  
[UCC will say goodbye to Church House and Amistad Chapel — online — on Dec. 4](#)

[For more news click here](#)  
<https://frontline-faith.teachable.com/>

## [How to Contact Vermont Conference Staff](#)

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak [llbvtc@gmail.com](mailto:llbvtc@gmail.com)  
Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree [sangreepucc@gmail.com](mailto:sangreepucc@gmail.com)  
Office Administrator: Elise Foster [vermontconference@gmail.com](mailto:vermontconference@gmail.com)  
Ministries Coordinator: Rev. Jackie Lingelbach [vtconmincoor@gmail.com](mailto:vtconmincoor@gmail.com)  
Bookkeeper: Tanya Frazier [vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com](mailto:vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com)

DEADLINE for E-Kit News must be received by **Tuesday of each week.**  
Please send any and all information to [vermontconference@gmail.com](mailto: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/>