



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

January 6th, 2022

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Message from the Conference

So I got Covid this Christmas break. As this Pandemic has gone on and on, I think all of us have wondered whether it will happen to us, and of course so many of us have gotten it already. Well, I wasn't feeling so well one day, and actually looked around to see if I could find a Covid test to determine if I had it, without success, and then the next day it hit hard with fever and sore throat and congestion and the full nine yards! Someone who works with my wife was able to give us a Covid test a couple of days later, and yes, it confirmed that I did have it! At the time of this writing, I am feeling much better, but I still have some of the congestion and cough.

I racked my brain as to how I got it-was it from the night my wife and I went to a restaurant and ate indoors? Did my wife pick it up from her workplace where so many are sick with it right now and give it to me? Or did it come from a couple of friends that I spent time with? In the end, who knows? The simple truth is that none of us can completely so shield ourselves from life that we will never get Covid.

The only good thing is that Covid did give me a chance in quarantine to spend more time reflecting and reading than I would have done otherwise! One of the things that I reflected on are the things that I am grateful for before God, and one of those things is being your Associate Conference Minister. Ever since I began in this position, you have surrounded me with support and have been willing to follow my leadership. I am deeply grateful to be in partnership with Lynn and the rest of the staff and all of you as we continue to journey together as a Church through this challenging time. Thank you!

Gratefully yours,
Paul

Latest News

2022 YEARBOOK DATA!!



Time to Update Your Church Membership Records!
This week is a reminder to update your church membership lists. UCC Yearbook reporting is scheduled to open January 5, 2022, and it is important that your church report current and accurate membership information. For churches that are affiliated with more than one denomination, the membership number should *only reflect members who identify themselves as UCC*.

There are also **FABULOUS PRIZES** this year!!

"This year we are offering several incentives for churches that submit both their annual Yearbook report and answer the supplemental research questions. Every church that responds to both will be entered into a random drawing for several prizes. The following prizes will be awarded:

- \$100 UCC Resources Gift Card – 5 gift cards will be awarded
- One year free subscription to Access UCC (online Yearbook and Directory) – 10 subscriptions will be awarded
- 2021 Yearbook and Directory – 10 books will be awarded
- Statistical Profile – 15 will be awarded"

Why do we do this?

The membership number is used to determine the amount of dues that your church gives to your association and the Vermont Conference. The numbers you report also help determine how many delegates the Vermont Conference can designate for General Synod, which is one of the essential ways your voice is heard on important issues. Your church number includes the Vermont Conference number which is 82. Therefore, your complete church number (including zeroes) is 82xxxx.

How do I update these records?

Just follow [these directions!](#)

Are there 'How To' videos?

Sure thing! [Find them here!](#)

Do you just want a paper form to fill out or have any other questions?

[Email me here](#)

Christmas Extravaganza's throughout Vermont!!

Here is the Annual visit of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet with Counterpoint Chorale at the [Grafton Community Church](#). It's a free concert for the community that we host each year. This year, despite the snow, 130 people attended. Proof of vaccination was required for entry and masks were required along with contact tracing.



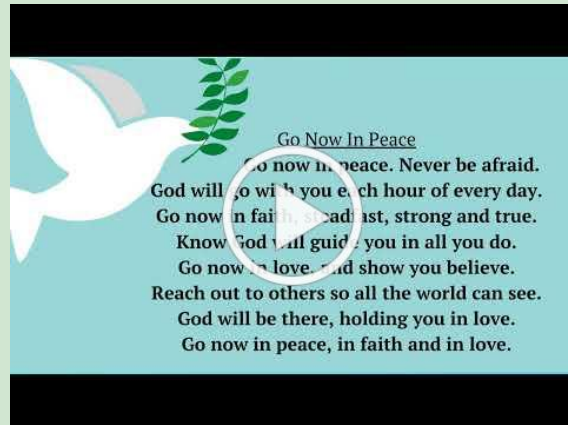
The [South Hero Congregational Church](#) Board of Deacons and Pastor



Cordelia Burpee chose the theme "The Inn. Welcoming the Holy". Our sanctuary was transformed into a farm-like manger using items that we found in a congregant's barn and crates from our local apple orchard. Each week new items were added. Lanterns were used instead of an Advent wreath. The door, made by another member, was the key to the welcoming theme.

First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

The Christmas pageant was the majority of our Sunday morning worship on December 19th !!



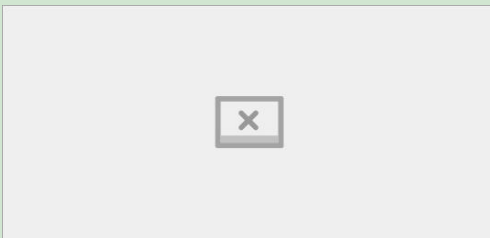
Christmas pageant titled "The King's Birthday" that was held at the **Federated Church of East Arlington!!**



Pageant photo from **Second Congregational Church, Bennington**



First Congregational Church of St. Albans



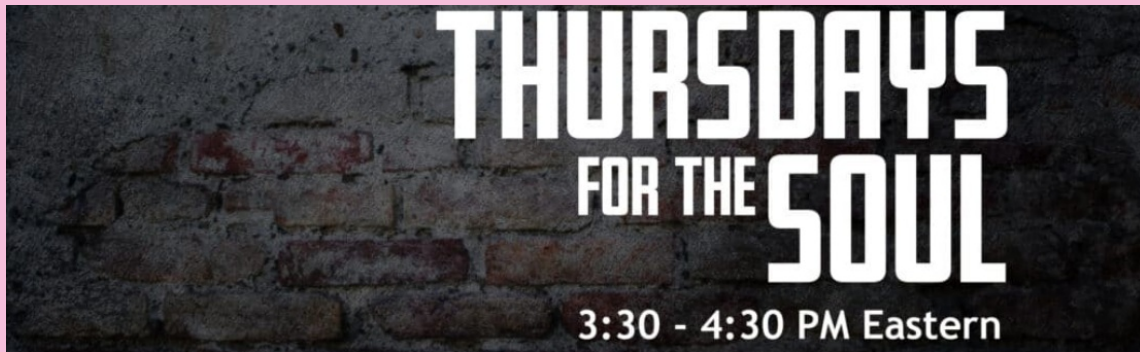
Guilford Community Church traveled around the church property to hear the Christmas story and ended at our very own manger!



Members of the **Grafton Community Church**, maintained a decades long tradition of sending Christmas Baskets filled with fruits, baked goods and candy to members of the community who have reached the the age of eighty or might be a bit "under the weather" at this season.



Bethany Montpelier's
Christmas Eve Pageant!!!



Schedule is released for first webinars of 2022

by **Hans Holznage!** | published on Dec 30, 2021

Worship. Grief. The Bible. Bias. Black History Month. Contemplation. The rural church. Youth and young adults.

Those are among the topics of weekly United Church of Christ webinars now set for the first quarter of 2022.

[Read more here!](#)



[A Warning from the Insurance Board!!](#)

As we move into the heart of the winter season. Many churches are tempted to lower their thermostats to save on heating costs, *please be careful !!*

- Be sure to protect your property from Frozen Pipes!!!
- During these times of below normal temperatures make a habit of inspecting your buildings from attic to cellar on a regular basis.
- One day things may seem to be fine and the very next day you could have a broken pipe!
- Attached is a **[bulletin](#)** with tips and ideas about keeping your pipes from freezing.

[Youth Ministry Conference!!!](#)

On February 7-8th, the national setting will offer a virtual conference for 100 youth ministers and

leaders to reimagine youth ministry, National Youth Event and other events for the future. Registration can be completed here: <https://cvent.me/Vy8PPK>



Additionally, we are asking anyone who has regular contact with youth in the United Church of Christ to complete a short survey to provide additional insight to the Faith INFO team and national setting. You may access the survey

here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Youth_Min2022

Your responses and presence are greatly appreciated. For questions or additional information please reach out to Rev. Trayce Potter at pottert@ucc.org.



Amazing Opportunity!

" What I have found in my three years as SC is that it is like totally pastoral care without overt religious overtones. It has been the best job for me since I served that little church in Anchorage AK.

Anyone interested could totally reach out to me: 802 738 8254. (My new phone number.)" – Karen Lipinczyk, Sash Coordinator

[Read the description HERE!](#)

The New York School of Ministry Spring 2022 Core Course Schedule



New Class Schedule for the New York School of Ministry is now available [HERE!!!](#)

Register at: <https://arena.nyucc.org/default.aspx?portal=4&page=3347>

Do You Need Shelter?

If You Are Unhoused, You Likely Qualify For Motel Housing Right Now Through The March 1st!



Call 211 During After Hours & Weekends OR



Call Economic Services During Business Hours 8am-430pm 800 479 6151 Mon-Fri

****Note: you must check in with Economic Services On Next Business Day If You Enter Hotel Through 211**

Do You Qualify?
These 3 Factors Qualify You

- ✓ Unhoused and without shelter with no where to go.
- ✓ Below 185% Of The Poverty Line.
- ✓ Have savings below \$2250

If you have any trouble navigating call our hotline 802 490 4931

You Likely Qualify Even If You Were Denied Before:

- Did you accept the \$2500 buy out?
You Still Qualify
- Were you previously exited?
You Still Qualify
- Were you previously denied?
You still Qualify
- Do or do not have any disability?
You Still Qualify
- Don't have children?
You Still Qualify
- Don't have a previously qualifying condition?
You Still Qualify

If You Need Help Navigating This OR If You Are Denied For Any Reason, Please Contact Us At 802 490 4931 or endhomelessnessvt@gmail.com



Please Remember in Your Prayers

Peg and I want to thank you for your prayers and well wishes after her emergency surgery and long recuperation in both the hospital and then rehab. She is home now. She has a ways to go to get back her independence, but she is progressing a little each day. Again, please know we are very grateful to you! As I said more than once, "I feel the prayers."
Lynn

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!)

Celebrate!!

Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

Jan. 7th
Peter Plagge
Jeremy Kirk

Jan 9th
Douglas Cameron

Jan. 12th
Nancy Devor
David Dean

Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

Jan. 7th
Debbie Ingram



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



PRC's January 2022 Webinars

All webinars are recorded. Click the title to register or read the description.

Lenten Resources from A Sanctified Art

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

2:00 - 2:30 PM

Leader - Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Learn more about Lenten Resources from A Sanctified

Art. <https://sanctifiedart.org/infographic-full-to-the-brim-lent-year-c>

Lisle Gwynn Garrity (she/her/hers) is a Pastorist (pastor + artist), retreat leader, and creative entrepreneur seeking to fill the church with more color, paint, mystery, and creativity. In the midst of a rapidly reforming church landscape, she is convinced that new models for ministry are emerging all over the place, we just have to be willing to discover and pursue them. She founded A Sanctified Art with the conviction that, in

order to thrive, the church needs more creative expression and art-filled freedom. We will be sharing your name and email with A Sanctified Art so that they can follow up with you.

Lenten Resources From A Thoughtful Christian

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

2:00 - 3:00 PM EST

Leader - Katie Snyder and Michael Hilliard

Explore resources and curricula for the 2022 Lenten season that will work for any size congregation. We will explore great group study options, free downloadable resources, Bible studies, other relevant books, and Lenten devotions that your congregation will find useful for Lent 2022. We are also offering a discount on our resources for those who attend the webinar.

Katie Snyder is a certified Christian educator working for the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation as their curriculum specialist and POINT Coordinator. Katie aspires to faithfully seek God while encouraging and empowering others to do the same.

Michael Hilliard is the Sales Manager for Westminster John Knox Press and Flyaway Books. When not talking about books, he enjoys backpacking, hiking, and camping (although many books have been read and talk about by the fire or on the trail over the years). Michael lives in Jeffersonville, Indiana with his wife, their two children, and their rescue dog, Ross.

Best Practices for Pastoral Search Committees

Thursday, January 20, 2022

7:00 - 8:00 PM EST

Leader - Laura Stephens-Reed

Join us for a great discussion on how pastoral search committees can find the right pastor for their congregation. We'll talk about topics like where to search, how to review materials, what questions to ask of yourselves and the candidates, and how to communicate with the candidates. We'll include some tips for small churches and part-time calls as well.

Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed believes in the power of the local congregation to change individuals and communities in the name of Christ. Her call is to increase the effectiveness of clergy and congregations by helping them harness the amplified opportunities and overcome the challenges presented by transitions. Laura attempts to be faithful to this call primarily through coaching clergy and congregations across the ecumenical spectrum. She has been credentialed as a Professional Certified Coach through the International Coaching Federation and as a Certified Mentor Coach. She has also been trained as a Congregational Consultant and an Intentional Interim Minister by the Center for Congregational Health.

Caring for Frontline Workers

Thursday, January 27, 2022

7:00 - 8:00 PM EST

Leader - Harriet Wilkin

This webinar is for pastors and for laity who are involved with pastoral care, to help understand the challenges Front line workers, including First Responders have been experiencing not only through the pandemic, but in their everyday work life. This webinar has been designed to give helpful tips and resources for your toolbox. What is presented in this webinar may also help you provide pastoral care to military veterans.

Harriet Wilkin has two bachelor's degrees and a Master of Divinity degree. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration/ Management and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Critical Communications. In 2015 Harriet completed her Master of Divinity degree at Claremont School of Theology (<https://cst.edu/>).

Harriet's early days in ministry revolved around Christian program development for children, youth, and young adults. Her ministry work started as a volunteer in her local church, which then led to paid staff positions in churches. Since July of 2015, she has been appointed as a local pastor.

Harriet continues to be an advocate for People with Disabilities, Caregivers, First Responders, Veterans, and their families.

Harriet currently offers resources on her personal website: <https://thelighthouse-design-studio.mn.co/> . Join this online community to share resources and have conversations about church ministries.

Overwhelm Workshop

Thursday, February 10, 2022

2:00 - 3:15 PM EST

Leaders: Heidi Carrington Heath, Callie Swanlund, Laura Stephens-Reed

Do you feel buried under the weight of the the world? the church? the community struggles? the family demands? the near constant change and ever growing need? It's all too much.

We can help.

This is a workshop in three parts: the first 30 minutes we'll hear from three clergy coaches with simple practices to ease the burden. This section will be recorded and can be watched later (at 2X speed) if that's all your can fit in to your life right now.

If you can invest a little more time, please plan to attend the full workshop. Each coach will lead a 45 breakout session for personal help and support. These will not be recorded.

Finally, if you are desperate for a deeper transformation, you'll have the opportunity to engage the topic in a coached cohort.

Save the Date!!!

The Racial Justice Task Force met Dec. 9 and went over the results of the information gathered this fall from the Racial Justice Survey.

We will be meeting this spring every fourth Wednesday of the month from 5 pm -6 pm via zoom. Mark your calendars! If you are interested in joining the meeting and learning what is happening please email us to register. We invite you to join us in these ongoing efforts to combat racism and make the world a more just place!



January 26th
February 23rd
March 23rd
April 27th
May 25th



Certificate in faith formation, youth work now available churchwide

by Hans Holznage! | published on Dec 6, 2021

Teachers and youth leaders in local churches of the United Church of Christ can now get certified.

Educators everywhere can now enroll in the **Faith Formation Leadership Training and Certification Program** offered by the UCC's **Southern New England Conference**.

Students who completed the Faith Formation Leadership Training and Certification Program this fall pose for a Zoom picture with their instructors.

The program is “specifically for faith formation and youth ministry leaders with a progressive theology,” said its administrator, **Debbie Gline-Allen**. She is the Conference’s minister of faith formation and serves on the national board of the **Association of United Church Educators**. “We are not aware of any other program in the UCC with this focus,” she said. AUCE endorses the program, and becoming an AUCE member is required for certification.

[Read more here!](#)

Vermont Interfaith Action

Transforming People and Communities



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](#)

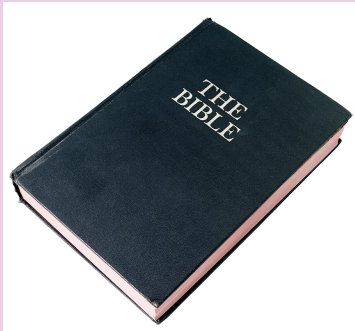
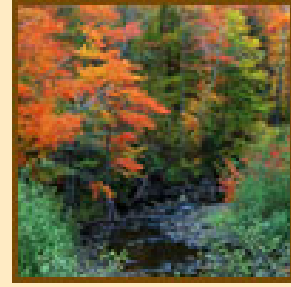
And keep an eye out for a story by Kevin O’Connor soon to be published in VT Digger.

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.

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.](#)



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

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

UCC | NEWS

[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

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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 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/>