



# 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 20th, 2022

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## Message from the Conference



“Raise Up” is part of the display at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a memorial to honor thousands of people killed in lynchings.

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

As we marked the celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday I could not help but reflect on all of the blatant and covert attacks on our Black and Brown siblings, and the movement to wipe out the history and truth of systemic racism and white supremacy in this country.

I spent some time reading the names of the 203 Black people killed by police in 2021. One of the three signs we rotate through on the front of the Conference Office is Black Lives Matter. When that sign goes up, we almost always get a visit from one or two people who are incensed that such a political issue is being displayed on a church building. We also hear from folks who are angry that we have chosen the lives of Black people over the lives of police officers. I try to explain that caring about Black lives does not mean the lives of police officers are not also valued.

There are those moments when justice prevails, but there is still so much work to be done. Many of our congregations have ongoing book and discussion groups focused on systemic racism. In Williston, that conversation has been extended into the wider community with community members and leaders participating alongside church members.

This week legislation to protect the freedom to vote was defeated, leaving in place newly minted state laws that will surely disenfranchise Black and Brown voters. It is alarming to me to witness local school boards being taken over by those whose agenda is to stop Critical Race Theory from being taught in our schools. First, the description of CRT is often very far from the actual definition. Often this results in changes in curriculum and the banning of books that may focus on the racism that has been and remains woven into the fabric of our country. In some states, teachers have lost their jobs because they talked about the evils of slavery and the reality of white privilege and white supremacy.

In King's acceptance speech for his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize he said, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

May it be so and may those of us who are white allies have the courage to speak and act where injustice prevails. When we get it wrong, as I know I do more times than not, may we have the humility to learn and grow in our understanding.

In peace and hope,  
Lynn

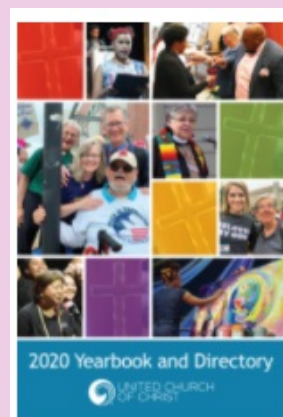
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## Latest News

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### 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

[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](#)**



**A Special Report from the Vermont Digger-  
Rev. Devon Thomas: When Covid  
came calling, I yearned for direction**

"This year I led my churches through the holidays in Covid quarantine, it was one of the most terrifying, inconvenient and spiritually challenging periods of my life! Having now come out the other end of my quarantine, I find myself wishing I had received more direction in what to do.

December is a busy month for ministers, and at the start of the month my wife woke me up to inform me our daughter had tested positive for Covid with an at-home test. After we confirmed that she was sick and that her symptoms were mild, we bunkered down to do the responsible thing and locked ourselves in the house for the good of society.

My wife and I had hoped we would only have to wait out our daughter's quarantine to get back to life. Long story short, Covid did not care."

Read the rest of his amazing testimony **[here!](#)**

(A giant 'Thank You' to Rev. Thomas for letting us share his beautifully articulated piece!)

# \*UPCOMING WORKSHOPS !\*

Bringing back:

## Wellness Through Art

Wednesday, January 19th, 6:00pm

with guest artist/facilitator, [Jen Berger](#)

[Register Here!](#)

Bringing back:

## Parenting to Promote Mental Health and Wellness in Children & Youth

Wednesday, January 26th, 4:00pm

[Register Here!](#)

## The Brown Scholarship

Introduction to the Brown Scholarship webinar, co-hosted by MESA and United Church Funds; **Thursday, January 27, 4:30 – 5:30pm ET**. Join MESA for an opportunity to learn about the Brown Scholarship for Members in Discernment in conversation with the Revs. Charles Buck, United Church Funds, President and CEO, and Gwendolyn Kirkland, Scholarship Administrator. Applications to the Brown Scholarship are accepted until March 1, 2022. This conversation is ideally targeted for Members in Discernment and COM members.

Read more about it [here!](#)

## Upcoming MESA Webinars!!!

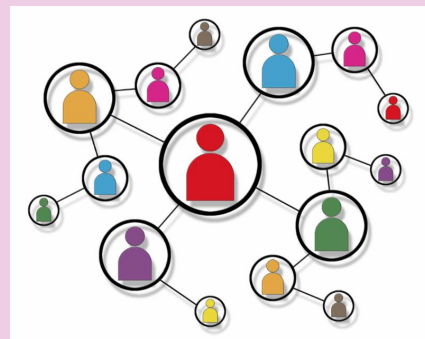
**Monday, February 28, 7:30 – 9:00pm ET**

### **Pastoral Relations Committees**

Pastoral Relations Committees provide essential leadership in the life of a congregation. Come to this workshop to explore what the purpose of a PPR Committee is and is not. We'll be talking through a newly developed PRC covenant to help name the priorities and commitments of a well-functioning PRC.

Revs. Tara Barber and Stephen Boyd will share best practices from around the church and be prepared to answer your questions.

**Monthly Zoom Conversation for Pastors in Churches Considering Closure:** Few church pastors and leaders ever anticipate or hope to engage in the process of ending a congregation's active life. To support pastors in churches considering closure, Rev. David Schoen, Minister for Church Closure and Legacy in the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund, holds a monthly zoom conversation to address the experience and role of ministers in the closure process, difficult conversations, grief and conflict, missional and resurrection theology, and clergy self-care. Pastors are invited to contact David Schoen to participate: [dschoen@ucc.org](mailto:dschoen@ucc.org).







Friends,

Don't we all wonder what will "church" look like after COVID. I know I do.

I'm interested to hear what you have to say. Just three questions, short or long

answers are welcome. Send me an email [charlaine@prcli.org](mailto:charlaine@prcli.org) or call me 631 486 4350.

1. What did you or your congregations learn over the last 22 months that you will continue in the future?
2. Can you name something the congregation did before the pandemic that you will not be doing in the future.
3. What do you miss the most from before the pandemic and how do you bring it into the future?

Happy and Healthy New Year  
Charlaine

631 486 4350  
[charlaine@prcli.org](mailto:charlaine@prcli.org)

# Vermont Interfaith Action

*Transforming People and Communities*



Please join VIA clergy and leaders as we participate in the annual Homelessness Awareness Day & Vigil. The virtual gathering will begin at 9AM with legislative training, participating in both House and Senate committees and include a 12noon vigil where our very own VIA board president, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, will be one of the speakers. For more information and the zoom link, please visit the [Facebook event page](#) or <https://fb.me/e/1RjNKsMhI>

**SAVE THE DATE**

Agenda includes...

- Committee testimony
- Commemorative Vigil
- Call-in/letter writing campaign
- Legislative advocacy training ...and more!

Tune in live on on VAHC's Facebook or Youtube Page

**VERMONT VIRTUAL HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS DAY AND VIGIL 2022**

Join homeless and formerly homeless Vermonters, service and shelter providers, and housing advocates from across the state to reflect on all we must do in the coming year to end homelessness in Vermont.

For more information, contact Molly Shimko ([mdavishimko@capstonevt.org](mailto:mdavishimko@capstonevt.org)) or Martin Hahn ([mhahn@helpingtohousevt.org](mailto:mhahn@helpingtohousevt.org)).

**20 JANUARY 2022 · 9 AM TO 2 PM**

sponsored by VT Coalition to End Homelessness, Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and VT Affordable Housing Coalition



## Tax time is just around the corner!!!

Do you have a phenomenal accountant who specializes in filing taxes for clergy? We all know there are so many nuances associated with this. If you have an amazing accountant or would like the names of some, please email our office administrator Elise [here!!](#)



# SERMON AND WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER

AN ONLINE BIBLE STUDY SERIES WITH  
DIANA BUTLER BASS

Pastors, preachers, and other faith leaders are invited to join us for an online bible study series in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. Our guest presenter, Diana Butler Bass, will lead two sessions of study, reflection, and discussion of the lectionary texts and Holmes Camp & Retreat Center will facilitate a follow-up session for you and your peers to share ideas, resources, and conversation with each other while building a network of support for you and your ministry. The Online Bible Studies with Diana Butler Bass will take place on March 9th and 16th at 2 PM. The follow-up session will be scheduled in consultation with all attendees during the last two weeks of March. Cost is \$50. Register at [holmescamp.eventbrite.com](http://holmescamp.eventbrite.com).

[Find the official flyer here!](#)



Please Remember in Your Prayers

## 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!)

## Celebrate!!

### Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

Jan. 22nd  
\*Joan Vincent\*

Jan 23rd  
\*Tracy Weatherhogg\*

Jan. 24th  
\*Douglas Moore\*  
\*Mark Wilson\*

Jan. 26th  
\*Thomas Kinder\*

### Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

Jan. 20th  
\*Kevin Goldenbogen\*  
\*Jean O'Bresky\*

Jan. 24th  
\*Amelia Pitton\*



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

## 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>

### 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.

## **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](#)

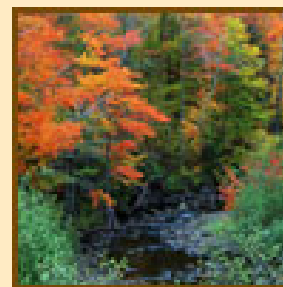
[Brattleboro Reformer](#)

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.](#)

## 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](mailto:endhomelessnessvt@gmail.com)**



## 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!](#)

## 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!

### 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

### 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](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](mailto:pottert@ucc.org).



#### 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**

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## **VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS**

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## **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**

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# **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/>

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**How to Contact Vermont Conference Staff**

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak [lbvtc@gmail.com](mailto:lbvtc@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/>