



The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ



a just world for all
ucc.org

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 Advent Edition

December 8th, 2022

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Message from the Conference

Vermont Conference Pastors Share Their Advent Joy!!!



Rev. Jackie Lingelbach

Ministries Coordinator, Vermont Conference

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." -Matthew 3:3

Singing Godspell in the second week of Advent is my favorite advent tradition!

Rev. Peter Plagge

Waterbury Congregational Church

"Every year on Christmas Eve, at the family candlelight service, I read a Christmas story. There's only one that I repeat and I do so every two or three years: Dr. Suess's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* And because, for whatever irrelevant reason, my family did not have a television, and because I was a country kid, I never saw the movie production. The result of that is that when I first read it publicly, "Roast beef" came out of my mouth, instead of "Roast beast" It is the Christmas miracle, now,

whenever I get it right!"



Rev. Andrew Ponder Williams

United Community Church, St. Johnsbury

"For me personally it is the advent candle lighting and the diversity of the groups/families that get us started in worship :)"

Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno

Congregational Church of Westminster West UCC

Over the years, as I have lived more and more into my contemplative heart, I have found that what I love best about Advent is the sense of quiet. It's there, but it's countercultural for sure.! You just have to cultivate it, I suppose. One thing I love about my church's tradition is that we do the "bells and whistles" pre-Christmas service on the Sunday before



Christmas; that's the one most locals who are not churchfolk attend. And because we do it then, our Christmas Eve service, which we celebrate at 11 PM on the 24th, is a different mood all tougher: somber, deep, heavy on shadows, and very, very tender. There's always at least one song about Mary's experience ("What Child is This?" or "Nanita Lullaby"), and I nearly always quote Meister Eckhart:

"We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly, but does not take place within myself? And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of Man is begotten in us."

-Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)

Rev. Lava Mueller

Love Church, Randolph Center

"39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among



and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be [e] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”
 Luke 1:39-45 (NRSV)

I love Luke 1:39-45 because there is something wonderful that happens in my heart when I think about Jesus and John meeting each other while still in their mothers' wombs. And jumping for joy at the recognition! The excitement that these two feel as they anticipate the profound, challenging, and sacred work that they will do together is very moving. Their love for each other is evident whenever they are brought together in the story, and this first time is precious to me. I also love that it is the women who bring them together.
 Mary and Elizabeth are rockstars!

Rev. Terry Hanley
 Grace Congregational, Rutland



Personally, the Magnificat and the Messiah are two that never get old. The Advent Wreath lighting is each week a powerful reminder and focus-assist, that we are waiting, sometimes in deep darkness, for the light.



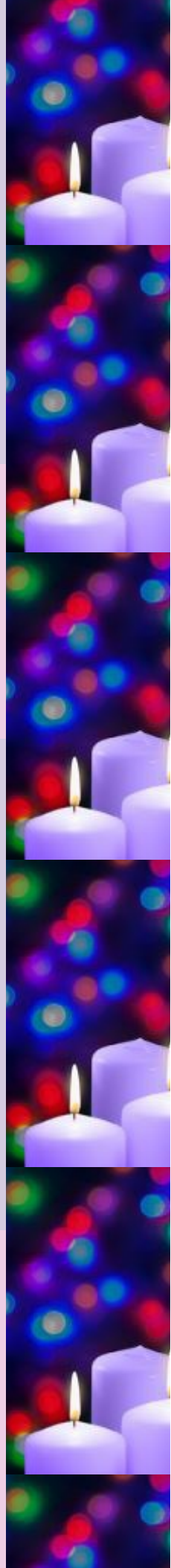
Rev. Julie Lombard
 United Church of Northfield

My favorite Advent scripture is John 1:9 "The true light that gives light to everyone, was coming into the world"

My favorite Advent Tradition is lighting the Advent Wreath candles each week during worship... in the UU tradition, most UU churches have left the wreath behind (only one of seven churches that I have served lit up an Advent wreath) & to serve a church that honors this tradition makes my heart sing. I can hear Peter, Paul, & Mary singing, "Light one candle!" A favorite holidays tune about light, love, and hope. UCN lights the candles on the Advent Wreath & they lift their voices to sing: "Shine a Light" afterwards... it's a nice new tradition for me & a familiar favorite for them.

Rev. Kathy Clark
 Federated Church of East Arlington

Two cherished traditions are an annual part of the celebration of Advent at the Federated Church of East Arlington. Every week before the lighting of the Advent wreath happens at Sunday Worship, a lantern that was crafted by a member decades ago, is brought to one of our home bound folks. They then light it and offer some words they would like to share with the congregation. The lantern is then returned to



the church, and it is where that week's Advent candle lighter gets the flame from and the words from the one visited are shared with the congregation.

The second tradition is Advent Workshop which is typically held the first Sunday of December from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in our church social hall. This free event is for the entire wider community, and it is an afternoon of making crafted gifts and decorations. Refreshments are served amid festive music and fun.



Ezra Chapola
Old South Church, Windsor

The advent season is not just a period of preparation. It is the anticipatory period in which we remember the birth and second coming of Jesus Christ. It is a reminder of God's presence in our life. Advent allows us to reflect and affirm our faith in all God has done in Jesus Christ. Despite the ill will in the world accumulating in war, spreading violence, and unjust socioeconomic policies, advent reminds us of the love of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. It is a reminder to speak hope, share peace, love one another, and share the joy in a divided world.

Hence, I am always inspired during advent when I sing:

Emmanuel, Emmanuel
His name is called Emmanuel
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called Emmanuel.

I pray that no matter what you are going through, you will remember that the presence of God is always with you. Always remember Emmanuel – God with us.

Rev. Elizabeth Gleich
Congregational Church of Middlebury

Every night we light our advent candles before dinner and sing/pray.
It's very meaningful.



Latest News

Join us for an afternoon of music, and fun
at the *FIRST ANNUAL FCC*



CAROLS , COOKIES, **AND (UGLY) CHRISTMAS SWEATERS!**



Sunday, DECEMBER 11TH 4:00 pm
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MANCHESTER

Gather in the sanctuary to sing and hear holiday favorites - both sacred and secular - by the FCC Chancel Choir, the Tall Spire Ringers and area soloists.

Have refreshments & join in
"The Great Manchester Christmas Cookie Contest!"
Community members are invited to bring their best cookies (please provide 2 dozen).
Make a donation in the basket of your favorite cookie - the basket with the most \$\$ wins!

All proceeds will be given to the
InterFaith Council's Emergency Needs Fund
which aids folks in need throughout the Northshire region.
A trophy will be given for the "ugliest" Christmas sweater or outfit!

Time: 1-3pm

**Where: United Church
of Craftsbury
(Church on the Common)**

**Christmas crafts/gifts to
make & take. Refreshments
& a special visit from Santa!**

**Come & embrace the spirit
of Christmas!**

**For more information,
call 586-8028 or 586-2516**

The United Church of Craftsbury (Church on the Common) will be hosting a Christmas Workshop for children of all ages on December 11th from 1-3pm. Children can make Christmas crafts-gifts to take home to decorate or give as a gift. The church is grateful for the volunteers who are helping to make this fun festive event to return after being canceled the past two years.

Are all welcome to come and embrace the spirit of Christmas!



Community Candlelight & Carols service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022 AT 5 PM
Congregational Church of Westminster West UCC

Join us around the fire pit (or on FB) for our annual Candlelight & Carols service. Like last year, we'll gather in the dooryard of the church, with a blazing fire pit for both warmth and cheer. We'll hear the Christmas story as told through scriptures, we'll sing it with carols, and we'll welcome the coming of Love Incarnate ~ something our world very much needs. There will be cocoa and chances to carol in the village when we're through if folks are interested!

[Read more here!](#)

Tuba Christmas Returns to **First Congregational Church of West Brattleboro**! The concert and sing-along will start at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 11. No admission fee (there will

be a free-will offering). Come join us for this unique holiday concert.



Lighted Labyrinth and Peace Pole

The Christian Education team at **Charlotte Congregational Church** implemented the Illuminated Advent Spiral and their Social Justice and Facilities ministries implemented the installation of the Peace Pole.



DORSET CHURCH TO CELEBRATE WORLD AIDS DAY – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022 AT 2:00 PM



In celebration of World AIDS Day, our local P.F.L.A.G. (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) group will be having a special presentation about the National AIDS Memorial Quilt on Sunday afternoon, December 11th

At 2:00 PM at the Dorset Church in the Upper Room Chapel. Our speaker will be Bill Aupperlee who will accompany his history with a Power-point presentation of the quilt itself. Q & A will follow with refreshments. All are welcome, presentation is free. The church is located at 143 Church St. (off Route 30) in Dorset. Questions, call 802-867-2260.

NEAUCE 2023

"Beyond Church Walls:
Hearing New Voices"

May 4 - 6 (Th, F, S)

Pilgrim Pines
Swanzey, NH

SAVE
THE
DATE



Lament with Earth

Five seasonal events honoring the pain of loss through the liturgical year

Thursdays October 2022 - June 2023
7:30-8:30 pm (Eastern) • via Zoom

Next gathering on Thursday, December 1

[Learn More](#)

[Register](#)

Vergennes is seeking a Sunday School Coordinator.!!!

The Congregational Church of Vergennes, United Church of Christ, is an Open and Affirming congregation of 135 members seeking a Sunday School Coordinator. We are a vibrant, Christian community—full of life, music, and

laughter. We have a long history of deeply appreciating the gifts of our staff in supporting an inclusive, loving, and compassionate ministry in the heart of our little city.

The pay rate is \$25 per hour, and the hours range from 8 to 15 hours per week depending upon applicant interest. We seek a person of faith with experience working with children, who will direct a program of stimulating and nourishing faith formation. If this sounds like the way you want to make a big impact in our community, please contact Rev. Elliott Munn at elliott@vergenesucc.org.

For more information, including the Job Description, please go to the church's website:

<https://www.vergenesucc.org/ccfmsearch>



This music is free and looking for a new home! Please contact **Erika** at United Community Church in St. Johnsbury for more information.

**SAVE THE
DATE
APRIL 28-29,
2023**

**“AND
WHO
IS
MY
NEIGHBOR?”**

**228TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
VERMONT CONFERENCE**

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER BILL MCKIBBON

Grace Congregational
UCC

8 Court Street, Rutland,
VT 05701

(Actual logo coming soon to an eKit near you!)

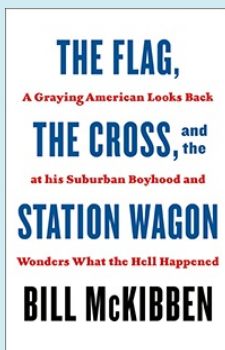
The Vermont Conferences 228th Annual Meeting will be connecting the dots between creation justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and LGBTQ justice.



Our workshops this year are so abundant they will happen TWICE. Stay tuned for more information!

Our keynote speaker is Bill McKibben (pictured here) whose new book "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon" was just released.

"I'm curious about what went so suddenly sour with American patriotism, American faith, and American prosperity."



"Like so many of us, McKibben grew up believing—knowing—that the United States was the greatest country on earth. As a teenager, he cheerfully led American Revolution tours in Lexington, Massachusetts. He sang "Kumbaya" at church. And with the remarkable rise of suburbia, he assumed that all Americans would share in the wealth.

But fifty years later, he finds himself in an increasingly doubtful nation strained by bleak racial and economic inequality, on a planet whose future is in peril.

And he is curious: What the hell happened?"

You can find the book from the sellers below!

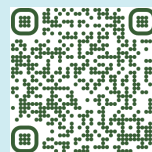
[Indie Bound](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Audible](#)

[Would you like to be a vendor at next years Annual Meeting?](#)

A limited amount of display space is available for this year's meeting. Tables are 8' and may be reserved on a first come, first served basis. Displays may be set up Friday morning between 8-10am. A \$30 fee is being charged per table. All organizations, committees, departments, and vendors must pay the fee. Extension cords can be provided.



Use this QR code to pay for your table if you are using the fillable online form!

[Fillable Exhibitor Form \(Online\)](#)

[Exhibitor Form \(Print\)](#)

[Make sure to watch our website for new updates!!!](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Register](#)

PRAYER CONCERNS



All those dealing with the trauma of mass shootings
All those experiencing war and violence
All those dealing with illness and pain
All who are grieving

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!)

Farewell, Welcome and Blessings

Pastoral Transitions since the 2021 Vermont Conference Annual Meeting

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

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

Celebrate!!

Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

December 1st
Scott Couper

December 5th
Margaret Flad

December 9th
Doug Carter

December 14th
Mary Brownlow
Daniel Wright

December 19th
Jane Wilson

December 22nd
Lee Moore

December 24th
Mary Simpson Thompson

December 27th
Cordelia Burpee
Junius Peeler

December 28th
Gregory Homan

Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

December 2nd
Devon Thomas

December 3rd
Elizabeth Gleich
Daniel Wright
Elisa Lucozzi

December 6th
Ed Sunday Winters

December 7th
Carole Carlson

December 9th
Josh Simon

December 15th
Audrey Walker

December 31st
Roger Brown



The Tour de SWA is Off to a Great Start!

The first stage of the Tour de SWA took place on Sunday October 16 th with nine cyclists (three from end-to-end)! A hardy crew of three, Matt Moore, Jim Gray and Chris Heintz left the United Church of Benson at 8:30 after fueling up with breakfast served by the church. They were joined by the Delins family (Lucine, Daris, Luna and Matiss) at the First Congregation Church of Fair Haven. They visited the Castleton Federated Church and passed through Poultney on their way to Pawlet where they were greeted by Pastor Tracy Weatherhogg who served up a delicious lunch. She joined the tour for the next leg to Rupert Congregational Church and then on to the Dorset Church – a total of 55 miles end-to-end). Along the way they were supported by Julie Demaree (our Clergy On the Ground) and Esther Gray who drove our support van.

Most important: this first stage raised over \$2,000 for the Hope Fund. The Southwest Association hopes to raise \$10,000 and visit each of its member churches during the Tour de SWA. 2023 will bring two more stages which will visit the remaining churches. Please keep your eyes open for dates.

Contact Jane LoBrutto at the Dorset Church with questions:
jane@dorsetchurch.org.



[Caption]



[Caption]



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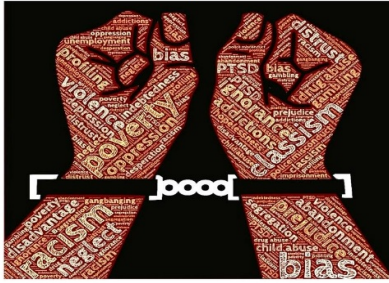
Just for fun!!!



Click here to update your contact information!!!

THE TALK, VERMONT

The Talk, Vermont



Thank you so much for your support and participation in what was formerly The Racism in America Forum and, starting this fall, will be known as The Talk, Vermont. While our focus will be on Vermont, one of the whitest states in the nation, and its efforts to confront and overcome the challenges of racism and other forms of bigotry, we shall draw upon resources both within and beyond the state in guiding our path to a better place.

[Read more here](#)

VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS



Stowe Community Church
Director of Youth Ministry Job Description

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION: The Director of Youth Ministry is responsible for developing and delivering a comprehensive program of Christian Education for youth (6th-12th grades). It is important that the Director inspires and excites the youth of SCC to learn and study the faith by communicating and demonstrating a personal passion for Jesus Christ.

[Read more \(including how to apply!\) HERE!](#)



Middle School Ministries Coordinator:
First Congregational Church UCC of Burlington Vermont is looking for a team

player ready to work with youth in a great location – Burlington, Vermont! The person hired for this new part-time position will work with our great team to oversee programs and service-learning opportunities, facilitating the spiritual development of youth (6th-12th grade). You'll work with middle school youth on Sunday mornings at FirstChurchBTV and with our collaborative youth program (youth in grades 6 thru 12 from both the College Street Church and FirstChurchBTV) one evening per week and periodically on weekends. Learn more about this opportunity

We are hiring.

If you have a passion for young people, outdoor recreation and building a community of faith, we should talk!

Stowe Community Church is seeking a Director of Youth Ministry who is ready to build on a solid foundation and bring new life to the growing ministries of SOC. Experience in education or leading a youth-based program is preferred, but a love of Christ and passion for our youth group is a must. Duties include developing an inspiring and engaging ministry for students 6th grades and up; including curriculum, programs, music and maybe a trip to the mountain every once in a while.

Any interested applicants should send a resume or a letter of interest to Marylou Durett at info@stowechurch.org. The position is available for the right person to start immediately.

NURSERY COORDINATOR NEEDED

Stowe Community Church is seeking a Nursery Coordinator, teen or adult, who will provide a dependable, safe, nurturing environment to infants and toddlers, ages three and under. Duties include being silly, giving big hugs, reading stories, cuddling and a diaper change or two.

Any interested applicants should send a resume or a letter of interest to Marylou Durett at info@stowechurch.org. The position is available for the right person to start immediately.

It takes a big heart to help shape little minds and we believe the nursery is the most important room in the Church building. Please help to keep this very important ministry growing!!

VT CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Christian Education:

Administration & Finance:

Music & Other Lay Ministries:

Music Director- North Pomfret Congregational

Church Musician- Tunbridge Church

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



SAVE THE DATE!

New Offerings from Practical Resources for Churches!!!



Tax-Advantaged Giving Guest Post: Horizons Stewardship

The program year is already in full swing, and soon enough, you will be wrapping up another year of ministry. Now is the time to consider how you will engage your donors during this important giving season by encouraging tax-advantaged giving.

It is true that reducing tax liability is not a primary motivator for giving. However, today's donors are savvy about leveraging their contributions to take advantage of tax deductions. Promoting tax-advantaged giving can help your donors maximize their gift to your church and provide substantial year-end funding for your important ministries.

What are some of the primary ways donors can leverage their gifts and avoid unnecessary taxation?

Did you miss these webinars?

Encouraging Year End Giving

Leaders - Scott McKenzie, Jennifer Williams

Finish Strong 2022

Should You Do a "Second Annual" Pledge Drive?

Leader: Cesie Delve Scheuermann & Julia Frisbie

IRA Rollover Handout 2020

2020 Year End Flyer

January pledge letter

January pledge letter for those 70.5 years+

What's Next for the Offering Plate?

Leaders - Scott McKenzie, Jennifer Williams

REVOLVING DOOR OFFERING TALKS v2

Sample Scripts for Offering Talks

Here is a link to the [Stewardship & Finance page](#) of our Online Resource Center

Here is a list of some of my favorite Stewardship Recorded Webinars, click blue links to watch.

Narrative Budgets: You can do this!

Leader: Cesie Delve Scheuerman

Increasing Joy, Increasing Generosity in Your Congregation

Increasing Joy, Increasing Generosity Handout

Leader: Cesie Delve Scheuermann

Unlocking the Secrets of Bountiful Generosity Session 1

Unlocking the Secrets of Bountiful Generosity Session 2

Leaders: Kristine Miller & Scott McKenzie

SALT is an Emmy Award winning, not-for-profit production company dedicated to the craft of visual storytelling. We love creating stories with sparkle and imagination, lovely little windows through which the world can catch a glimpse of who you are and what you do. My favorite place to [download letters and graphics for a Stewardship Campaign](#) these are not free but reasonably priced.

UCC | NEWS

For the latest [news click here](#)

[The Online Learning Platform of the United Church of Christ](#)

How to Contact Vermont Conference Staff

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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



Your copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for? (Audience) Why should they care? (Benefit) What do I want them to do here? (Call-to-Action)

Create a great offer by adding words like "free" "personalized" "complimentary" or "customized." A sense of urgency often helps readers take an action, so think about inserting phrases like "for a limited time only" or "only 7 remaining!"