



# 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 15th, 2022

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## Message from the Conference

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference:

In this week following the third Sunday in Advent, I offer this prayer, written by my colleague, David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference.


In peace and joy,  
Lynn

### Beginning Again - An Advent Prayer

O Love,  
Thank you for the gift  
Of beginning again  
When all seems lost  
Or weariness wears down  
The last inch of hope.

Yes, turn the page  
Of over-rehearsed despair  
Or dread of dullness  
Formed by too much  
Of just about everything.

Form instead Your promise  
When night's weight  
Seems too heavy for  
Dawn's readiness to rise  
In surprises unlikely



To be noticed by the world  
Yet formed by You  
As the beginning place  
Of Your grand renewal,  
Starting as one small baby  
Still in formation  
Not yet ready to be born  
But quickening the senses  
With miraculous movement.

Yes, form this advent  
Of Your grand reversal  
In me as I wait in wonder  
At what You will readily reveal  
In this long season  
Of late dawn and early dusk.

Let me savor the beauty  
Of what I do not know  
Urging me to wait  
When all around me  
The world rushes  
In frenzy of the overfull,  
The too much and the too soon.

Still me into the gift  
You so yearn to give,  
Of silence rising  
From deep within  
Touching everything  
With Your cosmic creation  
Daring to form a new world  
Unknown by the old one  
Satisfied with a hypnosis  
Of over-rehearsed hopelessness.

Yes, grant me  
An Advent awakening  
Muting every resistance  
And releasing a new song  
Of thanks for Your grand gift  
Of beginning again...  
Here...now...yes...thank you.

*-David Long Higgins November 2022*

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## Latest News

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**Are you a Friend of the Conference?**



You may write a check to the Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ and mark it "Friends of the VT Conference." Alternatively, you may give your gift online [HERE](#) with the option of signing up to have a regular amount withdrawn from your credit card or bank account each month.

Please send checks to:  
Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ  
36 North Main Street  
Randolph, VT 05060

**Do you want to be part of the Hope Fund's story?**

# HOPE FUND FOR THE FUTURE



**"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see"  
(Hebrews 11:1)**

You can now find the application online [HERE](#) or by clicking the link above!

Please help us thank the wonderful Discernment Team members who helped make this application happen! Those team members are:

Rev. Paul Sangree (Associate Minister, Vermont Conference),  
Rev. Dan Haugh (Stowe Community Church),  
Rev. Mary Hoadley (Brownington Congregational Church),  
Rev. Jessica Moore (First Congregational, St. Albans),  
Rev. Lava Mueller (Love Church, Randolph),  
Rev. Paul Eyer (Williston Federated Church),  
Rev. Caryne Eskridge (Weybridge Congregational Church)

Please send all completed applications to  
[VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto:VermontConference@gmail.com).

## Vermont Conference Pastors Share Their Advent Joy!!!

[Rev. Elisa Lucuzzi](#)



## Before Jesus by Alla Renée Bozarth

Before Jesus was his mother.  
Before supper in the upper room,  
breakfast in the barn.  
Before the Passover Feast, a feeding trough.  
And here, the altar of Earth, fair linens of hay and seed.  
Before his cry, her cry.  
Before his sweat of blood, her bleeding and tears.  
Before his offering, hers.  
Before the breaking of bread and death,  
the breaking of her body in birth.  
Before the offering cup,  
the offering of her breast.  
Before his blood, her blood.  
And by her body and blood alone,  
his body and blood and whole human being.  
The wise ones knelt to hear  
the woman's word in wonder.  
Holding up her sacred child,  
her spark of God in the form of a babe,  
she said: "Receive and let your hearts be healed  
and your lives be filled with love, for  
This is my body, This is my blood."

### Rev. Kim McKerley Bethany Church, Randolph

Each year at Bethany Church during the early service on Christmas Eve the children prepare the manger for the Christ Child. Inspired by resources from the Iona Community in Scotland, we provide strips of burlap which the children use to line the manger's wooden slats, creating a softer place for Jesus to rest. The children love it! Actually, everyone loves it!



## 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!](#)



become involved are numerous, as follow:

- Learn more about Sunrise by scheduling an in-person or zoom presentation during worship or perhaps an afternoon or evening presentation on a different day
- Plan a church school unit including a zoom presentation and activities to help the children in your church connect with Sunrise students
- Make quilts or blankets for children who stay in the Cottage
- Travel to Mumias to help with a service project at Sunrise
- Sponsor a learner by contributing to the Hummingbird Fund (School fees are \$400 per term or \$1200 per school year- of course, any size gift is welcome!)

If you are interested in joining in, please contact me at [salterwanda@gmail.com](mailto:salterwanda@gmail.com), or feel free to give me a call at (802) 869-2582. **I look forward to hearing from you!**

Sincerely yours,

Wanda Salter  
Saxtons River, Vermont





THE COALITION FOR UCC RURAL MINISTRIES  
PRESENTS

***NOURISHING THE SEEDS OF FAITH***

**(ISAIAH 55:10-11)**

**A VIRTUAL NATIONAL GATHERING OF  
RURAL/SMALL TOWN CHURCHES &  
MINISTRIES IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**SAVE THE DATES: FEBRUARY 9-11, 2023**

**REGISTRATION TO OPEN IN JANUARY 2023**

**HOSTED BY**

**FAITH EDUCATION, INNOVATION & FORMATION (FAITH INFO)**

**JUSTICE AND LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY OF THE UCC**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

**REV. ROBERTO OCHOA – [ochoar@ucc.org](mailto:ochoar@ucc.org)**

**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.





NEAUCE 2023

"Beyond Church Walls:  
Hearing New Voices"

May 4 - 6 (Th, F, S)

Pilgrim Pines  
Swanzey, NH

SAVE  
THE  
DATE



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 LBGTQ justice.

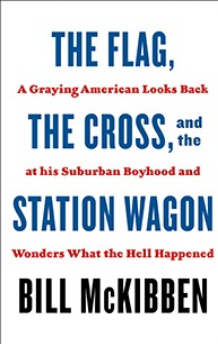
Our workshops this year are so abundant they will happen TWICE. Stay tuned for more information!

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!

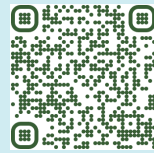
[Indie Bound](#)

[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!!!](#)

## 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](mailto: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 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

December 31st  
Roger Brown

## 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



## 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](mailto:jane@dorsetchurch.org).



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]

# Just for fun!!!



**Click here to update your contact information!!!**

## **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.



## VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS



Stowe Community Church  
Director of Youth Ministry Job Description

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**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!](#)**

### **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](mailto:elliott@vergenesucc.org).

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

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



**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 (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 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

here: <https://bit.ly/middleschoolcoordinator> Approx. 6 hours per week - \$20/hour.

# 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 SCC. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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# UCC | NEWS

For the latest [news click here](#)

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

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### **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/>

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!"