



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 Winter Edition

January 26th, 2023

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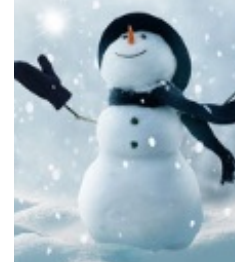
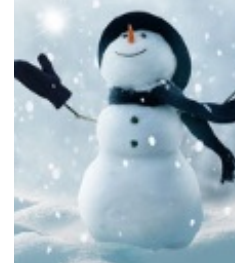
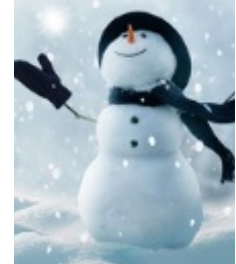
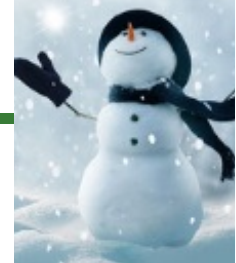
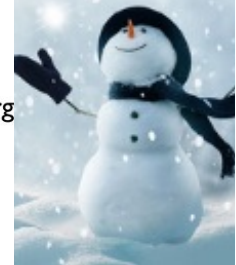
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Message from the Conference

When was the last time you or your church went on a spiritual retreat? I was reminded of their importance recently when one of our clergy told me about their desire to do a spiritual retreat this year. Spiritual retreats have a long and powerful history in the Christian tradition. So many of our forebears in the early church went on spiritual retreat that many of them ended up living out in the desert fulltime—a sort of permanent spiritual retreat!

Many of us perhaps are not quite ready for that! But when was the last time your church had a leadership or all church retreat? Or when was the last time you personally chose to go on retreat? In our fast paced world, it is easy to lose sight of our real priorities day to day. It is also easy to not stop and take the time to listen to God as we check off the “to-do’s” on our daily schedule. And yet the Bible makes it clear over and over again that God most often speaks into our lives when we are willing to stop and listen, when we will take a break from our daily schedule to retreat. We see that over and over again with Jesus, that He took time out of a very busy schedule to get away to pray and think, sometimes by Himself, and sometimes with others.

So as you map out what you and your church are going to be doing in 2023, I hope you might fit in time for a retreat there. If you need suggestions of places for a larger group of people to go, I do have a couple. You could also just contact a neighboring church and see if you could use their space. If it is an individual retreat, there may be a monastery or other spiritual community that you could join for a day or two. But I encourage you to be intentional about planning this time, so that you and your ministry will continue to be open to our Still Speaking God.



Faithfully yours,
Paul

Latest News

On January 12, 2023, a coalition of concerned community members from across Northfield and the State of Vermont submitted the attached statement/complaint to Northfield's Town Manager and Select Board. The attached list of links, though not part of the statement itself, provides additional context and background information. If you are inclined to do so, now is the time to contact the [Town of Northfield](#) to voice your individual support, experiences, and/or concerns.

"Northfield Needs a New Chief of Police"

January 12th, 2023

A Joint Statement by Northfield Middle High School's Gender & Sexuality Alliance; the United Church of Northfield; Outright Vermont; Rights & Democracy of Vermont; Education Justice Coalition of Vermont; Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network; Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ; TeachOut Vermont; Concerned Parents, Educators, and Students of Northfield

Northfield's current chief of police has revealed himself (1) to have a feeble grasp on what the laws and constitution actually mean and (2) to be willing to misinterpret and misapply the laws in order to advance his own ideological agenda.

In 2020, the district attorney of Washington County issued a Brady letter, which called into question Chief John Helfant's ability to faithfully execute his duties. An investigation revealed evidence of Fourth Amendment violations and potential on-duty racist practices, including disparately worse treatment of Hispanic and African American men. It was also revealed that Officer Helfant omitted exculpatory evidence from his statements and failed to activate his body camera when this disparate treatment is alleged to have occurred. Although criminal charges were not brought against him at the time, he nonetheless has become a less effective officer because his standing in the community was eroded and the DA's office no longer accepts his referrals of non-listed and non-violent crimes."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

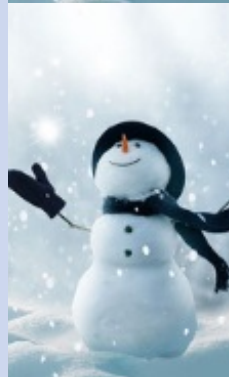
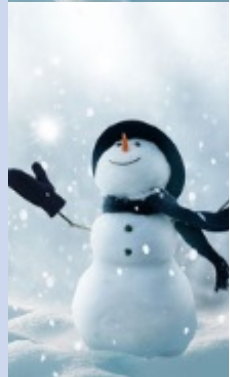
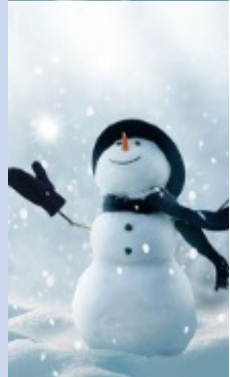
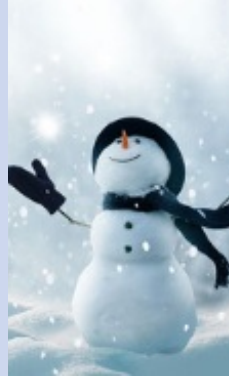
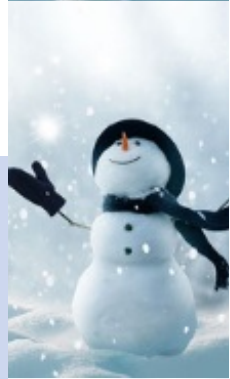
[NPD Chief Problem Links for Context](#)

Update!!!

Lynn and Julie Lombard (Northfield UCC) were both featured in an article published by the Vermont Digger yesterday, January 25th.

[**YOU CAN READ IT HERE!!!**](#)

(Please note that Lynn is the Conference Minister for the



Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, not "a minister at the United Church of Christ in Randolph" as the article states. This will be corrected per the author.)

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS **on Christian Nationalism**



"Jesus Christ, we invoke your name!"

"Thank you for allowing the United States of America to be reborn....In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen!"

Two years ago, as throngs of supporters of former President Trump stormed the Capitol to disrupt the peaceful transition of power from one administration to the next, several made their way into the Senate chamber where the sentiments above were expressed.

Nearby, rioters in the Rotunda, overcome with emotion, erupted into chorus beneath the Apotheosis of Washington, belting out the refrain of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, followed by an impromptu prayer: "Thank you for letting us stand up for our country. Guide us so that we may do your will." From icons to prayers to rituals—such expressions permeated every facet of the events of Jan. 6, 2021, from start to aftermath.

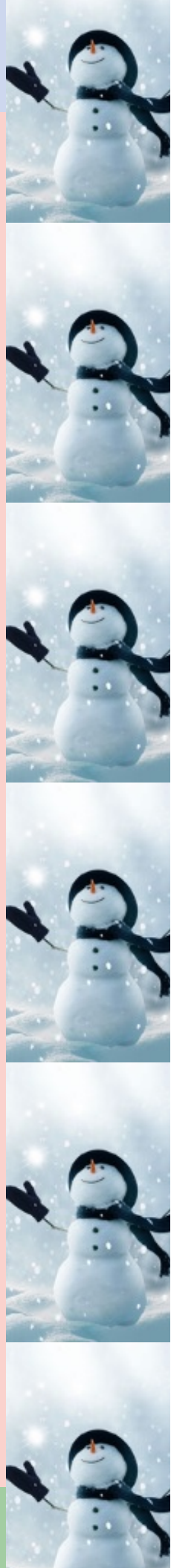
While it's been clear all along that most of the rioters were Christian and expressed their motivations accordingly, coverage and analysis of the incident has largely focused on the cultural and political commitments of the rioters; not nearly as much attention is given to the theological and spiritual frameworks motivating so many of the rioters—both on and beyond that fateful day. (One singular exception to this has been the insightful work of the Uncivil Religion project, a joint effort of University of Alabama's Department of Religious Studies and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.)

Yet we cannot fully understand the events of January 6 apart from these motivations. Which is why on **January 31, at 7pm**, Newfane Church will host a public conversation on Christian nationalism. For this conversation, we're thrilled to be joined by Dr. Erica M. Ramirez, Director of the Center for the Study of Theological Expression at Auburn Theological Seminary. Dr. Ramirez's research explores how reactionary forms of religion, especially within Christianity, both support and undermine democratic flourishing. She holds her PhD in sociology of religion from Drew University and was recently named one of "15 up-and-coming faith influencers" by the Religion News Service.

This will be the first in a series of monthly discussions we're launching called Courageous Conversations. Through these conversations we seek to create a regular space in which to engage folks in our area on a range of pertinent questions facing our country and community. Each month we'll tackle a different topic in the hope of creating opportunities to face hard, uncomfortable, high-stakes questions, together, in healthy, generative ways that stoke our curiosity, illumine our perspectives, and make space for real difference.

You can RSVP for the event by emailing me directly at matt@newfane.church. Attendance is free but space is limited. Masking is strongly encouraged, and masks will be available at the door. An elevator and a chair lift are available. The event will be recorded and accessible on the Church site.

The First Congregational Church of Berlin's



website got a makeover!

Check it out here!!



United Community Church, St. Johnsbury swung into the new year with a Swinging Epiphany Celebration. The ecumenical community service included five UCC, Congregational and UMC clergy reading the familiar Christmas and Epiphany scriptures interspersed with jazz carols and swing standards offered by the Swing North Big Band. Swinging Epiphany Celebration was originally conceived in 2012 and offered annually in various VT and NH communities. The 2023 service was the first offering since the pandemic. Enjoy this recording of the Benediction and closing number:



United Community Church, St. Johnsbury has a free lunch program that was also recently featured on the Vermont Public Website. You can read it **HERE- Free lunch, and a community gathering place, reopens in St. Johnsbury after a 2-year hiatus**

VITALITY EVENT

MARCH 11TH, 2023

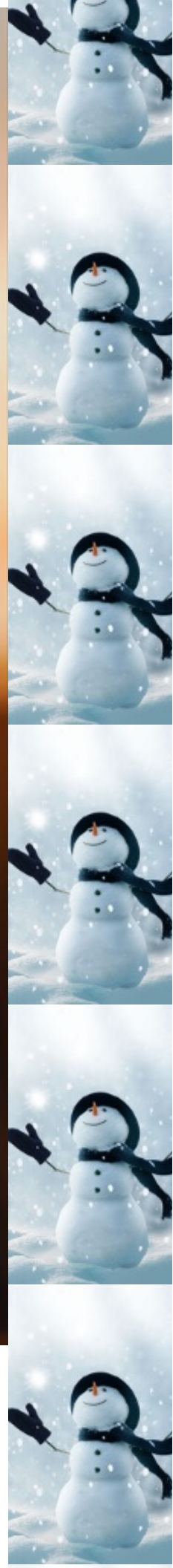
First Congregational Church UCC,
Springfield VT

\$75 per church in person
\$50 per church via Zoom

REGISTER HERE!!

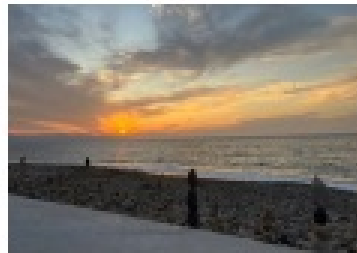


Featured Seminar
: "How to be a Vital
Church in a Post-Pandemic
Age." with Rev. Dr.
Patty Kogut, Associate
Conference Minister
in the Southern New
England Conference



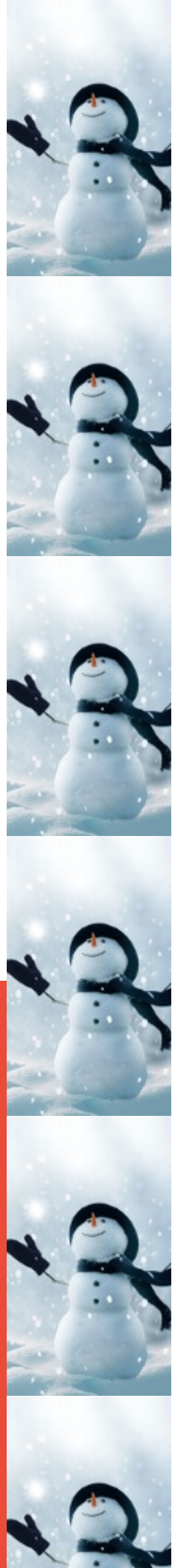
Boundary Training for Authorized Ministers

February 22 & 23
9 am to 12 pm



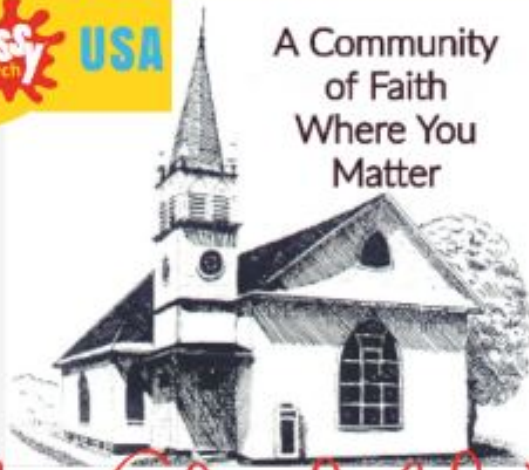
The sun, the sea, and the sand are each aware of their own boundary and that of the other. This is what allows for the creation of a beautiful sunset.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Facilitator: | Rev. Dr. Diane Weible, Ordained Minister & trained facilitator |
| Structure: | Six hours divided into two Zoom sessions, three hours each day. For credit, participants must be fully present and participate in all sessions. Each topic will include a case study and be discussed as a group prior to breaking out into small groups for discussion. |
| Topics Covered | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power and Vulnerability• Social Media• Finances• Pastoral Identity and Vocation• Self-Care (burn-out, stress, compassion fatigue)• Receiving Gifts• Boundaries and Church Conflict• When a Minister Leaves/Retires• Ministers as church members/Ministers in Four-Way Covenants• Cultural Boundaries |
| Cost: | \$60 |
| To Register: | Register by 9 a.m. PT, February 21. Once you register and eligibility for the training is confirmed, you will be emailed the Zoom link. |





A Community
of Faith
Where You
Matter



Messy Church of the Month:

**BRISTOL FEDERATED
CHURCH**

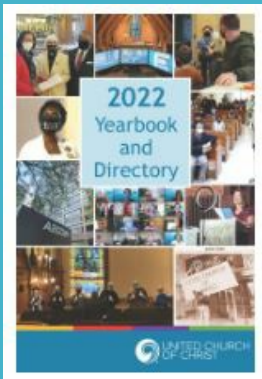
IN BRISTOL, VERMONT

Congratulations to Bristol Federated Church!

Our Messy Church is located in Bristol, Vermont but is an Ecumenical event including 5 different churches in 3 different towns, representing 4 different denominations. We seek to reach those living in our rural 5 town area of Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven, and Starksboro, Vermont. We acknowledge that Messy Church requires a good number of volunteers and the potential to burn out our faithful, but older population of volunteers is very real if we attempt to go at it alone. We are stronger (and reach more people) when we work together.

DataHub is Open for Yearbook Info!

[Access DataHub!!!](#)



It's that time again for the UCC to begin preparing the Yearbook & Directory for the coming year. We are deeply grateful for your continued efforts to help us maintain up-to-date and accurate data, especially as 2022 has continued to be a year of pandemic challenges and uncertainty. To best help us prepare for the upcoming Yearbook & Directory, please consider the important items in the sections below.

[Yearbook Instructions](#)

“And Who Is My Neighbor?”

228th Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference



April 28-29, 2023
Grace Church, Rutland

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

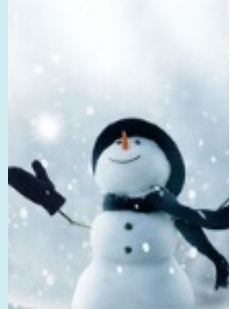
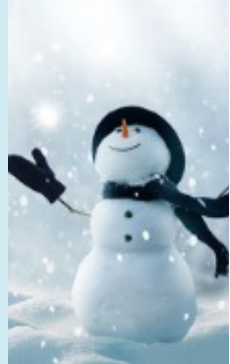
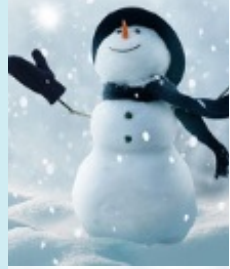
Our workshops this year are so abundant they will happen TWICE. Stay tuned for more information!

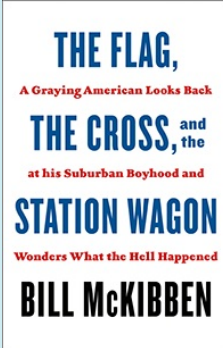
Our keynote speaker is Bill McKibben (pictured here) whose new book "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon" was just released.



“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!

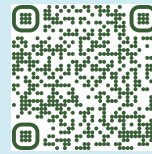
[Indie Bound](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Audible](#)

[Would you like to be a vendor at this 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 \(Print\)](#)



Practical Resources for Churches (PRC) is growing their **Cultivate Faith YouTube channel!** Take a peek at the playlists we've already uploaded and subscribe so you get updates when we upload new resources. (Lots more are coming SOON!)



Do you or your church want to apply for a Hope Fund grant?



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.

Join the Marketplace

...
Celebration XI
March 17-18, 2023

Now Accepting Vendor & Exhibitor Applications

Jewelry / Prints / Pottery / Stationary
Candles / Handbags / Clothing / Books
Crafts / Handmade Goods & MORE

www.UCCWC.org

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Celebration XI



register online
www.UCCWC.org

UCC New England Women

CELEBRATION XI

www.UCCWC.org



A weekend filled with reconnecting with friends, making new ones, and forming connections with other women of faith.

March 17-19, 2023

DoubleTree by Hilton | Manchester, NH

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

Prayers for the family and friends of Rev. Holsman.

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



Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

January 2nd
Jane Wilson

January 3rd
Joan W. Vincent

January 7th
Roger Carroll Banker Daly
Douglas S. Moore

January 9th
Douglas J. Cameron

January 12th
Nancy G. Devor
Thomas C. Kinder
Debbie Ingram
David Joseph Dean

January 13th
Michael Boy

January 18th
Tracy Fye Weatherhogg

January 19th
Peter O Plagge

January 22nd
Mark D. Wilson

January 23rd
Scott Couper

January 24th
Jeremy Kirk
Erin Reardon

January 26th
Josh Simon

Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

January 7th
Debbie Ingram

January 14th
Kurt Shaffert

January 20th
Kevin Goldenbogen
Jean O'Bresky

January 24th
Amy Pitton

January 28th
Dereen Vanderlinde-Abernathy

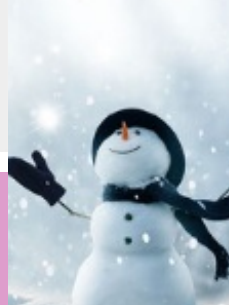
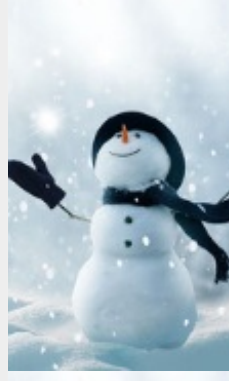
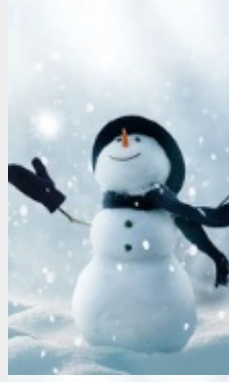
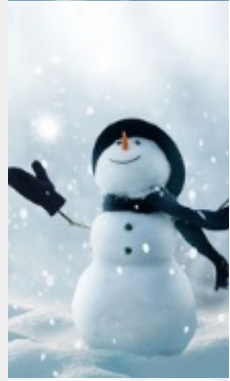
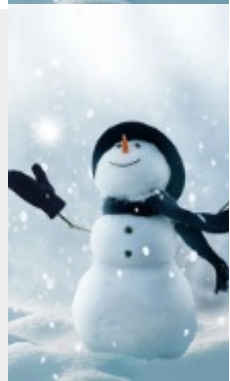
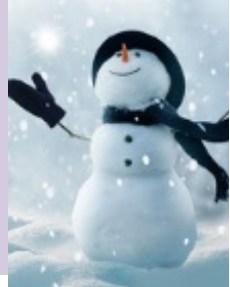
January 29th
Mary Hoadley



This music is free and looking for a new home! Please contact



[Erika](#) at United Community Church in St. Johnsbury for more information.



[Click here to update your contact information!!!](#)

RETIREMENT



Please help us in congratulating
Rev. Jane Elizabeth Wilson

on her recent retirement!

Congregations on both sides of the river have been lucky enough to have been blessed with her service.



**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**

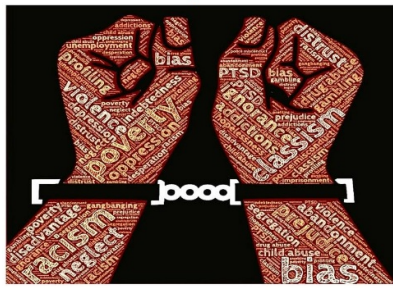
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

REV. ROBERTO OCHOA – ochoar@ucc.org

THE TALK, VERMONT

Thank you so much for your support and

The Talk, Vermont



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!](#)

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@vergennessucc.org.

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

<https://www.vergennessucc.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 (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

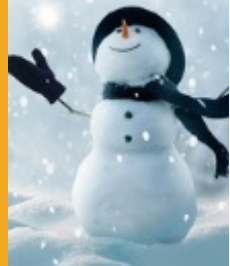
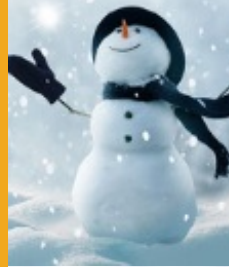
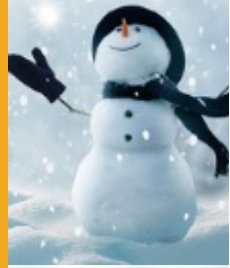
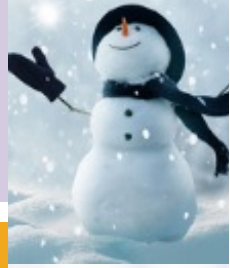
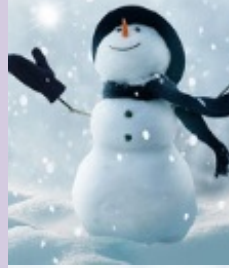
here: <https://bit.ly/middleschoolcoordinator> Approx. 6 hours per week - \$20/hour.

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 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!



Tending the Fire

Wise, resilient leadership for a changing world

“There’s no going back to who we were. We have to figure out how to move forward.”

Your church needs your leadership more than ever as we move out of the pandemic, yet the way forward isn’t always clear. As a leader, you face pressure for solutions and plans which are then sabotaged from all sides. How can you discern the way forward and lead your congregation with hope and resilience?

Tending the Fire will teach you how to manage yourself and your church so that you can:

- Be a healthy, non-anxious leader
- Manage difficult emotional relationships
 - Avoid overwork and “underwork”
 - Recognize and handle sabotage
- Discover the “next right steps” for your churches and yourself.

[Learn more and register here!!](#)

NEAUCE 2023

"Beyond Church Walls:
Hearing New Voices"

May 4 - 6 (Th, F, S)

Pilgrim Pines
Swansey, NH

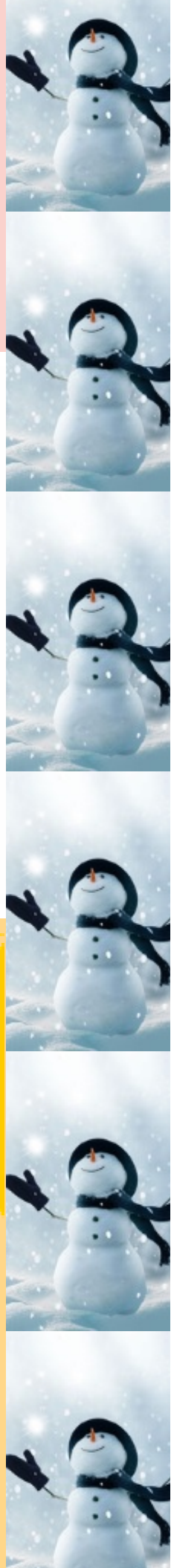
SAVE
THE
DATE

PATHWAYS
pathwaystheological.org

A new year brings new opportunities to learn and grow in faith! PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc. is pleased to announce our January term online, asynchronous courses that are accessible and affordable for curious Progressive Christians. All courses are designed with the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers at their core, and are helpful to anyone who wants to develop spiritual and leadership gifts for use in the church and the world.

—United Church of Christ History and Polity, January 11–April 7; this course is designed according to the content recommendations of the UCC History and Polity Network Teachers group (12 weeks, \$625)

—Practicing Our Faith in the Public Square, January 11–February 21(6



weeks, \$325)

—Understanding the Bible as a Progressive Christian, January 11-February 21 (6 weeks, \$325)

—The Art of Worship, January 11-February 21 (6 weeks, \$325)

We will also offer a three week Introduction to Supervised Ministry for student ministers and their site supervisors who are participating in the PATHWAYS Supervised Ministry track.

For more information about PATHWAYS as an organization, our courses, and to register, please visit www.pathwaystheological.org.

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



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!"

