



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

May 18th, 2023

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Message from the Conference

Vermont Conference friends,

The Surgeon General of the United States recently issued a report on "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation". The report, which is easily accessed online, states that one of every two Americans is dealing with loneliness, and that the mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. After laying out these facts in more detail, the report goes on to talk about the healing effects of social connection and community.

Of course, we as the Church have been in the business of social connection and community for a long time. We believe as Christians that when we are connected in relationship to God and to others, we will be in a spiritually and emotionally good place, because this is what God has called us to do. Our Conference clergy group this week discussed the Surgeon General's report in our Tuesday Zoom call, and we all agreed that loneliness and anxiety are big challenges in our society right now. A number of our churches shared programs that they are doing that help to build social connection and community in their churches, from potlucks to Bible studies to yoga classes. Sometimes we in the church today are concerned about how relevant we are, but there is no doubt that the work of building relationships and community makes a huge difference in the lives of those that we touch, both inside the church and outside.

Loneliness in my experience is best combatted by deep relationships where we can be totally honest with God and others about what we are going through. There are many activities we have in the church that help build community, but don't necessarily allow for deep and interpersonal sharing. This is why the creation and development of small groups in churches can make such a difference, because they create an environment where people can more freely share about what they are dealing with in their lives, and allow others the

chance to be community for them. How many small groups do you have in your church right now? Is there any way that you could develop some more?

Serving with you in Community,

Paul

Latest News

With great joy and excitement, the **Washington Association** has been newly reconstituted. Over twenty representatives attended a meeting last Sunday at the Barre Congregational Church to worship, elect officers, fellowship together and discuss ways to deepen the connections with the clergy, congregations, and the Vermont Conference of the U.C.C.



We are delighted to share the wonderful news that Rev. Jen Mihok, appointed pastor at the United Church of Underhill, gave birth to a healthy baby on Friday, May 12. Mira (pronounced MEER-ah) Joan Mihok Larson came into the world weighing 8 lbs 15 oz and measuring 20.25 inches. We pray for Jen and the family as they embrace this time of new life.



Summer Food Grant



It is that time of year again. Children will be out of school, and families find it hard to stretch their budget. In this time of Supply chain issues, and prices rising through the roof, The VT Conference Department of Justice and Witness Ministries is again offering grants to help your congregation help your neighbors. See the attached application form. Requests must be received by May 21, 2023. Upon receiving the grant, you promise to send a final report by August 30, 2023.

[Find the Application HERE!](#)

Dan Haugh's UCC Privilege of Call Celebration Service at Stowe Community Church!



Rev. Devon Thomas: Easter is intimately linked to a radical message of social justice

VT Digger May 16, 2023

This commentary is by Rev. Devon Thomas, who serves the Second Congregational Church in Hyde Park, Second Congregational Church in Jeffersonville and the United Church of Bakersfield and Fairfield.

The season of Easter is when people of faith remember a man who entered a hostile state capital to give voice to people who had no voice within a system of imperial and religious oppression.

In coming to Jerusalem, Jesus Christ was living into a Jewish tradition of advocacy that we see depicted to us in the Book of Proverbs: "Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable. Speak out in order to judge with righteousness and to defend the needy and the poor" (31: 8-10), and which Jesus revived in his call that the "Last shall be first and the first shall be last. (Matt 20:16).

I think many of us who celebrate the Easter season forget that this time is intimately linked to a radical message of social justice. I hold on to the hope that Vermont's

people of faith, both those who attend church and those who do not, will heed the message of Easter and recognize that, even though many of our politicians represent our values, we each still have an individual responsibility to actively give voice to those who struggle to be heard. And just because many of us are returning to what feels like a post-pandemic normal, for many of our neighbors, things have never been stable or normal and their voices remain unheard.

Vermonters have a powerful voice and we have a responsibility to use it.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

FIRST
ANNUAL

VERMONT
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NORTHEAST ASSOCIATION

JOINT WORSHIP
10:00 AM

SUNDAY
MAY 21, 2023

ORLEANS
FEDERATED CHURCH

**SPECIALTY GUEST GOSPEL PRESENTER:
FRANCOIS BERGERON**

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE VERMONT CONFERENCE
NE ASSOCIATION WIDE COMMUNITY CHOIR
LED BY MARK VIOLETTE

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE JOINT CHOIR!
CHOIR REHEARSALS AT THE ORLEANS FEDERATED CHURCH
SATURDAY 5/20 11 AM AND SUNDAY 5/21 8:30 AM
ATTEND ONE OR BOTH REHERSALS**

WORSHIP WILL BE FOLLOWED WITH
VT ARTISAN ICE CREAM & COFFEE

ROMANS 15:7
THEREFORE WELCOME ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST HAS
WELCOMED YOU, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD (ESV).

**Some of the Champlain Association
clergy and MIDS!!!**



Correction to Annual Meeting 2023 Hope Fund Donations Presentation-

We would also like to recognize the United Church of Dorset & East Rupert and Community UCC of Pawlet for their monetary donations to Hope Fund! Thank you so much for your thoughtful gifts!!!



SAVE THE DATE

VT UCC ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 19 & 20

2024



UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH
St. Johnsbury




Photos from the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference 2023 will be uploaded to the website

soon! Do you have any that you would like to share? Please email them to

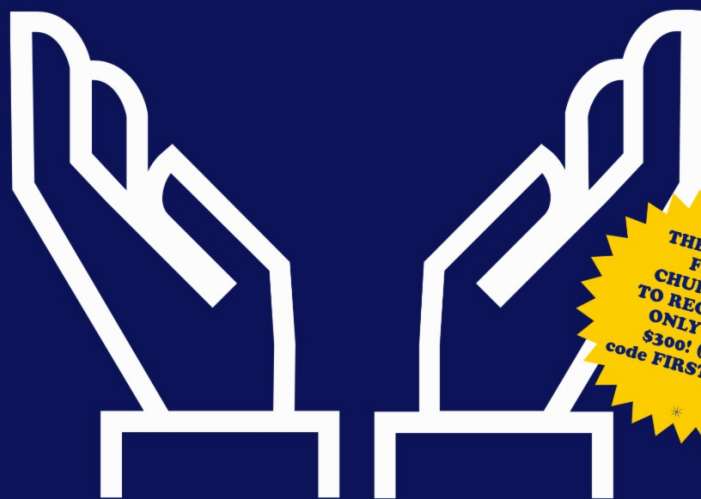
VermontConference@gmail.com!!!!

Funding Our Future by Paul Nickerson

Has your stewardship gone flat? Is your church dealing with financial issues? Make sure you don't miss this!

\$499.00

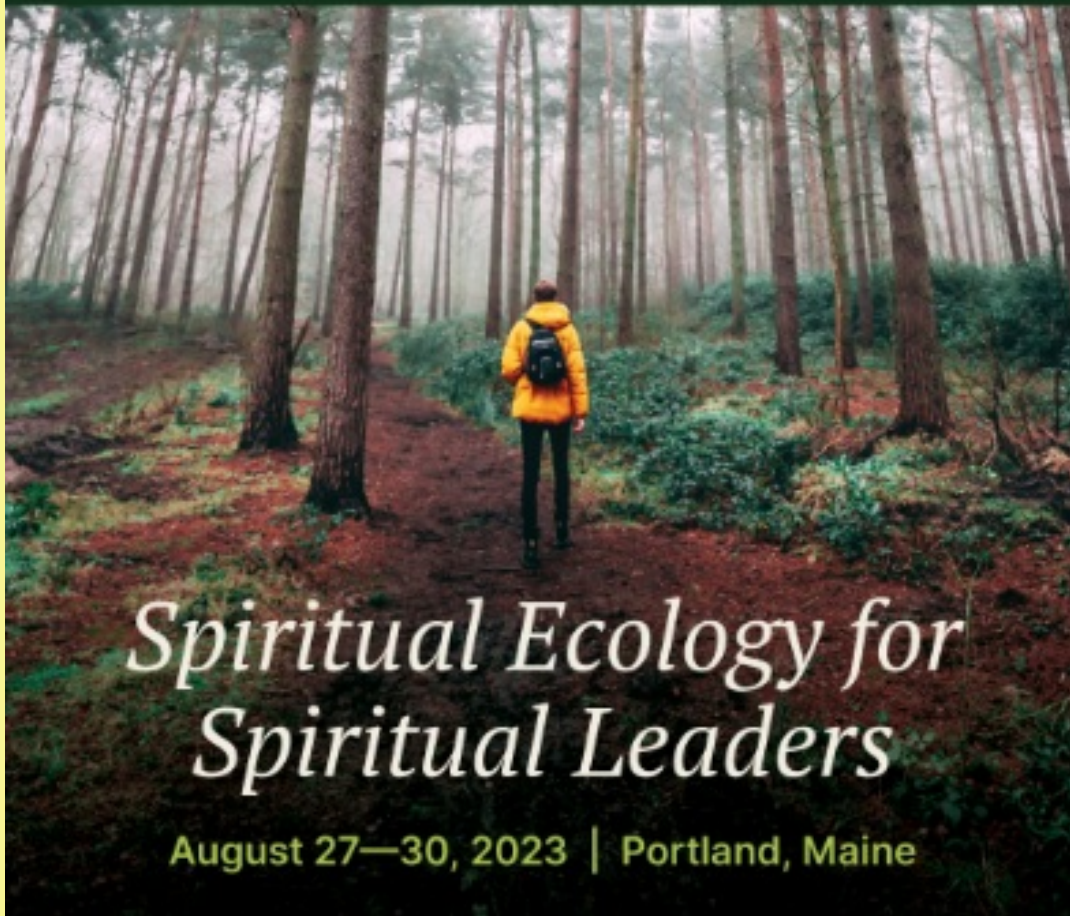
Saturday, May 20th from 9am -1pm on Zoom



*
THE FIRST
FIVE
CHURCHES
TO REGISTER
ONLY PAY
\$300! (Use
code FIRSTFIVE)
*

Register for Funding Our Future [HERE!](#)

Auburn



Spiritual Ecology for Spiritual Leaders

August 27—30, 2023 | Portland, Maine

Auburn Theological Seminary and The BTS Center are partnering to offer a four-day gathering in Portland, Maine, for early-career leaders working toward communal justice.

Spiritual Ecology for Spiritual Leaders aims to provide participants with an immersive experience centered around connection with the Earth, stories of collective spiritual ecology, and each other.

Please share this opportunity with the leaders and communities in your life and **[read our full posting on Auburn Voices.](#)**

Warmly,
Keisha E. McKenzie, Ph.D., *Senior VP Programs*
Matt Deen, *Fellow in Public Theology: Ecological Justice*

[View Interest Form!](#)

CULTURAL CAMP

PRESENTED BY SHIDAA PROJECTS INC.

Sponsored by:

802 Cars



The Montpelier Community Fund

July 25-26-27 8:15 am - 1:30 pm Ages 8 & Up

Drumming
Dance
Storytelling



Fabric Printing
Tie & Dye
Cooking



First Congregational Church of Berlin, 1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin, VT

\$150.00 per camper - shidaaprojects.org/programs

Heather@Shidaaprojects.org 617-780-2458

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

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.

PRAYER CONCERNS

The Rev. David J. Dean, Pastor Emeritus of Grace Congregational Church in Rutland. Rev. Dean died Palm Sunday April 2, 2023 in Pilgrim Manor, Cromwell, CT.

A Memorial Services will be held Saturday June 10, 2023 at 2 pm at Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, Rutland, VT. and on Saturday May 6, 2023 at

1 pm in the Event Center of Cromwell. CT.

Rev. Dean's obituary can be read here:

[Click here for obituary](#)



Memorial contributions may be made to Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, 8 Court St., Rutland Vermont 05701, or the Benevolence Fund of Covenant Living Of Cromwell, 52 Missionary Rd., Cromwell. CT 06416. Tossing Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

Please keep Rev. Greg Briggs and his family in your prayers as they mourn the passing of his father.



PATHWAYS THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc. is a 501c3 program that grew from a program of the Southeast Conference UCC. It remains affiliated with the Southeast Conference. The program offers a full menu of courses for those seeking authorized ministry, for those wanting continuing education, and for those looking for a progressive theology, ethics, or practical church course. The courses are asynchronous, geographically unbound, affordable, and aligned with the UCC Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers. Please be in touch with any questions. You may apply online at pathwaystheological.org.

Six-Week Course Schedule through the Early Fall 2023

Summer I: Courses Begin May 17, 2023

- **TH10608 Ethics and a Life of Meaning** (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun 27)
- **BF20604 New Testament Hermeneutics** (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun 27)
- **MP20611 Preaching for Special Occasions** (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun 27)
- **HT21206 UCC History & Polity** (12-weeks) (May 17 – Aug 8)
- **TH30608 Theology of Gender and Sexuality** (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun27)
- **MP10607 Faith Formation (Children, Youth, Adults)** (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun27)
- **MP20601 Introduction to Spiritual Health** (Pastoral Care) (6-weeks) (May 17-Jun27)

Summer II: Courses Begin July 5, 2023

- **HT10608 Pluralism and Religion in North America** (6-weeks) (July 5-Aug 15)
- **TH10610 Living the Heart of Progressive Christian Theology** (6-weeks) (July 5- Aug 15)
- **BF20602 Old Testament Hermeneutics** (6-weeks) (July 5- Aug 15)

- **MP30601 Congregational Ministry and the Future Church** (6-weeks) (July 5- Aug 15)
- **MP30604 Contemporary Homiletics** (6-weeks) (July 5- Aug15)

Fall I: Courses Begin August 21, 2023

- **TH10603 Variety of Belief within Christianity Today** (6-weeks) (Aug 21- Sept30)
- **MP10605 Spiritual Care of Self and Others** (6-weeks) (Aug 21 – Sept 30)
- **MP20603 Small Church Administration** (6-weeks) (Aug 21 – Sept 30)
- **TH30607 Contextual Theology** (6-weeks) (Aug21 – Sept 30)
- **HT21206 UCC History & Polity** (12-weeks) (Sept 6 – Dec 5)

Supervised Ministry Program

PATHWAYS offers a six-course series in Supervised Ministry. The participant finds a ministry site and supervisor. The supervisor oversees the participant’s internship as the participant takes the facilitated asynchronous online courses. There is a four-week introduction to supervised ministry followed by six 9-week courses. The titles and schedule of courses are listed below:

Supervised Ministry 2023-2024 Schedule

Intro to Supervised Ministry (June 3- June30, 2023)

Supervised Ministry I Entering a Place of Ministry (July 10 - Sept 17, 2023)

Supervised Ministry II The Transformative Context of Pastoral Care (Oct 2 – Dec 17, 2023)

Supervised Ministry III The Practice of Worship Leadership (Jan 8 - Mar 10, 2024)

Supervised Ministry IV Faith Formation in the Parish (April 8- June 9, 2024)

Supervised Ministry V Leadership in the Midst of Change (July 8 - Sept 15, 2024)

Supervised Ministry VI Leaving a Place of Ministry (Oct 1 - Dec 17, 2024)

ACPE-certified Community-Centered Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

PATHWAYS will offer a 24-week ACPE-certified CPE course in the Fall 2023.

Applications are due by mid-August for a November 2023 course. The course originates with the Sankofa CPE Center but you apply through PATHWAYS. From the website: “Learners can choose diverse learning settings including social justice/activism venues to meet their clinical hours. Digital ministry can also be a focus including tele-chaplaincy and online worship. This 24 week program.

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!)



Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

May 2nd
Anne M. Hancock
Gary F Lewis

May 5th
Kurt F. Shaffert

May 6th
Morris D. Pike

May 8th
Ken White

May 9th
David C. Norling

May 10th
Richard E. Ringenwald Sr
Andrew Nagy-Benson

May 13th
Duane Richard Brown
Lucia A. Jackson
Elliott Munn

May 15th
Joan N. O'Gorman

May 18th
David E. L. Brown
Marcia a. Dorey

May 19th
Melissa O'Brien

May 21st
Leigh G. McCaffrey
Gregory Briggs

May 24th
Elizabeth Gleich

May 27th
Jordan E. Dickinson

May 28th
Amanda Swoyer

May 29th
Kimberly McKerley
Mark R. Pitton
Terry M. Hanley

May 30th
David N. Vanderlinde-Abernathy

Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

May 1st
Laura Engelken

May 2nd
Mark Pitton

May 4th
Jacquelyn Lingelbach

May 6th
Steven Berry
Marjorie MacNeill

May 10th
Rona Kinsley

May 14th
Daniel Cooperrider

May 15th
Janice Chilek

May 16th
Paul Willard
Margaret Wright

May 22nd
Andrew Ponder Williams

May 23rd
Thomas Kinder
James Merriam

May 24th
Donald Ferrell

May 28th
Junius Peeler

May 31st
Mary Brownlow
Roger Daly
Casseniette Poulos



Farewell, Welcome and Blessings

Justice Witness Ministries

Your conference has a robust group of social justice-minded folks working together on several issues. Here's an update on our activities:

Justice "Road Show"

We're putting together a 90-minute workshop to share current activities and brainstorm ideas around racial, reproductive, and environmental justice, global mission, and gun safety. This workshop will involve videos, discussion, and hands-on activities to get folks excited about our UCC witness to justice in the world!

This "Road Show" will be piloted as a Workshop at Annual Meeting (April 28-29) and will be available to be presented at Association Meetings. Please contact Debbie Ingram at debbie@viavt.org if you would like to feature it as the program at your next Association gathering.

Racial Justice

Our VTCUCC Task Force is sponsoring two workshops in which church choirs and community choruses can learn spiritual music by black composers, to honor them and give them the recognition these composers deserve and have been unfairly denied for decades. The southern workshop is in Guilford on April 15 and the northern one is in Mallett's Bay on May 13. Contact the Conference office for more information.

Also, Vermont Interfaith Action is looking for congregations that would like to help in their towns advance racial justice initiatives around the Declaration of Inclusion, a statement your Selectboard can sign onto to make your town more hospitable and welcoming to all, and a

Community Engagement Guide with Local Police, to build a meaningful relationship with your police department around racial equity and true public safety for all. If you would like to know more, please contact Debbie at debbie@viavt.org.

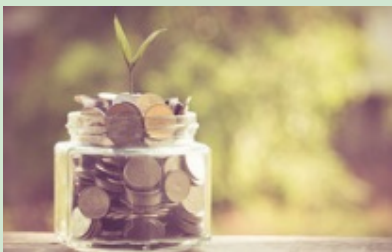
Gun safety

The issue of gun safety is important to the VTCUCC, but we need a point person to help us stay connected with the efforts of other groups. If you would like to be that person, please let us know by contacting Debbie at debbie@viavt.org.

Global mission

Did you know that Rev. Kim McKerley is our Conference's liaison to the national setting's Global Mission? She can help your church connect with visiting Mission Co-Workers to speak at an event, or help your church plan a pilgrimage to another country, and so much more! Contact kmbethanyucc@gmail.com to find out more.

Our JWM group meets regularly the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm for an hour. If you are interested in joining us, let Debbie know at debbie@viavt.org. As people of faith, let us "do justice" together!



Financial Seminars in West Dover!

If your church is anything like ours, you probably have a good number of folks over 55 which in some circles qualifies them as "seniors". After hearing some scary stories of friends who experienced a loss of their spouse and had little or no knowledge about their finances, the **Loose Knit Group (LKG)** of the West Dover Congregational Church came up with an idea to help our members be more prepared for such an event. Thus, Financial Seminars were established. One of our church members was a financial services professional who agreed to help us understand financial planning for the future. He presented his thoughts on how to be "Money Wise", including budgeting, why to plan financially, the first important steps and how to begin. In addition, he

discussed how to protect one's income, retirement and other topics. Scott then arranged for a local attorney to share his knowledge about wills and trusts. A second session with the attorney is scheduled for March. We hope that this information will prove to be helpful to our members.

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@vergenesucc.org.

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

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

The Waitsfield United Church of Christ in Waitsfield, Vermont, an Open and Affirming church, is seeking a MUSIC DIRECTOR AND ACCOMPANIST to join our church ministry. We are seeking one person to fill both roles or two people to fill the two roles

individually. This person should possess strong interpersonal skills, keeping lines of communication open between the choir and the pastor, and build and maintain relationships in the church.

[READ MORE 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

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

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:

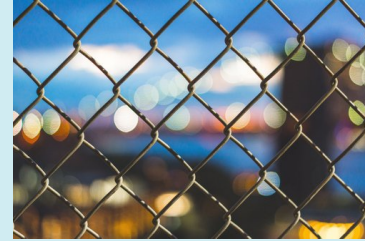
Music Director- North Pomfret Congregational
Church Musician- Tunbridge Church



SAVE THE DATE!

Not-Your-Average Boundaries Training

LeaderWise's online boundaries training workshop is lively and interactive, full of reflection and conversation. Attendees have given us feedback that our boundaries training was a great experience, AND caused them to re-evaluate some of their own practices.



The following Boundaries Training sessions are scheduled for 2023:

- May 22 & 23 from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm Central
- August 22 & 23 from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm Central
- October 11 & 12 from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm Central

[Read more HERE!](#)

UCC | NEWS

For the latest [news click here](#)

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

Just for fun!!!



Click here to update your contact information!!!

[How to Contact Vermont Conference Staff](#)

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak llybvtc@gmail.com
Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree sangreepucc@gmail.com
Office Administrator: Elise Foster vermontconference@gmail.com
Ministries Coordinator: Rev. Jackie Lingelbach vtconmincoor@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: Tanya Frazier vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com

DEADLINE for E-Kit News must be received by **Tuesday of each week.**
Please send any and all information to vermontconference@gmail.com.

Thank You for Your Support!

Our Churches Wider Mission Basic Support, Association Dues, and Friends of the Vermont Conference make this communication possible.

[Donate](#)

Connect with us



visit our website at <http://www.vtcucc.org/>
