



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

June 1st, 2023

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Message from the Conference

Hello Friends,

In the LGBTQ communities, "Happy Pride" is a standard greeting each June and it is our honor and joy to wish you all "Happy Pride" on behalf of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ. From our own, personal queerly Christian perspectives, Pride is about celebrating our divinely created selves and proclaiming that we are worthy of love and belonging. We celebrate all of the diverse ways God made us fabulous.

We all want every child to develop a healthy pride in themselves, a sure sense that fundamentally they are deserving of love and belonging. However, getting there is a struggle when you are taught that all humans are primarily sinners who are inherently unworthy of the love of their creator. Developing a healthy pride in yourself is all but impossible when you're taught that something inherent to who you are, your gender identity/sexuality, is abhorrent to God. You learn that your basic human desires and wants are not to be trusted. They are in fact to be suppressed. When you can't find love and belonging while expressing your divinely-created, rainbow-colored, authentic self you start contorting yourself into boxes and shapes to attempt to fit in somewhere, to find some sense of belonging wherever you might find it. And when you can't find it, you find something

to numb the hurt. This cannot be the abundant life Jesus comes to offer to us (*John 10:10.*)

When we wish each other "Happy Pride" this month, we are saying: "I see you as a beloved child of God, created in the divine image and I honor and celebrate your needs and wants as holy. When we wish each other "Happy Pride" we join with the God of Isaiah 55:1 who cries out: "Ho, all who thirst; come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Our God is calling all of us to the banquet. Worthiness never comes into it.

Therefore we call on the church to celebrate Pride boldly, as if lives depend upon it. Because they do! We invite the church to celebrate Pride by questioning and dismantling toxic theologies that vilify human want and need. Our God is not disgusted by our humanity, our God cherishes our humanity. And as we celebrate Pride boldly, we must do so as we do all things with an eye towards intersectional justice. Rev. Dr. Christine Smith writes "It is not just equal rights or 'our share' of the status quo that LGBT people want. Rather many of us are working hard for a transformed world for *all* who are oppressed and marginalized. It is time to really challenge our communities of faith to articulate and embody aspects of that transformation."

God delights in you.

Happy Pride,

Rev. Elisa Lucozzi, Guilford Community Church
Rev. D. Mark Blank, Second Congregational Church,
Bennington





[Latest News](#)

**OUR MISSION: TO HELP YOU STAY IN YOUR HOME —
 HAPPY, HEALTHY & CONNECTED!**



**SASH is *free* and available to
 Medicare-eligible people in our community.
 FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN UP, CONTACT:**

Sue Balfe 802-989-3134



This confirmation group from **United Community Church of St. Johnsbury**, Congregational Church of Lancaster, NH, and First Congregational of Littleton, NH, is offering a public theological witness during one of their recent gatherings!



FIRST ANNUAL JOINT WORSHIP

SUNDAY MAY 21, 2023

VERMONT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NORTHEAST ASSOCIATION

THANK YOU EVERYONE



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



PRIDE MONTH

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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**](#)

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



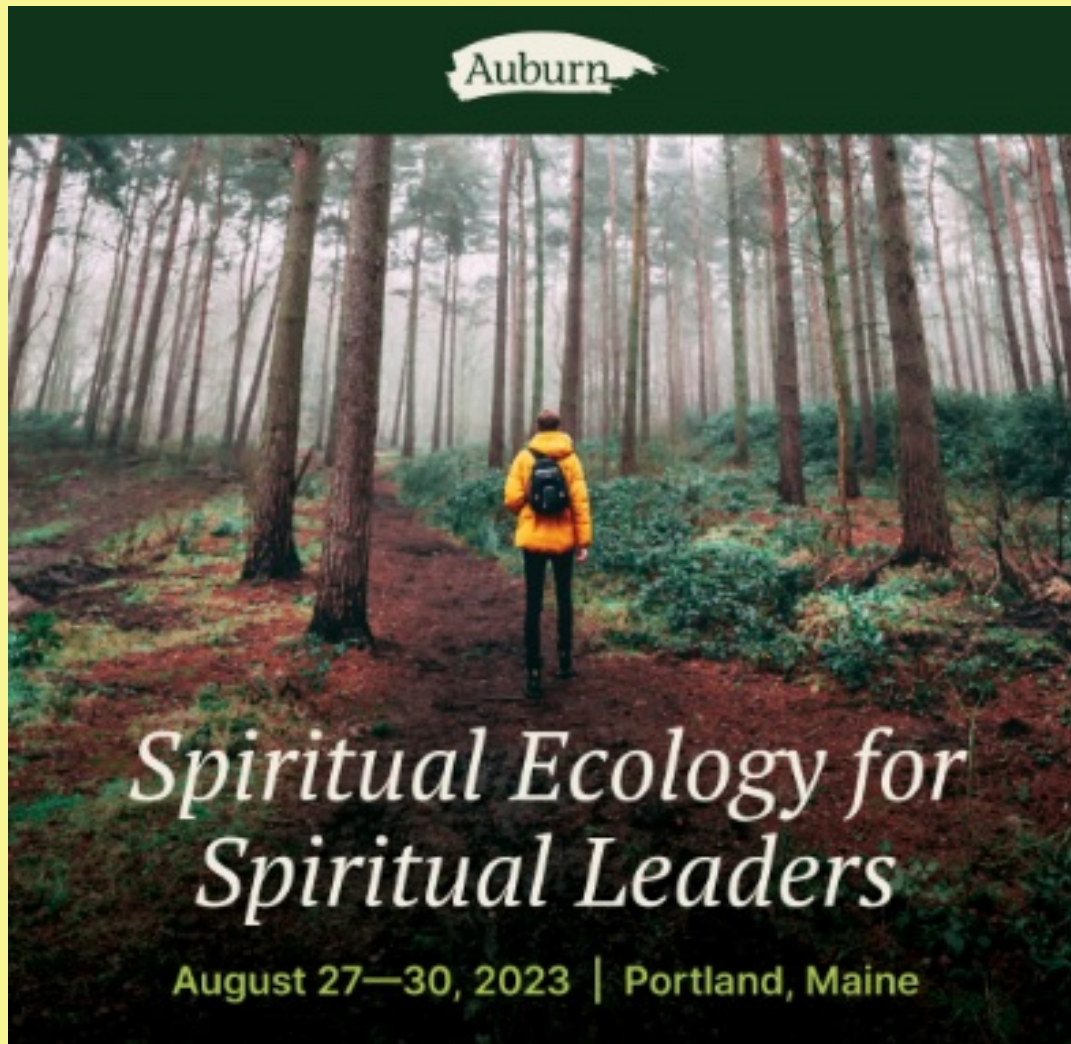

UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH
St. Johnsbury



Photos from the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference 2023 have been uploaded to the

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

VermontConference@gmail.com



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!](#)

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.

Please keep Sandy Soho, Co-Chair of the Racial Justice Task Force and her family in your prayers as they mourn the passing of her mother.

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!

June 1st
Kathy D. Duckworth

June 3rd
Jay D. Sprout

June 4th
John M. Grivetti
Margo Marrone

Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

June 1st
Jay Sprout

June 2nd
David Andrews

June 6th
Cornelius Carr
Scott Couper
Robert Moyer

June 5th
Carole C. Carlson

June 9th
John N. Bixby Jr

June 13th
Sally P. May

June 15th
Evelyn Coupe

June 17th
Harvey P. Bartlett

June 19th
James H. Gray

June 27th
Donald G. Vincent
Alyssa May

June 28th
Evelyn E. Lavelli

June 8th
Doug Carter

June 9th
Charlie Purinton

June 10th
Jane Wilson

June 13th
David Kraus
Ivy Merrill

June 14th
Susan Kittredge

June 15th
Katelyn Macrae
Dale Hindmarsh

June 16th
William Nelson
Linda Kulas

June 18th
David Brown
Joan O'Gorman

June 20th
Matthew von Behrens
David Norling

June 22nd
William Bartholomew
Ken White

June 25th
David Travers



Farewell, Welcome and Blessings
Pastoral Transitions since the 2022 Vermont Conference Annual Meeting
[For the most up to date information click here](#)

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

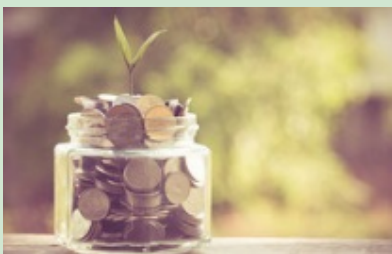
The issue of gun safety is important to the VTCUCC, but we need a point person to help us stay connected with the efforts of other groups. If you would like to be that person, please let us know by contacting Debbie at debbie@viavt.org.

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.

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

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>

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:
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 llbvtc@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/>