

The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ



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

April 4th, 2024

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Greetings, dear (extended) church family!

I'm writing to you in the immediate aftermath of Easter, and I'll be honest: my spirit is equal parts elated and exhausted. Having poked around the internet, I know that my wee church isn't the only one that has put wholehearted effort into walking the way of the cross with Jesus and celebrating the deep truth that death is not the end of Creation's story. My goodness, you are an inspiring and inspired lot! Our Conference is alive with faithful churches that are digging deep to meet the spiritual needs of our communities. Even in an age when the world is challenged by a cultural shift towards cynicism, and beset by violence and a scarcity mentality, the Church is still gathering, singing, praying, celebrating, reflecting on the Gospel, calling leaders to accountability, and bearing witness to Love Incarnate, whom we call Jesus Christ. Yes, its hard to know how to navigate in this shifting landscape, and sometimes our spirits flag, but the healing power of communion, connection, and resurrection is undeniable.

I love the Church – I hope that's completely evident – but I want to be clear with you: I am under no illusion that "the way we've always done it" will be our only way of thriving. My love of the Church and my discernment that the path forward may involve new ways of understanding our role in the world are what have led me to say "Yes" when Paul Sangree approached me about

heading up the ministry development program we're now calling "Ministry 21," a program designed to help equip lay, licensed, and ordained leaders for 21st century ministry. The Church still has an essential message to share with the world, but I believe that thriving in this age will require a blend of embracing tradition and welcoming newness in our ways of faithfully telling the old, old story. (Our program begins in earnest in September 2024, starting with Worship Leadership and Preaching course taught by Rev. Andy Nagy-Benson; might you want to join us?)

I'll share more in depth about Ministry 21 at Annual Meeting and beyond, but for the moment, here's what I want to say: I know that God is still God, that Love is still a force for healing in a world so desperately in need of it, and that we in the Vermont Conference have far more capacity to serve God's world than we can even imagine. As a Narrative Lectionary preacher, I've been steeped in the Gospel according to Mark since Christmas, so that's where my head is right now. I love that Mark's Jesus doesn't sit still; he is always on the move towards newness. It's somewhat strange to preach Mark's version of the story on Easter morning, as it's the only one in which Jesus himself doesn't make an appearance. Where is Jesus? Well, as the "young man" in white (an angel?) tells the three women, "he is going ahead of you to Galilee."

Going ahead of you to Galilee: our Jesus is on the move, just a step or two out of the frame, and inviting us to follow. It's a real honor to be on the road to Galilee with you!

Happy Easter! In resurrection faith,

Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno

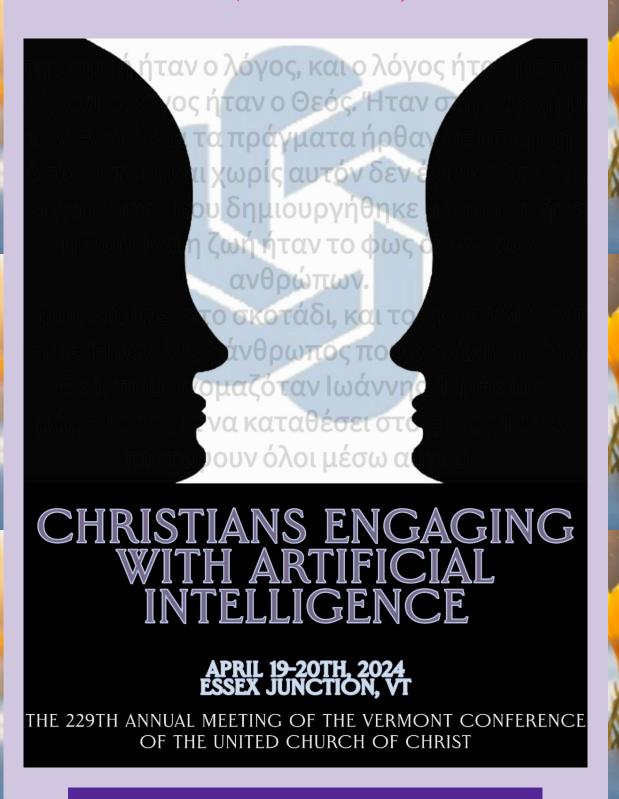
Latest News

ANNUAL MEETING 2024 Registration ends



TODAY!!!

(If you have any issues, would like to go and cannot afford it, etc., email Elise <u>HERE</u>)



REGISTER NOW!!!

We have added two new workshops! Read about them below! If you have already registered and would like to

change your workshop registration, email Elise **HERE!**

We are still looking to fill the positions of Parliamentarian for our Annual Meeting, as well as help with our youth events! If you have any interest in these, or others, or would like to know more, just click the volunteer form below!

All slides, videos, media, info for the program, etc. are due by <u>APRIL 1ST, 2024</u> per the Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

Exhibitor Form

Itinerary (DRAFT)

Hotel Information

Volunteer Form

New Workshop!!!

emerging churches with rev. terry hanley

no more moping -- it's raining bushels of joy! (sharing faith now)

we are not closing. we are changing. scared? let's find the excitement and get going. God is longing for us to connect with people who don't "go to church." let's talk in this workshop about sharing, preaching, and enjoying a progressive, vibrant, abundant Christliving spirituality that feeds our longings and

New Workshop!!!!

Global Ministries

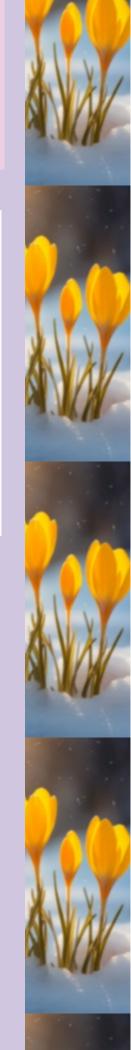
Fivori Kidane serves as the People-to-People Coordinator at Global Ministries since Feb 2023. Holding a BA in Religion and Sociology from TCU (2019), she interned at Perichoresis postgraduation, aiding migrant, and refugee communities under the Evangelical Church of Greece. Fiyori's present focus, via the People-to-People office, is fostering stronger connections between the global Church and local

the fountain.
...it might even help us
pay the bills and "keep
our church open!"

communities, continuing her commitment to meaningful engagement.



Would you like to present at the *new* and *improved* Peacemakers Breakfast this year? Email Elise HERE (and stay tuned for more information)!!!!







This year when you make a donation or pledge to donate to Friends of the Conference, you get the free gift of a tote bag, tee shirt, or both (respectively). These have been ordered in very limited quantities, so we have made them available for preorder! We will

reserve your gift as soon as you pledge!!!

MAKE YOUR PLEDGE HERE!!!

GAME ON!!



We are having a Church Vs. Church competition to conclude at Annual Meeting!!!

Church World Service provided so much help to us in our time of need during the flooding last year, it is our honor to be able to help fill their currently empty period pack warehouse by challenging our churches to bring more period packs than any other church to our Annual Meeting!! CWS will take it from there. The least we can do is try to help them as much as they helped us.

There are two ways to successfully do this-

You can make your own using the supplies and instructions listed

HERE!!!

You can order kits HERE!!!

Every church who participates in this will be

eligible for a \$250 UCC matching grant!!! Read more about that HERE!!!

How many period packs is your church bringing?!?Click here to pledge!

CONGRATULATIONS!

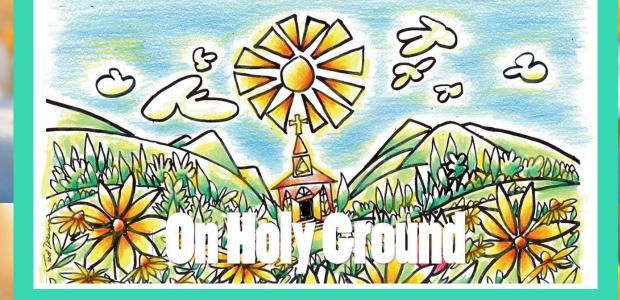


Rev. Kurt Shaffert and Katie would like to announce the birth of their son, John-Louis Schaal Walsh!!!





viewing in the sanctuary before the lecture beginning at 4pm. Following the event there will be an opportunity to meet and greet Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson during the reception in the Fellowship Hall. Sign up at no charge: tinyurl.com/antiracismlecture Follow Karen on Facebook: @Karen Georgia A. **Thompson** SPRING RUMMAGE SALE AT THE DORSET CHURCH The fabulous shopping day you have been waiting for is on Saturday, April 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Remember outside sales begin at 8:30 a.m.) at the Dorset Church! This year all outside merchandise such as children's clothing & accessories, linens, sports gear, tools, garden equipment, small appliances, books, nature table and other interesting treasures will go on sale outside at 8:30 a.m. There will be no EARLY-BIRD SHOPPING! However, sale items inside the church will go on sale at 9:00 a.m. The bag sale will take place from 12:00 Noon to 1:00 PM The rummage sale is always packed with useful and interesting items at reasonable prices. There will be women's separates, Ladies' Boutique, men's clothing, jewelry and accessories, footwear, attic treasures, miscellaneous house wares, and small appliances. Christian Education members will be selling coffee, donuts, our famous egg sandwiches and lunch hot dogs, soup, etc. . Donations of clean, serviceable spring and summer clothing (children's clothing is always appreciated), jewelry, purses, linens, kitchen and household items, houseplants and books will be accepted at the Dorset Church on Monday, April 22, Tuesday, April 23 and Wednesday, April 24th We do not accept large furniture items, TV's or computers. The church is located at 143 Church Street, off Route 30 in Dorset. If you have any questions, please call 802-867-2260. For the shopping experience you will remember come to the Rummage Sale on April 27th.



Dear Friend:

God calls us into community. God desires for us a big, inclusive, expansive, welcoming community. One where "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome." Our General Minister & President Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson calls this a "big tent" community. God wants our congregations and our whole Christian movement to be a "big tent" where all can be genuinely welcomed.

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports congregations and initiatives that help us live into the United Church of Christ's "big tent" vision. Funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Your conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of our movement.

Through this offering, we further our commitment to being a multi-racial/multi-cultural church that is accessible to all.

Please join with people across the UCC in promoting the Strengthen the Church Offering on May 19, 2024. You can find materials to promote this year's Strengthen the Church Offering in your congregation at UCC Resources.

Download Now

Thank you again for your support of this campaign.



Family and the SG Family Weekend conferences are open to all - singles with or without children, couples with or without children - all ages are invited and included! There is programming for everyone. Your time on Star Island can be as busy as you would like it to be or it can be completely unscheduled. The SG1 Youth conference runs separately with its own staff and is open to 9th graders through graduating seniors. SG2 has an integrated youth program.

The Star Gathering Conference 2024 dates are:
STAR GATHERING 1 FAMILY: JULY 28 - AUGUST 4
STAR GATHERING 1 YOUTH: JULY 28 - AUGUST 4
STAR GATHERING 2 FAMILY & YOUTH: AUGUST 4 - 11
STAR GATHERING FAMILY WEEKEND: AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 2

READ MORE HERE!

Ministry21: Equipping 21st Century Leaders for Ministry in a Changing World A partnership of the Vermont and New Hampshire Conferences of the United Church of Christ



If you've attended Conference events lately, you'll have noticed that many of our churches are lively and joyful regardless of the size of the congregation. We have so much spirit, joy, and courage to offer the

communities in which we serve! We are actively engaged in the ministry Jesus did, feeding bodies and souls, working for justice and safety for marginalized peoples, resisting the powers of war and divisive hatreds, and worshiping faithfully.

To support the needs of these amazing churches for skilled leadership, our Conference is joining with our UCC neighbors in New Hampshire to develop Ministry21 — a partnership designed to help equip lay leaders for service in the Church through a three-year program of courses. Ministry21 will launch in September of 2024, bringing students together one Saturday per month to develop their skills and knowledge in preaching and worship leadership, the practical aspects of leading congregations, and pastoral tasks of caring for parishioners and engaging in ministries in the community. This program is particularly designed for licensed clergy and those potentially seeking licensure, as well as lay leaders who wish go deeper in their support of their local congregation.

One of the very life-giving opportunities for the local church is to take note of the gifts that are evident within the church family and encourage their development. If you are clergy or a lay-leader who has noticed the gifts of someone in your worshiping community, and you suspect they are being called to deeper learning and service within the church, please encourage them to contact Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, the Vermont Conference Dean of Ministry21. Susie can be reached by text or phone at 802-579-8356, or via

email: Ministry21.vtconferenceucc@gmail.com



Register HERE!!!

Greetings NEAUCE Community, We want YOU To Find Rest For Your Soul!

Join us in "Keeping Sabbath Sacred" this May at NEAUCE 2024 on the beautiful Pilgrim Pines Campus in Swanzey NH.

Registration is open for the **53rd Annual NEAUCE Conference**. Gather with your colleagues for amazing worship, a variety of specialty workshops, networking, rich discussions, creative play, and relaxing opportunities.

Our Keynote, Rev. Matt Carriker will focus on **Sabbath Practices** that will



guide us into long-term rhythms of rest amidst the busy, demanding schedules of our lives and ministries. In "Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives," Wayne Muller says, "Without rest, we respond from a survival mode, where everything we meet assumes a terrifying prominence... a period of rest is not simply a human psychological convenience; it is a spiritual and biological necessity."

We have largely forgotten the Sabbath as a church. Jesus models a way of Sabbath as a refuge- setting aside a sanctuary in time to "disconnect from the frenzy of consumption and accomplishment and consecrate our day as an offering for healing all beings... the world aches for the generosity of a well-rested people." (Muller) Moving away from the legalistic, dreary Sabbath, Jesus invites us to reclaim the Sabbath not simply for self-care, but for the good of the church and the world. Come, explore together how this practice can offer nourishment, delight, savoring, and blessing.

Also joining us is **Guest Speaker Debbie Gline Allen**, **SNEUCC Minister of Faith Formation**. She will invite us all to explore the implications and implementations for Christian practices of hospitality that can lead to transformational congregational ministry fully grounded in a culture of welcome and acceptance. As faith formation leaders accommodate post-pandemic shifts and changes, this intentional perspective may be just what your church needs to enliven an intergenerational focus.

We are so excited to gather in person once again and meet new faces or reconnect with beloved colleagues from years in this ministry. Being a part of this three-day retreat is always magical, memorable, and transforming in so many ways.

Come, Rest, and Reclaim Sabbath in ways that are just right for you!

Kristin Putney NEAUCE Chair

Director of Faith Formation, Youth and Families Seekonk Congregational Church, UCC Seekonk, MA 02771 774-991-1555

Online Boundary Training Classes 2024

For All Authorized Ministers – Licensed, Ordained & Retired

Boundary Awareness Training: Through the Lens of Clergy Wellness from the Southern New England Conference UCC

Good professional boundaries allow ministry and those who do it to thrive with health and wholeness. Through the lens of clergy wellness, authorized ministers will renew their understanding of and develop skills for maintaining boundaries in an ever-shifting ministry landscape.

Upcoming Trainings are online via Zoom:

June 5, 2024, 9:30am-2:30pm

September 16, 2024, 9:30am-2:30pm

November 12 & 13, 2024, 6:30PM-8:30pm (both sessions must be attended)

The cost for the training is: SNEUCC Clergy - \$65.00; all other Clergy - \$85.00.

If you have questions regarding the training please contact Deb Holmes at holmesd@sneucc.org or 508-244-4399.

Enkei Resolutions – online training Cost: \$60

- · April 10 and 11, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (PT)
- · September 4 and 5, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (PT)

https://enkei-resolutions.com/boundary-training-registration/

Leaderwise - Online via Zoom Cost: \$85 MAY 15 & MAY 16 (3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM CENTRAL)

https://www.leaderwise.org/workshops-programs/boundariestraining-may24

Convergence – self paced online course that can be taken at any time. Cost: \$199.

Certificate provided on completion – turn into the Conference office.

https://www.faithlead.org/p/boundarytraining-clergy

PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc - PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND MINISTERIAL SELF-CARE -Synthesizing Courses (Level 3) - MP30606 - 1.5 Credits \$350

The website link is: https://www.pathwaystheological.org/

The registration link for this course is:

https://www.pathwaystheological.org/index.php/programs/ministry-preparation-tagclasses/professional-boundaries-and-ministerial-self-care

Required Texts

- Lebacqz, Karen, and Drickill, Joseph. (2000). Ethics and Spiritual Care: A Guide for Pastors, Chaplains, and Spiritual Directors. Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-0-678-07156-2
- Gula, Richard M. (2010). Just Ministry: Professional Ethics for Pastoral Ministers. Paulist Press. ISBN: 978-0-80910463104

For <u>PATHWAYS THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, Inc.</u> Late Spring and Summer courses, go to the <u>schedule</u> to find out more and to sign up:

- Small Church Administration begins April 10, 2024
- Contemporary Homiletics begins April 10, 2024
- Living the Heart of Progressive Christian Theology begins April 10, 2024
- Ethics and a Life of Meaning begins May 1, 2024
- Stories of Christian Saints and Sinners begins May 8, 2024
- Preaching for Special Occasions begins May 8, 2024
- UCC History and Polity begins May 8, 2024
- Congregational Ministry and the Future Church begins May 15, 2024
- What about the Bible begins June 1, 2024
- Variety of Belief within Christianity Today begins June 19, 2024
- Introduction to Spiritual Health (Pastoral Care) begins June 19, 2024
- Practicing Our Faith in the Public Square begins June 26, 2024

• Pluralism and Religion in North America begins July 10, 2024

Isabel Wilkerson Pulitzer Prize-winning author



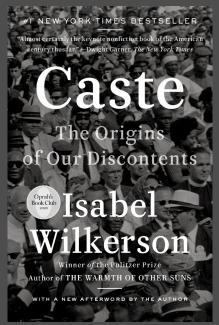
Author of Caste: The Origins of Our
Discontents
Virtual Presentation
April 28, 2024
6:00 pm
Hilton Hotel
60 Battery Street
Burlington, Vermont

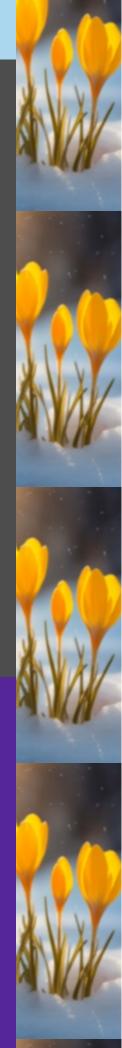
The Burlington Community is honored to welcome Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize-winning Author, to give a virtual presentation on her new book, Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents.

Please reserve an advance ticket for this event.

There will be a 30-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute Q&A.

\$45.00
Purchase Tickets







SPRING'24 Webinars

7PM-8:30PM EACH NIGHT

- 2/27/24. ONA 101 Starting the Open and Affirming Journey.
- 3/19/24. ONA 201- We're ONA, What's next?
- 4/23/24. ONA and the Bible.
- 5/28/24. Beyond The Binary Panel: The spectrum of gender.
- 6/25/24. Unpacking Attraction with the Bible — A Deep Dive into Bisexuality, Pansexuality, and Asexuality.
- 7/30/24. Navigating Ethical Non-Monogamy & the Bible: Open Relationships, Polyamory and More.

Register Here!

How to Become ONA

Greetings from Horton Center!

My name is Tivvi Pare and I am the Executive Director of Horton Center, the Outdoor Ministries site of the UCC in New Hampshire. Horton Center is an incredibly beautiful place where people of all ages come to rest, rejuvenate, reflect and relax! We have seven weeks of summer camping starting in late June and running through early

August. Campers entering 3rd grade through 2024 high school graduates come for a week at a time to explore their faith, be part of an inclusive

their faith, be part of an inclusive Christian community, try new things (rock climbing, archery, hiking, etc!), and make new friends. There are also opportunities for adults, families, and entire churches to come up to our mountaintop "thin" place!

I'd love the chance to connect with you and share more about the opportunities Horton Center holds for you, your youth, your churches and more!



Please complete this form and plan to attend an informational Zoom meeting so that I can meet you and provide more information about camp.
All are welcome at Horton Center!

Shalom,
Tivvi Pare (she/her)
Executive Director of Horton Center
tpare@nhcucc.org
603-545-9660
www.hortoncenter.org

LEARN MORE HERE!

PRAYER CONCERNS

We pray for all affected by the ongoing work and recovery from flooding and other natural disasters.

Prayers for all our first responders, volunteers who are working so hard during this difficult time.

For those grieving and harmed by violence and hate, including Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid, and Tahseen Ali Ahmad.

AROUND THE CONFERENCE

(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to <u>VermontConference@gmail.com</u>.

You may just see yourself or someone you love in the eKit or our Facebook page!)



Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

April 6th

Mark Blank
Robert Hamm

<u>Happy Ordination Anniversary</u> <u>to our Clergy!</u>



April 9th
Christine Boardman

April 12th
Cynthia Batten

April 13th Sandra Daly

April 15th Rona Kinsley

April 19th Rameen Zahed

April 21st Ezra Chapola

April 23rd Kim LaRose

April 27th Elizabeth Fisher April 9th
Caryne Eskridge

April 14th
Robin Junker-Boyce
Laurie S. Krooss

April 29th

Judith D. Waible



Farewell, Welcome and Blessings

Pastoral Transitions since the 2022 Vermont Conference Annual Meeting

<u>For the most up to date information click here</u>

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.



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

VTCUCC CLASSIFIEDS

Vermont Interfaith Power & Light Seeks Coordinator

Job Description-Coordinator Vermont Interfaith Power & Light

Vermont Interfaith Power & Light (VTIPL) is a non-profit organization that provides a religious response to climate change via education, advocacy and working with faith and spiritual

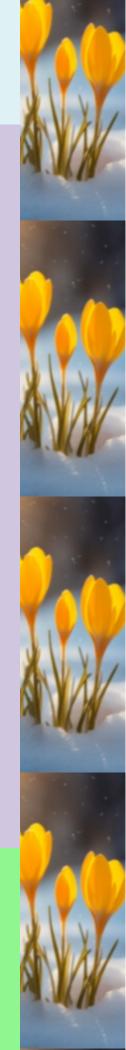
communities and their members to reduce their carbon emissions and energy costs.

Read More Here!



Music Director Wanted

The Danville Congregational Church in Danville, Vermont is seeking a part-time Organist/Music Director. Responsibilities include providing organ/piano music for the church's weekly worship service, providing for/or performing anthems and special music at all services, directing the church's choir, coordinating guest musicians, etc..



Salary and hours are negotiable.
For more information please contact Rev. Douglas Carter.
dcarter36@charter.net; 802-684-1151

The Pond Village Church in Brookfield is seeking a church musician willing to play for our 10am service on Sunday mornings.

Contact: Millie Reynolds, Pastor at (802) 431-3043 or minedgoof@comcast.net

The Bradford Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ is searching for a part time organist/pianist. All interested persons should contact Pastor Jeff Long-Middleton. A job description is available upon request.

Phone: 978-273-6399

Email: pastorjeffuccbradford@gmail.com



Read More 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.

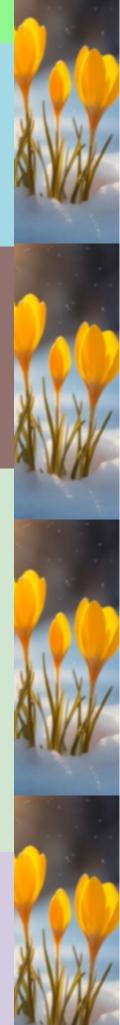
The pay rate is \$25 per hour, and the hours range from 8 to 15 hours per week depending upon applicant interest. We seek a person of faith with experience working with children, who will direct a program of stimulating and nourishing faith formation. If this sounds like the way you want to make a big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

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

https://www.vergennesucc.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.

VT CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Christian Education:

Administration & Finance:

Music & Other Lay Ministries:

Music Director- North Pomfret Congregational
Church Musician- Tunbridge Church



For the latest news click here

The Online Learning Platform of the United Church of Christ

How to Contact Vermont Conference Staff

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak llbvtc@gmail.com
Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangreesangreepucc@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 <u>vermontconference@gmail.com</u>.

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





Vermont Conference, UCC | 36 N Main St, Randolph, VT 05060

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