



# 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

February 1st, 2024

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Dear friends,

It is so good to report that Susie Webster-Toleno started on Jan. 1st as our Dean of our new program for training lay people in our Conference to be pastors and worship leaders of our smaller churches! We plan to start this September, 2024, using the basic model of the Pastoral Preparation Program but adding some things to it. Susie has brought many good ideas and enthusiasm to the work, and I know that some of you have had conversations with her about the future shape of the program already!

Lynn mentioned last week in Ekit about our partnership with the New Hampshire Conference around this program, and I wanted to share a bit more about that. New Hampshire like Vermont has many small rural churches, and many of our communities interact with each other regularly. (One of our Associations, the Grafton Orange Sullivan Association, is made up of churches from both Vermont and New Hampshire.) I and Susie have had a number of conversations with leaders from the New Hampshire Conference, and are proposing to our Vermont Board of Directors this Saturday that we do this program in partnership with the New Hampshire Conference.

The reasons for this are two-fold:

1. We will have more resources to work with and more potential programs to offer. New Hampshire has a gifted

grant writer on their Conference staff, and together, we believe we have the opportunity to get more grant funding for our combined program. We envision that we will not only be able to train lay people preparing to become pastors and worship leaders, but provide support for our Members in Discernment and already existing pastors as well.

2. We will have a larger base of students to draw from. The reason our former Vermont Academy of Spiritual Training (VAST) came to an end 15 years ago was a lack of students. Our Conference is now smaller than it was then. By combining the students from both Conferences, we will have a larger pool to draw from, which will be good both for the program and the students involved.

Let Susie or I know if you have any questions,

Hopefully,  
Paul

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## Latest News

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Thank you so much for your donations in 2023! The letters recording this were sent out last week. If you would like your letter emailed to you as well, please email Elise [HERE](#).

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Make a commitment this February  
to begin plans for a 2024 study of --

***Afro-Christian Convention:  
The Fifth Stream of the  
United Church of Christ***

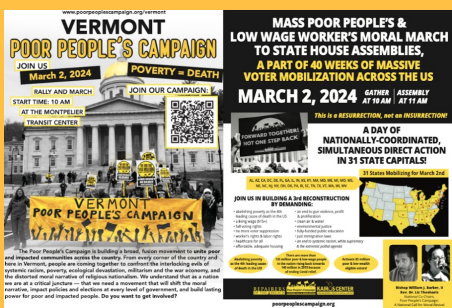
Use the free PDF Study Guide found on the Pilgrim Press website  
<https://www.thepilgrimpress.com/> to:

- **Discover** the origins of the Afro-Christian Convention in the 19th century,
- **Explore** the values that sustained Afro-Christian tradition throughout the 20th century, and
- **Celebrate** the legacy of Afro-Christians that widens and deepens our UCC commitments for ministry during the 21st century and beyond.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"To know the beliefs, movements, and events comprising [our] history is to begin to accept ownership and to be shaped by it. . . . In that process, insights are gained, perspectives brought into focus and visions renewed."*  
*The Shape of the United Church of Christ*, Louis H. Gunnemann, 1977.

***The United Church of Christ Historical Council***



Happy New Year, I hope you are doing well! My name is Ed Sunday-Winters. I co-chair the NEK hunger council, Today, I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Vermont chapter of the **Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival**. I am involved with growing and strengthening our VT

chapter of this national campaign, including working toward a major day of action, coming up on Saturday, March 2nd, at the statehouse. I help you will consider helping us lift up and center the voices of those in our community most impacted by poverty. Here is some more details:

The **Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival** is a nationwide coalition of organizations, people of faith, and diverse individuals directly impacted by poverty who are collectively calling on state and federal governments to address the interlocking injustices of racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation. Poverty is the 4th leading cause of death in this country, and there are 140 million poor and low-wealth people in the US (almost half the population) who are at, below, or just one crisis away from the "poverty line", while subsidies and policy preferences continue flowing to rich individuals and corporations. We believe you cannot address poverty without addressing the climate crisis, nor can we address systemic racism without addressing the war economy, and so on. It all goes hand in hand.

So we are building a diverse movement to develop the kind of power we need to make real change. Right now, we are building toward a major day of action (March 2nd) that will take place simultaneously at state houses across the country. The event is called the **Mass Poor People's and Low-wage Workers' State House Assemblies and**

To the Polls, and comes 1 week ahead of Super Tuesday, a few days before VT Town Meeting Day, and 35 weeks ahead of the 2024 general election. We are asking organizations, faith groups, unions, and service providers, around the state, to partner with us by supporting this event, and by helping us to mobilize people from your networks to the statehouse on March 2nd.

I hope your organization will consider partnering with us because of the bedrock commitment your work represents in our communities, and because of the deep connection we share in addressing the dignity and rights of the dispossessed, in order to address the health and wellbeing of all. Another key part of the PPC is giving the mic to the poor and dispossessed, and centering the lived experiences, shared by all of us, around poverty and precarity. We have the expertise to change the system, and we must lift from the bottom. If there were someone from your organization who might want to speak at our event in March, or ways that we can lift up the work you are doing, please let us know.

Here is a **partnering form** that spells out what we're asking, in terms of organizational support/partnering. And here's a **short 5 min video** explaining more. And attached are a couple of fliers also describing the event. March 2nd will include a short march to the statehouse (starting at the Montpelier transit center and ending at the statehouse), and the event will be held outside, weather permitting. There will be music, art, food, and speakers. Accessible porta potties onsite, and a warming location for gathering before, during, and after the event.

Let me know if you have any questions. With gratitude and appreciation for all that you do!

- Ed on behalf of the VTPPC

BRING YOUR VALENTINE TO MARDI GRAS

Swing  
North  
Big  
Band



7-9  
pm

MARDI GRAS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Admission by donation -

Proceeds to help fund the  
kitchen's indoor grill

United Community Church  
1325 Main St.  
St. Johnsbury, VT



## WEEKLY PRAYER

*from Global Ministries*

### Pray with Fiji February 4, 2024

The church is called to carry out Jesus' ministry of liberation and hope. Global Ministries partners with churches and ecumenical bodies seeking to heal communities through empowerment. In the Pacific region, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) in Fiji addresses many concerns in the communities they serve. [Read more.](#)



# Transformational and Compassion Resiliency: A Toolkit for Preventing Burnout in Work and Ministry

## Description

This class invites participants to recognize the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout and how it impacts their work and personal life. More importantly, this course offers effective self-care strategies for promoting compassion resiliency.

## Key Content Areas Will Include

- Understanding the Impacts of the Work we do: Cumulative Stress, Collective Trauma and Burnout
- Introducing The 4 Phases of Erosion
- Expanding our Personal Resiliency Portfolio
- Exploring Post Traumatic Growth
- What is Self-Care Resistance?
- Growing as A Resiliency Aware Agency

This training is being provided by The New England Disaster Chaplaincy Association and The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services. There is no cost to participate but we ask that you register before-hand.

Please share this with anyone who may be interested.

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/MgzstjrHUu>

Training Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5085664590>

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28 TH**  
**2:00PM – 3:00PM.**

Dear Vermont clergy and church leaders,  
I encourage you to take this class from NEDCA – the New England Disaster Chaplaincy Association. As we approach the 6-month mark after the July 2023 flooding, feelings of fatigue and burnout can manifest among both survivors and caregivers. This class is focused on identifying and providing self-care strategies.

One of the co-founders is Rev. Fred Meade a UCC minister who has done disaster response since he was a pastor in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. He serves on the UCC's Emotional and Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster team.

As your communities continue to recover from the recent floods and severe storms, please don't neglect our emotional and spiritual care,

either. If I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me – [pastor.greg.briggs@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.greg.briggs@gmail.com)

As a reminder, the "Light Our Way: A Guide for Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster" that was distributed at the Clergy Convocation discusses both long-term spiritual care and self-care for caregivers. If you didn't get a copy, please contact the conference office for a copy.

Greg Briggs

VT Conference Disaster Coordinator and E.S.C.T. member

## FROM EXODUS TO JESUS AND BEYOND

Progressive Christianity,  
Social Justice, and the Bible

AN ONLINE LENTEN SERIES

Ground yourself in this five-part series exploring the lessons and values of our faith tradition that can, sometimes surprisingly, inform our work to build a better world.

  
**JUSTICE**  
LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 20, 27, MARCH 5, 12, 19

4:00 - 6:00PM PST

[JUSTICELEADERSHIP.ORG/EVENTS](https://justiceleadership.org/events)

**From Exodus to Jesus and Beyond:**  
**A Lenten Series Workshop on Progressive Christianity, Social**  
**Justice, and the Bible**

There is an amazing and often hidden alternative understanding of what it means to be Christian. From Exodus to Jesus and beyond, the Bible offers an ancient, enduring, and surprisingly relevant story about people living in the light of the love of God. This five-part online workshop series will explore how the lessons and values of our faith can inform our work to build a better world.

Register and find more info [here](#).



This workshop meets online via Zoom on five Tuesdays during Lent at 4:00 - 6:00pm PST.

We ask that participants attend in person but recordings will be available for registrants in the event of illness or unavoidable conflict.

\$75 per person for all 5 workshops. Group discounts available for groups over 8 people.

This workshop is led by Rev. Rich Gamble who has hands-on experience in leading congregations and a variety of social justice campaigns.

*FACEBOOK*

POST: <https://www.facebook.com/JusticeLeadershipProgram/posts/681181504097818>

INSTAGRAM POST: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C2NyzrBykNU/?igsh=Mmp6aWhwN3BnZmh1>

*Installation of  
Rev. Amanda Swoyer*



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**EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO COME CELEBRATE  
THE COVENANT BETWEEN REV. SWOYER &  
THE WEST LEBANON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2023  
2:00 PM**

A RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW  
*(THERE WILL BE NO 10:00 AM SERVICE)*

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West Lebanon Congregational Church  
18 Maple Street, West Lebanon 03784  
603-298-8096

West Lebanon Congregational Church is pleased to announce that we'll be having the Installation of Rev. Amanda Swoyer on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm (There will be no Sunday morning Worship Service that day.). A reception will follow. ***An Installation highlights and celebrates the relationship between a local church, their newly called pastor and the larger church association.***

**The Installation will be in person and on Zoom. People on Zoom are welcome to join 30 minutes (1:30pm) before the start of the service.**

Topic: Installation of Rev. Amanda Swoyer  
Time: Feb 11, 2024 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84559295165?  
pwd=VG5abFdneEpiWW1iZ0J1RFIzR1RFUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84559295165?pwd=VG5abFdneEpiWW1iZ0J1RFIzR1RFUT09)



**BLACK  
HISTORY:  
UNsung HEROES  
OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE MOVEMENT**

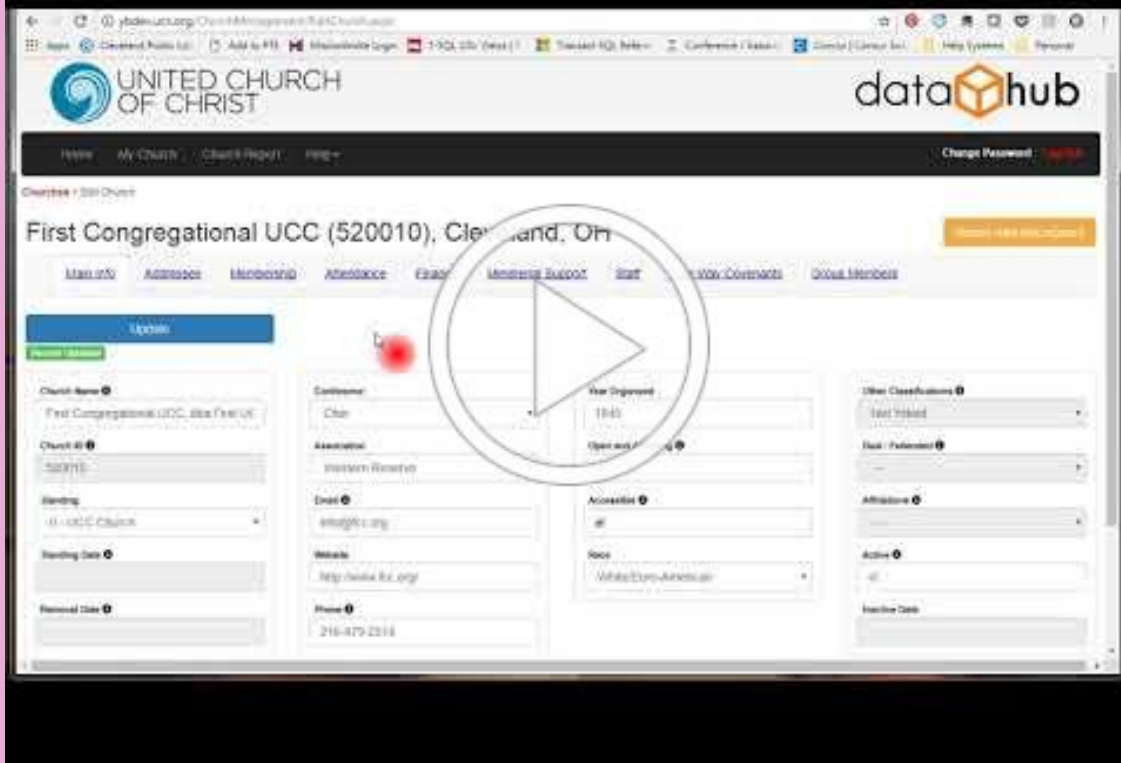
**FEBRUARY 14 | 1 PM ET**

**UCC Webinar—Black History: Unsung Heroes of the  
Environmental Justice Movement**

For Black History Month, the UCC will be celebrating past environmental justice leaders and their historic contributions to the movement. We will lift up and reflect upon the lives of champions for justice such as Dana Alston, Damu Smith, Hazel Johnson, and others. To fully appreciate their impact and legacy, we will hear from those in the movement who knew them. Featured speakers will include those who have been at the forefront of the movement: Robert Bullard, Vernice Miller-Travis, and Peggy Shepard. Even if you cannot make the webinar at its scheduled time on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm ET, still sign-up, and we will send you a link to a recording of it.

**[Register now!](#)**

**[It's Yearbook Time!!!](#)**



Hi Friends!

'Tis the season for the national yearbook! I hope you are as excited as I am!!

[You can sign in here!](#)

[You can find instructions here!](#)

[You can find the paper form here!](#)

[And you can always email Elise here!](#)



# HOW TO HELP YOUR CHURCH GROW!

Each church will be asked to bring a team of a Pastor and at least 3 lay people. Each of the above topics will be overviewed, and then each church will choose the two areas they wish to address first. Churches will be clustered in cohorts around these topics for a year of training and coaching. In my experience, the year of coaching helps a church to put the principles of a seminar into practice.

The Hope Fund is funding special scholarships for Vermont Conference churches to participate. We ask for \$100 for your church to come to the seminar (lunch included for all your participants) and \$250 for a year of coaching for your church.

Saturday, March 9th from 9:30-3 at the  
Federated Church of  
Williston or online via Zoom.

There is room for three more churches to sign up for the Paul Nickerson event at the reduced Hope Fund rate! The first three churches that sign up will receive it!

**REGISTER HERE!**

REGISTRATION IS OPEN  
AT HORTON CENTER!  
It's time to sign up for a week  
(or more) at Horton Center!

REGISTRATION IS  
OPEN!



Sign up for camp at [www.HortonCenter.org](http://www.HortonCenter.org) TODAY!



Take a look at our summer schedule with camps for all ages [HERE](#).

Questions? Give Tivvi a call!

Contact Tivvi (Horton Center Executive Director)

email: [tpare@nhcucc.org](mailto:tpare@nhcucc.org), phone: 603-545-9660 Visit [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org) for more

information.

Join our [mailing list](#) to be included in our seasonal newsletter. Fall 2023 Edition is [HERE](#).

Follow us on Instagram ([@hortoncenter](#)) and Facebook ([Horton Center Official FB Site](#))



**PATHWAYS**  
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Affordable, Accessible, Awesome

Are you busy with work, family, caring for others, standing up for justice but need a moment each day to deepen your faith and explore ways to hold on in a broken, fearful, too often violent world? We invite you to check out our online courses where community grows, questions arise, peace comes, and faith deepens. Courses offerings can be found on the website [here](#). Now is a good time to look ahead to the 2024 course schedule and contact **PATHWAYS** with any questions you may have. Whether you would like to take one course or a whole program, PATHWAYS welcomes you. Heidi Hulme writes, "I have never been one to do things "traditionally," and PATHWAYS allowed me the opportunity to continue to prepare my alternative path to ordination, while allowing me to serve a church, and be a wife and mother. ... I am grateful for this experience and education; it has blossomed my ministry, and changed my life."

## 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.

Reverend Doctor Harry R. Flad died peacefully on Saturday evening, December 30th, 2023 . Please keep all of Rev. Dr. Flad's family, friends, and colleagues in your prayers.

Reverend Richard White died peacefully, on January 2nd, 2024. Please keep all of Rev. White's family, friends, and colleagues in your prayers.

Joan O'Gorman broke her shoulder in a fall and would appreciate your prayers. While she would love cards, please do not call her at this time.

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## AROUND THE CONFERENCE

(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to [VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto:VermontConference@gmail.com) .

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

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### Happy Birthday to our Clergy!

February 6th  
Sherry Baer  
James Macintyre III

February 7th  
John C Weatherhogg

February 13th  
Margaret Wickham Tooker

February 20th  
Harold E. Masback III  
Gary O'Gorman

February 26th  
Robin Junker-Boyce

### Happy Ordination Anniversary to our Clergy!

February 3rd  
Janet Langdon

February 4th  
Richard E. Ringenwald Sr

February 8th  
Cynthia Jane Batten

February 13th  
Shawn Edward Bracebridge

February 15th  
John N. Bixby Jr



[February 23rd](#)

Jenei Rossigg

[February 24th](#)

Lucia A. Jackson

[February 27th](#)

Rameen Zahed

## Farewell, Welcome and Blessings

Pastoral Transitions since the 2022 Vermont Conference Annual Meeting

[For the most up to date information click here](#)

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

**HOPE** FUND FOR THE **FUTURE**

**BUILDING DISCIPLES**  
Children, Youth and Adults

**WELCOMING THE COMMUNITY**  
by seeking justice and the common good

**NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS**  
with people who don't go to church

Love God Love Your Neighbor

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

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

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

Rev. Paul Sangree (Associate Minister, Vermont Conference),

Rev. Dan Haugh (Stowe Community Church),

Rev. Mary Hoadley (Brownington Congregational Church),



Rev. Jessica Moore (First Congregational, St. Albans),  
Rev. Lava Mueller (Love Church, Randolph),  
Rev. Paul Eyer (Williston Federated Church),  
Rev. Caryne Eskridge (Weybridge Congregational Church )

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

**SASH**<sup>®</sup> *a caring partnership*  
**SUPPORT AND SERVICES AT HOME**

**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**



# WE'RE HIRING!

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

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 10 hours/week, part-time Youth Activities Coordinator who is ready to build on a solid foundation and bring new life to the growing ministries of SCC. Duties include developing inspiring and engaging service projects, social outings, bible studies for students 6th grades and up...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 [jobs@stowecommunitychurch.org](mailto:jobs@stowecommunitychurch.org). The position is available for the right person to start immediately.



JUMP - the Joint Urban Ministry Project - an interfaith and community organization with support from many individuals, businesses, foundations and more than 20 faith communities - manages a direct services Drop-In Center (in donated space) at First Congregational Church UCC of Burlington, VT.

[Read Job Descriptions Here!](#)

## Client Services & Outreach/ Development Managers



*Based in Burlington, JUMP has been providing direct assistance to people in need in Vermont for 35 years. If you are a team player who cares about people and community, apply to work with JUMP!*

### **MANAGER OF CLIENT SERVICES:**

Manage JUMP Drop-In Center; meet with clients; allocate direct assistance; maintain records; supervise volunteers; collaborate with JUMP staff/leader team.

**MANAGER OF OUTREACH & DEVELOPMENT:** Coordinate JUMP communications, outreach, social media; JUMP Drop-In Center involvement, collaborate with JUMP staff/leader team.

Apply with letter and resume: JUMP, P.O. Box 1657, Burlington, VT 05402.

Positions @20 hours/week. Details: [jumpvt.org](http://jumpvt.org)

## 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](mailto:dcarter36@charter.net) ; 802-684-1151

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

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

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



**Middle School Ministries Coordinator:**  
**First Congregational Church UCC of Burlington Vermont** is looking for a team

player ready to work with youth in a great location – Burlington, Vermont! The person hired for this new part-time position will work with our great team to oversee programs and service-learning

opportunities, facilitating the spiritual development of youth (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade). You'll work with middle school youth on Sunday mornings at FirstChurchBTV and with our collaborative youth program (youth in grades 6 thru 12 from both the College Street Church and FirstChurchBTV) one evening per week and periodically on weekends. Learn more about this opportunity here: <https://bit.ly/middleschoolcoordinator> Approx. 6 hours per week - \$20/hour.

## **VT CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Christian Education:**

**Administration & Finance:**

**Music & Other Lay Ministries:**

**Music Director- North Pomfret Congregational**  
**Church Musician- Tunbridge Church**

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**UCC | NEWS**

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](mailto:llbvtc@gmail.com)  
Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree [sangreepucc@gmail.com](mailto:sangreepucc@gmail.com)  
Office Administrator: Elise Foster [vermontconference@gmail.com](mailto:vermontconference@gmail.com)  
Ministries Coordinator: Rev. Jackie Lingelbach [vtconmincoor@gmail.com](mailto:vtconmincoor@gmail.com)  
Bookkeeper: Tanya Frazier [vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com](mailto:vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com)

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

Thank You for Your Support!

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

[Donate](#)

Connect with us



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

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

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