



# Vermont Conference, UCC Electronic Keeping in Touch

EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS FOR CHRIST'S  
MINISTRY AND MISSION TODAY AND TOMORROW

E-Kit

Feb 22, 2017

## Quick Links

[Our Website](#)

[Our Calendar](#)

[Directory](#)

[Staff](#)

[Summer Camp](#)

[Vt School of Ministry](#)

[Annual Meeting Page](#)

[Newsletter Archive](#)

## In This Issue

[UCC News & Updates](#)

[Food for Thought](#)

Donate Online

## Vermont Conference News

Pam Lucas will be worshipping in Post Mills and attending the search committee meeting.

Jim Thomas will be worshipping at Sherburne UCC, Killington VT for Beverly Anderson's last service.

*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



## [UCC News and Updates](#)

*Little boxes on the hillside,  
Little boxes made of ticky tacky,  
Little boxes on the hillside,  
Little boxes all the same.*

This chorus came to mind this week as I pondered the Transfiguration story. Written in the 60's by Malvina Reynolds, the song was a protest against those who were fleeing to suburbia. A protest against the quest for conformity in the midst of the diversity bursting forth in that decade and in 2017 diversity is being forced back into boxes - easily defined and categorized.

*Little tents on the mountaintop  
One for each of you  
Moses, Elijah and Jesus.  
Little tents all the same.*

Just days before Jesus had asked the disciples "Who do you say I am?" They named them, "Elijah, Jeremiah...one of the prophets?" "But who do YOU say I am?" Peter proclaimed with his usual bravado, "YOU are the Messiah. The Son of the Living God!" "Good for you" says Jesus. Then, Jesus goes on to tell the disciples what is in store for the Messiah. The Messiah must die before new life can burst forth. Peter doesn't want to hear anything about the dismal news.

So just six days later, on this mountaintop, before their amazed eyes, there stood Jesus, Moses and Elijah. So what does Peter want to do? He wants to put them in



[Click image to read about Be The Church](#)

[Heavy load of business awaits General Synod 2017 delegates](#)

[New York congregation, a Sanctuary Church, stands with those detained in ICE raids](#)

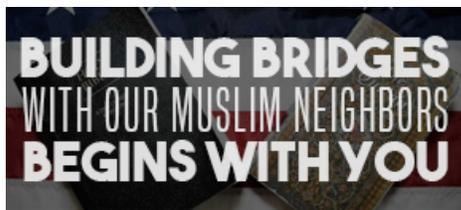
[Virginia church members protest ICE raid outside church shelter](#)

[Glitter Ashes, Masquerade ball to mark the beginning of Lent in Massachusetts LGBTQ community](#)

[UCC minister in Denver providing pastoral care for mother, activist in sanctuary](#)

[Commentary: Living into Our Legacy](#)

[More UCC news](#)



[Click image for more information.](#)



### **Food for Thought**

**Focus Scripture  
Matthew 5:38-48**

**Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina, 19th century**

**"If you look for perfection, you'll never be content."**

**G.K. Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, 20th century**

three little boxes - right there on the mountaintop. Capture the glory in little tents all the same! From now on, follow the directions and you too can replicate the glory.

Oh, I am so grateful that something happened to Peter on the way to building a church. Something happened when Peter and the others were praying in an Upper Room in Jerusalem. Struck by the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaimed Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. "Repent, be baptized, be forgiven, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit - you, your children and all who are afar off."

There were no little boxes that day. There were no tents. There was no conformity. No one size fits all. There was the glorious bursting forth of diversity. Little groups of believers gathered for prayer, teaching, fellowship and sharing of possessions and story. We know from the Epistles and church history that there was this great emergence of passion, energy and many different forms of church as new occasions taught new duties and each culture and generation made the faith their own.

Only later did folks try to squeeze their church into a box and church has been bursting out of the box ever since. Look at the United Church of Christ!

But at 60 some years old, we're not feeling so green and young, restless and reckless. Yet, there is enormous need for the church. To not just 'do' church but to 'be' the church - standing with Jesus against the boxes.

Something in us needs to die in order for new life to burst forth. Maybe that is enough to ponder this Lenten season.

Pam Lucas

### **Annual Meeting Preacher & Keynoter**

Our Preacher and Keynoter is the Rev. Emily C. Heath. Emily is a United Church of Christ minister currently serving as Senior Pastor of

**"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."**

**Mahatma Gandhi, 20th century**

**"There are many causes I would die for. There is not a single cause I would kill for."**

**and**

**"It seems to be a difficult concept for most of us that peace is a skill that can be learned. We know war can be learned, but we seem to think that one becomes a peacemaker by a mere change of heart."**

**Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, 19th century**

**"Oh! that gentleness! how far more potent is it than force!"**

**Brennan Manning, 21st century**  
**"Our identity rests in God's relentless tenderness for us revealed in Jesus Christ."**

**Arundhati Roy, Public Power in the Age of Empire, 21st century**

**"Colorful demonstrations and weekend marches are vital but alone are not powerful enough to stop wars. Wars will be stopped only when soldiers refuse to fight, when workers refuse to load weapons onto ships and aircraft, when people boycott the economic outposts of Empire that are strung across the globe."**

**Simone Weil, 20th century**

**"The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say, 'What are you going through?'"**  
**Chinese proverb**

**"He who seeks vengeance must dig two graves: one for his enemy and one for himself."**

**St. John of the Cross, 16th century**

**"In the evening, we will be judged on love."**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th century**

the Congregational Church in Exeter, New Hampshire, and a writer and public theologian.



Rev. Heath's first book, *Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity*, was published by Pilgrim Press in the spring of 2016.

**Registration is now open!**

**[Click here for more information and to register](#)**

The 222nd Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, UCC will take place April 28-29, 2017 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. **You can book your room now by calling Lake Morey Resort at 800-423-1211 and asking for the "Vermont Conference Annual Meeting" group rate.**

Everyone -- delegates, authorized ministers, church members -- is welcome and invited to the 222nd Annual Meeting!

**[Click here for more information and to register](#)**

## **It's UCC Yearbook Time!**

The United Church of Christ's annual Yearbook is the central reference point for the UCC for information about churches, ministers and other data the UCC uses to better understand the health of our denomination and identify trends as we all plan for the future.

The UCC Yearbook relies upon all UCC churches, associations and conferences to submit their statistical information at the beginning of each year so the reference data is as accurate as possible. Using the UCC Data Hub, churches may upload their information directly for the Yearbook.

You can access the 2017 Yearbook Instructions and video tutorials at: [www.ucc.org/research\\_yearbook](http://www.ucc.org/research_yearbook)

The deadline for uploading church information to the UCC Data Hub is March 8, 2017.

If you are the designated Yearbook person and have questions, please contact the Vermont Conference Ministries Coordinator Jesse Davis at [davisj@vtcucc.org](mailto:davisj@vtcucc.org) or 802-728-4999.

**"Religion is to do right. It is to love, it is to serve, it is to think, it is to be humble."**

**Winston Churchill, 20th century**

**"They say that nobody is perfect. Then they tell you practice makes perfect. I wish they'd make up their minds."**

~~~~~

"An Invitation from the Environmental Committee of the DOM."



To pastors and members of the Vermont UCC,

Make Lent an opportunity to enter into a spiritual discipline of fasting from carbon and reflecting on our stewardship of the Earth.

Over the past few years, thousands of people the world over have welcomed a day-by-day opportunity to fast from carbon as their Lenten discipline. Initiated by the UCC, people of every Christian perspective - and people who are not Christians - have benefited from this opportunity to become more conscious and conscientious in their daily lives.

If you're a pastor - SIGN UP... and: email this invitation to the people in your parish, tell them you'll be participating, AND

- consider convening a weekly Lenten discussion focusing on the Carbon Fast. MAKE THIS YOUR CHURCH'S LENTEN PROGRAM!
- And if you're part of a local clergy association, email it to your colleagues, too.

If you'd like to [SIGN UP](#) as an individual, click below or paste the link in your

Thank you!



**TOWARD COMMON GROUND**

46th ANNUAL NEAUCE CONFERENCE

Greetings!

It is with great excitement and anticipation that we announce this year's Annual NEAUCE Conference: Toward Common Ground: Living Faithfully in a Diverse World Community.

Permeating the conference will be two important and timely issues: racial justice and interfaith matters. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to hear from leaders in these fields, and to receive guidance in and support for how they might teach and work with young people accordingly.

To that end, three Keynote Speakers will be presenting: Dr. Heidi Hadsell, President of Hartford Seminary, will provide the "interfaith" keynote. The Rev. Da Vita (Day) McCallister, one of the authors of the UCC's White Privilege curriculum and Connecticut Conference staff person, will provide the "racial justice" keynote. Dr. Courtney Goto, Assistant Professor of Religious Education at Boston University School of Theology, will provide the "faith formation" keynote.

[Continue here for more information](#)

## **Vermont Congregation named UCC Church of the Month for**

**"Embracing Diversity"**

February 14, 2017

Written by Connie Larkman

One of the oldest churches in Vermont, named the UCC Church of the Month for "embracing

browser:

[www.macucc.org/carbonfast](http://www.macucc.org/carbonfast)

Here's how it works:

Beginning Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity, scripture passage, and/or prayer for the day.

Make this your congregation's Lenten activity:

Organize an opportunity within your congregation for members to meet each week during Lent to discuss their own experience with this fast, AND specifically to discuss the weekly themes which also invite participants to engage in suggested actions.

Please forward this invitation - to others in your congregation and to other pastors.

Let's make protecting God's creation by reducing our carbon footprint as fundamental a spiritual discipline as prayer.

AN INITIATIVE OF: NEREM - New England Regional Environmental Ministries

~~~~~

## Two Great Opportunities!

Our conference is in need of a new **Open and Affirming Consultant** and a **Disaster Response Coordinator**. Training and support available for each position. If you wish to learn more, please contact me. Lynn bujnaki@vtcucc.org, 802-728-4999.

~~~~~

The United Congregational Church of Orford UCC is pleased to announce hosting a pilot dental clinic on three different months in the coming months beginning in March. Please read and take note.

### Free Oral Health Screening For Adults

Upper Valley Smiles for Life provides preventative oral health screening, education, and fluoride varnish to adults. Services are provided by a licensed dental

diversity," won over the contest judges by proposing that a church in rural Vermont has to work pretty hard to embrace the kinds of diversity others take for granted. But the Guilford Community Church United Church of Christ, the spiritual home of 100-120 congregants of all ages, abilities and ethnic backgrounds has a lot going for it to back up that proposition.

"Diversity has become a source of fascination, joy and awareness in all of us," said the Rev. Lise Sparrow, Guilford Community Church's pastor. "This in turn, has created a context in which we can examine our differences and develop the skills necessary for conflict transformation both among ourselves and, hopefully, as we go forward into the larger world."

[Read the full article here...](#)

### Margaret Campbell's How to Have Difficult Conversations

17 Learn to practice what is good;  
seek justice,  
alleviate oppression,  
defend orphans in court,  
and plead the widow's case.

18 "Please come,  
and let's reason together," implores the Lord.  
Isaiah 1:17-18 ISV

Step one in having these conversations involves semantics. Let's start by giving this essay a different title:

How to have meaningful conversations  
How to talk with someone on a subject on which you each have deeply felt and differing opinions  
Do these titles better convey our meaning?

Step one involves acknowledging that it's not the conversation that is difficult, rather it's the topic. Whether the topic is racism, sexism, or gun violence, opinions are strong and emotions run high.

[Read more here...](#)



Peacemakers' Pulpit  
Bethany Church, Randolph  
Theresa Lever

hygienist. This pilot program is available to all Upper Valley adults and will provide services at up to four Upper Valley locations between March and August 2017.

United Congregational Church, Orford, NH  
March 2, 2017  
May 11, 2017  
July 20, 2017

For more information, schedule updates, and to make an appointment, please contact Sally Edson at 603-448-1558 or [sedson@gcsc.org](mailto:sedson@gcsc.org)

Sponsored by the Public Health Council of the Upper Valley,  
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Community Health,  
and Dr. Christopher D. Baker, DMD.

~~~~~

~~~~~

## The Conference Resource Center

The following VHS tapes are available at no cost.

[Email me](#) if you are interested in them and I will mail them out to you.  
Here is this week's selection:

Conversations with God

Discovering Everyday Spirituality -Story - Place - Activity - Ritual

Abraham

Jeremiah

Jacob

Great Figures of The Bible -  
Cain & Abel  
Adam and Eve

The Bible Genesis  
The Bible Passion  
Story of Moses  
Jesus of Nazareth

Pioneers of the Spirit - Augustine of Hippo  
- Teresa of Avila - Julian of Norwich

. . . the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

St. John, Revelation 22.2, circa 100 CE

When the white eagle of the North is flying overhead  
The browns, reds, and golds of Autumn lie in gutter, dead.  
Remember then that Summer birds with wings of fire flying  
Came to witness Spring's new hope, born of leaves decaying.  
Just as new life will come from death, love will come at leisure -  
Love of love, love of life, and giving without measure  
Gives in return a wondrous yearn of a promise almost seen;  
Lives hand in hand and together will stand on the threshold of a dream.

*Graeme Edge, "Threshold of a Dream," Moody Blues, 1969*

We the people of the Way of yeshua trying,  
sighing, dying  
For two thousand years like John's leaves,  
prophet's Edge,  
Blown down by cold winds of new Herods  
Over years become soil of composted new community,  
Now newly numinous, rising from dying.

God taps the sap of the tree of life,  
Boils away twenty centuries like steam  
Extracts alchemical gold,  
Heals nations

Through new people of the Way of yeshua,  
Dying and rising, partnering in love tree's conspiracies,  
Organizing globe's green up day.

*Michael Caldwell, North Walcott, Vermont*

Stepping Forward Together: Advancing Equity and Cultural Competency to Improve Population Health  
by Vermont Care Partners

Join us for this timely and essential two day discussion about health care equity and the promotion of population health for Vermonters. The two days will be filled with national, regional and local experts sharing their knowledge and experiences about health care,



These are just a few of the large amount here at the Conference. If you are in the area and want to stop in and look to see what we have on VHS, please do.

-----

## Resources from WorshipWell

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at:  
[worshipwell.church](http://worshipwell.church)



diversity, culture and how to best support the health of Vermonters.

### More Information and Registration...

#### ***The BTS Center: "Course Corrections" Nine-week, online class***

Starting at the end of February, The BTS Center will run a nine-week, online course called "Course Corrections" that delves into the apostle Paul's Damascus Road experience and its implications for leadership and growth in changing religious and spiritual landscapes.

National United Church of Christ Musicians Association (UCCMA)  
 2017 Summer Conference  
 July 9 - 12, 2017  
Registration is Open

Yale University Online Classes Now Open to the Public  
 Learners may audit these courses Free of Charge

Take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity. Yale is offering three free courses centering on the work of eco-theologian Thomas Berry and the application of his work and writing to understanding the earth, God's gift of creation - the cosmos, and our relationship and responsibility.

This is an excellent opportunity for small groups in churches to participate in the courses, and then gather weekly to discuss with one another... And then launch a green team in their church.

Learn more in the course flyer or by visiting the registration website.



**Thank You for Reading**  
**An Open and Affirming Conference**  
[For the E-Kit Archive](#)

