



Vermont Conference, UCC Electronic Keeping in Touch

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

E-Kit

Feb 8, 2017

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Vermont Conference News

Lynn Bujnak will be
preaching in Randolph at
the Bethany Church

Pam Lucas will be preaching
in Vergennes

Jim Thomas will be
preaching in Charlotte

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



[UCC News and Updates](#)



Dear VTCUCC:

I have just pulled an old friend off my bookshelf. I do this from time to time. Perhaps you do as well? My choice of companionship depends on what is going on in me and/or in the world around me. When circumstances are such that simply enduring seems in order, my hand turns to novels. If things are seeming especially challenging, I might go to Hogwarts for awhile.

But there are those other times when I am searching for courage in the struggle for justice and peace. It is then my hand finds a different kind of book. Earlier in this month, we have celebrated the life and ministry of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In a collection, I ran across these words that were a part of his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964: "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant." I need the companionship of his words and the example of his life.

If great leaders like MLK inspire me to action, there is yet another type of book that both challenges and reassures my soul. The old friend I retrieved from the bookshelf is, *An Interrupted Life: the Diaries of ETTY HILLESUM 1941-43*. This book is the remarkable story of a



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

General Synod planners seeking "Be the Church" discussions

Two Chicago churches assisting refugees experience very different outcomes

Best practices to amplify the UCC's voice for progressive Christianity

Living out radical hospitality with a welcome for newly nationalized U.S. citizens

Commentary: The Impact of the Obama Presidency

Optional dining events available during General Synod 2017

[More UCC news](#)



[Click image for more information.](#)



Food for Thought

**Focus Scripture
Matthew 5:13-20**

Anne Lamott, Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts

young woman, a Dutch Jew, as she embraces and grows in her spiritual life during a time of great danger. In fact, she died in Auschwitz in November of 1943. This is a good book for me to live with right now.

One of the things she resolves to do is to spend a half hour each day in silent meditation. She writes:

But it's not that simple, that sort of quiet hour. It has to be learnt. A lot of unimportant bits and pieces have to be swept out first. Even a small head can be piled high with distractions ... So let this be the aim of meditation: to turn one's inner most being into a vast empty plain, with none of that treacherous undergrowth to impede the view. So that something of 'God' can enter you, and something of 'love' too.

This is how I keep my balance, finding the rhythm of my life between the holy action to which I am called and the holy silence that nurtures my soul. I have discovered that I cannot do one without the other. As our nation and world change, as we face the alarming rise of actions of hatred and fear, we need to find the balance so we can do the work we have been given to do.

Who are your companions these days?

In peace and hope,
Lynn

**PASTORING CHALLENGING PARISHIONERS:
A Model and a Guide**

Who?

All Pastors who, in Christ, love their parishioners.
All Pastors who, even in Christ, have a hard time loving challenging parishioners.

Which parishioners?

Dear ones who challenge us: pastorally, relationally, in committee meetings, in relationships with other parishioners and with staff.

Why a workshop on this topic?

Sometimes the challenges are so great that we wish we had a model of understanding and a method for

on Faith, 21st century

"The thing about light is that it really isn't yours; it's what you gather and shine back. And it gets more power from reflectiveness; if you sit still and take it in, it fills your cup, and then you can give it off yourself."
and

"Lighthouses don't go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining."

Voltaire, 18th century

"Those who are occupied in the restoration of health to others, by the joint exertion of skill and humanity, are above all the great of the earth. They even partake of divinity, since to preserve and renew is almost as noble as to create."

Marianne Williamson, 21st century (quoted by Nelson Mandela)

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure....We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in all of us. And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

engaging in pastorally effective ways.

How will this workshop help?

This workshop is designed to give some conceptual models for understanding challenging folks from a mental and relational health perspective. Through small group discussion and role play, participants will have opportunities to discuss these models and to practice effective ways to engage.

February 22, 2017

10:00am - 3:00pm

Bethany Church - Randolph, Vermont

\$15.00 - Lunch included

[Click Here to Register](#)

Our Facilitator

The Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola is the Pastor of the First Congregational/Puffer UM Church in Morrisville. She holds a PhD. in psychology, and before her ordination eight years ago, was a clinical psychologist in hospital and private practice for more than 20 years. Her specialty areas included sequelae of severe childhood abuse in teens and adults, eating disorders, and women's mental health. She has also given papers and workshops on working with challenging clients in the therapy relationship, women and substance abuse; and is published in the areas of the sequelae of incest, and rethinking labels for severe personality disorders.

Meet the Musician for Annual Meeting

We are excited to announce that Paul Vasile will be the featured musician for the 222nd Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, UCC!



Paul is "Committed to expressing and exploring faith in new ways, Paul composes sacred music that expands and enriches the church's language of praise and prayer. His music is represented in *Glory to God*, the new hymnal of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and he has written extensively for St. Lydia's and Not So Churchy, emergent congregations in Brooklyn. He is also a contributor to the forthcoming Convergence Music Project, an online musical resource for Emerging and Progressive Churches."

**Elisabeth Kubler-Ross,
20th century**

"People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within."

Hafiz, 14th century

**"Let tenderness pour from your eyes, the way sun gazes warmly on earth."
and**

"I wish I could show you, when you are lonely or in darkness, the astonishing Light of your own Being."

John O'Donohue, 21st century

"May the light of your soul guide you. May the light of your soul bless the work you do with the secret love and warmth of your heart....May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light and renewal to those who work with you and to those who see and receive your work."

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***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

Read more about Paul at [www.paulvasile.com](http://www.paulvasile.com)

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.**

**Registration for the Annual Meeting will open in mid-February.** Everyone-delegates, authorized ministers, church members-is welcome and invited to the 222nd Annual Meeting!

**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.

The Vermont Conference asks that every church in our Conference participate in the UCC Yearbook information submission effort. Each church should designate one person to be responsible for this effort and notify Jesse Davis at the Vermont Conference so he can be a resource to them. Jesse will be in contact with these designated people as the Yearbook process moves forward. The UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) has made resources available to take you step by step through the data upload process in the UCC Data Hub.

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.

landscapes.

A discounted early bird registration rate of \$375 (as opposed to \$425) is available through February 13th. [Click Here](#) for more information.

National United Church of Christ Musicians Association (UCCMA)

2017 Summer Conference  
July 9 - 12, 2017  
[Registration is Open](#)

Japanese American Remembrance Sunday  
February 19, 2017  
[Liturgical Resources](#)

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](#).

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.

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](#)

## GUN FIGHT - The Battle Over The Right To Bear Arms In America

### Sunday School Coordinator

Williston Federated Church seeks a Sunday School Coordinator.

Plan and supervise Sunday School for children aged 3 years through Senior High. Recruit, train, and support teachers and other volunteers in Sunday School program. The Sunday School Coordinator will serve as a consistent and welcoming presence on Sunday mornings. This individual will coordinate and oversee our Christian Education Program and assist with Sunday School teaching when needed.

For a job description and to apply, Email [Office@steeple.org](mailto:Office@steeple.org) at the Williston Federated Church.

### Resources from WorshipWell

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at:



[worshipwell.church](http://worshipwell.church)

### 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:

The Bible Collection  
Samson and Delilah 2 tapes  
Joseph 2 tapes

Written by Adam Winkler & originally published in 2011 (revised in 2013) by WW Norton, New York

Review by Margaret Campbell

When people on opposite sides of a contentious issue-gun violence, for example-begin a discourse aimed toward finding common ground, and ultimately resolution, the one item most needed by both parties is enough good will to have a civil discourse.

That such a discussion requires much more than sound bites, tweets, slogans and acerbic comments is a given. Further, a discussion cannot be predicated on an either-or, for-or-against foundation. Public opinion polling aside, this topic-gun violence-like so many topics which today perplex us, has many nuanced facets which require that those who seek to discuss it possess not only good will but information and knowledge as well.

Nothing makes the complexity of dealing with gun violence more obvious than reading Mr. Winkler's extensive work: GUN FIGHT. The book begins and ends in 2008 with the Supreme Court decision: District of Columbia v. Heller. In between these scenes at the Supreme Court, the author takes the reader all the way back to the invention of guns themselves around 1200. The history which impacts our current thinking and feeling about guns includes the English Bill of Rights, the American Revolution, the writing of the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the crime sprees of the roaring twenties, the "wild west" and the influence of the frontier, the impact on individuals of America's participation in wars, particularly the American Civil War, WW II, and the Vietnam war, as well as the Civil Rights Movement and several presidential elections. To do Mr. Winkler's book justice one reader will need many days; a group studying the book will require several readers, each working on sections of the book and then reporting to the whole group.

David 2 tapes

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Gandhi 2 tapes

The Father of Ice Cream
The Mother of Soda Bread
The Spirit of Assisi
Brother Sun, Sister Moon
Thomas Merton
Taizé



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.

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[More...](#)

### 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 (bujnakl@vtcucc.org, 802-728-4999).



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

