



# Vermont Conference, UCC Electronic Keeping in Touch

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

E-Kit

March 15, 2017

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## Vermont Conference News

Lynn Bujnak will be attending the Great Hartford Church and attending the Windsor Orange Listening Session.

Pam Lucas will be worshipping in Jericho and attending the service of installation for Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas

Jim Thomas will be worshipping at his home church at the Rochester Federated Church

## Greetings!

'Is the Lord among us or not?' You'd think by this time the people of Israel would have learned something about this 'Lord'. They were no longer in Egypt. They were no longer slaves. They had crossed on dry land through a sea. When they were thirsty and found the water bitter - God told Moses to toss in a piece of wood and the water turned sweet. When they were hungry - manna appeared - mind you, just enough for that day's needs - but it kept on appearing. When they were hungry - quails rained down from heaven.

And now they were thirsty again.

So, had they learned to trust that the Lord would provide - had they learned to wait and watch to see how God would provide what they needed this time? Had they learned to wait and listen to see if the Lord needed them to DO something to meet their own needs? Maybe this time they were supposed to dig down to open a spring back up?

No they hadn't! Somehow the people of Israel had decided that they were now entitled to God's instantaneous response to their every need - and if it didn't happen then it had to be someone's fault - so it must be Moses' fault!

Frederick Buechner, in his book 'Beyond Words', wrote: *'When the Israelites asked the question why God elected them, of all people, they arrived at two main answers. One answer was that God elected them for special privilege...'*



[UCC News and Updates](#)

- \* UCC Board selects new chair and vice-chair, sets Synod resolutions
- \* Task force identifies future priorities for UCC focus
- \* Missouri church to share ideas to build stronger relationships across generations
- \* Welcoming immigrants 'the Christian thing to do' in Santa Fe
- \* UCC advocates join Native Americans in D.C. march against Dakota Access Pipeline
- \* Rev. Traci Blackmon nominated to continue leading UCC's justice work as executive minister
- \* Commentary: In Search of a Moral Health Care System
- \* Reflecting on Japanese internment, Honolulu UCC pledges solidarity with Muslim, Hispanic communities



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Be The Church

[More UCC news](#)

'Is the Lord among us or not?' Why is it that when things go well for us we assume the trappings of privilege? We assume that we deserve it. God is on our side. And when things don't go well for us we assume that it must be someone else's fault getting in the way of what God wants to do for us. So we grumble and complain about 'those folks'. 'They' become our enemy - out to get what is rightly ours. Even though our privilege is causing others to have no privilege.

Buechner continues: *'The other answer was that God elected them for terrible responsibility. When they asked the question what the responsibility was that God had saddled them with, they arrived at two main answers. One answer was that their responsibility was to impose upon the world the knowledge of the One True God...the other answer was that their responsibility was to suffer and die for the world.'*

Jesus was born into a world much like ours. Jesus gave up his privileges in order to be born into a world of oppression and power and might - haves and have nots - the ins and the outs. The people of Israel longed for salvation. They yearned for a mighty savior who would lead armies to overcome oppression, power and might - WITH oppression, power and might! 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

This Jesus could get thirsty - just like us. Stopping at a well on his journey from Judea to Galilee, he asks a Samaritan woman for a drink. He set aside his privilege as a man and a Jew to share a conversation with one considered an 'other' on two counts. She expressed her longing for the Messiah who could break down the divisions that were keeping Jews and Samaritans apart...and Jesus said, 'I who speak to you am he.' The woman left her water jar and ran to the city proclaiming... 'The Lord IS among us - come and see.' And they did. And they believed.

And yet Jesus suffered and died for God's dream that ultimately love is the only way that oppression and power and might will be overcome. When we believe this truth we are



Click image for more information.



## Food for Thought

**Focus Scripture**  
**John 3:1-17**

### **N.T. Wright, 21st century**

"The work of salvation, in its full sense, is (1) about whole human beings, not merely souls; (2) about the present, not simply the future; and (3) about what God does through us, not merely what God does in and for us."

### **William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying, 20th century**

"People to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too."

### **William Nicholson, Shadowlands:**

A Play

"Self-sufficiency is the enemy of salvation. If you are self-sufficient, you have no need of God. If you have no need of God, you do not seek [God]. If you do not seek [God], you will not find [God]."

### **Brennan Manning, The Ragamuffin Gospel, 21st century**

"One of the the loveliest lines I have ever read comes from Brother Roger, the Prior of the Protestant monks of Taize, France: 'Assured of your

freed from the fear that the only way we can hold on to privilege is make sure that others don't have it. We are freed from the fear that 'those others' are out to get us. We are freed from grumbling and complaining.

And we are freed to cross boundaries and build relationships. We are freed to trust that God is up to something good. We are freed to watch for what God will do this time! And we are freed to listen for God's voice calling us to take up our shovels to dig wells of living water and wash God's world free of hate and fear and violence. We, as people of the most privileged nation in the world - as followers of Jesus the Christ - do have a terrible responsibility. Yes, the Lord is among us.

Pam Lucas

### **Embracing Stewardship: How to put Stewardship at the HEART of your Congregation's LIFE**



The 2017 Conference offered by the Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Council Friday - Saturday March 24-25 at the Regency Hotel & Conference Center  
242 Adams Place Boxborough, MA

The event features keynoters Grace Duddy Pomroy and Charles (Chick) Lane, authors of the new book Embracing Stewardship. Many of you will know Chick from his earlier book Ask, Thank, Tell, one of the best Stewardship books ever written.

This event will feature multiple keynotes, two workshop opportunities, excellent food and great company. Everyone who attends will receive a copy of Embracing Stewardship at no extra cost!

salvation by the unique grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is still difficult for me to read these words without tears filling my eyes. It is wonderful."

**Don DeLillo, 20th century**

"What we are reluctant to touch often seems the very fabric of our salvation."

**Anna White, Mended: Thoughts on Life, Love, and Leaps of Faith, 21st century**

"I grew up believing Christians didn't just believe in Jesus. To be saved, people had to look and speak a certain way. They followed a long list of notes to ensure their holiness. They fit the mold. They followed the rules."

**Christine de Pizan, DitiÈ de Jehanne d'Arc**

"[A] person whose head is bowed and whose eyes are heavy cannot look at the light."

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**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.**

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Greetings to our UCC friends and colleagues.

This event provides an opportunity for training and team building with your Stewardship folks. Attendees at past events have raved about how attending this conference has fundamentally changed the way they think about, and live into Stewardship.

This a real opportunity to make an investment in your Stewardship efforts - providing education and inspiration for those who help your congregation generate the resources needed to do the mission and ministry you are called to do.

[Here is a link to the registration site](#)

**Call to 222nd Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, United Church of Christ, will take place on April 28-29 at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, Vermont. Our theme this year is "Gifts from the Past ... for the Future." We will use the image of a "hope chest" to stir our curiosity and creativity. A number of exciting workshops are planned covering a wide variety of topics. Please check the Annual Meeting webpage for a list of workshops, descriptions and leaders.



**Registration is now open!**

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

We are excited to welcome the Rev. Emily Heath as our keynote speaker and preacher. Emily will help us engage with our theme by using insights from her book, *Glorify* to address the heart of progressive Christianity and discipleship. Here is a summary statement from the book's description. Sometimes practical, sometimes spiritual and always glorifying the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which Heath asserts is the true way to change the world.

We are also pleased to welcome Paul Vasile as our musician. Paul Vasile is a freelance church musician, consultant, and composer based in New York City. A multitalented musician and dynamic worship leader, he is committed to

There are several big marches taking place in DC in the coming weeks and months. Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ is happy to offer free sleeping space and basic accommodations for any UCC groups coming to DC for the following events:

- March for Science. Sat, Apr. 22
- People's Climate March. Sat, Apr. 29
- Immigrants March. Sat, May 6
- Equality March for Unity and Pride, Sun, June 11.

Westmoreland UCC is located at 1 Westmoreland Circle in Bethesda, MD-immediately across the street from DC at the intersection of Massachusetts and Western Avenues.

The accommodations we can offer are not luxurious-basically floor space for sleeping bags and pillows. But the cost may be right-free.

Our Social Justice & Action Board has taken on this effort to welcome marchers because we feel that opening our building is a good way to live out the Christian value of hospitality. We feel that providing space encourages people to add their voices to the grand choir of democracy. And we feel that these four marches-focusing on science, immigration, the climate, and LGBTQ rights-are very much in keeping with our UCC values

building, renewing, and re-shaping faith communities through music and liturgy.

I look forward to seeing you at Lake Morey!

Rev. Lynn Bujnak  
Vermont Conference Minister

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

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

### **This Friday - be a part of the Vermont Conference DOING JUSTICE!**

The Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council (VLIAC) and Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) invite you to the Vermont State House on Friday, March 17 to advocate for justice for low-income and working Vermonters.

The Vermont Conference has been a part of both organizations since their inception-VLIAC in 1972 and VIA in 2004. VLIAC collaborates with Vermont's community action agencies and other organizations working to meet Vermonters' basic needs. VLIAC's legislative advocate works in the State House to press for laws and policies that help people overcome the burden of poverty.

Vermont Interfaith Action engages congregations to identify local justice issues and carry out campaigns to accomplish goals.

This often involves working with local governments. VIA also tackles statewide issues-such as their current Raise the Wage campaign (\$15 minimum wage) they're taking to the State House on Friday.

Has there been any time in recent history when our work for justice was this crucial? Is God calling you to get involved? Here's a chance to join with other UCCers to answer the call! We're meeting in the Card Room between 9:00 and 9:20 a.m.. to begin our morning of activities. Use this link to get all the details, or contact Department of Mission member Theresa Lever at [thelevers@comcast.net](mailto:thelevers@comcast.net).

Thank you!  
Betty and Theresa

and the values of our local congregation.

So, if you know of any UCC groups headed to DC for these marches, tell them to contact us. (And honestly, we're not limiting this to UCC'ers. If you know other groups who need lodging, please connect them with us.)

Peace, Tim Tutt

Rev. Timothy B. Tutt  
Senior Minister | Westmoreland  
Congregational United Church  
of Christ  
1 Westmoreland Circle |  
Bethesda, MD 20816 | 301-229-  
7766

"Be kind to unkind people. They need it the most."

### **FREE ORGAN!**

The Second Congregational Church is Londonderry has a Rodgers 'windless' (electric) organ that needs a home. All you have to do is come and pick it up! Also included are the two organ speakers. This is a double console organ that has served us well, standard peddles, etc. Questions and or interest can be directed to [Rev. Laurie Krooss](#), or 802-824-6453.

### **WANTED:**

Glass communion cups. Second Congregational Church in Londonderry is in search of the small glass communion cups that your church may not use anymore....(Yes, of course we can buy them but first we thought that there may be some collecting dust in a church that has switched to plastic and we thought we would take them off your hands!) If you have some that you'd like to find a home for please call [Rev.](#)

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

[More Information and Registration...](#)

### **Is your church interested in a global connection?**

It could begin with a trip to El Salvador!

Bethany UCC in Montpelier has had a relationship of friendship and solidarity with a community in El Salvador for nearly 26 years! We're planning a week-long trip this summer and invite YOU to consider joining us. The first meeting of interested persons will be Saturday, March 11 at 10:00 a.m. at Bethany Church, 115 Main St., Montpelier. Here are answers to frequently asked initial questions about our trips:

1. This is not a work trip. The time in our community is spent doing things friends do together: talking about our daily lives and what is important to us, singing and dancing, eating meals and taking walks, celebrating the successes in the scholarship and sewing projects we sponsor. We also take day trips from our guest house in San Salvador, for education, recreation, and inspiration.
2. We will probably go sometime in August, when the country will be celebrating the late Archbishop Oscar Romero's 100th birthday.
3. The basic cost is \$100/day plus airfare. This includes everything but tips and personal items.
4. You don't have to speak Spanish. We are never without translators.

[Laurie Krooss](#), or 802-824-6453.  
Thank you!

## Resources from WorshipWell

Be sure to check  
out the worship  
resources  
available at:

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



5. Regarding safety, we are in the very good hands of our savvy Salvadoran hosts 24 hours/day.

Our trips have always been fantastic! Please consider joining us this time.

[Contact Theresa Lever](#) if you have any questions about the meeting or the trip.

## Our sympathy goes out to Mary Lee-Clark and family

From: Mary Lee-Clark, 2nd Congregational Church,  
Bennington

I wanted to let you know that my mom died peacefully last night in her room in assisted living at Friends Home, in Greensboro, NC. My brother was with her.

We plan to celebrate her long and full life sometime later in April or May.

Mom -- Helen Lee was also the mother-in-law of Donna Lee.

Peace,  
Mary

The Rev. Cindy Batten, pastor of the West Newbury Congregational Church, has been on sabbatical and hoped to be so until the end of this month. However, last week she fell and broke her right wrist. She had surgery on March 9th and will not be able to return to work for a number of weeks.. Please hold her in prayer that she heal well and quickly. In the meantime, she remains at home in Londonderry, New Hampshire.



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

