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Vermont Conference, UCC Electronic Keeping in Touch

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

E-Kit

March 8, 2017

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Vermont Conference News

Lynn Bujnak will be attending the Southwest Association Listening Session.

Pam Lucas will be worshipping in Windham.

Jim Thomas will be worshipping at the United Church of Hinesburg.

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



[UCC News and Updates](#)

Greetings!

Well, here we are. The Lenten season has begun again, which makes this the perfect time to talk about: Stewardship!

Yes, Stewardship. I know, I know, Lent is underway, the pledge drive is months away, the Stewardship Committee has scattered to the winds; and that is exactly why now is the time to prepare for the work to come. You know as well as I do that once "Stewardship Season" is underway that preparation time is nonexistent; there is too much to be done with too little time to do it. And today I'll not make you read once again about how I think Stewardship is really a thing to be about all year long.

Instead, I have a specific suggestion for you. Each congregation should send a team to:

[Embracing Stewardship: How to put Stewardship at the HEART of your Congregation's LIFE](#)



The 2017 Conference offered by the
Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship

UCC leaders condemn revised White House travel ban

Minnesota churches, as kindred spirits, band together to pledge sanctuary

UCC joins ecumenical effort to safeguard immigrants, refugees

Threatening call prompts Jewish pre-school evacuation to nearby UCC

Ashes to Go from New England to Hawaii

Chicago Theological Seminary president to step down in 2018

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!

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. I'll be there (teaching a workshop) and you'll also see Rev. Jonathan New - we both are members of the Council.

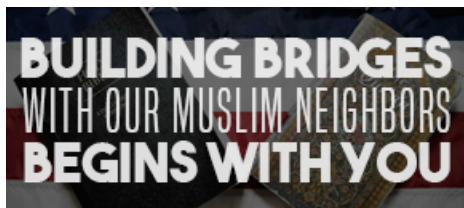
This a real opportunity to make an investment in your Stewardship efforts - providing education and inspiration for those who help your congregation generate the resources needed to do the mission and ministry you are called to do.

Alright. Enough of the sales pitch. I'll just add that this can make a real difference in the life of your church, and I'm hoping to see many of you there.



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

[More UCC news](#)



[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 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 nots to ensure their holiness. They fit the mold. They followed the rules."

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

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

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**An Invitation from the  
Environmental Committee of  
the Dept. of Mission**

[Here is a link to a flier you can email around or post up.](#)

[And here is the link to the registration site](#) where you can find additional information and register. And...Teams of five or more get a discount!

Please be in touch if you have any questions.

We now resume our regular Lenten programming.

Peace,

*Jim*  
Rev Jim Thomas  
ACM, VTCUCC

**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



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.

[Read 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.

### FREE ORGAN!

The Second Congregational Church in 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

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 multitasking musician and dynamic worship leader, he is committed to 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](#)

## Will you be a witness for justice right here in Vermont?

Your presence is needed (!) at the annual VLIAC day at the State House. For 45 years, the Vermont Conference has supported this organization that advocates for the needs of low-income Vermonters. With the recent changes in the national political climate and in Vermont's present economic state, programs that support our lowest income neighbors are at risk! **Please join Betty Edson, Theresa Lever and other UCC justice advocates in Montpelier on March 17.** Your physical presence alone will demonstrate support, and there will be opportunity (though no obligation) to voice your concerns as well. We will:

- Be introduced as a group in the House chamber
- Receive orientation and a legislative update from Karen Lafayette, VLIAC's legislative liaison
- Attend hearings and committee meetings
- Enjoy free lunch during a program that includes presentations by legislators and advocates for housing, food security, healthcare and more.

Plan to arrive at the State House by 9:20 and stay until lunch ends at 1:30.

would take them off your hands!) If you have some that you'd like to find a home for please call [Rev. 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)



Follow this link for all details, a document you can print to distribute to others, and contact information

[Details Here....](#)

Thank you!  
Betty and Theresa.

## 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.
  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.



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

