

Greetings!

Vermont Conference



November 29, 2017



**As we approach Advent we must remember -
Mary was pregnant - by now - very pregnant!
Heavy - uncomfortable -
Her ankles were swollen and her feet outgrew her sandals.
How on earth did she manage to get onto that donkey
To travel to Bethlehem?
Or did she really have to walk there?
Hundreds of travelers congesting the roads.
Bethlehem so crowded they got relegated to a stable
overcrowded with the animals belonging to the extra travelers.
When it was time for Jesus to be born
Mary was in pain - perhaps for hours -
Birthing babies is hard, painful work.**

(Maybe that's why it's called labor!)
After Jesus was born, Mary was absolutely exhausted and probably asleep
When shepherd faces pressed
against the window of this makeshift stable nursery.

In the midst of getting to Christmas -
to get the baby born so we can celebrate -
Advent gets robbed of its power.

Advent is about a people waiting in darkness.

Advent is about Mary waiting nine months for the birth of her son.

Advent is hard work and can be most uncomfortable.

When Gabriel arrived and said "Peace be with you" -

Mary was troubled and perplexed.

Instinctively, Mary knew that these words would change her life.

"How can this be?"

Yet deep inside the impossible begins to take hold -

her senses were suddenly in tune with the world around her

as her spirit was getting in tune with God.

She could say in the midst of perplexity and the impossible,

"I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."

Eventually, that initial troubling and questioning would be transformed
into the "Yes" of the Magnificat.

'There is nothing God cannot do!'

Her HOPE is that a God who chooses a peasant girl

instead of a princess to bear the Messiah...

A God who chooses an unwed mother...

a social outcast to bear the child...

If God would do things so backwards...

then just maybe God could turn the world upside down.

The proud scattered.

The lowly lifted up.

The hungry filled.

Is God asking something impossible of your church?

Of the Vermont Conference?

Of the United Church of Christ?

Does God want to transform our lives?

All these centuries later, we still have a living God who is still speaking.

"Peace be with you."

And we must choose how we will respond.

Advent is a time to consider whether or not we are about

the work of being God's people in this world -

invited to model a life inside the church

very different from the life lived outside.

Life out there is filled with fighting and division -

with winning and losing.

Life inside can model a different way -

a way of respect and care in spite of diversity -

a way where no one is a loser and all can experience

the love of Emmanuel - the God with us.

And we are invited to model a life outside the church

that works to lift the lowly and fill the hungry.

While much of the world around us is frantic with holiday frenzy

While too much of our world sits hopeless
in the aftermath of natural devastation and human violence -
It is essential that we take time to sit in the darkness of expectation so that we will
glimpse the fragile God light that comes among us as we worship.
It is essential that we sit in the silence of waiting
so that we might hear the echo of angel promises.
It is essential that we get ready to see heaven open up
and come down to us in the birth of a child - Emmanuel - God with us.
It is essential that we become ready to say with Mary,
"I am the Lord's servant"
and to sing with Mary our very own "Yes"
to the God who still yearns to bring hope, love, joy and peace
to this earth.
It sounds impossible
but in Advent
God's impossible can begin to take hold of us
as our spirits get in tune with God.

Pam Lucas

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# CONFERENCE NEWS

Saturday-Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 am at the Vermont Conference Office

Lynn Bujnak and Pam Lucas will be at Elisa Lucozzi's Ordination at the United  
Community Church, UCC in St. Johnsbury.

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The Vermont Conference welcomes a new Ministries Coordinator!

We welcome [Sherri Caouette](#) to our conference staff. Sherri is the new Conference
Ministries Coordinator. She will be working administratively with Search and Call as well as
supporting Annual Meeting, MSSC and Vitality Events.

Hi!

My name is Sherri Caouette. I live in Randolph, VT with my husband Bobby and our Cocker
Spaniel; named Sophie. Together we have 5 adult children and 5 grandchildren. I love my
family and look forward to working together with all of you.



Next time you are in the office be sure to stop by and introduce yourself to her.
We're very glad she has joined us!

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE VERMONT CONFERENCE
[Here...](#)



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS

NEWS HEADLINES

Erie community's Blizzard of Blankets, Sock Sunday wrap homeless neighbors in love

A Thanksgiving dinner at an Ohio church brings several groups together in community

The Price of Freedom?



WEEKLY SEEDS

FOCUS READING:

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Karl Rahner, 20th century

"Every year we celebrate the holy season of Advent, O God. Every year we pray those beautiful prayers of longing and waiting, and sing those lovely songs of hope and promise."

Walter Brueggemann, 21st century

"Give us the grace and the impatience to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes, to the edges of our fingertips. We do not want our several worlds to end. Come in your power and come in your weakness in any case and make all things new. Amen."

George Eliot, 19th century

"It seems to me we can never give up longing and wishing while we are thoroughly alive. There are certain things we feel to be beautiful and good, and we must hunger after them."

Saul Bellow, 20th century

"There is an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are and what this life is for."

Madeleine L'Engle, 20th century

"Some things have to be believed to be seen."

Henri J. M. Nouwen, "The Wounded Healer," 20th century

"To announce, however, that the Liberator is sitting among the poor and that the wounds are signs of hope and that today is the day of liberation, is a step very few can take. But this is exactly the announcement of the wounded healer: 'The master is coming—not tomorrow, but today, not next year, but this year, not after all our misery is passed, but in the middle of it, not in another place but right here where we are standing.'"

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century

"Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come into being."

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

BE THE CHURCH

HAPPENINGS

United Church of Christ
New England Women's

Celebration 

A SEAT AT THE TABLE
Come for all things are now ready.
- Luke 14:17b

SAVE THE DATE!
APRIL 6 - 8, 2018
Portland, Maine



---> **What is the New England Women's Celebration?**

The New England Women's Celebration takes place every 4 years at various locations in New England. It is held over (or near) the weekend of Mothering Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Lent, which is traditionally a time when the strict observances of Lent were relaxed for a day so church folks could return to the Mother Church of their roots.

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**"Working for a Second Chance 2.0"**

Join us for "Working for a Second Chance 2.0" on Wednesday, December 13 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 2 Cherry St, Burlington. This event, sponsored jointly by Vermont Interfaith Action and Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, will bring together the formerly incarcerated with local business owners and the Department of Corrections to explore better ways to provide job opportunities for those who need a second chance. This is a follow-up to the highly successful event last year in which ex-offenders and business owners shared their stories. Call Debbie at 802-651-8889 or email [debbie@viavt.org](mailto:debbie@viavt.org) for more information or to register.

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Climate Change event

Come learn "What You Can Do About Climate Change" at Ohavi Zedek Synagogue (188 N. Prospect St, Burlington) on Tuesday, December 12 from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. This event, co-sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Action, will feature suggestions from Mayor Miro Weinberger's office and Burlington Electric as the city and state address this important issue in the wake of the U.S. pull-out from the Paris Climate Accord. The purpose is to help local faith communities to lead the way in engaging individuals and congregations to meet climate change goals. We will also light the candles for the first night of Chanukah, celebrating an earlier solution to an energy crisis! For more information, contact Karen, kpcorbman@aol.com.

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"It has been five years since the terrible killings of the school children the Sandy Hook School in Newtown CT. The Charlotte Congregational Church will hold a remembrance ceremony on Monday December 11 at 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary. The community is welcomed to join us in prayers and readings to offer our empathies to those affected and to pray for policy and cultural actions that will reduce the prevalence of gun violence on our society. Please join us as we ring our Church Bell twenty-eight times, one toll each for those killed; the children, the teachers, the shooter and his mother."

**Read more here...**



Working Together To Keep Guns Out Of The Wrong Hands

**read more here...**



## **Leadership and Anxiety in the Church (LAC)**

When: Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Where: Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, CT

Who: Clergy members and laypersons who seek to understand congregational dynamics better and to learn ways to calm anxiety and heal broken relationships



## **Mediation Skills**

Training Institute for Church Leaders (MSTI)

When: May 7-11, 2018

Where: Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, CT

Who: Clergy and all persons in positions of church leadership who are interested in learning skills that will equip them to deal effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of church conflict

Attached please find an LAC brochure, a sample bulletin ad, and a group discount coupon for LAC, as well as a current brochure for all five MSTI workshops in 2018. Please share this information with friends or colleagues who you feel might benefit from this training, whether or not you yourself are able to attend.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or visit our website at [www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org).

Thanks so much for your support!

Pamela B. Eiten LMPC Assistant for Communication Lombard Mennonite Peace Center  
101 W. 22nd Street, Suite 206 Lombard, IL 60148 P: 630.627.0507 F: 630.627.0519

[www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org)



## CLASSIFIEDS

Starting your holiday shopping online? If you are already shopping on Amazon, you can support Global Ministries at the same time at no additional cost to you. Simply use this link as you shop on Amazon and Global Ministries will receive 4-7% of your purchase. Thank you for thinking of Global Ministries as you plan your holiday shopping!

[Shop Here...](#)



**Marble Baptismal font**  
Best offer--you pick up (we may deliver, if needed)  
United Community Church of Morrisville  
Please contact Pastor Marisa at 888-2990



## DINNERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Community Supper**  
Every Friday, 6 pm at the United Church of South Royalton



**Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue... 1st Friday of Every Month**  
[www.essexeatsout.org](http://www.essexeatsout.org)





# CHURCH NEWS

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Bethany Church
Randolph, VT
December 2, 2017
Annual Craft Fair 10am - 2pm
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CHARLOTTE, VT - On Sunday, December 3, 2017 at 4 pm, the Charlotte Congregational Church invites the community to their seventh annual Sing Along performance of Handel's Messiah. This special evening of music will feature musicians from the Vermont Symphony, the Burlington Chamber Orchestra and four professional vocalists, accompanied by a chorus of audience and choir members. Enjoy this magnificent work for the first time or as a seasoned veteran. Come celebrate the season with beautiful music and spirit!  
Tickets are \$15 per adult and \$50 for a group of 4. They can be purchased at the door. For more information please contact the church office : 425-3176 or [scookekitt@mac.com](mailto:scookekitt@mac.com). Church is located at 403 Church Hill Road in Charlotte.

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DORSET COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING, POT-LUCK SUPPER ON
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6th AT 5:00 PM AT THE DORSET GREEN .

Again this year we will be joined by the faculty, students, and families of Long Trail School. We'll all begin at the Christmas tree on the Dorset Green for a Christmas Carol Sing-a-long [we have printed carol books--Bring a flashlight]. Then we will head over to the Dorset Church for a Chili and Soup Potluck. Please bring a pot of your favorite chili or soup. We'll provide the bread & drinks. Long Trail School will provide the salad.

Jane A. LoBrutto, Administrator United Church of Dorset and East Rupert
PO Box 263 Dorset, VT 05251 802-867-2260 Jane@dorsetchurch.org

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Holiday Carol Sing

2pm on Sunday December 10th at the Church with refreshments to follow at the Dover Historical Society.

Bring your friends and family!  
West Dover Congregational Church (UCC)  
104 Route 100, West Dover, Vermont  
More information at 802-464-1195

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Breathe in, Breathe out, Repeat  
Peace,  
Laurel Beth Cashman

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SAVE THE DATE

Eastern Regional Youth Event (ERYE)
July 19-22, 2018 at California University of Pennsylvania.

Worship / play / pray / learn / serve / sing / dream

ERYE is a chance to grow your spirit through workshops, worship, recreation, and service! Registration information will be posted soon. Estimated cost is \$350 per person for event registration, housing, and meals. This does not include transportation. The Southern New England Conferences (RI, MA, and CT) will be collaborating to provide bus transportation.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Bethany Church United Church of Christ Randolph, Vermont

<http://www.bethanyuccvt.org> Coordinator for Youth and Family Ministries Bethany Church, a lively congregation of the United Church of Christ, is seeking a half time (20 hours a week) Coordinator for Youth and Family Ministries. The candidate we are seeking is a person of faith who is committed to the church and to nurturing the spiritual needs of children, youth and families. They will have strong organizational and communication skills. They will have training and/or experience in providing educational ministries in a local church setting. They will understand and honor confidentiality and appropriate boundaries. This staff person will work closely with our pastor, Rev. Kim McKerley, and will have the strong support of the Christian Education Committee and the members of our congregation. Together we will work to continue our excellent youth ministry programs consisting of three fellowship groups (Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) which provide fellowship, spiritual formation and outreach programs for our youth. This staff person will work with us all to strengthen our Sunday School ministry to children and youth (ages three through grade 12) and their families. They will also be asked to reach out to our Bethany Church and Randolph Community families. We are a UCC congregation eager to move boldly forward in Educational/Faith Formation ministries. We would love to hear from all interested persons that we might talk together to see if the Spirit has a mutual path forward for us. We ask that references be provided if requested. Compensation will be commensurate with experience.

Contact: Wendy Ross, Chair of the Christian Education Committee Rosspol.w@gmail.com
Bethany Church United Church of Christ 30 North Main Street Randolph, Vermont 05060



We hope you like our ever changing look as we try to make each E-Kit fun to explore! We welcome submissions for the weekly E-Kit. Please submit your submission by Tuesday of each week! We will be running all events and news in this weekly E-Kit. Have you seen our new website? If you have anything you would like to see published on the website, please let me know!

robinsonc@vtcucc.org

Know someone who might enjoy this email? [Share it](#) with them.
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Vermont Conference, UCC | 802-728-4999 VTCconference@vtcucc.org | <http://www.vtcucc.org>