



Vermont Conference, UCC

Keeping in Touch

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

E-Kit

October 25, 2017



Vermont Conference News
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**Pam Lucas will be worshipping at the United Church of St. Johnsbury for Joan Vincent's Last Sunday**



Click image for more information.



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

[UCC News and Updates](#)

2017 Digital Stewardship Materials...  
[read more here!](#)

**Greetings!**

Many of our churches in the Vermont Conference are spending time this fall thinking about/talking about/studying about the Protestant Reformation. I've written a couple of EKIT articles about the gifts that have come to us through Martin Luther's invitation to the Roman Church in 1517 to debate matters of faith and theology - Scripture Alone and the Priesthood of all Believers. But that invitation set the Reformation in motion.

And it was not another 500 year Rummage Sale as Phyllis Tickle suggested. It was more than a Yard Sale. Every 500 years there is something akin to a seismic eruption caused by a shift in the tectonic plates that change the world.

It turned out that these matters of faith and theology Luther wanted to debate were not mere ideas - they became foundational touchstones to stand upon.

The invitation to stand on the touchstone of Scripture Alone brought the first victims - the Anabaptists. Infant Baptism? That's not mentioned in scripture. So that group ended the practice and became the common enemy of the Roman Church, the Lutherans and the Calvinists!

Scripture Alone and the Priesthood of all Believers challenged the Church as it was known. It became a battle for power and truth.

Antal, other religious leaders  
"Take a Knee" for climate  
change

Journalists link media and  
social justice at annual Everett  
C. Parker Lecture

Missouri church welcomes  
father of five young U.S.  
citizens into sanctuary

UCC Board talks  
transformation, innovation  
and privilege

UCC newspaper ad condemns  
racist posters, rising  
acceptance of intolerance

A Justice Revival in Milwaukee  
aims at dismantling white  
supremacy

UCC church in Seattle hosts  
totem pole blessing

Commentary: Deep into the  
Eye of the Hurricane in the  
Caribbean

UCC advocates applaud block  
of third Trump travel ban, call  
for 'heart-change'

Food for Thought

Focus Reading:  
Matthew 22:34-46

C. S. Lewis, 20th century

"Love anything, and your  
heart will certainly be wrung  
and possibly broken. If you  
want to make sure of keeping  
it intact, you must give your  
heart to no one, not even to  
an animal. Wrap it carefully  
round with hobbies and little  
luxuries; avoid all  
entanglements; lock it up  
safe in the casket or coffin of  
your selfishness. But in that

Who did it belong to? Was it the nation? Nations  
established the state churches of their rulers.

Was it the right Truth? Who had it? And when  
you did have the power then eliminate all  
opposition. Through burning them at the stake  
- hanging them - through wars and rebellions  
and revolutions. From the birth pangs that  
preceded Martin Luther's invitation through the  
next almost two hundred years religious  
proponents sought for their turf. There was  
very little tolerance for diversity.

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, 'What is  
truth?'

Last Sunday afternoon, the Southwest  
Association's program was centered on an  
introduction to 'Campaign Nonviolence'. The  
Association plans to provide Nonviolent Action  
training in 2018. We talked about what are the  
golden calves that so easily take the place of  
God in our lives. At the end two other  
questions were posed:

How do we show our  
love/loyalty/ for our nation?

How do we show our  
love/loyalty for our God?

Our nation right or wrong?

Or our nation that has displayed such promise  
and yet has deep cancers still to be recognized,  
treated and eliminated?

I sat thinking about the 50's, 60's and  
70's and the calls for equality, justice and  
peace - and the arrests and dogs and shootings  
and firehoses and harassings -

I thought about the 'terrorists' at  
work in so many parts of our world -

I thought about the mass shootings,  
the return of the Ku Klux Klan - and the rising  
up - not just of racism and anti-Semitism - but  
sexism and homophobia - and fear of  
immigrants and refugees -

I thought about the threats of war -  
that are all about power and greed.

And then I realized that we are called  
to share our love for God by seeking for what  
God seeks in our nation? Equality, justice,  
mercy, peace? Love of neighbor? Welcome the  
stranger? Care for the poor? Stand up for the  
abused? Work for the common good? Except all  
this is the truth of Who I understand and

casket--safe, dark,  
motionless, airless--it will  
change. It will not be broken;  
it will become unbreakable,  
impenetrable, irredeemable."

The Dalai Lama, 21st century

"Today, more than ever  
before, life must be  
characterized by a sense of  
Universal responsibility, not  
only nation to nation and  
human to human, but also  
human to other forms of life."

J. C. Ryle, 19th century

"All heaven and earth resound  
with that subtle and  
delicately balanced truth that  
the old paths are the best  
paths after all."

John of the Cross, 16th  
century

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

Henri Nouwen, 20th century

"Knowing the heart of Jesus  
and loving him are the same  
thing. The mystery of  
ministry is that we have been  
chosen to make our own  
limited and very conditional  
love the gateway for the  
unlimited and unconditional  
love of God."

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."

Martin Luther King Jr., A  
Testament of Hope:  
The Essential Writings and  
Speeches, 20th century

"I have decided to stick to

believe that God is. And so we in the UCC work  
against the powers of hate and violence  
wherever it arises. We show our love to God by  
working against the hate and violence in our  
nation.

Yet there are others who have a  
different truth about who God is and what God  
seeks in our nation. Who seek to impose their  
particular truth on everyone - even if it leaves  
people left out, left behind, forced out - even  
if it leaves our planet in jeopardy - and our  
children without a future - even if it takes  
violence to make it happen  
In these days those multiple truths are clashing  
with one another in a battle for the soul of our  
nation - our world - and our churches.  
500 year Reformations are NOT rummage sales -  
they are the times that change our world.  
What touchstone truth will we stand on?

Pam Lucas

### ***The Conference is Hiring!!!***

We need a Ministries Coordinator - this is a part  
time position in Randolph, VT. Proficiency in Office  
Suite required. Duties include liaison for churches in  
the pastoral search process, pastors seeking  
churches, and administrative support for ministry  
school. The position requires organizational skills,  
confidentiality and the ability to work  
independently.

For additional information and application email  
the Vermont Conference at  
[vtconference@vtcucc.org](mailto:vtconference@vtcucc.org). Please no phone calls or  
walk ins. The application deadline is October 30,  
2017



Dear Friends,

After two blessed years serving as your Vermont  
Conference Ministries Coordinator, I have been  
called to serve as the Community Relations Manager

love...Hate is too great a burden to bear."

Mother Teresa, 20th century

"I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, 'How many good things have you done in your life?' rather he will ask, 'How much love did you put into what you did?'"

Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island, 20th century

"The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image. If in loving them we do not love what they are, but only their potential likeness to ourselves, then we do not love them: we only love the reflection of ourselves we find in them."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince, 20th century

"It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

Richard P. Feynman, 20th century

"Physics isn't the most important thing. Love is."

for Stagecoach Transportation, a nonprofit transportation service for Orange and northern Windsor Counties (stagecoach-rides.org).

It has been a privilege to work with all of the churches seeking new pastors, our Members in Discernment, authorized ministers and everyone involved with the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting. What I have learned from all of you will serve me well in my new role and I am grateful for the support you have given me as I worked to serve you the best ways I could.

I will be finishing my time at the Vermont Conference on Wednesday, November 1st, but my new office will be just a couple blocks down Main Street in Randolph so look me up if you're in town! Thank you for your work and ministry to bring the love and peace of Christ to Vermont and the world, a world very sorely in need of such divine grace. You will continue to be in my prayers in the time to come.

Your brother in Christ,  
Jesse

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We will be sorry to see Jesse leave our staff but happy that he has found a full-time job with benefits in his field. Jesse has done excellent work for the Vermont Conference and often went the extra mile. He has helped us to better arrange the dissemination of Church Profiles to candidates and Ministerial Profiles to Search Committees. He has served as staff support to the Annual Meeting Planning Committee and also Ministerial Standing and Standards. If you attended an Annual Meeting or a Vitality Event within the past two years, you will have seen Jesse hard at work to make the event a success. Thank you Jesse and Godspeed! -  
Lynn, Pam and Charri

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## **The Challenge of Paul Gift Program**

**Thanks to a generous donation, FaithandReason® will be able to provide copies of "The Challenge of Paul", Themes 1 & 2 at no cost to churches who agree to use the resource in their classes. "The Challenge of Paul" is a production of FaithandReason® and features the work of John Dominic Crossan, an Irish-American New Testament scholar and historian of early Christianity. Dr. Crossan previously collaborated with**



**Tending the Fire**

**Do you ever feel like your church gets "stuck"?**

Do you find the same conversation happening in meeting after meeting, without resolution? Or are there topics so touchy that no one brings them out at all? Do a few people do almost all the work of the church while others seem to do very little? Are you one of those people doing everything, and you're not sure how much longer you can do it? Is there a lot of worry and not much joy in your ministry?

If so, then Tending the Fire will help you understand why people in your church act the way they do, especially when they are anxious. You'll discover how important your role as leader can be, and how to live into that role in ways that are sustainable and life-giving for you and for the church. You'll learn how to assess the best changes for the place you serve, and how to implement those changes so that they last.

Tending the Fire: Maine will be offered in Barre Vermont beginning in January 2018; register online at [www.tending-the-fire.com/register](http://www.tending-the-fire.com/register). For more information, contact Rev. Barbara Lemmel at 802-881-3267 or [barblemmel@mac.com](mailto:barblemmel@mac.com).

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[Tom Kinder](#) / United Church of Strafford is wondering if anyone in the conference has boxes of Pilgrim Hymnals looking for a home. I need 50 or so.

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**Norm Williams, mountain dulcimer player and instructor will be in Vermont on November 11th.** (website: [awayfarer@normw.com](mailto:awayfarer@normw.com)) He will offer three workshops for novice through intermediate players. If there is enough interest a beginner course will also be offered. The venue is the Congregational UCC church in Berlin, just off exit 7 on I89. Norm

**FaithandReason® to create "The Challenge of Jesus", currently available on [faithandreason.org](http://faithandreason.org).**

**We're asking interested churches and organizations to fill out this form, commit to use the product, and share their feedback with us. Each theme is created with church group resource leaders in mind, and includes downloadable Participant Guides. As a part of the Gift Program, we are also including a fully-designed PDF transcript.**

[read more here...](#)

Saturday, October 28  
First Congregational Church, UCC  
39 Main Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452

A Worship & Song Leading Workshop with **Paul Vasile**, Executive Director of Music that Makes Community  
Nepalese Lunch provided by The Vineyard Nepali Fellowship  
Cost: \$15 person payable at the door, for all coming from churches outside the Champlain Association UCC

Please RSVP at:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/workshop-songs-of-transformation-reformation-and-liberation-tickets-37928359745>

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Consult XXI at Silver Lake

Join us for Consult XXI Monday, November 6 through Friday, November 10 as we are reminded and explore "Be Not Afraid for I am With You." We will gather at Silver Lake Conference Center (Sharon, CT) as colleagues and partners in Outdoor Ministries. Consult is a bi-annual gathering of camp directors, board members and chairs, site supporters, and advocates for Outdoor Ministries, especially within the UCC. We will explore what it means to "Be Not Afraid for I am With You", when the "I" is God, Jesus, self, and partners we may work with at camp.
[Read more here....](#)

and friends will perform a concert at 7:00PM at the church. A free will offering will go to support the mission and ministry of that congregation. Questions? Want to register for workshops? (\$15.00 for 1, 35.00 for all three. Call Lynn at 802-505-3980.

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**Resources from  
WorshipWell**

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at:



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

**The MSSC is in the process of "counting heads" of authorized clergy who have not yet returned their information review forms.**

If you know that you have not yet returned the form, you have 2 option wonderful options: return it now, ask Jesse Davis for a form to return now. Just as a reminder: "All authorized ministers are expected to participate in ... Information Reviews in order to maintain their authorization." (United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry ) This document is a means for authorized ministers to participate in the Information Review in order to uphold the covenantal relationship with the Vermont Conference.

We have not been able to contact several of our authorized members. Their names are listed below. If you know how we can reach them, or if you think they've moved away, we would appreciate the info! Please let Jesse Davis know.

Nancy Devor,  
Ann Hockridge,  
Diana Scholl

Thanks!  
Marisa Laviola, Chair  
MSSC



**Thank You for Reading**  
**An Open and Affirming Conference**

