



## THE PARISH PAPER

### March 2018

#### **Finding Significance as a Small Church**

Imagine a company with more than 300,000 small retail outlets, which are locally owned and supported. Their presence is so evenly distributed geographically that every county in the U.S. has one or more outlets- in some cases, even dozens of outlets. Almost all own their facilities and attract millions of volunteers.

If such an enterprise existed, it would be widely recognized as a success story of unmatched magnitude.

Such an organization does exist. It is the story of American congregations, whose founding dates go back hundreds of years. Frequently, commentators focus on the size of each church rather than the large numbers of congregations engaged in ministry in local communities. If a congregation is small, is it also small in mission or significance? What are we worth?

#### **How Location Does and Doesn't Matter**

When a small congregation claims a small corner of creation as their own, their corner is the same size as any other church. In this way, all congregations are created equal-uniquely called to a particular spot on the globe. Further, worshipers and leaders believe that God founded their church or parish at a particular moment in history. Members reveal this belief in the stories they tell about the church's founding, in the biblical characters that members reference as

inspiring, and in the hymns that members find most meaningful.



[Read Entire Article here.....](#)

### ***The Parish Paper:***

***Ideas and Insights for Active Congregations***, is a monthly resource for local church clergy and lay leaders to use to help their local churches engage in dynamic and fruitful ministry. We encourage you to share The Parish Paper with appropriate boards, committees, teams, or interested members within your congregation.

The Vermont Conference has subscribed to this resource on behalf of all Vermont UCC churches. Each monthly issue of The Parish Paper provides ideas, insights, research-findings, and practical methods that strengthen the effectiveness of congregations in accomplishing God's purposes through their various ministries. Not every suggestion included in The Parish Paper will be right for every church.

The Vermont Conference United Church of Christ's subscription to The Parish Paper INCLUDES:

- Permission to provide copies to Conference staff and to the congregations within the Vermont Conference, UCC in any of the

following ways: E-mail, U.S. mail, newspaper, newsletter, meetings, training events, and our Web site.

- Permission for each congregation within the Vermont Conference, UCC to (a) photocopy or electronically distribute for local use as many copies as it needs, (b) post them on its Web site, and (c) quote sentences and paragraphs.

Congregations within the Vermont Conference, UCC to which we distribute The Parish Paper do NOT have permission (a) to delete the copyright ownership notice, (b) to re-write, paraphrase, delete, or change the wording of sentences and paragraphs, or (c) to give ANY THIRD PARTY-other than our staff and constituents-permission to photocopy or reprint (in any quantity, no matter how small, whether for free distribution or for sale).

For other free resources and more information about copyright/photocopying permission please visit:

[www.theparishpaper.com](http://www.theparishpaper.com).

*~~from the Vermont Conference Resource Center  
and your OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contribution  
to the Vermont Conference which makes this newsletter  
and numerous programs available to you and your church.*

802-728-4999 | Vermont Conference, UCC, 36 N Main St, Randolph, VT 05060

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#).

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [vtconference@vtcucc.org](mailto:vtconference@vtcucc.org) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact** 

Try it free today