

Welcome to E-Kit! Charri

# Vermont Conference



December 12, 2018

Here...

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CONFERENCE**

## **VT CONFERENCE NEWS**



[Bujnakl@vtcucc.org](mailto:Bujnakl@vtcucc.org) - Conference Minister emails  
[Sangreep@vtcucc.org](mailto:Sangreep@vtcucc.org) Associate Conference Minister emails  
[Lucasp@vtcucc.org](mailto:Lucasp@vtcucc.org) Associate Conference Minister emails  
[Coordinator@vtcucc.org](mailto:Coordinator@vtcucc.org) Jesse Davis Office Management emails  
[Ministriescoordinator@vtcucc.org](mailto:Ministriescoordinator@vtcucc.org) - Search & Call & Ministry Info. emails  
[Robinsonc@vtcucc.org](mailto:Robinsonc@vtcucc.org) Charri Robinson Finance/E-Kit emails

## **How do I say good-bye!?**

**With thanksgiving and gratitude to the pastors and people of our Vermont Conference Churches, with incredible memories of moments shared in the hard places of being church in the 21st century, with gratifying memories of moments of celebrating in the joyful places where by God's grace the church has been used by God to make a real difference in the world.**

**Thank you for farewell parties, notes, emails and Facebook posts. They contain thoughts and words that I will cherish. For gifts given and prayers prayed. I thank you all for the ways you have opened the doors of your churches and your hearts to my presence among you - in worship - in retreats - in meetings - in coffee hours. As I have said many times you are the ones who have taught me what I needed to know - even when I didn't know that I would need it down the road. But that is the way God works - making the future ready for us to enter.**

**And now you and I are entering that future in our separate ways. But of one thing I am sure - it will be an adventure for all of us! I leave you with a reminder to be wise enough to follow God's star - and nothing will ever be the same again!**

**Gentle and mothering God**

**Who called forth the creation;  
Who called us into covenant.**

**Gracious and fathering God**

**Who calls us into community;  
Who calls forth our commitment.**

**Compassionate and forgiving God**

**we seek your face,  
For we've forgotten to follow your Star  
and we've lost our way.**

**We've wandered into the maze of the world  
and built our houses on shifting sand.**

**We've furnished the rooms  
with treasures that rot  
and hopes that fly away;**

**The creatures of our passions**

**have gnawed holes in our souls;  
And the rains have poured down  
and drowned out our peace.**

**We are not safe from turbulence  
within and without;  
We live in fear of violent unrest  
within and without;  
These houses of our own making have left us  
homeless, helpless and hopeless.**

**Compassionate and forgiving God  
we seek your face,  
For we've forgotten to follow your Star  
and we've lost our way.**

**Because dear God, we've forgotten -  
We've forgotten where to look and  
whom to follow;  
We've forgotten to remember whose house  
it is we seek -  
We've forgotten the house of our birth.**

**We've forgotten the house that comes  
completely furnished  
with treasures that never spoil;  
with hope that never flies away;  
with a passionate love that makes us whole;  
with a light that reaches into the corners of our souls.**

**This is the house built upon a rock -  
The house built, not with our hands,  
but yours.  
The house whose owner awaits our return;  
For whether a lost sheep or a lost heart  
you yearn for us to return home.  
For once we lived in that house -  
once we were loved in that house.**

**Compassionate and forgiving God  
we seek your face.  
For we've forgotten to follow your Star  
and we've lost our way.**

**And so today...**

**We will turn to face the light.**

**We will look up to see your Star.**

**We will climb from the leftover rubble of our houses  
to follow your Star.**

**The star that will guide us home;**

**The star that will bring us to our knees**

**in humble recognition of our need,**

**in humble adoration of our Savior,**

**in humble thanksgiving for our welcome home.**

**Thank you God for Your open and loving arms.**

**Thank you God for your great and loving heart.**

**For your heart is the place our hearts call home.**

**Pamela Y Lucas**

***It's Mid December.....***

***It's nearing the***

***end of the fiscal year***

***at the Conference. Please review your 5 for 5, please  
review your OCWM etc. Please try to keep in mind we have  
deadlines here at the Conference and deadlines to meet for  
the National Offices.***

***You need to submit your payments before  
December 20, 2018.***



## "Celebrate Three Great Loves this Advent."

Three Great Loves offers a new window on Creation Care. The National UCC has been developing a program called the "Three Great Loves," focusing on love of neighbor, love of children, and love of creation. This video gives an inspiring overview of the project and its relevance for our churches today.

[Watch the video here](#)

They have also been developing a series of Four Advent Inserts, highlighting each of the four themes of Advent in relation to the Three Great Loves.

[3 GREAT LOVES ADVENT BULLETIN DOWNLOADS](#)

## Peacemakers' Pulpit

In the season of Advent, we are called to focus on hope, peace, joy, and love. There is much of all four in my life, personally, and I am so grateful for that - and yet I am increasingly aware of how much the fullness of life I experience is built on systemic injustice to so many.

And when I think of so many in God's weary world this Advent, the idea of hope, peace, joy and love invites a sad "Not so much."

**And yet, as incivility, and bullying, and alarmist hyperbole, and a disregard for truth seem to be more and more "acceptable" in our culture, well, that's exactly when, as people of faith, we need to spread hope, peace, joy and love and to look for it in the world around us.**

**I saw hope, when a quickly pulled-together vigil after the Tree of Life massacre drew out 50 people in our small town, probably 20 % of them Jewish, and it was hard not to become emotional when the Jewish man, co-leading the service, began a typical Shabat prayer in Aramaic and all of the Jewish attendants joined in.**

**I saw peace, for just a moment or two, when five of us at the Independent Living Facility where I now live, came together, for a bi-partisan political discussion one day, and each mentioned one thing we like or respect about the others, before we ended our gathering.**

**I saw joy on the face of a 96 year old friend, as she looked out the nursing home window at winter wonderland the other day.**

**And I see love daily in so many people who volunteer in so many ways with groups that do make life fairer and better for all.**

**We need every one of these that we can spot, so join the game. May we know deeply this Advent that the light still shines in the darkness and will not be overcome.**

**Betty Edson, Bethany Church, Randolph**

**Local Vermont Vigils to End Gun Violence on the 6th Anniversary of the Shooting Deaths at Sandy Hook Elementary School**

**From the VT Conference Task Force to Reduce Gun Violence  
Vermont Vigils to End Gun Violence for the 6th Anniversary of the Shooting Deaths at Sandy Hook Elementary School**

**Burlington: December 11th Unitarian Universalist Society, 6-7pm**

**Montpelier: December 12th, Montpelier City Hall, 5:30-6pm**

**Woodstock: December 13th, Norman Williams Public Library, 5-6pm.**

**Norwich: December 14th, The Norwich Green, 5-5:30 pm.**

**Putney: December 14, The Tavern Green, 5:30-6pm**

**Middlebury: December 16th, Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, 11:30am-12pm**

**Charlotte Congregational Church Sanctuary will be open for prayer and meditation for the issue of gun violence on Sunday, Dec 16, from 6:00 - 7:00 PM.**

**To register your local vigil contact the Newtown Foundation at:**

<https://www.newtownfoundation.org/nationwide-vigils/>

# 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



### Oxford Background Checks

- If you are submitting a background check through Oxford, please
- let Jesse know who they are and what church it is for.
- Sometimes, we have no idea who the people are and we need to
- know who to forward the information to. If you are waiting on
- results call the Conference Office.

• Thanks!

**Does your church need hymnals?**  
**We have about 50 Pilgrim hymnals, free for the taking!**  
**Call Marisa at United Community Church in Morrisville if you're**  
**interested (888-2990)**

## HURRICANE RELIEF DONATION CHECKS

SHOULD BE SENT TO:

**ATTN: Financial Services  
United Church of Christ  
700 Prospect Ave. 6th Floor  
Cleveland, OH 44115**

or

**Church World Services  
P.O. Box 968  
Elkhart, IN 46515**

**Thank you!**

## **Houses of Worship Leadership**

**All -**

**In response to recent events, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit would like to invite you to an outreach event to bring leaders from places of worship within Vermont together to provide resources that might be used to improve security in your facilities. The agenda is still in development, but I hope to include presentations on DHS' Security of Soft Targets and Crowded Places, Resources that are available from Vermont Departments, possible grant sources to help improve security at your facilities and as well as an opportunity to network.**

**The meeting will take place on December 21st, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety, 1311 U.S. Route 302 - Suite 600, Berlin. The parking is at the back of the building and the entrance is by the loading dock. Meeting space will be on the second floor.**

**I understand that this meeting is scheduled close to some holiday's and this is done on purpose. I think December is a time of year where we come together to share traditions and experiences and I'd like for all of us to come together during this time to talk about things we can each do to make these spaces safer than they currently are. I intend for this to become a reoccurring opportunity for this community to come together with officials to improve relationships and facility security.**

**Please forward this invitation to all of your contacts within this community. This is intended to be a non-denominational meeting and I'm hoping that we will be able to have participation from each corner of the state. I'd like to reach as many places of worship as possible.**

**If you or someone you know would like to attend, please [RSVP here](#) so that we are able to have the correct number of handouts and to ensure that there is enough space for everyone to attend.**

**Please let me know if you have questions or thoughts on agenda items.**

**Thank you,**

**Jessica**

**Jessica Stolz**  
**Vermont Homeland Security Unit**  
**45 State Drive**  
**Waterbury, Vermont 05671**  
**(O) (802) 241-5094**  
**(C) (802) 595-1463**

## **Continuing Education**

[Theological Education for a Changing World](#)



<http://www.voicesonstewardship.com>

## **UCC NEWS**

### **2019 Pension Board Insurance Rates**

**Click here for individual 2019 Pension Board Rate Assessment**

[Click Here...](#)

To see the PBUCC Explanation Letter and Rate Charts for 2019 Pension Board Rates [Click Here...](#)

## Open and Affirming

Later in December, we'll welcome Open and Affirming church #1,500 to our rapidly growing family! Get ready to party! In the meantime, can you help us grow the ONA movement until EVERY ONE of our 5,000 churches can offer a confident and well-informed welcome to our LGBTQ neighbors? Here are three ways you can help:

[Read More Here...](#)

## Church World Service

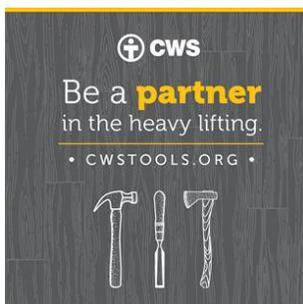


Hannanne Oreus's house didn't hold when Hurricane Matthew ripped through Haiti in 2016. Thanks to your support, we've helped to rebuild hers and hundreds of other homes with stronger material built to withstand disasters.

Now, Hannanne has a safe home for her family:

[cwsglobal.org/hannanne/](https://cwsglobal.org/hannanne/)

Adam Smedberg



Community & Congregational Engagement Specialist  
Church World Service  
PO Box 749  
West Springfield, MA 01090  
Phone: 413-279-4039  
Skype: asmedbergcws  
Email: [asmedberg@cwsglobal.org](mailto:asmedberg@cwsglobal.org)

## UCC NEWSFEED

**Faith leaders arrested in show of support for migrants at US-Mexico border**  
**More than a dozen UCC leaders risk arrest at the U.S.-Mexico border in a viable show of support and love for migrants seeking asylum and stalled at the border.**

### **Commentary: Peace on Earth? What Peace?**

**In this Advent season, this time set aside to reflect upon the birth of Jesus- an Afro-Semitic Palestinian who was forced with his parents to seek refuge in a foreign land-I am mindful our brown-skinned Jesus would not be welcomed at our southern borders.**

### **Love Knows No Borders' action in San Diego to lead moral call for Migrant Justice**

**UCC clergy and immigrant justice advocates are responding to a call to action, joining the American Friends Service Committee and other faith leaders in San Diego this weekend to kick off a national week of action, in solidarity with the people of the migrant caravan.**

### **Former UCC leader celebrates George H.W. Bush for Americans with Disabilities Act**

**As the United States mourns former President George H.W. Bush during his state funeral, the Rev. John Thomas shares a UCC tie to one of Bush's greatest accomplishments.**

## Weekly Seeds

**Focus Scripture: Luke 3:7-18**

**Scott Peck, 20th century**

**"The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual--for it is in the solitary mind and soul of**

**the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost."**

**James H. Aughey, 20th century**

**"Palaces and pyramids are reared by laying one brick, or block, at a time; and the kingdom of Christ is enlarged by individual conversions."**

**John Ortberg Jr., 21st century**

**"Low self-esteem causes me to believe that I have so little worth that my response does not matter. With repentance, however, I understand that being worth so much to God is why my response is so important. Repentance is remedial work to mend our minds and hearts, which get bent by sin."**

**Michael M. Rose, 21st century**

**"Love always precedes repentance. Divine love is a catalyst for our turning, our healing. Where fear and threat may gain our compliance, love captures our heart. It changes the heavy burden of the 'have-to's' of imposed obedience to the 'get-to's,' a joyful response to the genuine love of God."**

**John R.W. Stott, 20th century**

**"Social responsibility becomes an aspect not of Christian mission only, but also of Christian conversion. It is impossible to be truly converted to God without being thereby converted to our neighbor."**

**Rumi, 13th century**

**"When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy."**

**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century**

**"Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God."**

**Henri J.M. Nouwen, 20th century**

**"Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day."**

**Jerusalem Jackson Greer, 21st century**

**"It is now, at Advent, that I am given the chance to suspend all expectation...and instead to revel in the mystery."**

**Eugene Kennedy, Joy of Being Human, 21st century**

**"To be human is nothing less than to be caught in the great congested pilgrimage of existence and to join ourselves freely to it in the face of the evidence of its never-ending troubles."**



[Original worship resources for local churches...because Sunday's coming.](#)

## **DINNERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Choral Christmas Cantata**  
**"Ceremony of Candles: A Cantata for Advent and Christmas"**  
**Sunday afternoon December 16 at 2pm**  
**United Community Church**  
**Upper Main St., Morrisville**  
**We will be joined by choir members at**  
**Wolcott UMC, Hyde Park Congregational, and Holy Name of Jesus Parish.**  
**Choral Director: Shaun Booher**  
**Pianist: Marisa Laviola**



**Kay Jorgensen**  
**Service of Light**  
**A time to observe and honor loss**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 19**  
**Please, come and join us at 7 p.m. on Dec. 19 at The Tunbridge Church in**  
**Tunbridge Village. All are welcome. The Rev. Dr. Claire W. Bamberg will lead**  
**the service.**

**Christmas is a time for laughter and light, surprise and joy - but not for all and not in every circumstance. The Service of Light, "sets aside" time, sacred time, set in the context of worship, to observe and honor loss - loss of a loved one, a hope, a job, a promise..... The Service of Light observes the nuances of loss and transformation; its intention is to release the person who attends, by allowing them to grieve - and move on into the season.**



## **Community Suppers**

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



**Bradford Congregational Church  
The Community Suppers are the  
4th THURSDAY of each month**

**Pot Luck and Hymn Sing - third Tuesday of every month, 6:pm, at the Roxbury  
Union Congregational Church.**

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

**United Church of Underhill hosts community dinners on the  
second Thursday of each month from 5:00-6:30 pm**



**On Saturday, December 15th, fuel up for your holiday shopping with a Holiday  
Breakfast from 8:30 to 10:30 at the Shoreham Congregational Church, 28  
School Road, Shoreham, VT. Blueberry Pancakes, French Toast, Sausages,  
Home Fries, Egg Dishes, and Beverages will get you off to a great start for the  
day. The cost is still only \$8 for adults, \$4 for children under 12, and \$20 for  
families.**



## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**



**Open Positions - UCC National Offices**

[See posting here...](#)

# VERMONT OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

2018 brought our third great week of UCC camp at Rock Point!  
Many thanks to all our campers, volunteer staff and camp staff  
that lead our UCC week!

We are looking forward to filling our camp week with 24 campers  
in 2019 and connecting with God, nature, friends - old and new,  
and reaching out in service...along with all the fun things you can  
do at camp. We hope you will mark your calendars and join us!

[Read More Here.....](#)

Click on the following links for information

[2019 Camp Counseling Information](#)

[2019 Camp Nurse Information](#)

[2019 Camp Lifeguard information](#)

## SAVE THE DATES

ONLINE

UCC History, Theology and Polity Course  
Jan/Feb 2019

A UCC History, Theology and Polity Course that meets the requirements  
as set forth by the UCC Polity Teacher's Network will be offered online in  
Jan/Feb 2019. The instructor will be Rev. David Gaewski, Conference  
Minister of the New York Conference, UCC. Classes will begin at  
9:30am and end at 3:30pm on the following dates: Jan 19, 26, Feb 2, 9.

The platform utilized will be Zoom Video Conferencing (zoom.us) The tuition will be \$495. [For more information click here...](#)



Join UCC and Episcopal church leaders to share stories and discover ways to bring your congregation's values, principles and practices into your outreach and evangelism efforts. Enjoy good food, rest and renewal, in a beautiful setting. Ideally, two or more members of a faith community will participate together.

[Read more here.....](#)



**Save the Date**  
**April 30th - May 2nd 2019**  
**Pilgrim Pines, Swanzey, NH**  
**Welcoming Keynote: Rev. Traci Smith**  
**Author of Seamless Faith and Faithful Families**  
**Check out Traci's website**  
[www.traci-smith.com](http://www.traci-smith.com)

**Join Rev. Traci Smith as she guides those gathered - Christian educators, pastors, parents, and children's ministry leaders through effective ways to encourage the spiritual lives of families. Leave with a copy of Traci's book, Faithful Families, practical tips and ideas for developing age appropriate faith practices, fostering rich worship experiences for all ages, and nurturing sacred space even in busy times. Open to everyone who is interested in learning child-centered ministry practices.**

**Focus scripture: 1 Corinthians 3**

**Registration information coming soon!**

**We hope you enjoy E-Kit! 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.  
robinsonc@vtcucc.org**



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Vermont Conference, UCC, 36 N Main St, Randolph, VT 05060

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