



E-Kit April 22, 2020

DONATE

Earth Day Turns 50!

April 22nd is Earth Day! As the first Earth Day was in 1970, this marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day! (Doesn't it feel good to read about something other than Covid-19?) It was in 1970 that an estimated 20 million people, or around 10% of the American population of the time, hit the streets to mark that first Earth Day in 1970, which provided the political impetus shortly thereafter to pass the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. As a denomination that is committed to Creation Care, we recognize on this Earth Day the importance of being good stewards of this world that we have been given.



Of course, the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an impact on our planet. We are all well aware of the cost it has had on our human communities, of the people who have died from it, of the people who are sick from it, of the people who are unemployed because of it, and of the people who have been living in isolation because of it. This pandemic has also had a major impact on our planet. Air pollution is down significantly, wildlife have benefited, and there has been much less use of energy as cars and planes are being used far less, which benefits climate change. While it has been a very difficult time for us as humans, it has been a healing time for our Earth.

There are so many good Earth Day resources online, so please go take a look. These can be used by yourself personally or by your whole congregation. And go outside today! Take a walk, ride a bike, breathe in fresh air, enjoy yourself! And remember that "The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord" (Psalm 24:1).

Hopefully yours,
Paul

Answer the call and volunteer in response to COVID-19

COVID-19 FAQ's for churches

**COVID - 19
Information &
Resources**

**Resources curated by the
Southern New England
Conference**

**Utilities and COVID-19: Help &
information from VT Dept. of
Public Utilities**

CARES Act: Churches Eligible for Payroll Relief

ACT NOW!

Attached is the loan application and fact sheet from the SBA. If you have churches interested in applying for this loan, they need to apply NOW, as the available funds are expected to be exhausted quickly. The attached application should be submitted directly to a lender identified as a participating lender on the SBA's website ([sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov)), rather than seeking the application from the lender.

Application Form

Borrower factsheet

Unemployment compensation for church workers & the CARES Act

CARES Act information courtesy of the Southern New England Conference



*Your Conference staff
working for you*

**The Vermont
Conference office is
closed, but we're
still hard at work
for you!**

You can reach any of the
staff members by using the
information below.

Be safe, be well, take
good care...



*Sable likes the working
from home concept*

Vermont Conference COVID-19 office protocol

*The Vermont Conference office is closed
for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.*

Staff are able to check their voicemail
and are available on email. **Please send
all documents to staff by email only.**

Rev. Lynn Bujnak: 802-728-4999 ext. 4#

Rev. Paul Sangree: 802-728-4999 ext. 5#

Jesse Davis: 802-728-4999 ext. 0#

Email Conference Minister Lynn
Bujnak

Email Associate Conference
Minister Paul Sangree

Email Operations & Ministries
Coordinator Jesse Davis

Contact Vermont Conference
Disaster Ministries chair Rev.
Adrienne Carr

Peacemaker's Pulpit: Pandemic Peace

April 2020
Rev. C. Michael Caldwell

"Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy." Exodus 20:8

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel defines sabbath as “a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord.”

The COVID-19 Pandemic has jarred our lives and lifestyles. Mindful of the Fourth Commandment in Exodus 20, of Heschel, and of Cleopas’ recognition of Yeshua in the broken bread of Emmaus in Luke 24, we are given a biblical approach to these days that gives us deep peace and abiding hope.

We suffer, as did our Lord, with Good Friday moments, like the virus now brings. And we can decide to rise with him through slower, simpler, lives that model the “kingdom life,” a sabbath-keeping life that actually is like a dry run for the wider climate change remediation that is so urgent.

This life for which we pray in the Lord’s Prayer is a source of profound inner peace. And when we spread its contagion - the benevolent contagion of the kingdom life - outer peace follows in the world, beyond our pain and fear, on the other side of all suffering and dying.

Stewardship in the midst of COVID-19

Many people, ministers and church members, have been asking how to continue to support their local church budgets while everyone is social distancing and unable to gather together in worship. The short answer is - keep stewardship and the offering going!

Rev. Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach Officer for the United Church of Christ offered a webinar and several resources last week. He has kindly shared them with us for members of the Vermont Conference to use.

[Fundraising webinar recording](#)

[Planned giving webinar](#)

[IRA qualified charitable contributions](#)

[Example quarterly letter to church members](#)

[National Study of Congregations Economic Practices \(NSCEP\) study](#)

[NSCEP self-assessment tool](#)

[Making the stimulus ask](#)

Per Capita rate for 2020

The Vermont Conference per capita rate has been established at \$13.00 per member. Association dues are *in addition* to the Conference per capita rate of \$13.00.

Spiritual Direction

By popular request, a list of Spiritual Directors is now available. [Download the list here.](#)

Special Webinar for Church Vitality with Paul Nickerson

Dear friends,

So much has happened in our world and in our churches in the past 6 weeks. Many

churches are struggling to adapt to the changes and are they are asking some key questions:

- With half the churches seeing increases in "worship attendance", due to new people viewing our services, how do we connect with them? How do we follow up?
- How do we encourage on line giving and what are the implications for our budgets and stewardship campaigns?
- As we are "doing church" differently, which of these changes might we keep, moving forward, that would help us be a more vital church?
- Can we use this time to clarify who we are as a church, what our central purpose is, and live out of that purpose in the years ahead.

To address these questions, I am offering a Webinar on Thursday, May 7th at 10:00 AM.

There will be an opportunity to delve into these issues, have a question and answer time, and for those who would like help in customizing these issues to your church setting, there will be an offer of 30 days of specialized coaching.

To Register: Simply email me at nickersonp@comcast.net and I will send you all the needed information.

I hope you can join the discussion as together we seek to be vital churches that make a difference.

*This webinar has been set up, and promoted, by the Vermont Conference.
Registration fee is required to join the webinar. Please email Paul Nickerson at nickersonp@comcast.net to register and pay the fee.*

Pastoral Transitions

- Rev. Elissa Johnk was installed as Pastor and Teacher at First Congregational Church in Burlington.
- Lava Mueller was granted the status of Ordination Pending Call by the Windsor-Orange Association following an ecclesiastical council.
- Rev. WendyJane Summers has been called as Pastor of Second Congregational Church of Hyde Park.

[Click here for full list of transitions](#)

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Please hold health care workers and first responders in your prayers as they stand on the front lines responding to COVID-19.

Please hold Lava Mueller in your prayers as she mourns the passing of her mother.

Please hold Rev. Lucia Jackson in your prayers as she cares for her husband Michael Heaney who is healing from a health crisis.

Useful Links

- [UCC Newsfeeds](#)
- [UCC Weekly Seeds](#)
- [2020 Tax preparation resources](#)
- [Pension Boards rate calculator](#)
- [UCC Yearbook](#)
- [Stewardship blog](#)

Who should I contact for...?

- Conference Minister: Rev. Lynn Bujnak
 - bujnakl@vtcucc.org
- Assoc. Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree
 - sangreep@vtcucc.org
- Search & Call, operations, events: Jesse Davis
 - vtcoordinator2018@gmail.com
- Finance: Tanya Frazier
 - vtcfinanceucc@gmail.com
- E-Kit postings
 - vermontconference@gmail.com

Department of Justice & Witness Ministries

This pandemic, this season of social distancing should not mean social isolation or neglect of the vital work of witnessing to the love of God and neighbor through acts of compassion and advocacy. But it does present challenges. The necessary cancellation of Annual Meeting is one such challenge. Our Department had hoped to connect with many of you then. At our last meeting (via Zoom) we came up with an idea. What if we had a *virtual* Peacemakers Breakfast, where people could share and learn about all the important efforts our churches are making for compassion and for justice? Hearing from your churches about your programs and aspirations, through this survey, would help us plan this. The details of that breakfast are TBA.

[Read the full notice](#)

2020 Census has begun

The numbers that are returned in the 2020 Census - which began on March 12 - will determine the amount of federal funding that Vermont receives for programs that help the most vulnerable among us: Medicare and Medicaid, school lunch programs, emergency housing assistance, SNAP, WIC, special education, and more. Every person counts!

The Vermont Conference calls upon our local churches to help spread the word about the Census with the downloadable bulletin insert and flyer. Responding to the Census will help ensure funds for vital services to Vermonters are not threatened by an inaccurate population count.

Thank you!

[Census flyer](#)

New Podcast Available

Rev. Josh Simon (First Congregational Church of Essex Junction) and Rev. Sally May (Malletts Bay UCC, Colchester) are proud to present the podcast *Faith in Vermont: Conversations with LGBTQ Religious and Spiritual Leaders*.

On this week's episode of Faith in Vermont: Conversations with LGBTQ Religious and Spiritual Leaders:
Cantor Steve Zeidenberg from Ohavi Zedek joins us for a conversation on being an LGBTQ cantor.

[Click here for the latest podcast](#)



Our Faith, Our Vote, Our Voice: A call to the Church to be a place of civil dialogue that builds community

Racism in America symposiums



[Watch the videos of Racism in](#)

It's Tax Season - Beware of Scams!

*This is something that happens to other people.....
And it happened to me..*

It is Monday, March ninth. Like a lot of us, I am sitting here at my desk in my home office, working away. There are not enough hours in the day - and my phone rings. I did not pick up, so they left this message:

...Security number for fraudulent activities. So when you get this message kindly call back at the earliest possible on our number before we begin with the legal proceedings, that is dead 470-276-7965. I repeat 460-276-7965. Thank you and have a nice day.

Voice transcription being what it is, what most caught my attention was "legal proceedings." What?! When I call the individual back, he says he is with the Social Security administration and that there have been a lot of complaints filed on my social security number. Have I heard from the police yet? While one part of my brain goes on "Spidey - alert" there is, in limbic system, a reflexive fission of fear. What could this be?

AVOID PHONE SCAMS

Seminar to help eradicate Human Trafficking

Join us at the Waterbury Congregational Church on May 9 from 10 AM to 3 PM for a free seminar to learn how the faith community can help and become part of the initiative to eradicate human trafficking in Vermont. More than 4 million people across the globe have experienced the horrors of human trafficking, many right here in Vermont. Learn about the intersections with addiction, the use of force, fraud and coercion tactics that traffickers use, as well as the signs and red flags to be aware of in your own community. This will be a broad overview of Human Trafficking the training will be presented by a multi-disciplinary team led by Ms. Kira Krier, the Human Trafficking Victim Services Director for the state and will include representatives from the areas of Law Enforcement, the Department of Children and Families, Disability Rights and Victim Services.

Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to peter@waterburyucc.com if you'd like to attend.

Waterbury Congregational Church
8 North Main St.
Waterbury, VT 05676
(802) 244-6606



Planning for VT @ the Lake week continues!

July 26 - July 31

Registration is open

Learn more about @ the Lake Camp

Register for camp here

We are living in different times and seeking God wherever we can find the divine. The VT Outdoor Ministry Team is moving ahead and holding in prayer our summer camps as we long for the first day of camp and us able to meet in God's great outdoors all together and in person. We've had a change in deans for this year. Come join Laurie Chipman (CE Director at First Cong Essex Junction) and Ed Sunday-Winters (Pastor at Greensboro UCC) at Rock Point Camp for a week of @ the Lake fun for all 5th- 8th graders on Sunday, July 26th - Friday, July 31st. VT Scholarships are available and Horton Center has a refund policy in place. Please help

the VTOM Team as we search for two female counselors and a nurse. Interested? Know someone who might be, please contact Laurie Chipman, chair at lchipman@fccej.org.

[Continue reading the news from Horton Center ...](#)

Resources from the Vermont Conference website (click the buttons below)

Click
here
for
local
church
events

Eradicate Human Trafficking seminar - May 9 at Waterbury Congregational Church - [Click here to register](#)

Save the date! *Our Clergy Convocation this year will be Sept. 14th-16th at the Bishop Booth Conference Center in Burlington.* We will be talking about "How to stay Centered in a Time of Deep Change" with noted retreat leader and pastor Barbara Lemmel. Hope we can all gather by then, and that we will see you there.

**Search & Call
Resources**

**Lay Ministry
Openings**

Visit our partners



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



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