

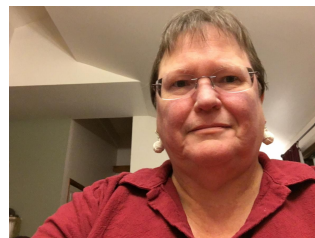


E-Kit May 27, 2020

DONATE

"If not now, when?"

This is a phrase I learned a long time ago. It was meant as a push to do our part in creating the justice and peace we long for. Do not put off what must be done waiting for someone else to show up and do it. Lately, this phrase has come back to me in a very different context. Now, it is the plaintive question of many in our congregations longing to return to in person worship. Recognizing how difficult this season is for so many, still I have answered that question, "not yet."



I know the president has declared houses of worship as "essential" so that people can return to their sanctuaries. There are two things I'd like to raise. First, the CDC has named churches as "super spreaders." There is plenty of concerning data that shows that a church service easily spreads the virus to many of those in attendance and then well beyond as those infected come into contact with others outside the church. We must think long and hard about whether our desire for in person worship is more important than those whose lives will be infected.

[Continue reading Rev. Bujnak's statement here](#)

Required VT Occupational Safety & Health training for reopening workplaces

See the latest guidance and directives from State of Vermont

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**

**Pandemic grants for churches added to UCC National
Setting COVID-19 relief response**

The United Church of Christ National Setting is offering financial assistance to local

churches whose ministries have been challenged by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

As one, the national officers have collectively identified \$2.6 million in COVID-19 relief, \$1.5 million in loans that will be [administered through the Cornerstone Fund](#) and another \$1.1 million in micro grants. **The grant application process opens June 1.** Grant money will be available through the process detailed below by the UCC executives.

From the Revs. John Dorhauer, Traci Blackmon and Karen Georgia Thompson:

The prolonged impact of COVID-19 has caused increased challenges for many of our churches and conferences. The national setting, in addition to the phenomenal work of Conferences, seeks to respond with holistic support of local churches in addition to the ecclesiastical and administrative resources available through our ministries and on ucc.org. We want to provide financial assistance to local church ministries and Conferences during this unprecedented time. As a result, several routine granting cycles for 2020 are suspended for this year only as we redirect funds to meet present challenges while maintaining the integrity of the intent of grant funds. Below please find a list of resources with links to their corresponding application or landing page. Our prayer is that this offering will be useful to churches most in need during this COVID-19 pandemic season.

Operational Grants for Churches that Perform Direct Service

These funds are for general operating support, directed to support churches' ability to carry out their mission rather than specific projects or programs. General operating support is intended to grant the working capital needed to sustain day-to-day operations. This fund can be applied for by congregations as well as Conferences who are applying on behalf of congregations. All applications require Conference endorsement. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Rev. Aaron Wade at: wadea@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

Operational Grants for Congregations of Color and Ethnic Minority Congregations in the UCC

These funds are intended for general operating support that has been allocated specifically for Congregations of Color and Ethnic Minorities in the United Church of Christ: non-dominant racial/ethnic churches, indigenous churches and African-American churches. This fund can be applied for by congregations as well as Conferences who are applying on behalf of congregations. All applications require Conference endorsement. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Rev. Aaron Wade at: wadea@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

Community Garden Grants

These funds are direct service funds set aside for churches to support community garden programs. These funds are intended to be seed monies to maintain or establish sustainable urban and community gardens to improve the public's health, well-being, economic vitality, and create resilient ecosystems for present and future generations. All applications require Conference endorsement. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Rev. Aaron Wade at: wadea@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

UCC COVID-19 Conference Recovery Grant

In response to COVID-19, this grant will provide support to Conferences to meet needs created or worsened due to COVID-19. The funds are earmarked for community support in areas hardest hit by the pandemic. Conference Ministers may apply on behalf of their Conference. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Rev.

Monica Dawkins-Smith at: dawkins-smithm@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

Make a Difference! Caring for Authorized Clergy Fund Grant

These grants are available to persons authorized for ministry in the United Church of Christ (ordained, licensed and commissioned) who are experiencing crisis in their vocational and/or personal lives (e.g. counseling, immediate intervention, early intervention and referral assessment, psychological testing). Funds are not meant for long-term support, salaries or other income. Conference staff must apply for this grant on behalf of an authorized minister. For questions concerning this grant, please contact scholarships@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

Low-Interest Sustainability Loans in partnership with the Cornerstone Fund

Administered by the United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund, this loan program is in response to the adverse impact COVID-19 is having on UCC churches. These loans assist UCC Churches that are experiencing cash flow problems due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Loans of \$5,000 to \$20,000 at 2.5 percent interest rates are being made available.

[Apply here.](#)

The National Setting is also allocating resources to these additional COVID-19 programs:

Medical Debt Abolishment:

RIP National Debt Abolishment

With profound gratitude for essential workers who themselves live at or below poverty and are burdened with medical debt, the national setting will contribute \$15,000 to RIP Medical Debt for a special national campaign to abolish the medical debt of low-income essential workers through their COVID Heroes Fund. The UCC contribution will abolish approximately \$1.5 million dollars of debt from the families of these workers.

Sustainable Farming Response:

FCAB Just Food Project

The national setting has provided a \$15,000 sustainable farming grant to Franklinton Center at Bricks, in Whitakers, N.C., to provide resources to increase the harvesting capacity of community farms in one of the poorest ZIP codes in the nation. Produce grown at FCAB will help sustain families in that area throughout the summer.

International COVID-19 Response:

UCC COVID-19 International Relief Grant

In response to COVID-19, this grant will provide support to international organizations that the UCC currently works with to meet needs created or worsened due to COVID-19. The funds are earmarked for international support in areas hardest hit by the pandemic. Applications are not being received for this grant. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Phyllis Richards at: richardp@ucc.org

UCC COVID-19 Refugee and Asylum Grant

In response to COVID-19, this grant will assist churches and community organizations that provide relief efforts to the refugee and asylum-seeking community. Applicants showing that the situation was caused or worsened due to COVID-19 will be

considered. These funds will be available for United States and territories, and international organizations with proven capacity to address these community-based needs. For questions concerning this grant, please contact Phyllis Richards at: richardp@ucc.org

[Apply here.](#)

Additional financial assistance:

Pension Board Ministerial Assistance Emergency Grant

Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible. To apply for an emergency grant, contact the Conference office where you have authorization for ministry and speak with a member of the Conference staff. Explain your situation and ask them to forward your request for an emergency grant. If the Conference supports your request, conference staff may call or email the Director of Ministerial Assistance.

[More information can be found here.](#)

Cornerstone Loan Options

The Cornerstone Fund offers competitively priced and low-fee borrowing options that are specifically designed to meet the unique need of churches and nonprofit organizations. Loans provide short-term financing to fill the gap between needed funding and availability of collected funds.

[More information can be found here.](#)



*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#

**Email Conference Minister Lynn
Bujnak**

**Email Associate Conference
Minister Paul Sangree**

**Email Operations & Ministries
Coordinator Jesse Davis**

Contact Vermont Conference

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](#)

Special Worship Service available

The Council of Conference Ministers invites you to worship with them on May 17th or any other Sunday in Eastertide depending on what works for your schedule. The materials - full video, video segments, bulletin, and read-only service - can be found on this calendar event: <https://ucctcm.org/event/worship-with-the-council-of-conference-ministers/>

We offer this service to join together in this time of pandemic. We hope this service will provide pastors with a much needed and deserved time off.

Blessings to you all!

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.](#)

Pastoral Transitions

- Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola has been called as Associate Conference Minister on Congregational Transitions and Empowerment for the

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.

Penn Central Conference. Her ministry begins June 1, 2020.

- Rev. Elliott Munn has been called as Pastor of the Congregational Church of Vergennes. His ministry begins later this month.

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

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

2020 Census - Shape your Future - Please Respond Online or by Phone

It starts with each of us doing our part by completing the 2020 Census Questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire allows you to influence the amount of money that comes to Vermont for many of our essential programs that benefit our health and safety, and pay for our roads, local government, schools, hospitals, and so much more.

You can complete the Census by going to my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020. If you have received an invitation to complete the census, simply follow directions. If you have not, or cannot locate it, you can still complete it by calling 844-330-2020 [there is help in English and 14 additional languages] or by going online to my2020census.gov, clicking start, then clicking 'If you don't have a Census ID click here,' and following directions.

Languages and phone number link

<https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-by-phone.html>

59 Language Guides link: <https://2020census.gov/en/languages.html>

Link to Census Response Rate Map to track how Vermont, Windham County and our local communities are doing: <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>

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:

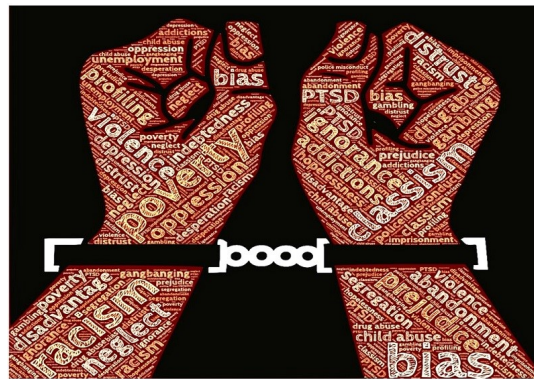
Cantor Steve Zeidenberg from Ohavi Zedek joins us for a conversation on being an LGBTQ cantor.



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

[Our Faith, Our Vote resources](#)

Racism in America symposiums



[Watch the videos of Racism in America series](#)

Outdoor Ministries News

HC@Home is FREE

Our UCC camps in New England, following much discerning, have made a tough and safe decision that all their sites will be closed for the summer camping season of 2020. To keep everyone safe and to help keep outdoor ministries alive Horton Center is offering a free option, HC@Home, with a mission to continue to give campers the experience of building sacred community, encouraging time spent outdoors and continuing our faith journeys alongside one another while keeping everyone safe. Have you been interested in attending an outdoor ministries camp, but were not sure what it was like or the timing just didn't work out? Well, here is your chance! Take a leap and sign up for camp! All the camp titles now begin with HC@Home and are now FREE! They run from Monday to Friday. Registration opened Friday, May 15th and there

Our Vermont Camp at Rock Point for those going into 5th - 8th grade Monday - Friday from July 27th-31st

The VT Outdoor Ministries Team of volunteers along with this year's co-deans, Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters & Laurie Chipman, and @ the Lake daytime volunteers a fun week for you! Join us and register for FREE on HC@Home at www.hortoncenter.org.

There will be daily morning watches at 9am, activity blocks and live evening vespers on Zoom at 7pm. We have a goal to bring as much flavor of @ the Lake to you with HC@Home as we can. We will connect to the water and offer ideas for community service.

Rock Point Camp, <https://www.rockpointvt.org/camp>, Episcopal Conference Center in Burlington will also be closed for the 2020 summer season.

Hello Horton Center Families!

The moment you have all been waiting for has arrived - Registration for HC@Home is now live and ready for you to sign up your campers for free!

You can register at: www.HortonCenter.org/Registration. NOTE: we are limiting it to 1 session per camper for the first week to give everyone a chance to sign up since space is limited. We email a reminder when you can sign up for multiple sessions.

Watch the video about HC@home: [What is HC@home?](#)

Here is the Information sheet about HC@home with a sample schedule: [Info Sheet](#)

We hope you and your campers will enjoy this program and that I bring a little bit of the mountain to you!

See you soon!

Peace,
Tivvi & Tim

are only 30 slots for each camp. You must register 2 weeks prior to camp starting so go visit www.hortoncenter.org NOW! After you register, campers will receive and email with information on how to access their camp.

Tivvi Paré, Summer Director
Tim Hughes, Interim Executive Director
thughes@NHCUCC.org
603-545-9660
Horton Center
140 Sheep Davis Road
Pembroke, NH 03275
Phone: 603-545-9660

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

**Click
here
for
local
church
events**

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
Well**

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



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