



E-Kit
July 15, 2020

DONATE

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

This week two clergy groups began their journey learning and growing through white privilege using “Let’s Talk,” a curriculum offered by our denomination. I also heard from two of our churches letting me know about how they are standing in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and seeking to increase both their awareness of white privilege and their desire to be allies in the struggle against racism, sometimes described as our country’s “original sin.”



We engage in this work because we are aware that it is God’s work. We witness to the work of the One who made all in the Divine Image and pronounced humanity in all its wondrous diversity good. Throughout the pages of the Bible we see God’s favor falling on the ones most mistreated and despised by their society. Through Biblical narrative and the lives of countless Christians we understand that the work of social justice is holy work and when we engage in that work, we are standing on Holy Ground.

Opposition is fierce and not above threats and acts of violence. The news is filled with the videos and sound bites of hatred being spewed at Black and Brown children of the living God. The frequency and tacit entitlement of such racist behavior has been shocking to me not because I did not know it exists but rather because permission has been given to say and do those things as if they were normative.

What are you doing? What is your church doing to exhibit “courage in the struggle for justice and peace”? (UCC Statement of Faith) I have always loved this quotation, attributed to St. Augustine though likely not the source:

“Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.”

May we persist with this Holy work.

In Hope,
Lynn

Black Lives Matter

Fredrick Douglass
July 5, 1852

"But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common.-The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is *yours*, not *mine*. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrecoverable ruin! I can today take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!"

[Read Fredrick Douglass' full speech marking the 4th of July here](#)

[Click here for the statement from the Vermont Conference staff, Board and ministers living and serving in Vermont](#)

Beginning conversations about race and white privilege

Has your church begun an education or reflection program about white privilege and systemic racism? If so, tell the Conference about what you are doing so we can highlight your program.

Contact the Conference at vermontconference@gmail.com to tell us about the programs you are doing and the journey you have begun.

Say their names...

Each week, we will publish names of our sisters and brothers of the black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities who have been murdered by police and/or white supremacists.

Sandra Bland - 28, died in police custody
Darrius Stewart - 19, shot during traffic stop
Ralkina Jones - 37, died in police custody
Christopher McCorvey - 36, died of cardiac arrest due to taser shock

The UCC and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

The American Missionary Association, a predecessor body of the United Church of Christ, was a visionary organization dedicated to education and racial equality. The AMA founded six colleges that continue to relate to the UCC Council for Higher Education. These schools are historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and are racially diverse, welcoming students from a wide range of races and ethnicities.

- Dillard University, New Orleans, LA; www.dillard.edu
- Fisk University, Nashville, TN; www.fisk.edu
- Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX; www.htu.edu
- LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis, TN; www.loc.edu
- Talladega College, Talladega, AL; www.talladega.edu
- Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS; www.tougaloo.edu

Do you know of protests and rallies that are taking place?

Have you attended protests, vigils or rallies? Please let the Vermont Conference know about them so we can post them on our website and social media. Email them to Jesse at vermontconference@gmail.com

- Silent Vigil Against Racism. It has been happening every Sunday afternoon from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. in Arlington on Route 7A in front of St. James' Episcopal Church that the Federated Church of East Arlington is participating in. Folks are asked to mask, are spaced 6 feet apart and encouraged to bring signs. All are welcome to join!



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](#)

Holding space for difficult conversations

How do we have difficult conversations - whether about race, finances or anything else - within our congregations and people with differing perspectives? College Street Congregational Church developed "Communication Guidelines to Strengthen Our Community" and have kindly shared it for other churches to consider. The Vermont Conference Annual Meeting also adopts "A Covenant for Dialog" at the beginning of each Annual Meeting. Please feel free to use these documents in your local church.

[Download College Street Congregational Church: "Communications Guidelines to Strengthen Our Church"](#)

[Download Vermont Conference Annual Meeting: "A Covenant for Dialog"](#)

[Required VT Occupational Safety & Health training for reopening workplaces](#)

[See the latest guidance and directives from State of Vermont](#)

[Pandemic grants for churches from UCC National Setting](#)

**COVID - 19
Information &
Resources**

[Answer the call and volunteer in response to COVID-19](#)

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

Resources curated by the Southern New England Conference

COVID-19 FAQ's for churches

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](#)

Remembering Rev. John Nutting

Did you miss last week's remembrance and time of prayer for Rev. John Nutting? You can see the gathering on the [Vermont Conference YouTube channel](#).



Clergy Convocation

The Convocation Planning Team met last week and decided that we will not have our annual Pastor's Convocation in September live, but will do it online. We decided to do this because of the feedback from many of you, who said that having a time to gather together as Vermont Conference clergy online would be helpful during these challenging times. Barbara Lemmel, Methodist pastor, consultant and spiritual director will be our leader with the theme "How to stay Centered in a Time of Deep Change."

We will begin with a session on Monday night, Sept. 14th with worship and time led by Barb focused on this time that we are in. There will be time for games and hanging out via ZOOM later in the evening. We will gather again on Tuesday morning, Sept. 15th for a time of worship and a session by Barb focused on how we can stay

centered, and she will be sharing with us spiritual practices and disciplines that we can do ourselves that afternoon. We will conclude Tuesday evening with a session of sharing in groups our experience, and a closing worship with Communion.

Convocation will only cost \$25 (no matter how many sessions you attend), and we hope many clergy can join us! In the next couple of weeks, a brochure about Convocation and a way to register will be on the Conference website. At this time in our church's life, we especially need each other, so please set aside this time to be with others. It will be a memorable Convocation!

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. Elliott Munn has been called as Pastor of the Congregational Church of Vergennes. His ministry begins later this month.
- Rev. Elisa Lucozzi has been called as Pastor of the Guilford Community Church. She will succeed Rev. Lise Sparrow who is retiring.
- Rev. Leigh McCaffrey has been called as Pastor of the Barre Congregational Church.

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

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Please hold those murdered by police and white supremacists in your prayers including Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery.

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.

Useful Links

- [UCC Newsfeeds](#)
- [UCC Weekly Seeds](#)
- [2020 Tax preparation](#)

Who should I contact for...?

- Conference Minister: Rev. Lynn Bujnak
 - bujnakl@vtcucc.org
- Assoc. Conference Minister: Rev. Paul

resources

- [Pension Boards rate calculator](#)
- [UCC Yearbook](#)
- [Stewardship blog](#)

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

Outdoor Ministries News



More HC News

Horton Center is offering an opportunity for the Horton Center Camp Experience for FREE remotely this summer. This is a great way to learn about Horton Center, the joy and fun times offered. All are invited - those who have been for years and people new to the camping experience. If you have questions please give me a call.

For four weeks in July (beginning June 29th), HC@home will be offering camp for three different age groups each week. Registration is required so that safe remote access practices can be followed and so campers can receive in the mail the "Kit" of the week.

The day time experiences do not have to be done at a certain time, short videos can be watched and activities completed at your own time. The evening 7pm gathering will be live - all will want to be live at that gathering.

Campers may want to sign up for more than one week - create new friendships and experience God's creation, learn more about the love of God, teachings of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit while having a great time.

Check out the short video on this page that invites campers to participate: <https://hortoncenter.org/>

This link is to information about HC@home:

<https://hortoncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HC@home-Info-Pack.pdf>

Check out the fun offerings and meet Interim Executive Director Tim Hughs and Summer Director Tivvi Pare.

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

**Search & Call
Resources**

**Lay Ministry
Openings**

Visit our partners



**Worship
Well**

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



Church World Service

Adam Smedberg
Community &
Congregational
Engagement Specialist
[Email Adam](#)

PO Box 749
West Springfield, MA 01090
Phone: 413-279-4039
Skype: asmedbergcws
[Website](#)



INSURANCE BOARD
Partners in Protection

Local Agent
James Stewart
[Email James](#)

P.O. Box 9031
Springfield, MA 01102-9031
413-788-4531
[Website](#)

Connect with us

