



E-Kit September 2, 2020

DONATE

Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference:

When my brother was thirty-five and I was twenty-nine, he committed suicide. I knew he was going through a rough spot, but never thought he was so despondent he would take his own life. I was an ordained minister, I had training in working with people who were suicidal and I didn't see this coming. Like many people who go through the suicide of a loved one, the guilt, the I-should-have-known, the I-should-have-saved-him haunted me for years.



September is National Suicide Awareness Month. Here is the statement put out by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness): "September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month—a time to share resources and stories in an effort to shed light on this highly taboo and stigmatized topic. Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

We are being told that mental health issues, including thoughts of suicide and actually committing suicide are sharply on the rise during the stresses of Covid-19. In recent news there seems to be an avalanche of entertainers and public persons dying by suicide. And, there is such stigma around mental health and seeking help. We can all do our part in encouraging our loved ones, family members, church members, strangers to seek help.

Losing someone to suicide means that a life, so full of promise, is cut short. Losing someone to suicide is a hurt that keeps on giving for those left behind. If you need help, know that you are loved and cared about. There are resources available. You are a beloved child of God. With help, you can get through this dark time.

What can you do? Please hold victims and survivors of suicide in your prayers. Sponsor an educational event at your church. Contact the UCC Mental Health Network (see below) and become a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) congregation for mental health.

In hope and peace,
Lynn

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, or,
@ www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org. We also encourage you to become more aware of and engaged in the work of mental health ministry. You can start by visiting the Mental Health Network of the United Church Christ @ www.mhn-ucc.org. There you will find pivotal resources that are invaluable to the work of our local churches and communities.

Black Lives Matter

Summer Forum Series: Is There a Path to Racial Reconciliation?

After over 400-years of history and oppression toward people of color, is there a path to racial reconciliation? Join us as we explore this important question in a Virtual Forum Series, each Sunday at 9 AM beginning Sunday, July 19th. Our guest speakers will present a wide range of perspectives and knowledge to inspire our discussion.

This discussion series is presented by members and friends of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Jericho, United Church of Bakersfield and Fairfield, Waterville Union Church, and Second Congregational Church in Jeffersonville.

Facilitators: Pastor Arnold Thomas (Good Shepherd) and Pastor Devon Thomas (Jeffersonville, Waterville and Bakersfield).

Learn more and attend the forum series at: <https://jeffchurchvt.org/summer-forum-series/>

Read Fredrick Douglass' famous speech regarding the celebration of American independence

[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.

- Old South Church in Windsor continues to hold weekly vigils on Wednesday evenings 6-6:30 followed by 30 minute discussions about local racial inequality issues.
- Mallets Bay Congregational Church has been holding a book study of *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone.
- The United Church of Strafford helped launch a town-wide discussion forum about race and being an anti-racist.
- Newfane Congregational Church has been using the UCC curriculum for examining white privilege.

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.

Jacob Blake - 29, tased and shot seven times in the back in Kenosha, WI. He remains hospitalized.

Watch the videos of Racism in America series

Lay Training Event - Save the Date!

The Vermont Conference will be holding its first annual Lay Training Event on October 24th from 8:45 to noon. This will be held virtually on ZOOM.

Our training sessions will consider:

- Pastoral relations committees
- Youth programming development
- Racial justice in our churches and communities
- Stewardship in the pandemic era

Stay tuned for more information about our instructors and registration.

Reminder

Your local church needs your financial support more than ever. If you have been fortunate to still be employed please consider making regular gifts to your church. Your congregation is doing vital ministry through online or written worship opportunities, caring for one another, feeding hungry people and fighting for justice. Summer is always a slow time in terms of giving, but the church expenses stay steady.



Please also remember the Vermont Conference. We need the support of our congregations and friends so we can continue to resource pastors and congregations through these strange and important days.

Thank you so much!

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"**

**COVID - 19
Information &
Resources**

Are you holding services



according to CDC protocols?

COVID-19 resources from the UCC Insurance Boards

Click the image above to learn more



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! A brochure about Convocation and a way to register are 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!

NY School of Ministry (NYSOM) Fall Courses open Featuring Supply Preaching certificate program

The New York Conference's School of Ministry (NYSOM) fall course listing is available and features the Supply Preacher Certification Program. This program is designed especially for lay members who feel called to preaching at churches when their pastors are away or while they are transitioning between pastors.

Click the buttons below for more information.

Supply Preacher Certification
Program

NYSOM Fall Course offerings

Kipah, Kufi, and Collar

As part of an interfaith effort at modeling peace, Rabbi Amy Small of Ohavi Zedek, Imam Islam Hassan of the Islamic Society of Vermont, and Pastor Ken White of College Street Congregational Church in Burlington have released a podcast called "Kipah, Kufi, and Collar". Each 30 minute segment starts with Amy, Islam, and Ken having a conversation about an everyday issue (week 1 is "how to deal with difficult people") and then interviewing a local figure about that same topic (week 1's guest is former Vermont Governor, U.S. Ambassador, professor and author Madeline Kunin). New episodes are available every Monday.

You can access it at [kipahkufiandcollar.com](https://open.spotify.com/show/0MpaNQRVMA1claeP2y5Ot0) or you can look for it on Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/0MpaNQRVMA1claeP2y5Ot0>), iTunes (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/kipah-kufi-collar/id1523653268>) or wherever you access podcasts.

Curating services and sermons for pastor vacations

Would you be willing to share your sermons or services with others in the Conference, so that they might use them on a Sunday they want to take off? Let Jesse in the Conference office know if you would be willing to do that, and we will list all the churches in the Conference that encourage you to use sermons and services in Ekit. Then you can simply go to their website and use them with their permission. Thanks!

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!

Lancaster Seminary accepting Doctor of Ministry applicants

As a Seminary, we continue to adapt to the needs and realities of these times, as we prepare faith leaders for ministry in a complex and ever-changing world. [We are still accepting applications for the Doctor of Ministry.](#)

Due to COVID-19, our Doctor of Ministry will look a little different, but will still offer the same high-quality educational experience. For the upcoming semester, the one-week intensive has moved to a completely online format (through Zoom). Also, additional classes are scheduled periodically throughout the semester to maintain the cohort experience and ensure academic accountability. I would be happy to meet with anyone you know that might be interested in starting their Doctor of Ministry this Fall.

Spiritual Direction

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

Pastoral Transitions

- 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.
- Rev. Mark Wilson has been called as Pastor of Waitsfield United Church Christ. His ministry will begin in October.

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

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Please hold Rev. Kurt Shaffert in your prayers as he holds vigil with his mother who is in hospice.

Please hold Rev. Margo Marrone in your prayers as she and her family mourn the sudden passing of her husband Tom Marrone.

Please hold our Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) sisters and brothers murdered by police and white supremacists in your prayers. Say their names...

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

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

Outdoor Ministries News



VT Outdoor Ministry is in full swing this week as we gather on Zoom for our week of @ the Lake camp. We invite you all to like our Vermont Outdoor Ministry UCC Facebook

page. Please click the link below and see the picture of the full team that we posted on our page. Your prayers are must appreciated as we go through this week of virtual camp, for the leader and the campers. We plan to continue to make post on this new Facebook page as we continue to move through this important ministry.

https://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Outdoor-Ministry-UCC-115717706796007/?view_public_for=115717706796007

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

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