



# The Vermont Conference of the



## Black Lives Matter

Fall/Winter November 12, 2020

### Message from Our Conference Minister

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference:

Grace and peace to you. I hope you have found time to revel in the gift of these warm November days. At a time when many of us feel overwhelmed, just the feel of sunshine on our faces can be enough to bring a moment of joy. I think living in these days of Covid-19, contentious politics and our growing awareness of systemic racism are burdens that we carry with us as we walk through each day. How necessary that we celebrate those small grace-filled moments when we laugh at a joke, or sing a favorite hymn, or notice the light on the shrubs or cherish a loved one even if from a distance.



It is by following these bread crumb trails that we remember that we belong, we are rooted and grounded in the One Who is always with us. We are led, step by step, to the still waters where our weary souls and weary hearts are restored. What is it that restores your soul? What have you noticed this week that has given you a moment of respite or joy or ease?

During one of the Tuesday morning clergy calls, Rev. James Mills, quoting author Alice Walker, proclaimed, "Hard times require furious dancing." These are hard times. It's time to dance.

In peace and hope,

Lynn

Rev. Lynn Bunjak, Conference Minister

### The Vermont Conference is hiring!

The Vermont Conference is seeking an Administrative Assistant to manage the business operations of the Conference office, assist with events, be a resource to our local churches and other responsibilities. Click the button below to learn more.

Click Here to: [View Administrative Assistant opportunity](#)

CONFERENCE RECCOMENDATION

# ON IN-PERSON WORSHIP

## FALL/WINTER COVID-19

Several people have asked me recently whether the Vermont Conference has changed its advice on in person worship.

In light of: the growing number of Covid-19 infections in Vermont, increased hospitalizations, the onset of flu season, the potential spreading of the disease during holiday gatherings and the advice of our Governor and experts in infectious disease, I strongly urge that worship not be held in person at least through the end of this year.

If you have worshiped outside or have begun gathering indoors with social distancing, these actions have seemed reasonable in some locations and with lots of precautions. However, the environment in which we live has changed as colder weather drives us indoors. Children have returned to school and are participating in sporting events. People are weary from the constraints resulting from the disease and are becoming less careful about wearing masks, social distancing, and not coming into contact with those beyond our "pod" or family.

Many of our congregations and clergy have reminded us that while some have a fairly low risk of getting Covid-19 or, if infected have a relatively mild case, it is those whom we might infect and who will not be able to fight off the virus that we need to keep in mind. In the language of our faith, we are our brother/sister/sibling's keeper.

I know this is a hard word to hear. There is hope on the horizon as promising drug trials for vaccines and medicine to treat those already infected come closer to making it through the trials and become widely available.

We are not alone. We can survive this time, see the gifts hidden within and take care of one another. As it says in Hebrews 6:19a:

***We have this hope, a sure and steady anchor of the soul...***

In peace and hope,  
Lynn

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### **Council of Conference Ministers' [2nd Virtual Worship Service!](#)**

You and your congregation are invited to the Council of Conference Ministers' second virtual worship service! The service will be ready for use on Sunday, November 15th in full and in parts, but can be used at any time. It is centered around the Parable of the Talents. Stay tuned for an E-blast as soon as we receive it and we hope you'll join us!

**[For more information and all the videos click here](#)**

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**THE SEASON OF ADVENT IS NEARLY UPON US.  
AN ADVENT LIKE NO OTHER**



## **3 GREAT LOVES ADVENT TOOLKIT 2020**

3 Great Loves has created an Advent 2020 Toolkit with online and streaming worship in mind. Everything from weekly social media and theme graphics, to weekly video prayers on the themes of Hope/Peace/Joy/Love, and a suggestion guide.

**Download your free toolkit today as you and your church prepare for the 2020 Advent Season here.**

[Order](#)

## **UCC CHRISTMAS PAGEANT / WORSHIP RESOURCES 2020**



## **A Very UCC Christmas: 2020**

Brought to you by the

United Church of Christ National Setting

The staff of the national setting is working on a Christmas Pageant and full worship service coming for Local Churches to use as worship for on or around December 27<sup>th</sup>, or as piece meal.

Each piece will be downloadable as a video file from the national setting, with more details released in marketing before November 20<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, as congregations are planning for Advent and Christmas, please know that the following components are coming for your use in worship through Advent and beyond:

[more information click here](#)



## Christmas Fund 2020 is here!

**“For Such a Time as This” Esther 4:14**  
**Suggested offering date December 20,**  
**2020**

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever. Click on link for more resources:

[The Pension Boards](#)

## Peacemaker’s Pulpit – NOVEMBER 2020

### *Tenacity*

Hello, Conference folks!

From time to time, when I feel that the world’s pain is too much to bear or share, I listen to a You Tube clip of the Kuumba Singers singing ‘Hold On’ with Bobby McFerrin as soloist. They were performing on an outdoor stage in Leipzig, Germany in 2002. The words are simple:

Hold on just a little while longer.. (3x)  
...everything will be all right.  
Pray on just a little while longer...  
Fight on just a little while longer...  
Sing on just a little while longer...

[click here for youtube video](#)

(or google kuumba singers Mcferrin hold on)

Notice it does not say, “Everything will go back to the way it was before,” or Everything will turn out exactly as would best suit you.” Also notice that holding on is not passive: we layer on the activities of prayer, struggle, and song. Whether you need encouragement in a personal issue, or the strength to keep calling attention to injustice, or the energy to keep feeding the hungry, loving the outcast, caring for the sick or loving your neighbor...hold on just a little while longer.



For almost a week, we had to hold on just a little while longer to hear the outcome of the presidential election, and it seems that 2 senate seats will be in question until January. For 8 months, we have been holding on, distancing and isolating from our friends and loved ones.

The spiritual virtue of tenacity, the reminder that we are held in a loving God's embrace, will get us through.

And if you need another You Tube musical fix, here's another one:

[click here for youtube video](#)

(or google the storm is passing over Detroit)

- Written by Mary Brownlow, retired UCC pastor, living in Norwich, VT

## THURSDAYS IN BLACK

*Towards a world without  
rape and violence*

#ThursdaysInBlack

Join Wider Church Ministries,  
and our partners, in the  
Thursdays in Black campaign.  
To learn more click here:

[Thursdays in Black](#)



General Synod website, newsletter sharing information about July's virtual online gathering

The United Church of Christ General Synod Planning Team is inviting people across the wider church to bookmark the recently released GS 33 website to learn more about the denomination's first online biennial gathering. **This website** will provide a hub for all the information related to **General Synod 2021**. The event is scheduled July 11-18, from 5 to 9:30 p.m. EDT. Pre-Synod events will occur July 7-10.

## BE A BLESSING

PRAY OFTEN. BE KIND. GIVE THANKS.

DO GOOD. HAVE COURAGE.

LEAD WITH LOVE. PRACTICE PEACE.

BE THE LIGHT. WORK FOR JUSTICE.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS. BE JOYFUL.



UCC.org



## Desk Calendar & Plan Book

Stay on track with a 2021 Desk Calendar and Plan Book. This 8.5" x 11" Plan Book includes complete lectionary readings for Sundays, special observances, mission offering dates, and a directory of national staff.

## Be a Blessing

Be a blessing to those in your circle and your community with Be a Blessing shirts, yard signs, banners, face masks, and more!

## Boy Scouts of America Bankruptcy Claim Information **DEADLINE TO FILE PROOF OF CLAIM NOV. 16, 2020**

Boy Scouts of America and Delaware BSA, LLC (“the BSA”) commenced cases under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code on February 18, 2020, partially due to multiple sexual molestation allegations and claims filed against BSA. Chapter 11 Bankruptcy allows for a business (in this case the BSA) to continue operating while it reorganizes and restructures debts to pay creditors over time. There are many instances where churches and ministries allow BSA activities to take place on their premises, whether they charter a troop or simply permit gatherings or activities to take place.

**The deadline for filing a claim is November 16, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. EST.**

For more information on:

1. What claims are subject to this notice
2. Should your ministry file a claim
3. Deadline to file a claim
4. How to file a sexual abuse survivor proof of claim
5. How to file a general proof of claim

[Click here](#)

We recommend ministries consult legal counsel for information and guidance.

HOW TO FILE YOUR PROOF OF CLAIM: [Click here for claim instructions and form](#)

## Old E-mail Phishing Scam Going Around Again

Please be vigilant about any email that appears to be from your clergy person or our conference minister or staff, asking you to take some kind of unusual action (purchasing gift cards and replying with the serial numbers, clicking a link or downloading an attachment you didn't request, wiring money to a specified account, or simply replying quickly).

A number of congregations across our conference and the country have been hit with an email scam. It involves making a fake Gmail (or yahoo, etc.) account in the minister's name and then sending a request for gift cards allegedly from that minister to the congregation's directory. The emails seem harmless; they have the local pastor's name and an email address that looks legitimate, but upon further inspection, the email address is actually from a provider different than the one the church typically uses.

In some instances, the sender's name may look correct but is missing a single letter. Or otherwise closely resembles the real email address; for example, joe@churchstaff.org becomes joechurchstaff@gmail.com. In some cases, the message asks for Google Play or iTunes gift cards and in other cases, it asks the recipient to contact them immediately.



DOs and DON'Ts:

DO double-check your emails carefully.

DON'T ever respond to an email asking you for money.

DO verify in person or by phone any request involving money or personal information.

DON'T reply.

DON'T click on any links within the message.

DO report the message as spam to your email provider after forwarding it to the Federal Trade Commission at [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov) - be sure to cc the church being impersonated.

These scams attack the trust and faith you place in certain respected people. Be safe out there in cyberspace.

## Upcoming Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Webcasts

### Securing Your House of Worship: A Roadmap to Success

[Register Here](#)

THIS WEBCAST WILL FEATURE:

CHRISTINE FIGUEROA  
PATRICK SHAW

THURSDAY • NOV 19 • 2PM EST

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is committed to helping houses of worship navigate security concerns such as civil unrest, active intruder, cybersecurity, and so much more. Protective Security Advisors, Christine Figueroa and Patrick Shaw, from CISA, will discuss how churches can utilize their new security assessment tool designed for houses of worship, and provide an overview of how to access critical safety resources.



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**COVID - 19  
Information &  
Resources**

**COVID-19 resources from the UCC Insurance  
Boards**

# RETURN TO WORSHIP COVID-19 - TRAINING PACKAGE-

In many states it is required to provide COVID-19 training to your leadership, staff and volunteers prior to reopening. By providing this training you will minimize the legal burden, but more importantly you are providing a safe place to work and worship. The Insurance Board spent months developing this high-quality training to help churches and ministries like yours to reopen safely.

The video provides a completion certificate for each viewing, which can help satisfy training requirements mandated by certain States. In addition to protecting ministries by reducing the likelihood of COVID-19 related claims, it also provides documentation for necessary steps taken by the church to best demonstrate preparedness and precautions taken for a safe return to worship.

There is also a companion video for staff and volunteers on "Considerations for Preventing COVID-19 in Your Ministry." Member denominations may access the license to view the videos through our partnership with myCEcourse.com at a discounted price of \$2.50. All other ministries may access the video for the low cost of \$5.

[For more information click here](#)

## Don't Forget!

Order your UCC Stewardship Theme materials.



### Introducing our new Ministries Coordinator!

The Vermont Conference is pleased to announce that Rev. Jackie Lingelbach has joined the Conference staff as our part-time Ministries Coordinator. Jackie grew up in Vermont, attended Vermont College of Norwich University and then went to Lancaster Theological Seminary where she earned her Master of Divinity Degree. Following a year-long Chaplaincy Residency at Penn State Hershey Medical Center, she was ordained by the Northeast Association of the Vermont Conference in the Danville Congregational Church. In Pennsylvania, she served as a pastor for over 9 1/2 years, until moving back to Vermont where her husband, Rev. Paul Eyer was called as pastor of the Williston Federated Church. Jackie also served as a Hospice Chaplain for The University of Vermont Health Network Home Health & Hospice.

She will be working closely with our Search and Call Teams and the Ministerial Standards and Standings Committee.

You can reach Jackie at: [vtconmincoor@gmail.com](mailto:vtconmincoor@gmail.com)

Thank You for Your Support!

Our Churches Wider Mission Basic Support, Association Dues, and Friends of the Vermont Conference make this communication possible.

[Donate](#)

Connect with us





visit our website at <http://www.vtcucc.org/>

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