



The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ



Purpose (from the Gospel of Matthew):

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves

Vision:

United in Christ's love, a just world for all

Mission:

United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all

Message from Our Conference Fall/Winter November 19, 2020

Did you know that the first African American to be ordained in the United States served in our Vermont Conference for most of his ministry? Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833) grew up in Connecticut, served in the American Revolution, and then was ordained by the Congregational Church in Torrington, Connecticut in 1785. He went on to serve that church as pastor for 3 years.

He then accepted a call to the West Rutland Congregational Church in Vermont, where he served as pastor for 30 years to a mostly white congregation. In addition to preaching the Gospel, he was a strong anti-slavery activist. In 1804, Middlebury College awarded him an honorary Master of Arts, the first honorary degree ever bestowed by a college on an African-American in the United States. At the conclusion of his ministry in West Rutland in 1818, he served as a temporary pastor in Manchester, VT, before finishing his ordained ministry at the South Granville church in South Granville, NY. He was still serving there at the age of 80 when he died!

The Southwest Association, which includes the two churches in Vermont where he served, plans to commemorate his ministry in some way this upcoming year, though obviously this is dependent on how Covid is affecting us all. In the midst of all that we are currently facing, it is good to remember a faithful servant of the Church before us who faced so much, and yet made such a difference in the lives of so many. It is something to be truly thankful for!

Faithfully yours,
Paul Sangree, Associate Conference Minister

NEW CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP FALL/WINTER COVID-19

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, we strongly urge that **worship not be held in person at least through the end of this year.**

[For more info click here](#)

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](#)

Religious Leaders Peaceful Transition Statement

(multi denominational)

A video message coordinated by the National Council of Churches in collaboration with leaders from a diverse theological perspective. All of them share the common belief that there is an urgent need for democracy to be preserved and for the administration to accept the outcome.

[view video here](#)

UCC Women's Table Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey prepared by the Women's Table of the United Church of Christ. It is intended to gather information from women in the UCC about the issues and concerns you most care about, are engaged with, and for which your faithful responses make a difference in the world around us. We are grateful for the staff of the UCC's Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data (CARDD) who will conduct the survey.

[Click here for more information.](#)

It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. Please have your responses included by Friday, December 11, at 11:59 pm EDT.

[Take Survey](#)



WORSHIP RESOURCES

[Free-Use, No-Licensing Music and Worship Materials here](#)

[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 is ready for use in full and in parts, but can be used at any time. It is centered around the Parable of the Talents.

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

3 GREAT LOVES ADVENT TOOLKIT 2020



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

Download your free
toolkit today here

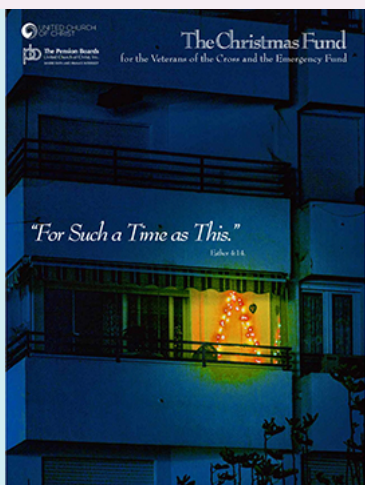


A Very UCC Christmas: 2020

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 27th, 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 20th. [more information click here](#)

UCC CHRISTMAS PAGEANT/WORSHIP
RESOURCES 2020



Christmas Fund 2020

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

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:

[Promotional Resources Here](#)

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](#)

SAVE THE DATE

UCC's first virtual General Synod
to take place July 11-18, 2021



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.

**Giving Tuesday, Dec. 1,
to focus assistance on
refugees and asylum
seekers**

[more info here](#)



DISASTER MINISTRIES



UCC launches "Recovering Hope,"

Emotional Care in COVID-19

[click here for more info](#)



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!

[order](#)



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.

[order](#)

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 - 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.

COVID - 19 Information & Resources

COVID-19 resources from the UCC Insurance Boards

COVID-19 - RESOURCES BEFORE RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP -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](#)

Across Our Conference:

Departing Pastors

Rev. Dr. Wendy Jane Summers - resigned as Pastor at Second Congregational Church of Hyde Park
Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola - called as Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Transitions, Penn
Central Conference, PA
Rev. Michael Caldwell - resigned as Interim Pastor of First Congregational Church of Newbury and
Wells River Congregational Church
Ms. Sherry Baer - resigned as licensed Pastor of United Church of Northfield
Rev. Lucia Jackson - retired as Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Hartland
Rev. Barbara Purinton - completed her ministry as Bridge Pastor at Waitsfield United Church of Christ
Rev. Daniel Cooperrider - resigned from Weybridge Congregational Church
Rev. Gordon MacClennan - resigned from Pastor of First Congregational Church of Manchester
Rev. Lise Sparrow - retired from Guilford Community Church

Arriving Pastors

Rev. Mark Daniels Wilson - called as Pastor at Waitsfield United Church of Christ
Rev. Ezra Chapola - called as Pastor and Teacher at Old South Church in Windsor
Rev. James Mills - called as Pastor and Teacher at First Congregational Church of Fair Haven
Ms. Theresa Lever - called as licensed Transitional Co-Pastor at First Congregational Church of Berlin
Ms. Nancy Fowler - called as co-interim at First Congregational Church of Berlin
Rev. Peter Heinrichs - called as Interim Pastor at Norwich Congregational Church
Rev. Cass Poulos - called as Pastor at Post Mills Congregational Church
Rev. Alberta Wallace - called as Interim Minister at Grace Congregational Church in Rutland
Rev. Elliott Munn - called as Pastor at Congregational Church of Vergennes
Rev. Leigh McCaffrey - called as Pastor at Barre Congregational Church
Ms. Amy Davin - called as licensed Pastor of First Congregational Church in Hartland
Rev. Lava Mueller - called as Hospice Chaplain, Visiting Nurse and Hospice of VT and NH
Rev. Dr. Wendy Jaine Summers - called as Pastor of United Church of Johnson
Rev. Elisa Lucozzi - called as Pastor of Guilford Community Church UCC, Guilford
Rev. Jessica Moore - called as Pastor of First Congregational UCC, Saint Albans
Mr. Michael Mario - called as licensed Pastor of First Congregational Church of Springfield
Mr. J. Chris Heintz - called as licensed Pastor of First Congregational Church of Manchester
Rev. Kurt Herber - called as Interim Minister of United Community Church UCC, St. Johnsbury
Rev. Rebecca Girrell, UMC Minister has been called to United Community Church of Morrisville

In Memorium

Rev. Louise Higgins Drake died Oct 7, 2018
Rev. Betty E. Stone-Ludwig died November 2, 2019
Rev. Ray Linford Harwick died May 13, 2019
Rev. W. Norman Macfarlane died May 5, 2020
Rev. Philip Noe Nelson died May 20, 2020
Rev. John E. Nutting died June 10, 2020
Rev. Dr. Avery D. Post died September 10, 2020

Don't Forget!

Order your UCC Stewardship Theme materials.

Thank You for Your Support!

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

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