



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

Weekly E-News Winter December 9, 2020



Message from the Conference

Dear Friends,

We are now squarely in the season of Advent, which is the beginning of the liturgical year. We all know Advent as a time of waiting, and traditionally in the Church, we are waiting for three things: the physical nativity in Bethlehem, the Second Coming of Christ, and the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer. Advent has been a time of penitence and fasting, as Christians fasted three times a week during much of the medieval period in Europe. But the Second Vatican Council differentiated the spirit of Advent from Lent, emphasizing Advent as a season of hope for Christ's coming now as a promise of his Second Coming.

The Advent wreath that so many of our churches use is a reminder of that promise of hope. Of course, we are not able to gather in our houses of worship right now to watch the candles of the wreath get lit. How many times I as a pastor watched nervously as children or adults went to light the candle on the wreath, hoping that they would not accidentally set the whole wreath on fire! So maybe it is not all bad that we are not doing it physically, but we still can rejoice in the four words that go with each candle of Advent—words of hope, peace, joy and love.

In a clergy group I was with recently, I asked everyone what their favorite Christmas carol or song was. Everyone shared some wonderful songs, both from the church and beyond. I said my favorite carol is “Away in the Manger.” As a pastor, I would always make sure we sang that carol on Christmas Eve, and how I would look forward to when it was sung in the service! It truly was the moment that I could worship. I particularly always like the last line:

“Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.”

Faithfully yours,
Paul

Rev. Paul Sangree, Associate Conference Minister

Need Extra Support During the Pandemic?



During these difficult times, could you use some emotional support and a listening ear? Are you looking for connections to community resources during the pandemic?

COVID Support VT is a statewide program offering free and confidential emotional support and connections to resources for anyone needing help. They offer a wide range of supports on their [website](#).

If you or someone you know could use some support coping with the pandemic, reach out to COVID Support VT. Call 2-1-1- to reach a Support Counselor. You can also access their [self-care tips and resources flyer](#), [daily stress management plan](#) and their online [Weekly Wellness Groups](#).

Share with us what your church is doing this Advent and Christmas. Send us a picture or a story of what you are doing or seeing during this unprecedented time to celebrate the God With us! Send your news to vtconmincoor@gmail.com by Tuesday of each week.



United Church of Underhill
always had a 16 foot Christmas tree in the sanctuary. With no in-person services at the church this year they decided to move it outside in front of the church. They decided on a 21 foot tree with 2,200 white LED lights! They turned on the lights on the first Sunday in Advent with a full moon over the church.



Charlotte Congregational Church
Is offering a Spiral Walk for Advent



New Haven Congregational Church

Do You Have Any Extra Choir Robes?

Thank you to Second Do you have choir robes you would like to donate to a good home? We are looking for 30 robes (assorted sizes) to donate to a partner church in Congo. They would prefer 30 of the same color, but will consider assorted colors. Please contact Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen (Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC) at rev.kemg@gmail.com if you've got robes

Thank you to the Second Congregational UCC of Jeffersonville who recently donated 12 choir robes!

**College Street Congregational Church
is freely sharing its collection of worship music videos
to all UCC churches for use in online worship services**

**Anthems, Preludes and Postludes for Worship Available Online
Plus: Special Christmas Sunday Anthem from Handel's Messiah**



Collection is available at: [College Street Congregational Church Youtube Channel](#)
There you'll find dozens of favorite anthems, preludes and postludes (choral & instrumental) from a wide range of styles, periods and composers. Our only request is that let us know when you use them so that we can lift each other up in prayer worship - thankful for the gift of connections near and far.

Special Christmas Sunday Music is being produced, too.

"For Unto Us a Child is Given" from Handel's Messiah.

For more information and to hear a sample recording,
contact Matt Van Wagner at (603) 557-7504 or email matt.vanwagner@gmail.com

We know that ministers and staff across the world are overtaxed (<- understatement) as we continue our socially distant ministries. We hope access to additional (and free!) service music may give you some additional ways to keep your engaged in worship in

the months yet to come.

FREE HOLIDAY GIFT TO ALL!

The Old Meeting House Arts Ministry is offering a free holiday gift to the community in the form of a virtual performance of Stories for a Winter's Eve featuring Patti Casey, Pete Sutherland, Mark Nash and Kathryn Blume airing from Dec 19 – Jan 3. for more info click on the [press release](#).

SHARING WORSHIP AROUND THE VERMONT CONFERENCE

BEHOLD I DO A NEW THING!

In this new era of the way our churches are providing various worship services (via. email/phone, local tv channels, radio, and virtually online through social media). We are creating a list of the many alternative worship services to share among our conference members. Would you please send an email to vtconmincoor@gmail.com to let us know how people can reach your services during this time?

**Do you need help with getting your church services online?
Find resources and help here:**

[Click here for WorshipWell information and resources](#)

[Worship Resource Links for How to Live Stream- from the Southern New England Conference UCC](#)

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

[Zoom Worship Laboratory Video Tutorial](#)

[How to prevent Zoom Bombing](#)

If you have additional resources to share please email the conference office at vtconmincoor@gmail.com

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](#)

BLUE CHRISTMAS & LONGEST NIGHT RESOURCES

- Marcia McFee Worship Design Studio: [A Blue Christmas Liturgy](#)
- UCC Worship Ways: [Blue Christmas Liturgy From Amistad Chapel](#)
- PRC - Practical Resources for Churches: [Advent & Christmas Liturgies and Webinars plus Blue Christmas Services](#)

3 GREAT LOVES ADVENT TOOLKIT 2020

UCC CHRISTMAS PAGEANT/WORSHIP RESOURCES 2020



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

Download your free
toolkit today here



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](#)



Beyond Belief: A Marcus Borg Retrospective

50% off for Vermont Conference Churches

Beyond Belief is a six session DVD study. The series contains favorite moments, core teachings and extensive never-before seen material of Marcus Borg from the LtQ archives plus commentary from Rev. Marianne Borg. A DVD copy will be in the Vermont Conference Office for churches to borrow. However if you would like to purchase the digital at a special 50% off rate [CLICK HERE](#) and use the coupon code: **vtcucc5**. This coupon code also applies to any of the Living the Questions DVD or Digital curriculum so act now.

SAVE THE DATE

"We now need to put as much effort into defining a just peace as we have done in the past in defining a just war."
-Dr. Robert V. Moss



The UCC Just Peace Committee is inviting you to the next quarterly Just Peace Webinar to take place on January 27 (7 p.m. ET/6 p.m. CT/5 p.m. MT/4 p.m. PT/2 p.m. HT)

Details and log-in instructions will be sent in the New Year, but please mark your calendars now and save the date.

Topic: Where do we go from here? How do we engage? What should be our Just Peace priorities in 2021 as individuals, congregations, Associations, Conferences and the National Setting. What might we expect from a Biden Administration and how does that influence our work? And, finally, let's talk and share ideas and plans.

University of Vermont SAVE THE DATE MLK CELEBRATION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Larner College of Medicine are excited to announce UVM's annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. This year's keynote speaker is Leon McDougale, MD, MPH, 121st President of the National Medical Association. Dr. McDougale is the first African American to achieve the rank of Professor with tenure in The Ohio State University Department of Family and Community Medicine. He currently serves as the first Chief Diversity Officer for The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Dr. McDougale's research focuses on diversity and inclusion and eliminating health disparities. He has been recognized nationally for clinical excellence as being among the top 10 percent of physicians for patient satisfaction and among the Best Doctors in America. Please save the date and join the UVM community for his keynote presentation, "Slave Health Deficit: The Journey to Health Parity," to be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 from 5:30-6:45 pm on Microsoft Teams.

Tickets are FREE and REQUIRED. eTickets are available now at go.uvm.edu/mlk2021. The URL to the live virtual celebration will be available closer to the event at uvm.edu/diversity/signature-events/mlk.

The keynote presentation is sponsored by President Suresh V. Garimella, the Larner College of Medicine, the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the Department of Student Life.

To request a disability-related accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services at (802) 656-7753 or access@uvm.edu.

DEADLINE DEC 11: 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.

**DISASTER
MINISTRIES**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**UCC launches "Recovering Hope,"****Emotional Care in COVID-19**[click here for more info](#)

At Annual meeting each year we take time to honor with deep appreciation those clergy in our midst who are celebrating significant anniversaries. This year Annual Meeting was canceled due to the pandemic, however we still want to recognize with Thanksgiving those clergy who have served us in so many ways. (please note this information is gathered from what we have in the UCC Data hub, if we have left out or forgotten anyone please email vtconmincoor@gmail.com so we can recognize you and update our files.)

65 Years of Ministry

Richard L. Bingham

60 Years of MinistryJordan E. Dickinson
Thomas D. Steffen**55 Years of Ministry**David C. Norling
Paul E. Willard**50 Years of Ministry**John N. Bixby Jr
James Macintyre III**45 Years of Ministry**Dale N. Hindmarsh
Marshall R. Hudson-Knapp
Jay D. Sprout**40 Years of Ministry**Marcia A. Dorey
Edward C. Hults
Karen S. Lipinczyk
Richard E. Ringenwald Sr
Arnold Isidore Thomas**35 Years of Ministry**Janet Langdon
Joan N. O'Gorman
Joan W. Vincent**30 Years of Ministry**Evelyn E. Lavelli
Mark A. Mendes

25 Years of Ministry

Ann Hockridge
Peter O Plagge

20 Years of Ministry

Shawn Edward Bracebridge
Anne M. Hancock
Mary Simpson Thompson
Margaret Wickham Tooker

15 Years of Ministry

Janice Chilek

10 Years of Ministry

Cordelia Burpee
Ken White

Ordained in 2020

Lava Mueller
Casseniette R. Poulos

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. 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

Protect Yourself and Others from Email Phishing Scams
[click here for more information](#)

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.

Donate

**Due to the increasing COVID-19 pandemic, the Vermont Conference
Office will be closed beginning Monday, November 23rd, 2020.
Staff will continue to work remotely.**

UPDATED CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP -ALL/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](#)

**COVID - 19
Information &
Resources**

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

Connect with us



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