

Dear Friends,

I have just finished a ZOOM meeting with Doug Carter, chair of our Board of Directors and Jeanne Zammataro, Conference Moderator concerning the 2020 Annual Meeting of our Conference. In its March meeting, the Board of Directors empowered the three of us to make the call about whether to hold Annual Meeting in light of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The decision is to cancel the 225th Annual Meeting at Lake Morey Resort. This is a painful decision to make, but one we felt was the right thing to do in light of current information.

Several things factored into that decision:

- There is a ban on National UCC staff travel which means Traci Blackmon is not able to be with us. Since she was so essential to our gathering in multiple ways, it would have been difficult to refocus our meeting.
- Many of those who attend Annual Meeting are over the age of sixty and/or have chronic health issues. Either our attendance would be drastically reduced or we would be taking a chance of spreading the virus to those least able to fight it.

Other factors contributing to the decision:

- COVID-19 appears to be able to be spread before the infected person displays symptoms.
- The COVID-19 virus, like other cold and flu viruses, is readily spread in large crowds.
- The Southern New England Conference, UCC (Massachusetts) canceled their Super Saturday event which would have been attended by over 600 people.
- The New York Conference, UCC has canceled all conference events for 60 days.
- The Upper Valley Haven in White River Junction has canceled an annual fundraising event which normally brings in upwards of \$60,000 in consideration of the public's safety.
- Middlebury College is going to have its students complete the remainder of the spring semester online instead of on campus.

What does this mean? First we are immediately **reaching out to the Rev. Traci Blackmon to secure her participation in our 2021 Annual Meeting.**

Lake Morey Inn has graciously offered to refund all money paid. This means you should contact Lake Morey Inn if you have already made room reservations and paid for them. The Conference will be refunding any registration fees already paid. Refunds will be issued by check only, not to credit cards. This will help save the credit card processing fees.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Vermont Conference office at 802-728-4999 and vtconference@vtcucc.org.

Thank you for your understanding, patience and support with this difficult decision.

Be safe, be well and take care of each other. May God's blessing be with all of us during these very trying times.

Yours in Christ,

Lynn Bujnak

Doug Carter

Jeanne Zammataro