



E-Kit June 24, 2020

DONATE

So what are you doing for fun this Summer? Summer of course has now officially begun, and I confess, it is my favorite season of the year! I appreciate many things about fall, winter and spring, but summer is a season that I wait for with anticipation all year long! I enjoy the longer daylight hours, the warmer days, the life you see all around you. There are so many fun things to do! In ministry over the years, I have also enjoyed how everything slows down in the summer in the Church. There are less committee meetings, less contentious issues, and less pressures. In a way, it is a sabbatical season for all of us in the leadership of the church, a time to just enjoy our relationships in the church.



Now we all know that this summer will be different in some ways. Some of the activities we may enjoy doing in the summer, like going to concerts or taking trips with friends, may be more difficult or impossible this summer. And we do have some more things to think about in the lives of our churches, as we all ponder questions about when and how to come together again in person. We need to continue to stand up for racial justice in our churches and for a more just world in Jesus' name.

But I hope that you will be intentional in trying to make this summer restful and enjoyable too! There may be some things we cannot do, but there are so many things that we can do, just like every other summer! Make sure you schedule vacation time if that is what you usually do and be sure to enjoy every sun-kissed day! So what are you going to do for fun this Summer?

Joyfully yours,
Paul

Black Lives Matter

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.

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.

Alton Sterling - 37, shot while in prone position during arrest

Watch the videos of Racism in America series

Required VT Occupational Safety
& Health training for reopening
workplaces

See the latest guidance and
directives from State of Vermont

Pandemic grants for churches
from UCC National Setting

Utilities and COVID-19: Help &
information from VT Dept. of
Public Utilities

COVID - 19 Information & Resources

Answer the call and volunteer in
response to COVID-19

Resources curated by the
Southern New England
Conference

COVID-19 FAQ's for churches

Announcing: Council of Conference Ministers Webinars

For times such as these.

This is an extraordinary time. The Covid pandemic has profoundly reshaped how we live, move and have our being in the world. And we are still learning, adapting and creating.

And in some cases...just surviving.

Then, in the midst of the pandemic the killing of George Floyd sparked a new emergence of a cry to recognize and oppose racism in all its forms.

Your Conference Ministers from across the UCC realized that there is a lot of experimentation and innovation happening in our churches across this country for a time such as these. And, as is the case with such things, some are brilliant, some we won't have to try again. There is a saying: "there is no failure only feedback." We've been watching and learning and want to give you a chance to share the feedback insights with all each other.

So we are developing a series of webinars that will bring together 3-5 panelists from churches across the country. Each webinar will focus on a particular theme hosted by one or more of our Conference Ministers. Panelists will share what they did, how they decided to do it and what they learned. You'll have the unique opportunity to be inspired, warned, and guided. You'll have ideas to bring back and modify, adapt or use as is.

And if you miss it, they'll be recorded and available to view and review later. The first webinar will be on July 1 at 3pm (eastern time zone).

PHASING FORWARD TOWARDS IN PERSON WORSHIP: STORIES OF HOW A DECISION WAS MADE IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Hosted by Rev. Don Remick, Bridge Conference Minister for Innovation, Southern New England Conference UCC.

Panelists will share their stories telling about:

- What information or guidance did they consider in making their decision
- Who did they include in the decision making process
- What perspectives did they seek from the congregation.
- What engagement did they have with local health agents or board of health.
- How did they communicate their decision to the congregation.

The intention is not to give advice on what you should do. We are too diverse in our geographies, approaches, styles of church and spread of this illness to try to give uniform advice. Your best approach is always to contact your Conference for their suggestions and guidelines. They are customized to the local context. Rather this is a glimpse of how different churches made their decisions. You'll learn insights from their thinking, process and conversations that may help you with yours.

You can register for the webinar at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vlB6kawYQ72JlfpMayMLVw.

Once the webinar is concluded a link to the recording will be made available to your Conference.

Rest in peace...

We have received word that The Rev. Philip Nelson has died. Jack Bixby, his Annuitant Visitor and pastoral presence said, "He was overtaken by lung cancer which was found about a year ago; he had undergone radiation treatment at Dartmouth Hitchcock until recently. Phil was determined to live to be 100; he almost made it....99.5 years. A remarkable man who was sharp and clear almost to the end. I last saw him in February when he laughingly complained about having to use a cane as he circled the hallways of Vernon Green, (the retirement facility where he lived) for exercise. His daughter, Phyllis Noyes, was able to be with her dad till the end....with mask and gloves; he was receiving heavy doses of morphine for pain and hallucinating about his daunting/haunting WWII experiences in the Pacific. Ordained just over fifty years ago after a successful career in the insurance industry; served churches in Massachusetts, Vermont, North Carolina (I think) and maybe other places. He was loved, respected and honored wherever he served... God's competent faithful joyful servant."

Stewardship in the midst of COVID-19

Many people, ministers and church members, have been asking how to continue to support their local church budgets while everyone is social distancing and unable to gather together in worship. The short answer is - keep stewardship and the offering going!

Rev. Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach Officer for the United Church of Christ offered a webinar and several resources last week. He has kindly shared them with us for members of the Vermont Conference to use.

[Fundraising webinar recording](#)

[Planned giving webinar](#)

[IRA qualified charitable contributions](#)

[Example quarterly letter to church members](#)

[National Study of Congregations Economic Practices \(NSCEP\) study](#)

[NSCEP self-assessment tool](#)

[Making the stimulus ask](#)

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!

Per Capita rate for 2020

The Vermont Conference per capita rate has been established at \$13.00 per member. Association dues are *in addition* to the Conference per capita rate of \$13.00.

Spiritual Direction

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

Pastoral Transitions

- Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola has been called as Associate Conference Minister on Congregational Transitions and Empowerment for the Penn Central Conference. Her ministry begins June 1, 2020.
- Rev. Elliott Munn has been called as Pastor of the Congregational Church of Vergennes. His ministry begins later this month.
- Rev. Elisa Lucozzi has been called as Pastor of the Guilford Community Church. She will succeed Rev. Lise Sparrow who is retiring.

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

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Please hold those murdered by police and white supremacists in your prayers including Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery.

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

Please hold Lava Mueller in your prayers as she mourns the passing of her mother.

Please hold Rev. Lucia Jackson in your prayers as she cares for her husband Michael Heaney who is healing from a health crisis.

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

2020 Census - Shape your Future - Please Respond Online or by Phone

It starts with each of us doing our part by completing the 2020 Census Questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire allows you to influence the amount of

money that comes to Vermont for many of our essential programs that benefit our health and safety, and pay for our roads, local government, schools, hospitals, and so much more.

You can complete the Census by going to my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020. If you have received an invitation to complete the census, simply follow directions. If you have not, or cannot locate it, you can still complete it by calling 844-330-2020 [there is help in English and 14 additional languages] or by going online to my2020census.gov, clicking start, then clicking 'If you don't have a Census ID click here,' and following directions.

Languages and phone number link

<https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-by-phone.html>

59 Language Guides link: <https://2020census.gov/en/languages.html>

Link to Census Response Rate Map to track how Vermont, Windham County and our local communities are doing: <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>

Podcast Available

Rev. Josh Simon (First Congregational Church of Essex Junction) and Rev. Sally May (Malletts Bay UCC, Colchester) are proud to present the podcast *Faith in Vermont: Conversations with LGBTQ Religious and Spiritual Leaders*.

On this week's episode of Faith in Vermont: Conversations with LGBTQ Religious and Spiritual Leaders:

Cantor Steve Zeidenberg from Ohavi Zedek joins us for a conversation on being an LGBTQ cantor.

[Click here for the latest podcast](#)

Outdoor Ministries News

@ the Lake!

Camp like you've never seen it before! Join us for a SPLASH of a week! Available for campers going into grades 5-8, this camp is led by Deans Laurie Chipman (CE Director) & Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters along with the VT Outdoor Ministry Team. We are looking forward to getting to know you with play some games, writing a song, have fun cartooning, water adventures, singing camp songs, and lot laughs. We'll add in the staff of Horton Center too! Register for free today at hortoncenter.org! Registration for this camp ends on July 10th so sign up soon! Only 30 campers get a slot so don't miss your chance!

Please help us by doing a search on Facebook for 'Vermont Outdoor Ministries - UCC' page, then 'like' it and 'share' it with your friends!

More HC News

Horton Center is offering an opportunity for the Horton Center Camp Experience for FREE remotely this summer. This is a great way to learn about Horton Center, the joy and fun times offered. All are invited - those who have been for years and people new to the camping experience. If you have questions please give me a call.

For four weeks in July (beginning June 29th), HC@home will be offering camp for three different age groups each week. Registration is required so that safe remote access practices can be followed and so campers can receive in the mail the "Kit" of

the week.

The day time experiences do not have to be done at a certain time, short videos can be watched and activities completed at your own time. The evening 7pm gathering will be live - all will want to be live at that gathering.

Campers may want to sign up for more than one week - create new friendships and experience God's creation, learn more about the love of God, teachings of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit while having a great time.

Check out the short video on this page that invites campers to participate: <https://hortoncenter.org/>

This link is to information about HC@home:

<https://hortoncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HC@home-Info-Pack.pdf>

Check out the fun offerings and meet Interim Executive Director Tim Hughs and Summer Director Tivvi Pare.



Resources from the Vermont Conference website (click the buttons below)

Clergy input needed-Should Clergy Convocation be online or cancelled?

**Click
here
for
local
church
events**

As most of the clergy know, we as a Vermont Conference have a Clergy Convocation every fall. It is an opportunity to look more deeply at a topic, and also to spend time with each other having fun and building relationships. Our speaker this September was going to be Methodist pastor and church consultant Barbara Lemmel, and she was going to speak to us on "Staying Centered during a Time of Deep Change".

Recently, the planning team voted to not do this year's Convocation in person, because of the Pandemic. We now need to decide whether to do it online or cancel it. If we were to do it online, we would shorten it, and do one Zoom session for two hours one day, and one the next day, with a worship service to close. We would charge \$20. Or we could cancel it and invite Barbara to be our speaker next year when we can hopefully gather in person again. Please let us know this week your opinion-you can email Paul Sangree at sangreepucc@gmail.com. Thanks!

**Search & Call
Resources**

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because Sunday's coming.
[Website](#)



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