



E-Kit July 29, 2020

DONATE

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

Have you noticed the longer the uncertainty and reality of COVID is with us, the less patience we seem to have? Tempers are quick to blow and minor disagreements become major points of contention.

All this is a normal reaction to short- and long-term stress. There are also some things we can do to lower the “temperature.”



As individuals we can make sure we are getting some exercise, connecting with friends and family, petting the dog or cat, doing something enjoyable. One thing we can always do when we are tense and anxious is BREATHE. Nearly everyone has a particular way of using breath to calm us down. My practice includes inhaling for a count of three, holding for a count of three, exhaling with a count of three. I have gotten to a place where I can breathe my intercessory prayers, holding someone that is in need and exhaling what might help them - love, comfort, encouragement, etc. Any type of prayer and/or meditation can also help us find a calm place inside to be renewed and re-connected.

Please dear congregations and pastors, offer one another grace during these times. Don't allow the anxiety and divisiveness that is so prevalent in our society to create conflict. We need each other too much for that. I am reminded of the letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth when they were angry and divided:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor 13:1-3)

Be gentle with one another. Be gentle with yourself. Let us hold each other in prayer even as we offer prayers for our nation and our world.

“So faith, hope and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.”

Blessings to you,
Lynn

Black Lives Matter

Summer Forum Series: Is There a Path to Racial Reconciliation?

After over 400-years of history and oppression toward people of color, is there a path to racial reconciliation? Join us as we explore this important question in a Virtual Forum Series, each Sunday at 9 AM beginning Sunday, July 19th. Our guest speakers will present a wide range of perspectives and knowledge to inspire our discussion.

This discussion series is presented by members and friends of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Jericho, United Church of Bakersfield and Fairfield, Waterville Union Church, and Second Congregational Church in Jeffersonville.

Facilitators: Pastor Arnold Thomas (Good Shepherd) and Pastor Devon Thomas (Jeffersonville, Waterville and Bakersfield).

Learn more and attend the forum series at: <https://jeffchurchvt.org/summer-forum-series/>

Fredrick Douglass July 5, 1852

"But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common.-The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is *yours*, not *mine*. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrecoverable ruin! I can today take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!"

[Read Fredrick Douglass' full speech marking the 4th of July here](#)

[Click here for the statement from the Vermont Conference staff, Board and ministers living and serving in Vermont](#)

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.

Shelley Frey - 27, shot by off-duty police
Michael Sabbie - 35, died in custody at privately run jail
Darnisha Harris - 16, shot while driving. The officer who fired had been accused of misconduct while working at three previous law

The UCC and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

The American Missionary Association, a predecessor body of the United Church of Christ, was a visionary organization dedicated to education and racial equality. The AMA founded six college that continue to relate to the UCC Council for Higher Education. These schools are historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and are racially diverse, welcoming students from a wide range of races and ethnicities.

- Dillard University, New Orleans, LA; www.dillard.edu
- Fisk University, Nashville, TN; www.fisk.edu
- Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX; www.htu.edu
- LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis, TN; www.loc.edu
- Talladega College, Talladega, AL; www.talladega.edu
- Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS; www.tougaloo.edu

Do you know of protests and rallies that are taking place?

Have you attended protests, vigils or rallies? Please let the Vermont Conference know about them so we can post them on our website and social media. Email them to Jesse at vermontconference@gmail.com

- Silent Vigil Against Racism. It has been happening every Sunday afternoon from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. in Arlington on Route 7A in front of St. James' Episcopal Church that the Federated Church of East Arlington is participating in. Folks are asked to mask, are spaced 6 feet apart and encouraged to bring signs. All are welcome to join!



Our Faith, Our Vote, Our Voice: A call to the Church to be a place of civil dialogue that builds community

[Our Faith, Our Vote resources](#)

Racism in America symposiums

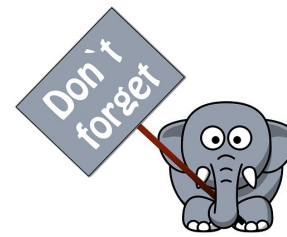


[Watch the videos of Racism in America series](#)

Reminder

Your local church needs your financial support more than ever. If you have been fortunate to still be employed please consider making regular gifts to your

church. Your congregation is doing vital ministry through online or written worship opportunities, caring for one another, feeding hungry people and fighting for justice. Summer is always a slow time in terms of giving, but the church expenses stay steady.



Please also remember the Vermont Conference. We need the support of our congregations and friends so we can continue to resource pastors and congregations through these strange and important days.

Thank you so much!

Holding space for difficult conversations

How do we have difficult conversations - whether about race, finances or anything else - within our congregations and people with differing perspectives? College Street Congregational Church developed "Communication Guidelines to Strengthen Our Community" and have kindly shared it for other churches to consider. The Vermont Conference Annual Meeting also adopts "A Covenant for Dialog" at the beginning of each Annual Meeting. Please feel free to use these documents in your local church.

**Download College Street
Congregational Church:
"Communications Guidelines to
Strengthen Our Church"**

**Download Vermont Conference
Annual Meeting: "A Covenant for
Dialog"**

**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

Curating services and sermons for pastor vacations

Would you be willing to share your sermons or services with others in the Conference, so that they might use them on a Sunday they want to take off? Let Jesse in the Conference office know if you would be willing to do that, and we will list all the churches in the Conference that encourage you to use sermons and services in Ekit. Then you can simply go to their website and use them with their

Kipah, Kufi, and Collar

As part of an interfaith effort at modeling peace, Rabbi Amy Small of Ohavi Zedek, Imam Islam Hassan of the Islamic Society of Vermont, and Pastor Ken White of College Street Congregational Church in Burlington have released a podcast called "Kipah, Kufi, and Collar". Each 30 minute segment starts with Amy, Islam, and Ken having a conversation about an everyday issue (week 1 is "how to deal with difficult people") and then interviewing a local figure about that same topic (week 1's guest is former Vermont Governor, U.S. Ambassador, professor and author Madeline Kunin). New episodes are available every Monday.

You can access it at [kipahkufiandcollar.com](https://open.spotify.com/show/0MpaNQRVMA1claeP2y5Ot0) or you can look for it on Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/0MpaNQRVMA1claeP2y5Ot0>), iTunes (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/kipah-kufi-collar/id1523653268>) or wherever you access podcasts.

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](#)

Remembering Rev. John Nutting

Did you miss last week's remembrance and time of prayer for Rev. John Nutting? You can see the gathering on the [Vermont Conference YouTube channel](#).



Clergy Convocation

The Convocation Planning Team met last week and decided that we will not have our annual Pastor's Convocation in September live, but will do it online. We decided to

do this because of the feedback from many of you, who said that having a time to gather together as Vermont Conference clergy online would be helpful during these challenging times. Barbara Lemmel, Methodist pastor, consultant and spiritual director will be our leader with the theme “How to stay Centered in a Time of Deep Change.”

We will begin with a session on Monday night, Sept. 14th with worship and time led by Barb focused on this time that we are in. There will be time for games and hanging out via ZOOM later in the evening. We will gather again on Tuesday morning, Sept. 15th for a time of worship and a session by Barb focused on how we can stay centered, and she will be sharing with us spiritual practices and disciplines that we can do ourselves that afternoon. We will conclude Tuesday evening with a session of sharing in groups our experience, and a closing worship with Communion.

Convocation will only cost \$25 (no matter how many sessions you attend), and we hope many clergy can join us! In the next couple of weeks, a brochure about Convocation and a way to register will be on the Conference website. At this time in our church’s life, we especially need each other, so please set aside this time to be with others. It will be a memorable Convocation!

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. Elisa Lucozzi has been called as Pastor of the Guilford Community Church. She will succeed Rev. Lise Sparrow who is retiring.
- Rev. Leigh McCaffrey has been called as Pastor of the Barre Congregational Church.
- Rev. Mark Wilson has been called as Pastor of Waitsfield United Church Christ. His ministry will begin in October.

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Please hold Rev. Margo Marrone in your prayers as she and her family mourn the sudden passing of her husband Tom Marrone.

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

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

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

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

Outdoor Ministries News



VT Outdoor Ministry is in full swing this week as we gather on Zoom for our week of @ the Lake camp. We invite you all to like our Vermont Outdoor Ministry UCC Facebook page. Please click the link below and see the picture of the full team that we posted on our page. Your prayers are most appreciated as we go through this week of virtual camp, for the leader and the campers. We plan to continue to make post on this new Facebook page as we continue to move through this important ministry.

https://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Outdoor-Ministry-UCC-115717706796007/?view_public_for=115717706796007

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

**Search & Call
Resources**

**Lay Ministry
Openings**

Visit our partners



Worship
Well

Original worship resources
for local churches...
because Sunday's coming.
[Website](#)



Church World Service

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