



E-Kit August 5, 2020

DONATE

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

I don't know about you, but there are days I struggle, overwhelmed by the enormity of COVID, the killing of Black persons, the hatred, the denials of truth. I miss hugging my loved ones, eating a meal in a restaurant, attending a dulcimer festival and being with my music friends.



I also know that I have it better than so many others who have lost jobs and health care, who have been evicted, who are hungry. With my white skin I don't worry about being arrested or killed or run off the road or shouted at with hate-filled words or having the police called because someone doesn't think I belong in their neighborhood.

It is easy to be overwhelmed and to veer towards despair. However, as Emily Dickinson wrote: "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings a tune without words and never stops at all." Our faith proclaims that no matter how desperate the situation there is always hope. Hope perhaps buried or tarnished or cast aside but hope nonetheless.

As many of you know, I have an ongoing relationship with an Episcopal Monastic community. While they are closed to outside visitors in this time of COVID, they are finding other ways to reach out, to comfort and remind us all of God's never failing love. James Koester, the current Superior of the Order wrote this:

For many, including us, this season has been a time of sadness, shock, grief, despair, and hopelessness. Words seem empty, and hope feels lost. Yet the promise of the Resurrection of Jesus, and the gift of Easter is that hope lives, even when all seems hopeless...

Br. James, ever the practical one continues:

The task before us is enormous. Justice and liberty for all will not happen overnight. But each one of us can do one thing that will make a difference in our world. In the days to come, you might want to consider what you can do in 8 minutes and 46 seconds that will bring hope and healing to our broken world.

May this world have more hope and healing because of our small and large acts.

In hope,
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.

Shantel Davis - 23, shot by NYPD officer who claimed she was

attempting to escape.

Kenneth Johnson - 60, denied medical care in custody of Vermont
Dept. of Corrections ([more information here](#))

Rekia Boyd - 22, shot in back of the head by off-duty Chicago police
officer

Felix Kumi - 61, bystander shot by NYPD officer conducting sting
operation.

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](#)

Clergy Convocation

Register for 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!

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 permission. Thanks!

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](#)

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.](#)

Peacemakers Pulpit

Dave & Louise Ransom

On June 24th, 2020, a sterling group gathered on-line to honor and share memories of Rev. John E. Nutting, who died on June 10th. John's beloved Ramona had died 2 years ago. Ramona was not absent from the pearls of stories shared. Our Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak led the Zoomed assembled, all cohorts in the mission of the Church. We were graced by the presence of John and Ramona's dear daughter, Emily. It was clear that John loved us, as did Ramona. It was clear that their love did not stop with us. It was clear to us, Louise and myself, that as we stood or walked with our signs, "Black Lives Matter," we were taking a step with John as he magnificently illustrated the Mission of the Church with his life. We felt that during the on-line sharing. Keep walking. It's a march. "We are marching..." I was wondering how John might have responded to the folk who don't quite understand why we are drawing attention to "Black Lives Matter," when they respond, "All Lives Matter" or "White Lives Matter." As one shared in the on-line session, John, at one point, had responded in regard to folk who didn't quite "get it," "Ya gotta love 'em." Love is going to take some clear directions, with respect to "whites'" criminal treatment of "Blacks." Returning police to be Peace Officers and Social Workers and better education and better jobs and greater justice all around.

That takes work. Whites can't hide behind, "All lives matter" or "White lives matter." Folk need to learn, and they need to be loved for them to learn. Maybe then we will face the real "gorilla in the closet," the one trillion dollar military expenses USA budget. Or is it our willingness to speak up, that needs informing and encouragement?

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.

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

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.

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 must 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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