



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 3, 2020



Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

Advent has always been an important season for me. There is an invitation that lives somewhere in the juxtaposition of the frantic flurry of activity that is so easily caught with the Advent themes of wait, watch, prepare, be.

This year it seems we are all waiting and watching. We wait for news when a friend or loved one becomes sick with COVID-19. We wait in the tumult of our country's presidential election to find out if there will be a peaceful transfer of power and whether violence (or rather more) violence will break out. We watch for signs of ending systemic racism and continue to ask what our part is and will be. We wait for a vaccine and the time it will take to vaccinate our population. We wait with longing in our hearts to be able to see, touch, laugh with our dear ones once more. We await the time when we can return to our sanctuaries, sing hymns, and share cups of coffee with the sharing of our day to day lives.

This is a year of waiting, watching, longing. It is not hard to give voice to these things as we sing and pray the ancient song of this season, "O Come O Come Emanuel and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appears."

Perhaps this Advent as we live with these challenges, as we watch the days grow darker knowing that longer and brighter days will come, we can wait for the transformation within us and within our world. What can we learn by committing to be present to Advent? What gift will we receive, what old ache of sorrow relieved, what stillness of joy discover, what solace found in

another?

“Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you O Israel.”

In peace, hope, joy and love,

Lynn

Rev. Lynn Bunjak, Conference Minister



New Haven Congregational
Church



Charlotte Congregational
Church's
Spiral Walk for Advent

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.

Do You Have Any Extra Choir Robes?

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



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

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

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.

**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](#)

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

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](#)

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](#)

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.

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.

[Take Survey](#)

**DISASTER
MINISTRIES**



UCC launches "Recovering Hope,"

Emotional Care in COVID-19

[click here for more info](#)

Ordination Anniversaries

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 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 Ministry

Jordan 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

15Years 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

Phishing Scam Going Around Again

Please be vigilant about any email that appears to be from your fellow church members, clergy person and or our conference minister or staff, asking you to take some kind of unusual action (purchasing gift cards and replying with the serial numbers, clicking a link or downloading an attachment you didn't request, wiring money to a specified account, or simply replying quickly).

A number of congregations across our conference and the country have been hit with an email scam. It involves making a fake Gmail (or yahoo, etc.) account in the person's name and then sending a request for gift cards allegedly from that person to the congregation's directory. The emails seem harmless; they have the person's name and an email address that looks legitimate, but upon further inspection, the email address is actually from a provider different than the one the person typically uses.

In some instances, the sender's name may look correct but is missing a single letter. Or otherwise closely resembles the real email address; for example, joe@churchstaff.org becomes joechurchstaff@gmail.com. In some cases, the message asks for Google Play or iTunes gift cards and in other cases, it asks the recipient to contact them immediately.

DOs and DON'Ts:

DO double-check your emails [and text messages] carefully.

DON'T ever respond to an email [or text message] asking you for money [without independently verifying the source of the request and the destination of the money].

DO verify in person or by phone any request involving money or personal information.
DON'T reply.
DON'T click on any links within the message.
DO report the message as spam to your email provider after forwarding it to the Federal Trade Commission at spam@uce.gov - be sure to cc the church being impersonated.
These scams attack the trust and faith you place in certain respected people. Be safe out there in cyberspace.
Keep safe--online and otherwise...

The Vermont Conference is hiring!

The Vermont Conference is seeking an Administrative Assistant to manage the business operations of the Conference office, assist with events, be a resource to our local churches and other responsibilities. Click the button below to learn more.
Click Here to: [View Administrative Assistant Opportunity](#)

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](#)

Connect with us



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