

Vermont Conference, UCC Keeping in Touch

EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS FOR CHRIST'S
MINISTRY AND MISSION TODAY AND TOMORROW

E-Kit

September 13, 2017

- [Quick Links](#)
- [Our Website](#)
- [Directory](#)
- [Staff](#)
- [Summer Camp](#)

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**Vermont Conference  
News**

A Farewell Gathering for Jim  
Thomas



On Saturday, September 23, 2017, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, we will be gathering at the Randolph Bethany Church for a farewell gathering for Jim and Lynn Thomas.

This is an "open house" style gathering. Come when you can!

At 4:00PM we will share in the Liturgy of Farewell as we send Jim and Lynn Thomas on their

Greetings!

Lately I've been spending some time with Psalm 46. Well, actually, just a portion of verse 10: **Be still and know that I am God!**

Jesus understood the 'be still' part. Throughout his ministry he sought solitude and quiet places to pray.

Matthew 14:22-23

(The Message)

*As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go*

*on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.*

Mark 1:35-37 (NRSV)

*In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you."*

Luke 5:15-16 (The Message)

*Soon a large crowd of people had gathered to listen and be healed of their ailments. As often as possible Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer.*

John 6:15 (NRSV) (after feeding the 5,000)

*When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make*

way with our gratitude and good wishes for Jim's new ministry as Pastor of the Atkinson Church, UCC in New Hampshire.

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2017 Pastoral Transitions

New Transitions

Rev. Mark Pitton has been called to serve the Sharon Congregational Church. He begins on September 24, 2017.

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**Peacemaker's Pulpit**

"Nothing is so important to the church as human life, as the human person, above all, the person of the poor and oppressed, who, besides being human beings, are also divine beings, since Jesus said that whatever is done to them he takes as done to Him. - Oscar Romero

I recently returned from El Salvador - an amazing and sobering trip. We spent time with Bethany's Sister Parish and traveled around the country. While signs of economic progress are clear, large divisions between the rich and the poor remain. The minimum hourly wage is \$2.50. Gang violence has subsided, settling into less violent methods of organized crime. Government corruption remains a problem. Abortion is completely illegal, and even the Archbishop of El

*him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*

Four different Gospels. Four stories from different points in Jesus' ministry. One commonality: Jesus valued quiet, solitary time for reflection and prayer and renewal. Jesus was, I'm pretty sure, an introvert. You pastors who are introverts and yet still are able to stand up in front of a congregation every Sunday know what I'm talking about. And the toll that forced extroversion can have. (e.g. Preachers Sunday Afternoon Nap)

Sometimes people tell me that although we proclaim that God is Still Speaking, they're not hearing anything. I believe that God IS still speaking, but I think we've forgotten how to listen, because listening happens best in solitude, in quiet, in prayer. Which, not coincidentally, is completely at odds with our noisy, frantic, regimented world. Our cell phones, laptops, Netflix, and hyper scheduled children all conspire to keep us busy - and inattentive.

Aristotle had it right when he said "The goal of action is contemplation." It's OK to be busy, and we have accomplished much in our busyness, but being busy is not the end to itself.

In September our churches rev back up, with Church School beginning, adult education opportunities starting, Advent planning underway, and we are over



programmed and over committed. Please remember to also plan to Be Still - to set aside quiet time that shall not be otherwise scheduled - at least temporarily and occasionally. I invite you to set aside time for solitude, for quiet, for reflection, for prayer. See if perhaps it isn't easier to hear if we're really listening. Create a space where you can invite our Still Speaking God to communicate in the

Salvador admitted the law disproportionately affects poor women.

[Read the entire article here](#)



UCC News and Updates

2017 Digital Stewardship Materials...  
[read more here!](#)

North Carolina churches' stand against hate spurs sanctuary discussion

Texas congregation returns home for worship after Hurricane Harvey flood

Irma makes devastating impact on South Florida

Ohio UCC church is home Sunday for Florida family escaping Hurricane Irma

UCC leaders join with faith community to denounce DACA decision and white supremacy

Disaster Ministries launches Hurricane Irma appeal, immersed in Harvey recovery

Commentary: Where Is the Hope?  
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voice we can only hear when quiet and undistracted. It worked for Jesus.

Peace,

Jim

Rev. Jim Thomas
Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship, Church Vitality, and Finance

Annual Annuitant Luncheon

September 28, 2017
10:30 to 3:00

Bethany Church, UCC, Randolph, VT

The Vermont Conference invites all of you to lunch and a program at Bethany United Church of Christ in Randolph.

[Read the agenda here](#)

Click the link below to RSVP online
[RSVP by September 21 to Conference Office](#)

Hurricane Relief



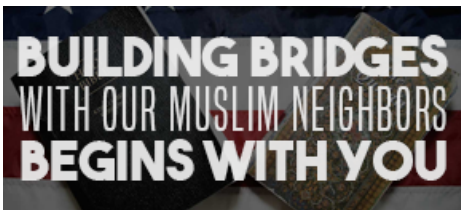
The UCC is working to support everyone affected by the Hurricanes. You can support this effort by making a financial donation through the UCC Emergency USA Fund.

[Click here to support Hurricane Relief](#)

Fundraiser for Flood Victims at Tyson Congregational Church, Sunday September 17 at 10:30

[Read more here](#)

Thank you!
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Click image for more information.



Food for Thought  
Focus Reading:  
Exodus 14:19-31

Louise Haskins, 20th century,  
"The Gate of the Year"  
"Go out into the darkness and  
put your hand into the hand of  
God. That shall be a better  
light, and safer than a known  
way."

Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a  
Young Poet, 20th century  
"Believe in a love that is being  
stored up for you like an  
inheritance, and have faith  
that in this love there is a  
strength and a blessing so large  
that you can travel as far as  
you wish without having to step  
outside it."

Presbyterian Church USA,  
Confession of 1967  
"Life is a gift to be received  
with gratitude and a task to be  
pursued with courage."

Bruce Epperly, Christian  
Century 1-26-10  
"When author Madeleine L'Engle  
was asked, 'Do you believe in  
God without any doubts?' she  
replied, 'I believe in God with  
all my doubts.'"

Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to  
Freedom: Autobiography of  
Nelson Mandela. 20th century  
"I am fundamentally an  
optimist. Whether that comes

## \*\*\*\*Registration Is Now Open\*\*\*\* Fall Vitality Event 2017

Presented by:  
Vermont Conference, UCC &  
Partners for Sacred Places

Join us on October 14, 2017 for a special  
Vitality event at which we will  
explore: Growing a congregation's membership,  
ministry, financial stewardship, leadership and  
vision through community engagement and  
outreach!

Take this opportunity to learn from other  
congregations about their innovative outreach  
and community partnerships, large and small  
including:

- Creating new ministries
- Leading conversations on major local issues;
- Launching a major "community-wide" capital campaign;
- Or just asking your neighbors how you might work together.

Keynote speaker [Tuomi Forrest](#) is the Executive  
Vice President of [Partners for Sacred  
Spaces](#). He has offered technical advice and  
consultation to thousands of congregations of  
all faiths on the care and active community use  
of their historic religious buildings since joining  
Partners in 1997.

These topics and more will be shared and  
discussed in this interactive day-long  
educational program.

Registration is \$25 per person (which includes  
lunch!) and you can sign up by clicking the  
Registration button below.

**We look forward to seeing you on October  
14th in Montpelier!**

[Register here...](#)

[Church Bulletin Board](#)

**The Wells River Congregational Church, UCC,**  
Main Street, Wells River VT. has 110 like new  
hymnals "United Church of Christ" Contact  
Marion Zambon:(802)-584-3857

from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death."

M. Scott Peck, 20th century  
"The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."

Madeleine L'Engle, 20th century  
"Some things have to be believed to be seen."

Paulo Freire, 20th century  
"We make the road by walking."

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Resources from WorshipWell

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at:



worshipwell.church

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Ideal for start-up church: over 100 year old Steinway upright piano in very good condition- Pay to move from Groton \$500.00 plus/minus- piano mover out of Barre, VT Contact Marion Zambon in Groton, VT (802) 584-3857

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The Bradford Congregational Church is seeking to buy used copies of the New Century Hymnal. If your church would like to meet their need please contact Marcia Tomlinson at m3site@charter.net

Employment Opportunities All these are all still open!

(If you have a job listed, please try to remember to let me ([Charri](#)) know if it has been filled!)

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Tyson Congregational church - located on the Ludlow/Plymouth border. Part-time organist needed to job-share with our current organist for some Sunday Morning Worship services. Please contact Ann Rose at [gms@tds.net](mailto:gms@tds.net) if interested.

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Music Director

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Second Congregational Church, Hyde Park, VT  
We are an active and friendly congregation of people who love our church and our music. We are looking for an individual with a love of music, and a musical background, to lead our music program. We are blessed with a beautiful pipe organ, baby grand piano and vibrant choir. Our ideal Music Director would be proficient with, and enjoy playing the organ and piano, be able to sight read music and direct and grow our Choir and music program.

Part time, paid position.

If this sounds interesting, we would love to talk with you about our program and what we can create together. Please email: Second Congregational Church [2congo@myfairpoint.net](mailto:2congo@myfairpoint.net)

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Organist/Choir Director Needed!

Application

Email:

welcome@fccej.org

Job Description/Offer: First Church of Essex Junction, U.C.C. seeks PT Organist/Choir Director. Church is GLBTQ friendly. Job includes coord. music program, directing adult choirs, and playing organ & piano @ 2 services [beautifully refurbished 1928 Estey organ / Young Chang baby grand].

Email cover letter and resume to FCCEJmusicsearch@gmail.com or mail to FCCEJ Music Search, 1 Church Street, Essex Junction VT 05452.

Church office 802-878-5745.

First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

Website: www.fccej.org

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Music Director Needed!

Job Description/Offer: Charlotte Congregational Church, U.C.C. seeks PT Music Director.

Church is GLBTQ friendly. Job includes: Accompanying congregational singing, leading Thursday night rehearsals, conducting the adult choir for Sunday morning worship services at 10am and for other occasional services. Regular planning meetings with the senior and associate pastors are part of the position. Email: [scookekitt@mac.com](mailto:scookekitt@mac.com)

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Thank You for Reading
An Open and Affirming Conference
[For the E-Kit Archive](#)

