



Vermont Conference, UCC

Keeping in Touch

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

E-Kit

November 15, 2017

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Greetings!

Vermont Conference News

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**Lynn Bujnak will be at the Department of Missions Meeting at the Conference and then on Sunday she will be worshipping in Barre**

**Pam Lucas will be Worshipping and meeting with the Congregation in Hubberton and then attending the Grafton Orange Sullivan Association meeting**

**We have offered the Ministries Coordinator position to Sherri Caouette and she has accepted! Sherri will start on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 here at the Conference office.**

*The wondrous thing about this Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ is that there are so many pastors and churches who are making a difference in the daily lives of real everyday people - who invite people into deep relationships with God and one another - who send people out into the world to be disciples of Jesus who spread kindness and mercy and justice into the places where they live and work.*

*How do we find words to describe the life and work of our churches? How do we find ways to claim and name our particular ways of being church? We are going to share with you an article written by Rev. Mary Lee-Clark, Pastor of Second Congregational Church in Bennington in the magazine 'Spirituality and Health' for the November/December Edition. And then, I invite you all to try the same exercise - If you came to My Church... Perhaps you might start simply - This is what you would see...this is what you would hear...this is what you would feel...this is what you would smell...this is what you would remember...this is what you would experience...this is what you would think about...*



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God is still speaking,  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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2017 Digital Stewardship  
Materials...  
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Shaping Theological Formation  
'From the Ground Up'  
The United Church of Christ  
national leadership is inviting  
anyone and everyone who loves  
this church to a two-day  
summit

UCC groups coming together in  
Philly to help hurricane  
evacuees from Puerto Rico

Cuba contingent hopes to  
further partnership between  
U.S., Cuban churches

*Or invite your Trustees, Deacons, Choir,  
children and young people, men and women  
to try their hand at writing such an article.  
You just might learn something important  
about you congregation!*

**If you came to my church...**

Rev. Mary H. Lee-Clark  
Second Congregational Church, United Church  
of Christ  
Bennington, Vermont

If you came to my church, you'd see the  
banner out front with the silhouette of the  
Holy Family escaping to Egypt, with the words  
over it, "Immigrants and Refugees Welcome."  
You'd come in either beneath the rainbow-  
colored flag out front, or through the garden  
with the Peace Pole with the prayer -"May  
peace prevail on earth"-- in 8 different  
languages, or from the back parking lot,  
where you'd get a good look at the solar  
panels on the roof. If you use a wheelchair or  
walker, every door would be accessible to  
you.

If you came to my church, you'd be  
welcomed by at least three people, and that  
welcome  
would be reinforced by the statement printed  
at the bottom of the service program-  
"We are an Open and Affirming, Green Justice  
Congregation of the United Church of Christ.  
We welcome to our work and worship all  
people of faith, or in search of faith, without  
regard to age, race, economic condition,  
disability, or sexual orientation, and we seek  
to care and advocate for the earth and its  
creatures."

If you came to my church, you might  
not know the first song or hymn we sing, but  
you could join in with one of our 3-year-olds  
who loves to stay in worship with one of her  
two moms and sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little  
Star" at the top of her lungs, while the rest of  
us are singing whatever we're singing. Our  
children are taught and encouraged to ask  
questions, to wonder why or how, ["How I  
wonder what you are!"] and to accept that

As Congress takes up a long-promised bill to reform our federal taxes, we are once again thrust into a very loud, very confusing conversation that will undoubtedly produce more heat than light.

### Food for Thought

Focus Reading:  
Matthew 25:14-30

John Lubbock, 19th century  
"If we are ever in doubt about what to do, it is a good rule to ask ourselves what we shall wish on the morrow that we had done."

Michael W. Smith, 21st century  
"I think if the church did what they were supposed to do we wouldn't have anyone sleeping on the streets."

Anaïs Nin, 20th century  
"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."

Robert Frost, 20th century  
"Freedom lies in being bold."

Eudora Welty, 20th century  
"All serious daring starts from within."

Erma Bombeck, 20th century  
"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'"

William Faulkner, 20th century  
"You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."

John A. Shedd, 20th century  
"A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for."

Michaelangelo, 16th century  
"The greatest risk to man is not

sometimes "I don't know, I wonder that too" will be the answer.

If you came to my church, you'd have an opportunity to think back over your week (or longer), to see how or whether you've wandered from your True Self, whether you've contributed to the world's sorrow, or just your neighbor's, or just your own. Some churches call this a "confession of sin," but we think of it as telling the truth about how we've been separated or alienated from God and our true selves, knowing that we are all "made in the image of God," as the story in Genesis says, and we can do better. The pastor reminds us of who we are and Whose we are, and we give thanks for the opportunity to begin again.

If you came to my church, you'd hear a couple of passages read from the Bible, and then you'd hear a sermon that would draw upon the latest in Biblical scholarship and commentaries, as well as contemporary writers, like Brene Brown or Anne Lamott. The pastor might talk about something she'd read in a Facebook post or the New York Times. You'd hear her questions about the text and be invited to bring your own questions. You wouldn't have to simply believe or accept what the Bible passage says literally, but you'd be given ways to understand its context and setting, you'd explore how our understandings may have evolved and given new images and metaphors for the Divine Reality. You'd come to know Jesus as a "Human Being fully alive," which is how the 2nd c. bishop Irenaeus described "the glory of God," and you'd be invited to come fully alive too. Just like Jesus' parables were meant to challenge and invite, you'd be invited to keep letting this story or that passage work on you during the week.

If you came to my church, you wouldn't have to say the Creed, because, although we affirm the creeds of the church as snapshots of understanding and belief throughout the centuries, we believe that God is still speaking, in words, in events, through people, in nature. "Never put a

that he aims too high and misses, but that he aims too low and hits."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,  
19th century  
"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."

period where God has placed a comma," as Gracie Allen said.

If you came to my church, you'd hear these words every week- *"Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."* And you'd be invited to join *the rest of the congregation at the end of the service, saying our commission, which reminds us how we are to be when we leave that place- Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honor all people. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

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Leadership and Anxiety in the Church (LAC)

When: Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Where: Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, CT

Who: Clergy members and laypersons who seek to understand congregational dynamics better and to learn ways to calm anxiety and heal broken relationships

Mediation Skills

Training Institute for Church Leaders (MSTI)

When: May 7-11, 2018

Where: Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, CT

Who: Clergy and all persons in positions of church leadership who are interested in learning skills that will equip them to deal effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of church conflict

Attached please find an LAC brochure, a sample bulletin ad, and a group discount coupon for LAC, as well as a current brochure for all five MSTI workshops in 2018. Please share

If you came to my church, you just might have to re-think your impression of who you thought Christians were and what "going to church" is all about. And you'd be welcome.

Pam Lucas

CHARLOTTE, VT - On Sunday, December 3, 2017 at 4 pm, the Charlotte Congregational Church invites the community to their

seventh annual Sing Along performance of Handel's Messiah. This special evening of music will feature musicians from the Vermont Symphony, the Burlington Chamber Orchestra and four professional vocalists, accompanied by a chorus of audience and choir members. Enjoy this magnificent work for the first time or as a seasoned veteran. Come celebrate the season with beautiful music and spirit!

Tickets are \$15 per adult and \$50 for a group of 4. They can be purchased at the door. For more information please contact the church office : 425-3176 or scookekitt@mac.com. Church is located at 403 Church Hill Road in Charlotte.

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this information with friends or colleagues who you feel might benefit from this training, whether or not you yourself are able to attend.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or visit our website at [www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org).

Thanks so much for your support!

Pamela B. Eiten  
LMPC Assistant for  
Communication

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**Resources from  
WorshipWell**

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at: [worshipwell.church](http://worshipwell.church)



**GOBBLE WOBBLE RACE**

Thursday, November 23, 2017 9:30 AM

Race begins and ends Barre Town Clerk Office, 149 Websterville Road, Barre, VT 05641

This race benefits local mission and outreach efforts for Barre Congregational Church. Fabulous prizes will be awarded for the overall Male and Female winner, and for the Male and Female winners in each age group.

Registration at [www.bccgobblewobble2017.eventbrite.com](http://www.bccgobblewobble2017.eventbrite.com)

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**Save the Date!
Eastern Regional Youth Event (ERYE)
July 19-22, 2018 at California University of
Pennsylvania.**

Worship / play / pray / learn / serve / sing / dream

ERYE is a chance to grow your spirit through workshops, worship, recreation, and service! Registration information will be posted soon. Estimated cost is \$350 per person for event registration, housing, and meals. This does not include transportation. The Southern New England Conferences (RI, MA, and CT) will be collaborating to provide bus transportation.



**Thank You for Reading
An Open and Affirming Conference**

