

Welcome to E-Kit! Charri

Vermont Conference



January 17, 2018

Pam Lucas

"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction." From MLK sermon "Loving Your Enemies"

Last Sunday and Monday, the Southwest Association of the Vermont Conference sponsored, in cooperation with Campaign Nonviolence, Pace e Bene and others, nine hours of Training in Nonviolence as a way to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Over 60 people participated. It was an introductory overview: Exploring Nonviolent Power - Structural Violence and Nonviolent Power - and Putting Nonviolent Power into Action. There will be follow-up training in March. This event was held at Grace Church with partners from the Association providing gracious and delicious hospitality. Leadership included those from the cooperating entities and members of the Vermont Legislature.

I was grateful to be part of those days. It is clear that building a culture of peace is a never-ending work of humanity in eradicating war, poverty, racism and environmental destruction. It is a work of stepping into and breaking the downward cycles of hate and violence. It is the work of love. For us, it is the way of Jesus and the pursuit of justice and mercy.

On Sunday evening, Grace hosted Rutland's Interfaith Martin Luther King, Jr Service. Representative Kiah Morris of the Bennington 2-2 District preached the sermon 'The Faith Community as an Amplifier for National Change'. It was incredibly powerful. She began with the story of her great-great grandfather and mother attending a church meeting in Mississippi. On leaving the church they were attacked by Klansmen who began to beat the men. Kiah told how her great-great grandmother knelt down and cried out to God to stop what she could not. And the beating stopped. But her great-great grandfather had suffered injuries that impacted the rest of his life. The Klansmen then burnt down the church building.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters have entered the season where the Torah readings each week are the re-telling of the Exodus. As I listened to Kiah tell her story, I remembered the verse from the beginning of Exodus. *'After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to*

God.' (Ex.2:23) Had they never cried out before? But God heard and God remembered God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and set in motion plans for their freedom. However, when Moses returned after receiving God's instructions (albeit with deep hesitation and protest!) he told the people what God would do - '*...but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel slavery.*' (Ex. 6:9b)

Broken spirits. Beaten down. Bent over. Unable to imagine a different life, a different future. Unable to believe that God had actually heard their cries and was at work on their behalf.

The Hebrew word for 'spirit' can also mean breath. To be broken in spirit is to be short of breath. To be constricted in our ability to breathe means that our world becomes very small - concentrating only our next breath, our next step, our ability to survive the next moment. In this case slavery/oppression is any circumstance in our world where human beings seek to survive with broken spirits and constricted breathing. Hunger, homelessness, dreamers, persons of color, immigrants and refugees, poverty, toxic water, soil and air.

Every one of us knows that when our heart races, anxiety rises, desperation constrict our gut, our breath quickens and gets shallow. We don't get enough oxygen. We can't think straight. And what is the advice. 'BREATHE!'

We who are people of privilege must BREATHE on behalf of those who are crying out of their broken spirits and constricted breath. To BREATHE is to be able to listen and hear - not just for the cries - but more importantly to listen for the call that comes out of the bushes that are burning all around us - but we're always too busy to notice.

To hear - to stop - to breathe deeply - and listen. God is inviting us to a place where we are willing to stand up - to stand beside - to walk with - to have the back of our neighbors - until there are no broken spirits - and no one's breathing will be constricted.

"Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective . . . No individual can live alone; no nation can live alone, and as long as we try, the more we are going to have war in this world."
From MLK "A Christmas Sermon on Peace"

Pam Lucas

VT CONFERENCE NEWS

Thank you

to everyone who helped me with sending in your OCWM and Per Capita payments! I do however, have a favor! Please make sure you remit a Conference Remittance Form with every check you send in so I don't have to question where it should be posted to. Please make sure your Location is on the check and the Remittance Form. For example, if you are a First Congregational Church please put First Congregational Church of your Town. This will be a big help!

Thank you, [Charri](#)

[Find a new remittance form here....](#)

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## UCC Yearbook Data Collection Time is Here!

If you are the pastor, clerk, administrator, or treasurer for your local church, **it is now time to submit your 2017 Annual Yearbook data**. The reporting cycle for the UCC 2018 Yearbook & Directory officially opened January 2nd at noon and will close on March 7, 2018 at midnight. The process for entering your church's 2017 data is done completely online! The national office of the UCC has created Church Yearbook Instructions to help guide you through the process.

Should you have any questions or need assistance as you work through this process, please contact Sherri at [ministriescoordinator@vtcucc.org](mailto:ministriescoordinator@vtcucc.org)

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Please Pray....

Margo Marrone's niece Erin who was undergoing treatment for an aggressive glioblastoma had a stroke and died on Monday night. Let us keep the whole family in our prayers. Margo is the pastor of our church in Tyson.

Please keep Alan Baer, Sherry Baer's husband and their family in your prayers as his surgery was moved again. Sherry Baer is our Pastor in Northfield.

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## BECOME A FRIEND OF THE VERMONT CONFERENCE

[Here...](#)



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS

## NEWS HEADLINES

Immigration advocates in NYC resolute despite deportation of one of their leaders

In the spirit of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., several UCC ministers in NYC spent much of the Jan. 15 holiday in protest and in prayer with hundreds who gathered at Judson Memorial Church, calling for the immediate release of two church members and high-profile leaders of the immigrant rights movement. One was deported, the other remains in detention.

Ohio interfaith group brings community together to celebrate, continue vision of MLK

A number of spiritual leaders in rural Ohio who have come together to continue the work of Martin Luther King Jr., used the national holiday as a way to celebrate King's vision of a beloved community, and honor the work of a UCC pastor.

Registration opens for Shaping Theological Formation Summit

Registration for the UCC summit, 'From the Ground Up: Re-imagining Theological Formation', is now open to interested participants across the life of the church.

Montecito mudslides prompt UCC pastor displaced by wildfires to serve

A California minister offers pastoral care to a community of friends stricken and injured by mudslides.

UCC leaders condemn Trump's racist profanity, demand apology

The United Church of Christ national officers, outraged and offended by the president's reference to African countries and Haiti in vulgar, racist terms on Jan. 11 while debating immigration reform, have issued this statement.

Michigan clergy demand protection for Dreamers

As churches and communities around the country ready to celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, a number of UCC clergy in Michigan came together to point out how much work still needs to be done to realize King's Dream, calling for a 'Clean' Dream Act.

UCC advocates in New York protest pending deportation of nationally-known immigrant rights activist

For the second time in a week, protesters filled the streets of New York City after a high-profile immigrant rights activist, and member of Judson Memorial Church was targeted for deportation by ICE.

Commentary: Joyful Resistance

The start of a new calendar year is a threshold, a moment to acknowledge the passing of time.

New York church, U.S. family rallying to keep Haitian immigrant from deportation

Members of the Judson Memorial Church in New York City are rallying around one of their own in an effort to keep him from being deported to his home country of Haiti.



## WEEKLY SEEDS

### **Focus Reading: Mark 1:14-20**

Shane Claiborne, *Jesus for President: Politics for Ordinary Radicals*, 21st century

"One by one, these disciples would infect the nations with grace. It wasn't a call to take the sword or the throne and force the world to bow. Rather, they were to live the contagious love of God, to woo the nations into a new future."

Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality*, 21st century

"When one of my friends becomes a Christian, which happens about every 10 years because I am a sheep about sharing my faith, the experience is euphoric. I see in their eyes the trueness of the story."

Sara Miles, *Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion*, 21st century

"Conversion was turning out to be quite far from the greeting-card moment promised by televangelists, when Jesus steps into your life, personally saves you, and becomes your lucky charm forever. Instead, it was socially and politically awkward, as well as profoundly confusing. I wasn't struck with any sudden conviction that I now understood the 'truth.' If anything, I was just crabbiier, lonelier, and more destabilized."

and

"Faith, for me, isn't an argument, a catechism, a philosophical 'proof.' It is instead a lens, a way of experiencing life, and a willingness to act."

and

"Conversion isn't, after all, a moment: It's a process, and it keeps happening, with cycles of acceptance and resistance, epiphany and doubt."

John Lancaster Spalding, 19th century

"Each forward step we take we leave some phantom of ourselves behind."

Richard Rohr, 21st century (in *Falling Upward*)

"True religion is always a deep intuition that we are already participating in something very good, in spite of our best efforts to deny it or avoid it. In fact, the best of modern theology is revealing a strong 'turn toward participation,' as opposed to religion as mere observation, affirmation, moralism, or group belonging. There is nothing to join, only something to recognize, suffer, and enjoy as a participant. You are already in the eternal flow that Christians would call the divine life of the Trinity."

Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century

"I think that the world will not be converted to the heavenly hope of Christianity if first Christianity does not convert itself to the hope of the world."

Booker T. Washington, 20th century

"Lay hold of something that will help you, and then use it to help somebody else."

Anne Lamott, 21st century

"I think joy and sweetness and affection are a spiritual path. We're here to know God, to love and serve God, and to be blown away by the beauty and miracle of nature. You just have to get rid of so much baggage to be light enough to dance, to sing, to play. You don't have time to carry grudges; you don't have time to cling to the need to be right."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 20th century

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*, 21st century

"Most of us have nicknames--annoying, endearing, embarrassing. But what about your true name? It is not necessarily your given name. But it is the one to which you are most eager to respond when called."

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Oracle / January, 2018 / Michael Caldwell

The Restorative Justice Committee of the VT Conference, UCC, Department of Mission, advocates for restorative rather than retributive approaches with offenders in the criminal justice system. Here's one anonymous story from one of the twelve restorative justice centers in Vermont. It involves the rather unusual intervention of a volunteer member in a Reparative Board meeting with an offender who was referred by the local court as an alternative to jail.

[Read More Here.....](#)

HAPPENINGS

BE THE CHURCH

*Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.*

BE THE CHURCH



You are invited to join the Vermont Conference UCC in Chandler Music Hall for Vermont Pride Theater's seventh annual winter benefit, at 7:30 PM on Saturday January 27th: the first Vermont production of Paul Lucas's ground-breaking play *Trans Scripts Part I: The Women*. Proceeds from this staged reading will go to the transgender-rights project of GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD).

For this play, Mr. Lucas conducted nearly four years of research, interviewing over 75 people of transgender experience. It was given its world premiere at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (Scotland) in August 2015. That production featured the real stories of six transgender women in a tapestry of colors and emotions. Each story deftly intertwined with the others, the actors baring their souls to present the experiences of the interviewees, as told in the interviewees' own words. Of a subsequent Boston production, *The Boston Herald* wrote that this ground-breaking play presents "... a set of deep-rooted stories full of warmth and vulnerability that speaks to anyone en route to discovering their own identity."

Interaction between audiences and performers is a key component of Vermont Pride Theater's mission. A talkback with playwright Paul Lucas, original cast member Bianca Leigh, and GLAD's Public Information Director Daniel Weiss will be followed by a reception to meet and greet them and the rest of the ensemble.

Tickets for adults are \$20 in advance, \$22 at the door; for students, \$15 in advance, \$17 at the door. These are available online at www.chandler-arts.org, or Chandler's box office (802) 728-9878.

Sponsored in part by the Vermont Conference United Church of Christ, Vermont Pride Theater presents on stage the concerns and issues of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer Vermonters. The purpose: to build understanding among them and their families and friends, as well within the wider community.

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**Sermon Challenge Launched**

Check out the website devoted to the call for more than a thousand sermons in solidarity with the 21 youth who have taken our federal government to court over climate change. Clergy and youth are encouraged to make a pledge to preach a sermon in the coming months. Help us spread the word about the challenge on social media. Also, read this wonderful reflection on the case by Peter Sawtell of Eco-Justice Ministries.

[See Creation Care Video here...](#)

[The Earth is the Lord's](#)

[United Church of Christ speaks out on climate change](#)

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**Ecumenical Prayer Service
celebrating
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed in the octave of the Christian feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul, January 18-25, in recognition of Jesus' hope, expressed in the Gospel, that the followers of Christ might all be one (John 17:21).
Observance of the Week is supported by The Graymoor Ecumenical

[Read more here....](#)

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---> What is the New England Women's Celebration?

The New England Women's Celebration takes place every 4 years at various locations in New England. It is held over (or near) the weekend of Mothering Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Lent, which is traditionally a time when the strict observances of Lent were relaxed for a day so church folks could return to the Mother Church of their roots.

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

New England Youth
Environmental Justice
Summit

Sponsored by the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ
April 7, 2018 ~ 9 AM-4 PM
Brookside Congregational Church
Manchester, NH

[READ MORE HERE.....](#)

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Original worship resources for local churches...because Sunday's coming.

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Vermont Outdoor Ministries

It's not too early to think about Summer Camp Rock Point 2018 - July 29-August 3 We have our volunteer Deans!

Thank you to Rev. Katelyn Macrae and Laura Labrie for saying yes to directing this week of camp for campers 5th-8th graders. If you would like to volunteer this week as a counselor or lifeguard please contact Nancy Fowler at fowler5vt@gmail.com Nancy Fowler and Laurie Chipman had a great time at the Outdoor Ministry Association Consult Gathering at Silver Lake, CT in November. Rev. John Dorhauer was at this event and listened to some of our camping stories. We applied and were awarded a \$1000 Deering Grant to help with the cost of paddle boarding at Rock Point next summer.



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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

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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 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.

Thanks so much for your support!

Pamela B. Eiten LMPC Assistant for Communication Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

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## CLASSIFIEDS

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Marble Baptismal font
Best offer--you pick up (we may deliver, if needed)
United Community Church of Morrisville
Please contact Pastor Marisa at 888-2990

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## DINNERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Community Supper**  
**Every Friday, 6 pm at the United Church of South Royalton**



**Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue... 1st Friday of Every  
Month**

**[www.essexeatsoout.org](http://www.essexeatsoout.org)**

## The Dorset Church

We will be serving (and eating!) a delicious supper at The Dorset Church, 143 Church St. (off Route 30) on Wednesday, January 24, 2018. Dinner will be held from 5:30 PM-7:00 PM. The menu will consist of pasta with meat sauce or vegetarian mushroom marinara sauce. We will serve Italian sausage, broccoli with garlic and oil, fresh mozzarella and tomato salad, tossed green salad and garlic bread. Assorted desserts will be served.

Winter Community Suppers are for everyone-Moms & Dads that need a break, people who want a night out in the middle of winter, families rushing from work to

sports, people stretching their budget - the suppers are meant to build community for EVERYONE. We hope you'll join us for warm fellowship and a hot meal. All are welcome for FREE great meals! Please bring your family and friends! Take outs available. Questions call Jane at 867-2260 or email at [dorsetchurch@gmail.com](mailto:dorsetchurch@gmail.com). This winter we will hold additional FREE dinners on Wednesday, February 28th and Wednesday, March 21st - please make a note on your calendar - we look forward to seeing you!

## **First Congregational Church of Harland, UCC**

Saturday January 20, 2018  
Famous Roast Beef Dinner  
4:30-6:30  
Call 802-436-2224 for more information

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CHURCH NEWS

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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.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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**Bethany Church United Church of Christ Randolph, Vermont**

<http://www.bethanyuccvt.org> Coordinator for Youth and Family Ministries Bethany Church, a lively congregation of the United Church of Christ, is seeking a half time (20 hours a week) Coordinator for Youth and Family Ministries. The candidate we are seeking is a person of faith who is committed to the church and to nurturing the spiritual needs of children, youth and families. They will have strong organizational and communication skills. They will have training and/or experience in providing

educational ministries in a local church setting. They will understand and honor confidentiality and appropriate boundaries. This staff person will work closely with our pastor, Rev. Kim McKerley, and will have the strong support of the Christian Education Committee and the members of our congregation. Together we will work to continue our excellent youth ministry programs consisting of three fellowship groups (Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) which provide fellowship, spiritual formation and outreach programs for our youth. This staff person will work with us all to strengthen our Sunday School ministry to children and youth (ages three through grade 12) and their families. They will also be asked to reach out to our Bethany Church and Randolph Community families. We are a UCC congregation eager to move boldly forward in Educational/Faith Formation ministries. We would love to hear from all interested persons that we might talk together to see if the Spirit has a mutual path forward for us. We ask that references be provided if requested. Compensation will be commensurate with experience.

Contact: Wendy Ross, Chair of the Christian Education Committee  
[Rosspol.w@gmail.com](mailto:Rosspol.w@gmail.com) Bethany Church United Church of Christ 30 North Main Street  
Randolph, Vermont 05060

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We hope you like our ever changing look as we try to make each E-Kit fun to explore!
We welcome submissions for the weekly E-Kit. Please submit your submission by Tuesday of each week! We will be running all events and news in this weekly E-Kit.
Have you seen our new website? If you have anything you would like to see published on the website, please let me know!

robinsonc@vtcucc.org



Know someone who might enjoy this email? [Share it](#) with them.

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