

Welcome to E-Kit! Charri

Vermont Conference



January 31, 2018

AN APOSTROPHE?

One day I was wearing my COMMA pin and the woman in the check-out line in front of me noticed it and asked, 'Is that an apostrophe?' Of course I explained about the Comma reminding us that God is still speaking. And then I realized that it could very easily be an Apostrophe - reminding us that we are God's beloved children. We BELONG to God! We are invited to be about God's work of caring for all others who also BELONG to God!

As God's beloved child we ask - Who am I? - What am I? - Why am I here? - What is my purpose? - Am I living it out? - What does God require of me at this time and in this place?

These are the same questions that local churches ask themselves when they are searching for a new pastor or looking over the last year and ahead to the next at Annual Meeting times. How clear are the members of your congregation about the identity of your church? Can your members articulate to one another, to neighbors and co-workers - What is our church about? Who is our church in my town? Why does our church exist? What is its purpose for being? Is our church living out its purpose? Does it make a difference in the lives of our members and our town? What does God require of our church at this time and in this place?

I think that most people would say that they are clear about their local church. However, how clear are your members about the denomination your congregation is a part of? There are many denominations and each one has unique characteristics about how they connect with local congregations. In the United Church of Christ there are local churches, Associations, Conferences, General Synod. All belong to one another in a chosen covenantal relationship to speak to and with one another about what God is requiring of those who love God and yearn to serve all whom God loves - to seek justice, mercy, peace and love for the well-being of the world and the humanity God loves.

Every one of those settings also must be asking those same questions - who are we? - what are we? - why are we here? - what is our purpose? - are we living it out? - how are we making a difference in the lives of our members and our neighbors? - wherever they are?

Our Vermont Conference is about to enter a time of Visioning and Strategic Planning for the next 5 to 10 years. Aren't we all trying to figure out how to be church in 2018 when everything around us swirls with change and uncertainty, fear and hate and violence?

One good first step is to root ourselves in our calling and our identity as a people of faith - a people who have chosen to live as the United Church of Christ. Perhaps this is the year for every church and every member in the Vermont Conference to explore our UCC History, Polity, and Theology. There is a new resource to help us do just that. It provides a number of sessions from which can be chosen those topics which are pertinent to particular audiences - Adult forums, new member classes, confirmation classes, Church Governing Boards, Search and Call Committees and Church and Ministry Committees - or whatever you dream up!

Please consider carefully this invitation to wander back through our UCC history and Identity in order to more clearly see our future as God's Continuing Testament in a world that so needs God's Good News as much or more than it ever has.

Pam Lucas



VT CONFERENCE NEWS



**2018 Annual Meeting
of the Vermont Conference
of the United Church of Christ
Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, Vermont**

Dear Members and Friends of the Vermont Conference,

I want to warmly invite you to the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting to be held at the Lake Morey Inn on April 27-28, 2018.

Our conference theme is I Love to Tell the Story - Sharing Stories of Faith in the 21st Century.

We are excited to welcome Susanne Schmidt as our keynote speaker/facilitator. Sue is a comedic storyteller, a sought after speaker and teacher and the regional producer for The Moth of NPR fame. As a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, trainer and speaker, Susanne's compelling and humorous presentations assist

listeners to understand the power of stories to heal. In 2013, Susanne launched her latest endeavor, Say It Forward Productions. Designed with the intention of promoting the power of stories for good, Susanne works with organizations to tell their own stories. We look forward to hearing Susanne as a presenter and workshop leader. She will also be organizing a "story slam" for Friday evening.

In addition to the important work of the Conference, we have an abundance of workshops for learning, spiritual renewal and living out our faith in actions of justice. Worship will be woven throughout the meeting and incorporate what we learn as telling the stories of our faith and life.

Registration will be open by March 1st. You can make your room reservations directly with Lake Morey at any time. There is scholarship money available. Churches with under 50 members can get a scholarship including full registration and meals for one person.

I look forward to seeing you at Lake Morey!
Lynn



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



Got a History Story?

There is interest in holding a workshop for the VTC Annual Meeting April 27-28 at Lake Morey Resort, celebrating the stories from our church's' history. Many of our churches were

established in the 1700s. We know some of the stories. Let's share them with each other in a workshop. Please let Diane Holme know of your interest in participating. The format has not been finalized, but at this point we are thinking 3-5 minutes per story. This is going to be a most amazing journey back in time!

Diane Holme, VTC Planning Committee Member
holmelaw@vermontel.net
802-875-4392



Vermont Conference Check Remittance form

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

**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE VERMONT
CONFERENCE**

[Here...](#)



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS

UCC Disaster Ministries Adds Harvey Work Site

UCC Disaster Ministries is partnering with the Southeast Texas Community Development Corporation, or SET CDC, in Port Arthur, Texas, to repair low-income rental apartments damaged in Hurricane Harvey. A volunteer work site will open there in February. Work may include but will not be limited to light carpentry, drywall, insulation, flooring, trim and painting.

[Learn more about how you can help >>](#)

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**Welcome to Exploring UCC History, Polity, and  
Theology, a curriculum resource for the church offered  
by the Ministerial Excellence, Support and  
Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team of the United  
Church of Christ.**

**This resource is for confirmation. It's for adult small groups. It's for retreats. It's for new member courses. It's for Committees on Ministry. It's for conference boards. It's for any gathering of folks who are curious about what it means to be a part of the UCC. Within this resource, you will find learning sessions designed around several different themes. Each learning session includes a facilitator guide, video, resources, and activities to help you explore more fully the unique history, governance structure, and theological commitments of the UCC as well as how the story of this denomination is still unfolding. You are invited through this resource to enter into the story and to make it your own. In the United Church of Christ, we believe in a still speaking God. Our prayer for you as you make use of this resource is that you will experience God's voice and presence in new and perhaps unexpected and surprising ways. Enjoy this journey!**

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

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UCC NEWS HEADLINES

**NY Immigration advocates applaud judge's rebuke of ICE, freedom for
New Sanctuary Coalition leader**

**Sanctuary advocates in NYC, including two UCC pastors, their faith
communities and scores of other clergy and congregations are
celebrating a bold message from a federal judge that led to freedom for
one of their own.**

UCC leaders celebrate Cleveland baseball team decision to retire logo

**United Church of Christ leaders believe the Cleveland Indians are taking a
step in the right direction with the decision to retire the team mascot after
the 2018 season.**

**Illinois church mission team heading to Florida for long term disaster
recovery work**

A mission team from a UCC church in Illinois is heading to Florida once again, to offer disaster recovery assistance in the St. Augustine area.

Commentary: Don't Adjust

Peace advocates looking to build a just world for all, and who remain fully committed to practicing love of neighbor and love of self must be vigilant in this time. We cannot let the machinations that are unfolding lull us into a belief that this is just a new way of living in the world.

Santa Fe church confirmation class: 'Protect the Dreamers'

A group of young teens from the United Church of Santa Fe, in a public expression of faith, is calling on Congress to protect the Dreamers, and drop the border wall.

Wisconsin church increases interest in sacred stories with 'Picture the Bible'

A local United Church of Christ congregation in Wisconsin has created a resource that helps bring the Bible to life. It's called Picture the Bible.



WEEKLY SEEDS

Focus Reading: Mark 1:29-39

George Bernard Shaw, 20th century

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

Paul Tillich, 20th century

"Being religious means asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers, even if the answers hurt."

Neale Donald Walsch, 21st century

"Honor the tradition but expand the understanding. That's what religions must do right now if they hope to be helpful to humans in the years ahead."

Libanius, 4th-century pagan philosopher

"What women these Christians have!"

Dori Grinenko Baker in Doing Girlfriend Theology, 20th century

"God is so large she requires all life to express herself." (adapted from

her grandmother's journal)

Rabindranath Tagore, 20th century Nobel Prize-winning poet
"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy."

Albert Schweitzer, 20th century
"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only
ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and
found how to serve."

Booker T. Washington, 20th century
"Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others."
**Theodore Guerin, Journals and Letters of Mother Theodore Guerin, 19th
century**
"We are not called upon to do all the good that is possible, but only that
which we can do."

Florence Nightingale, 19th century
"If I could give you information of my life it would be to show how a
woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God in strange and
unaccustomed paths to do in His service what He has done in her. And if I
could tell you all, you would see how God has done all, and I nothing. I
have worked hard, very hard, that is all; and I have never refused God
anything."

Martin Luther King Jr., 20th century
"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to
have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and
verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated
by love."

Fred Rogers, 20th century
"Life is for service."



ARTICLES OF INTEREST

PEACEMAKER'S PULPIT
January 2018

I have been thinking about peace lately. The Hebrew word for peace is "shalom," which means so much more than lack of violence. Shalom implies completeness and wholeness. In looking up definitions for shalom, I learned from several sources that shalom refers to the inclusion of opposites. For instance, shalom is used as both a hello and a good-bye. It can mean peace between opposing parties or opposing viewpoints that take into consideration both parties or viewpoints.

Shalom led me to thinking about the Household of God. In a household which includes the householder, all of his/her land, his/her dependents, his/her slaves/servants and his/her livestock, I suspect there would be found opposing viewpoints related to many issues. Shalom would include toleration for opposing viewpoints so long as respect, fealty, and working for the common good prevail. That strikes me as completeness or wholeness. The householder treats everyone in the household with justice tempered with mercy and members of the household do likewise.

We, who call ourselves "peacemakers," understand that peace and justice are intrinsically combined. I wonder though, if we have considered the way of peace as described by "shalom." Peace that means the inclusion of opposites; peace that includes opposing views, yet working together toward a common goal. Peace that excludes violence in all its forms in thought, word and deed. This year it is my intention to pay more attention to those viewpoints that oppose my own and to look for where I can find common ground. I hope that intention will lead me toward more peace within myself. Perhaps Jesus calls us to not only work toward peace through justice, but to become the very peace we seek.

Shalom, sisters and brothers!
Sue Church

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### Got a History Story?

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Diane Holme, VTC Planning Committee Member

[holmelaw@vermontel.net](mailto:holmelaw@vermontel.net)

802-875-4392

## HAPPENINGS





## [BE THE CHURCH](#)

## 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](#)



---> [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

Camp Brochures have arrived!

[Preview 2018 Camp Brochure here!](#)

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, please contact Nancy Fowler at fowler5vt@gmail.com
Nancy Fowler or Laurie Chipman lchipman@fccej.org.

Rev. John Dorhauer was at the Outdoor Ministry Association Consult Gathering at
Silver Lake, CT in November 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.

[See Camp Job Opportunities here.....](#)

Job Replies to:

[Laurie Chipman Ichipman@fccej.org](mailto:Laurie.Chipman@fccej.org)

or

[Nancy Fowler fowler5vt@myfairpoint.net](mailto:Nancy.Fowler@myfairpoint.net)



OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION
United Church of Christ



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.



CLASSIFIEDS



**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**



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

Bradford Congregational Church
The Community Suppers are the
4th THURSDAY of each month

Shoreham Congregational Church

Come to a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 13, from 5 to 7 PM.

Enjoy Pancakes or French Toast with maple syrup, Sausages, Latkes with applesauce or sour cream, and beverages. The cost is only \$8 for adults, \$4 for children, and \$20 for a family, and the meal is open to all.

The Dorset Church

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. 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!



CHURCH NEWS

Kevin Goldenbogen's Installation will take place at the Charlotte Congregational Church at 3:00pm. Pam Lucas will be participating.

Pam Lucas will be leading worship at the Westmore Community Church

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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 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](mailto:robinsonc@vtcucc.org)



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