

United Church of Hinesburg
P.O. Box 39
Hinesburg, VT 05461

FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER



TO:

Pastor: Rev. Jared Hamilton
Pastor's Email: revjared@gmavt.net
Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am – 12pm
Office Contacts: 482-3352 / unitedchurch@gmavt.net / www.ucfh.org

Please help keep our records current by contacting the UCH Office with changes to your e-mail or mailing address. Thank you!

Pastor's Message:

The Church of Already and Still-to-Come

He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come."

- Luke 11:2

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you."

- The Gospel of Luke 17:20-21

At the beginning of the year, media outlets produced a number of "all-decade" stories. From *CNN's* "Top 10 Environmental Moments of the Decade" to *The Atlantic's* "10 Biggest Political Stories of the Decade" to *The Sporting News'* "College Football All-Decade Team," article after article captured history in a ten-year segment from 2010-2019. This, of course, is common because splicing history into ten-year segments helps all of us to organize and characterize a busy, multi-faceted world.

Like the stories above that focus on the top environmental, political and college football stories and characters of the 2010s, author Philip Jenkins has written a couple of articles that look at the top stories that have affected United States churches in the 2010s. The January 29, 2020 issue of *The Christian Century* contains one of these articles entitled, "Major stories in American Christianity of the 2010s" (<https://bit.ly/2TZDMLv>). One of the overarching themes is the rise of "Nones" – folks with no religious affiliation – in the US. Most often, "Nones" are neither atheist nor agnostic; rather, they are simply not affiliated with a religious tradition, brand or creed. A majority of "Nones"

were raised in a faith tradition but left due to culture wars, institutional failings, politics, lack of impact or any number of other reasons. In the 2010s, self-identified “Nones” represented 26 percent of the population in the US, “making them a slightly larger group than either evangelical Protestants or Roman Catholics, the nation’s two largest religious groups.” By most accounts, this is up by over 12 percent from the previous decade. As a result, the 2010s saw many churches decline in membership (and thus, service, outreach, religious education programs, etc.) as a result of folks leaving – choosing to disaffiliate with Christian faith traditions and faith communities across the board.

Among other trends and stories that Jenkins highlights were the election of a progressive pope, the 2015 Supreme Court decision to guarantee the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples, Trump carrying the Evangelical vote in 2016, the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements, the closing of seminaries, decreased levels of fertility, gender fluidity and churches engaging in climate change advocacy and work. The author argues that the 2010s dynamically changed the landscape of Christianity in America, and I would argue that the 2010s have changed what it means to believe in the Divine and belong to a faith community.

Despite the reality that Christian faith communities have less of the “market share” these days, we could argue that the 2010s have been beneficial to the church. Greater inclusion, more work around social justice issues like white privilege, racism and sexism, and greater accountability and safeguards for protecting the most vulnerable in our communities have only strengthened the church. Churches that were stable at the beginning of the decade and able to adapt to the changing needs of the world are likely thriving today in their local settings.

One of the more important themes in Luke’s gospel is the concept of the “Kingdom of God.” Working against the oppression of the Roman Empire – a type of kingdom - the concept means something like God’s good and beneficial presence enacted in the real world with connotations of good governance, justice and mercy. The message of Jesus in polemic and parable is about the Kingdom of God as it stands against an oppressive regime that hindered humans and all of creation from thriving. And Jesus seems to give mixed messages about the kingdom. He exhorts his disciples to pray for its arrival, and also proclaims that it’s already here, among them. Unless Jesus is contradicting himself, he thinks about God’s presence and the end of oppression as something that is already here and still to come.

I like this “already and still-to-come” attitude when we think about the way churches meet the needs and challenges of the world in each age. It allows faith communities to acknowledge the way God is moving and present in their life together – through generosity and service, insights gained and burdens shared – while adapting to new ways God’s presence moves throughout the world, inspiring ever greater forms of love and justice. Faith communities never really “arrive” to some utopian final version of themselves. Rather, healthy ones acknowledge that God is present in their lives and adapt to their environments and whatever God might be doing in that new environment.

2020 at the United Church of Hinesburg will look a lot like this “already and still-to-come” church – one that is able to celebrate the presence of God in our history and our shared lives together, while adapting to those new things God is calling us to do in our ever-changing environment. Some of this work will include the restructuring of our governance to aid in decision-making, communication and overall institutional health, offering a different type of youth trip during the summer, engaging in new mission and social justice opportunities and becoming a supervised ministry site for a student going through the process of becoming an ordained minister. I will also take Sabbatical this year, with more information on what that will look like in next month’s newsletter.

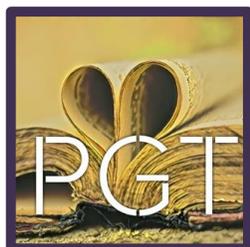
We enter the 2020s in a strong position. May we look on with excitement at what this decade holds for us and adapt along the way.

Blessings,

Pastor Jared

Spiritual Formation Activities at UCH in February

Practicing God Talk - Third Sunday of the Month - 11:15am to 12:00pm



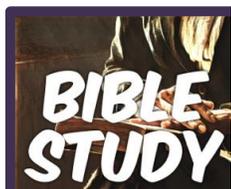
Practicing God Talk meets on the third Sunday of each month to look at contemporary issues and interesting ideas through the lens of faith. This month we will read a *Sojourners* article entitled, "From Violence, Beauty: Transforming 'Something Created for Evil' Into Art" by Andrea Couture. The article can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2O6RW0s>, in hardcopy at the back of the church or in the church office. Join the discussion about the power of art to overcome violence on February 16th from 11:15-12:00pm in the back classroom of the Parish Hall. All are welcome!

Wednesday Night Considering Faith Small Group - First Wednesday of the Month - 6:00-7:00pm



New at UCH! Our Wednesday Night Considering Faith Small Group will meet on the first Wednesday of each month (February 5th this month) at Parkside Café (10244 Route 116) from 6:00pm to 7:00pm. Come, grab a drink, and share life as we talk about our encounters with faith: good, bad and everything in-between. This month we'll discuss our faith origin stories and what we think about them today. All are welcome!

AM Bible Study - Last Sunday of the Month - 9:00 to 9:45am



We are also bringing back AM Bible Study the last Sunday of each month before Sunday Worship services from 9:00 to 9:45am. Come for good coffee and conversation about the lectionary passage for the day. All are welcome!

Membership Care Committee News

Membership Care Committee: Dianne Hall – Interim Chair; Alice Cobb, Grace Farley, Bonnie Farrow, Carrie Huestis, Barbara Lyman, Heather Roberts, Mary Thompson

Are you interested in becoming a member at the United Church?



Joining a church is one way of acknowledging the bond between individuals and a community of faith. When new members join, the entire community has the opportunity to pledge their care, support and commitment to the new member and the new member does the same.

If you are new to the United Church of Hinesburg and are interested in learning more about the church and/or joining as a member, please contact Pastor Jared at revjared@gmavt.net or the church office at 482-3352 or unitedchurch@gmavt.net to receive more details.

Annual Membership Meeting - February 9, 2020

Our annual United Church of Hinesburg membership meeting will be held on February 9, 2020 after our worship service. All are encouraged to attend and join in the discussion; members of the United Church of Hinesburg are entitled to vote. Nursery care will be provided.

Our church is in an exciting period of growth. The annual meeting is an excellent opportunity to hear from church leaders about our 2019 accomplishments, what we are envisioning for 2020 and beyond, and to ask questions. Come and be involved in decisions that will help to shape our future!

Copies of the annual report will be available on the Resources page of the church website (www.ucofh.org/resources/) and in the church office beginning Wednesday, February 5th.

Christian Education Committee News

Christian Education Committee: Eileen Ashe - Chair; Heather Roberts – CE Coordinator, Leah Hamilton, Mary Hong, Theron Main, Renate Parke, Sharonlee Trefry

In **January**, we returned to the classroom for lessons from our *A Joyful Path* curriculum: Concentrating our Energy, Learning from Mistakes and Connecting with Kindness. There were no Sunday School children at church on Sunday, January 19th, so we plan to make dry soup mix to stock the Little Free Pantry at our next One Room Schoolhouse on Sunday, February 23rd.

In **February**, we will continue using *A Joyful Path* in the classroom, with lessons about Sharing, Self-control and Learning Patience. We will finish the month with the One Room Schoolhouse described above, a great way to get a hearty, nutritious meal to our neighbors in need.

Our next Friday Night event will be a **game night** on Friday, February 7th from 6:00-8:00pm in the Parish Hall. We will share a dinner of quesadillas and fresh veggies and then play board games. Some games will be provided but, if you have a favorite game, please bring it to share. This is a friend-friendly event so feel free to bring others along. We hope to see you there!

Can you help our growing Sunday School program by **volunteering** your time on Sunday mornings or one Friday evening per month? We have a particular need for a musician or vocalist to work with the Sunday School for 4-6 weeks at a time, learning a song to be performed in church. In addition, we are in need of:

- Leaders for our Sunday School classrooms (grades K-3 and grades 4-6)
- Roamers to monitor Sunday School classrooms and help out where needed
- A special project or activity to share with the Sunday School during a One Room Schoolhouse
- Chaperones for our monthly movie or game nights on the first Friday of the month
- Nursery substitutes to cover when our usual providers are unavailable

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact Heather in the church office.

Middle and High School Youth Groups - Upcoming fundraisers

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner Tuesday, February 25th 5:30-7:00pm



Join us for our fifth annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner in the Parish Hall, hosted by the youth of HYP. A centuries-old tradition, this meal on the last day before the season of Lent will feature pancakes (with decadent toppings), sausages and Mardi Gras activities for young people. All are welcome and donations support the HYP 2020 summer trip to the New Community Project's Sustainable Living Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Youth Group Program Schedule

Winter Session 2020

The middle and school groups resume meeting on Sunday, February 9th, meeting every Sunday evening through March 22nd with the exception of March 1st. Unless noted below, the middle school will meet from 5:00pm to 6:30pm and the high school will meet from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. There will be an overlapping meal from 6:00pm to 6:30pm for everyone. If you are able, please bring \$5 to help cover the cost of the meal.

Because our 2020 combined summer trip will be at the New Community Project Sustainable Living Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and focus on the intersection of environmental stewardship and social justice, this session's topics will include environmental stewardship, sustainability, social justice, immigration/refugees, indigenous cultures and land, alternative transportation, permaculture, climate change, food and housing insecurity and more.

Additionally, participants in the 2020 Summer Trip are asked to register by paying their \$100 deposit by Sunday, February 23rd. If you have any questions or are interested in scholarship opportunities, please contact Pastor Jared.

Sunday, February 9, 2020

- Middle School: 5:00pm to 6:30pm
- High School: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Sunday, February 16, 2020

- Middle School: 5:00pm to 6:30pm
- High School: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Sunday, February 23, 2020

- Both groups 5:00pm to 7:30pm

Sunday, March 1, 2020 – OFF

Sunday, March 8, 2020

- Middle School: 5:00pm to 6:30pm
- High School: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Sunday, March 15, 2020

- Middle School: 5:00pm to 6:30pm
- High School: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Sunday, March 22, 2020

- Middle School: 5:00pm to 6:30pm
- High School: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

2020 HYP Youth Trip

Background

Every summer, youth from Hinesburg travel for a time of service, education and fun. In previous years, this group has explored food insecurity in New York City, social justice, accessibility and animal care issues in Massachusetts, disaster cleanup in Puerto Rico, and rural poverty in Orland, Maine. This program, called the Hinesburg Youth Project (HYP) is a non-denominational/interfaith/no-faith inclusive program of the United Church of Hinesburg and is open to youth grades 6-12 in Hinesburg, Vermont and the surrounding areas.



This year, participants will travel to the **New Community Project Sustainable Living Center** in Harrisonburg, Virginia to explore the intersection of environmental stewardship and social justice. The Living Center is a multifaceted organization that works to promote the healing of local lands and people by “Creating sustainable systems that care for the earth, empower people, educate and inspire, and build the foundation for a nonviolent life style.” In practice, this looks like creating green spaces in the city, campaigning and building bicycle routes to promote alternative transportation, working with schools to install gardens, offer energy audits to local businesses, provide housing for those in transition, including refugees, and many educational programs that connect the worlds of climate justice and sustainable practices with direct human impact. Founded by David Radcliff, and run by Tom Benevento, the Living Center is a vital part of a true one-of-a-kind organization called the New Community Project. For more information on this organization, visit:

<https://www.newcommunityproject.info/harrisonburg>, and <https://www.facebook.com/newcommunityproject/>.

There will be many options for service including work around the farm and community gardens, preparing meals, chop wood, working on bike path construction, and performing light carpentry work. To ground our environmental and agrarian work in social justice and care for all people, we will have the opportunity to hear from NCP staff and James Madison University faculty about how their environmental work is integral to working with those on the margins. Finally, youth will also have the opportunity for fun, exploring Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley and hanging out as a group.

The trip will take place **Monday, June 15th to Monday, June 22nd.**

Cost

Trip fees and fundraising cover all lodging, meals, transportation and program costs. Scholarships are available by email Jared Hamilton @ revjared@gmavt.net.

Trip Fee: \$300 (scholarships Available) if signed up by 2/23;
 \$400 if signed up by 3/31;
 \$500 if signed up by 4/30;
 \$Full Cost (\$750) if signed up 5/1 or later

A deposit of \$100 is due by February 23, 2020, or on the date of registration. Remaining Balance is due June 1, 2020

All participating youth (and their families when possible) are strongly encouraged to participate in program, fundraising and service projects throughout the year. Service projects will be focused on the New Community Project Site in Starksboro, Vermont. These opportunities prepare us for the subject material of this trip, ease the total trip cost to families, and strengthen bonds between the youth and chaperones before the trip.

February 2020 Happenings at UCH

{All meetings/events are held in Osborne Parish House unless otherwise noted.}

Monday mornings (except 2 nd)	10:00am-11:00am	Spanish speaking group
2 nd Monday	8:00am-3:00pm	WIC
Monday nights	5:00pm-9:30pm	Parish House reserved by private group
Tuesday nights	6:15pm-7:30pm	Cub Scouts
2 nd Tuesday night	6:30pm-8:00pm	4H Midnight Riders
Wednesday nights	6:30pm-9:00pm	Boy Scouts
Thursday mornings	10:00am-11:00am	Spanish speaking group
Fridays (except 1 st)	9:00am-1:00pm	Hinesburg Senior Meal site
Sunday, February 2 nd	1:30pm-4:00pm	Girl Scouts – cookie form drop off
Wednesday, February 5 th	12:30pm-2:00pm	Knitting/crocheting group meets in the Parish Hall
Wednesday, February 5 th	6:00pm-7:00pm	Considering Faith small group meets at the Parkside Cafe
Friday, February 7 th	6:00pm-8:00pm	Sunday School Friday Night event – game night
Sunday, February 9 th	5:00pm-6:30pm	Middle School Youth Group
Sunday, February 9 th	6:00pm-7:30pm	High School Youth Group
Sunday, February 16 th	11:15am	Practicing God-talk meets during coffee hour
Sunday, February 16 th	5:00pm-6:30pm	Middle School Youth Group
Sunday, February 16 th	6:00pm-7:30pm	High School Youth Group
Wednesday, February 19 th	12:30pm-2:00pm	Knitting/crocheting group meets in the Parish Hall
Sunday, February 23 rd	9:00am-9:45am	AM Bible Study
Sunday, February 23 rd		One Room Schoolhouse Sunday School – soup mix for LFP
Sunday, February 23 rd	5:00pm-7:30pm	Middle & High School Youth Group
Monday, February 24 th		March newsletter deadline
Tuesday, February 25 th	5:30pm-7:00pm	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner fundraiser for HYP
Wednesday, February 26 th	7:00pm	Ash Wednesday service
Friday, February 28 th	5:30pm-7:00pm	Free Community Meal hosted by the Missions Committee
Saturday, February 29 th	9:00am-11:30am	Missions & Social Justice Committee annual retreat



The United Church of Hinesburg is host to the first **Little Free Pantry** in Vermont and we continue to need your help to keep it stocked! It is designed to help neighbors in need, whether they are food insecure or have a last-minute need for a food item after the grocery store is closed. The Little Free Pantry is available for food, toiletries and household items 24 hours a day, no questions asked. If you need a little something, stop in and get it. If you can share a little something, stop by anytime and drop it in the pantry. If you have any questions about items that are appropriate to donate, please contact the church office.

****Please note that the colder weather limits the type of items that can be left in the Little Free Pantry – no canned goods or liquids that could freeze/thaw. Dry goods are welcome all year long! Some examples include: breakfast cereal, granola bars, pasta, rice, macaroni & cheese, peanut butter, foil-wrapped tuna or chicken, baking mixes, toiletries & hygiene products.**



Our knitting/crocheting group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 12:30-2:00pm in the Parish Hall. Join us on Wednesday, February 5th and Wednesday, February 19th. Bring your project, old or new, or just bring yourself. We have a large supply of yarn if you need some to start a prayer shawl or a project for next year's Holiday Bazaar. Come for some stitching fun and conversation!

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

04	Laurie Danforth
07	Simon Hamilton
08	Betsy Patrick
10	Douglas Lantman
11	Dot Blanck
11	Suzy Mead
11	Kathy Riggs
12	Sara Hawkins
12	Desmond Hong
12	Connor Sterrett
13	Jonathan Trefry
14	<i>Jaime & Grace Ciffo</i>
14	<i>Melissa & Eric Loretan</i>
18	Sarah Hayes
19	Beth Sengle
20	Kelli Brown
20	Karen Farnsworth
21	Katherine Ashe
21	Judith Burrirt
24	Keith Roberts
24	Erin Walker
25	Josephine Reilly

*If you don't see your birthday or anniversary listed,
please call the Church Office so we may include you!*



February 2020

February 2nd

Greeter: Mary Thompson & Sarah Hayes

Ushers: Mary Thompson & Meg Reilly

Reader: Mary Thompson

February 9th

Greeters: youth

Ushers: Grace Ciffo & Kristi Kilbride

Reader: youth

February 16th

Greeter: Paul Emmons

Ushers: Barbara & Bob Forauer

Reader: Sharonlee Trefry

February 23rd

Greeter: Paul Emmons

Ushers: Kate Schubart & TBD

Reader: Howdy Russell

*Coffee Hour committee: Anne Donegan & Jean
Isham, Co-chairs; Karen Farnsworth, Meg Reilly,
Kate Schubart*

Thank you for your service!



Looking for news regarding specific denominations?

Check these websites...

www.neumc.org | www.vtcucc.org | www.abcvnh.org

**Distributing the monthly newsletter by email
saves the church a considerable amount of**

**money in postage expenses. If you currently receive a mailed hard copy of the church
newsletter, please consider contacting the church office with an updated email address to
which future issues can be sent. Thank you!**
