April 2020 News & Updates

As we continue to navigate the waters of offering Faith Formation opportunities in a virtual setting, we need to be mindful of creating a safe, healthy, and inviting learning environment for God's children of all ages. The resources provided this month offer some guidance in that area.

Online Faith Formation Infrastructure

Whether you are just starting to create your online faith formation infrastructure, or are in the process of refining it, the resources below cover both curating content and selecting the right technologies to implement your desired solution.

Debbie Kolacki, of PRC Practical Resources for Churches, provides some helpful tips in her booklet or webinar Taking Faith Formation Online (revised in March 2020).

John Roberto, of Vibrant Faith, has developed a wealth of knowledge on the topic of Moving Faith Formation Online. Check out these resources, updated to acknowledge short term challenges presented by the pandemic and to provide strategies for optimizing online faith formation as an integral part of the new normal.

- A Guide with resources and programs for Moving Faith Formation Online (updated April 1, 2020)
- A Webinar held on April 1, 2020 along with the PowerPoint presentation

Practical Considerations for Online Ministry

Safety

As we spend more time interacting with one another via electronic means, we are called upon to review our Safe Conduct practices and, more specifically, how they address digital engagement.

The Insurance Board offers several resources in this area:

- Boundaries and Youth Ministry During COVID-19 Webinar
  May 5, 2020 - 2:00 pm EST
- Electronic Communications and an Organization's Duty to Protect
Best Safety Practices for Online/Digital/Virtual Interaction With Minors with the supplement Suggestions from the Insurance Board (provided in partnership with Disciples Home Missions and Ministries Across Generations and found on the webpage: https://www.docfamiliesandchildren.org/corona-virus-children-youth

SafeConduct(TM) Workbench is a program with a variety of tools and training resources, including Know Your Score!, a free Self Assessment tool to evaluate your current written policy.

Not all programming lends itself to an on-line format. At this time Amy Johnson, UCC Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice, is recommending that churches offering Our Whole Lives postpone any in-person meetings and do not offer this program online in any capacity. You can read Amy’s full statement in the article Justice in Action published in the Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANet) April 2020 Newsletter.

Legal Compliance

If your online programming includes the use of video clips, DVDs or music to enhance the delivery of your message, please stop to consider if you are actually breaking the law by sharing these resources without permission.

On April 24, 2020, the UCC Faith INFO team hosted a conversation between Heather Kimmel, UCC General Counsel, Rachel Hackenberg, Managing Editor of The Pilgrim Press, and Sue Blain, Minister for Worship and Gospel Arts. The panelists addressed questions about copyright, legal implications, licensing, streaming, and more. Watch a replay of that webinar, Legal Considerations for Online Worship: What Pastors and Worship Leaders Need to Know.

The UCC (national setting) website also provides a list of Frequently Asked Questions on this topic and the respective answers. Learn more about Copyright Issues & the Church at: https://www.ucc.org/music-arts_copyrt-and-the-church.

(Note: The two primary providers of licensing for worship music are CCLI and One License. In response to the challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic One License had offered a gratis license to churches through April 15. Learn more about church licensing options after that date at: https://news.onelicense.net/2020/04/13/looking-ahead-licensing-options-for-gratis-accounts-after-april-15/).

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Stay Connected via Facebook

Several years ago the New Hampshire Association of United Church Educators (NHAUCE) created a Facebook group as a means of keeping our local church educators connected, sharing ideas/resources and asking questions in real-time.

During this time of physical distancing, we are moving many of our Faith
Formation activities to a "virtual" environment. Let's revitalize this group as a means to support and help each other. Through this group, I look forward to connecting with everyone again and learning about all the creative ways you are continuing to engage remotely with your faith communities.

Events Update

**New England Association of United Church Educators (NEAUCE) 2020 Conference Cancelled**
Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the NEAUCE 2020 planning team has decided to cancel NEAUCE 2020 for the safety of participants. We look forward to NEAUCE 2021. Save the Dates: May 11-13!

**UCC National Youth Event (NYE)**
The United Church of Christ's National Youth Event scheduled for July 22-25, 2020 at Purdue University has been postponed due to the coronavirus. Visit [http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/](http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/) for updates on the future of this event. In the meantime, watch for online gatherings with NYE speakers and musicians in summer 2020!

**New England Environmental Justice Youth Summit Postponed until November 21, 2020**
Due to the COVID-19 virus, the Environmental Justice Mission Group has postponed the New England Environmental Justice Youth Summit that was to be held on March 21, 2020 at South Congregational Church in Concord. The proposed new date is Saturday, November 21, 2020. [Visit the event registration site](https://www.facebook.com/HortonCenter) for detailed information and look for registration to re-open in the fall.

Experience Horton Center - Now

**Horton Center**, a ministry of the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ, is located in the heart of the White Mountains, where spectacular beauty abounds. It is a place to experience God's creation, make new friends, explore your faith, take risks, and have the time of your life.

While we wait for the April snow to melt off the mountain, check out the Horton Center Facebook page ([https://www.facebook.com/HortonCenter](https://www.facebook.com/HortonCenter)) and participate in a Morning Watch, try some camp activities, and join in the occasional live sing along.

Quick Links

- The [Association of United Church Educators](https://www.uccpages.org) (AUCE). A membership organization of educators and students working within United Church-related agencies and organizations.
The Association of United Church Educators (AUCE) is a membership organization, of and for lay and ordained, paid and volunteer pastors, educators, and youth workers, which has been providing advocacy and support for church education and educators in the United Church of Christ since 1971. AUCE recently published a curated resource list to help faith formation practitioners create at-home materials for their families to use during COVID-19 cancellations...and beyond!

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**Employment**

**New Local Opportunity**

- **The First Church of Nashua, New Hampshire**, an historic and vibrant 700-member faith community of the United Church of Christ, located 45 miles outside of Boston, is seeking a new **Director of Children's Christian Formation**. This full-time position will oversee and develop the well-established ministries of Christian education and faith formation for the church's children. The Director will be part of a talented team of staff and work in a friendly and collegial environment. The position provides a competitive salary with generous benefits and can begin as soon as June 1, 2020. Learn more >>

- Visit the **Classifieds/Help Wanted** section of the NH Conference UCC website.

**National Opportunities**

Willing to relocate? The **UCC Ministry Opportunities webpage** is a great source for Christian Education and Faith Formation openings nationwide.

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**The Word of God**

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." Psalm 46:1-3 (RSV)

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Ann Desrochers | Christian Education Resource Consultant | New Hampshire Conference UCC
adesrochers@nhucc.org