March 2020 News & Updates

What a difference a month can make. At this time last month, we were thinking about spring. This month the beauty of a winter wonderland is again upon us, with everything coated in a fresh blanket of snow. Last month our thoughts were turning to our plans to gather together at traditional spring events, such as NEAUCE. This month our thoughts and prayers are consumed by how we adapt our ministry to continue to share God's Word and love in the midst of a global pandemic.

Let's Connect on 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 social 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.

Let's Continue to Equip Parents with Resources for Practicing Faith at Home

In uncertain times, such as these, it can be difficult to have authentic conversations about recognizing God's presence amidst all the worries, concerns, and changes to our normal routines. The following articles and activities offer some guidance:

- Coronavirus Conversations Milestone Moment (from Milestones Ministry)
- Pandemic Hope, a Family Devotional for life during COVID-19 (from Faith Inkubators)
- Coronavirus Explained for Kids (a video, produced by https://www.gocurriculum.com and shared by Ministry to Children)
- Using the Love Commandment to Talk COVID-19 with Kids (by Kate Ott)

If you are looking for ways to encourage families to experience the Lenten season and Holy Week with activities at home I offer the following ideas, from
Building Faith, unless otherwise noted.

- Making Pretzels
- Lord's Prayer Tracing Cross
- Holy Week in a Box
- Share the journey of Holy Week, with younger children, through Gospel Yoga (from Vibrant Faith @ Home)
- Stripping the Table - Maundy Thursday at Home
- Easter Sunrise Breakfast at Home
- Easter Egg Blessing

It may also be that families are just longing for some basic activities to integrate faith into daily life. Below are a few suggestions from Vibrant Faith @ Home.

- Signs of Spring or Jumping Prayers (for families with young children)
- Social Media Prayers or Where's My Phone (for families with teens)
- Laugh, Talk, Share or Cards for Caring (for young adults)
- Taxing Talk or Renewing the Earth and Spring Planting (for adults/couples)

Events Update

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 for detailed information and look for registration to re-open in the fall.

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)
Due to recent CDC protocols regarding COVID-19, registration for NYE has been suspended indefinitely. Visit http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/ for updates on the future of this event. In the meantime, you can stay up-to-date with public health guidelines at www.cdc.gov.

Summer Camp at Horton Center

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. Experience God's creation in this "thin" place between heaven and earth. Make new friends, explore your faith, take risks, have the time of your life.

Download the 2020 Summer Camp Brochure ★

Quick Links

- The Association of United Church Educators (AUCE). 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!

Employment

Local Opportunities

- Atkinson Congregational Church is looking for a part-time Faith Formation Youth Leader to be responsible for organizing and administering the Sunday morning Church School program for the youth of the church. This is a 10 hour per week position, 10 months per year (August - May). Some time will be flex but will include a commitment on Sunday mornings 9 - 11 a.m. Please send cover letter, resume, and references to hr@atkinsoncc.org. A CORI/SORI check will be performed prior to hiring.

- 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.

The Word of God

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus;" Philippians 4:6-7 (NRSV)