

United Church Herald

Spring

March 2018

Special points of interest:

- ◇ Guest Speaker
Open and Affirming
(ONA) Coordinator
for VT
- ◇ Newport Centennial
Celebration
- ◇ Holy Week Schedule



Office Hours & Staffing

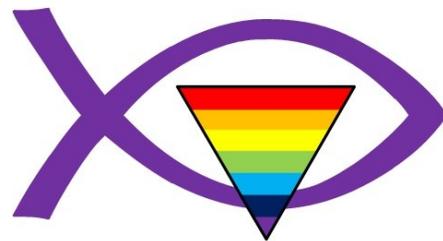
Valerie's normal Spring office hours are from 9-12 Mon, Thu and Fri. 9-2 with additional hours before or after dependent on scheduling requests.

802-334-6033 office
802-324-0659 cell

Open and Affirming Visit

Dear Friends in Christ,
On Sunday April 15 we will be joined for our worship service by Jeffery Tuper-Giles who is a Member of the Barre Congregational Church serves as the Open and Affirming (ONA) Coordinator for the Vermont Conference United Church of Christ. Jeffery will offer a powerful testimonial about his personal faith journey and the opportunities and support offered through the Open and Affirming process. All church and community members are invited to join us for this worship service. Jeffery will also be available at coffee hour to answer any questions anyone has and will continue as a resource going forward.

Open and Affirming is a designation given to churches in the



**OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

UCC who make a formal declaration of explicit welcome to all people regardless of sexual orientation or racial heritage. It is especially a commitment made by the congregation to welcome LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) individuals into the community, to celebrate marriages regardless of sexual orientation, and to support the ordination of homosexual individuals, welcome their participation in the wider church, and to consider homosexual candidates should a pastoral vacancy arise.

Jeffery's visit is the first formal step following a series of discussions I have had at UCN going back more than a year. At present the United Methodist Church is in the midst of a very difficult time as they struggle with the issue of Gay Marriage and Gay Clergy both of which are banned from the church by language added to the Book of Discipline in the 1970s. I consulted extensively with both the old and new Methodist District Superintendent and briefly with the Bishop and received all of their blessings and encouragement to pursue this process. In-fact there is an equivalent process known as the



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

Reconciling Ministries Network which works with Methodist Churches but is no longer within the denomination because of the political nature of the issue.

I spoke first with the UCN Pastor Staff committee about my feelings on this issue and how UCN's stance was affecting my ministry, and with their feedback I brought the topic for general discussion to the Executive Board where it was determined that these processes aligned with our values of inclusion and that having a visit from the representative to explore more would be a good idea. It was initially hoped that representatives from both Reconciling and Open and Affirming could visit, but further research determined that there is no representative from Reconciling Ministries in the state or even the region so we would be dependent on their print resources. I also spoke at length with my friend Rev. Kathy Clark from the

Federated Church of East Arlington, which is also a UCC/Methodist community and recently became both Open and Affirming and Reconciling through a joint declaration.

The greatest concern raised about this process is that it might alienate us from the Methodist church and make Methodist clergy less inclined to serve our congregation and it was on this issue that I did the greatest research. I discovered that, though the worldwide Methodist church may change its stance on this issue within the next few years the jurisdictional question is clear. In all instances in a Federated church, like UCN, the articles of Federation (bylaws in our case) take precedence over the Book of Discipline, and should the two denominations take different stances on an issue it is up to the individual church to decide. In short: we have to make our own decision and there can be no punishment from either denomination. I further learned that there is strong support for Gay rights among the New England Methodist Clergy and that, if anything, our being a welcoming church would actually make us more desirable for a new pastor should an opening arise. I hope this can do something to avert fears about the future and allow us to have an open conversation about the welcome we offer to all who seek guidance through Jesus Christ.

I encourage everyone in the congregation and community to join us April 15 and begin the conversation.

For many years we have had many prominent LGBT individuals in our community with some of them even taking leadership roles. They have given generously of Time, Talent, and Treasure and we now have the opportunity to give them the blessing of Christian Marriage in our beautiful sanctuary at the spectacular Magoon Park, and within our community. We fundamentally are a welcoming congregation, so I hope too that this can be an opportunity for us to bear public witness for what may be the defining civil rights issue of this generation.

There is no timetable for this process and Jeffery's visit doesn't obligate us to making a declaration, nor does missing the visit mean you are excluded from the process. This is just a first step on a journey through which I hope we can live more fully and broadly into the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ

Everyone is also invited to research the history, process, and resources in the ONA program online at www.ucc.org/lgbt_ona and the Reconciling Ministries Network at rmnetwork.org.



Yours in Christ
-James



Palm Sunday (Red)

- *The Empty Throne*
- *Pretzels*

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is an occasion for celebration with waving palms and songs of praise. We will not be doing a Hymn sing because of the special holiday.

Passion Concert - *Barton United*

Maundy Thursday (Purple)

- *Feast Time*

In the culmination of his public ministry Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples and spoke with them of things past and things to come. Join us as we share that table and all its blessings.

Good Friday (Black)

- *Repaid*

Jesus, tried and convicted by the Roman governor was crucified on the hill at Calvary, join us for a musical adventure through Christ's passion and sacrifice.

Saturday Easter Vigil

- *St Mark's*

Waiting for our savior in the dark times join our friends at St Mark's church for their traditional evening vigil.

Easter Sunrise

- *Rittershausen's home on the lake*

Meet true sunrise as the women did at Jesus' tomb.

Easter Dockside

Much loved service on the City Docks to celebrate our Risen Savior

Easter Breakfast

- *Pancakes for Everyone!*

Easter (White/Gold) - Surprise Chicken

The wait is over. Jesus returns to us in springtime, come enjoy the musical extravaganza and rejoice in our salvation through Christ including Holy Communion to feed our souls for the ministry ahead.

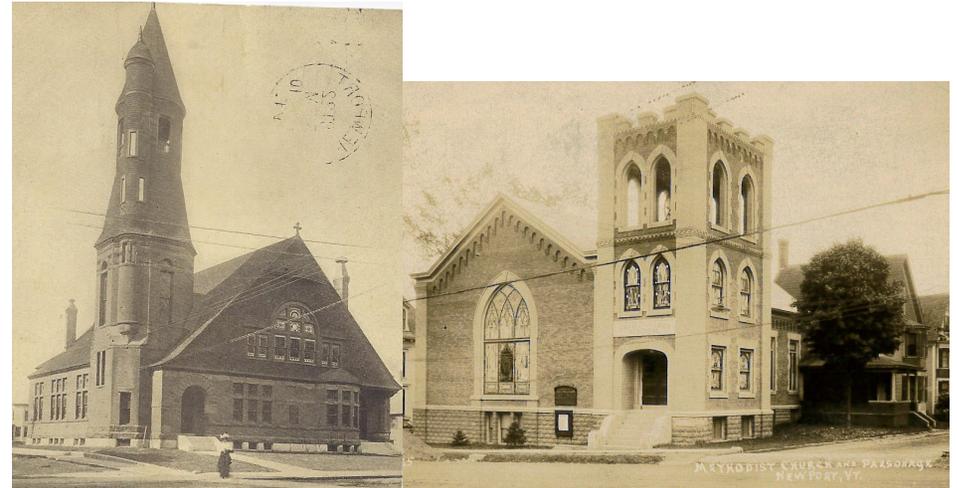


Newport City marked 100 years since it's incorporation earlier in March but the real party happens this Summer. From Friday June 29 to Wednesday July 4 Newport will welcome the world to celebrate the Centennial of our little community by the lake.

The United Church was asked to participate in the celebration and offered to provide a free community meal so that everyone can celebrate regardless of what they can afford. The menu for this meal has yet to be decided so the city put our famous chicken-pies in as a placeholder on the schedule but that definitely will NOT be the menu of choice for the day.

The dinner will be on Friday June 29 as one of the opening events of the celebration and will be a great opportunity for the church to pull together and share the love both wide and far. The ladies of Friendship Circle have been discussing the topic for some time and the city has offered us \$1500 for our expenses. As we will welcome any donations offered this stands to be a great community event and a modest fundraiser for the church.

The next day, Saturday June 30th will be the grand centennial parade down Main Street which was to be led by the late Grand-Marshal Tony Pomerlau. The United Church plans to have a float in that parade showcasing our role and history in Newport. The current plan is to make scale models of both the current building and the



Congregational Church Building lost to fire in 1956. All ideas and assistance are welcome for this project.

Over the years The United Church of Newport has become know throughout the community for:

Monthly Community Meals
Monthly Food Shelf
Bi Annual Rummage Sales

Yard Sales
VYCC partnership
Welcoming childcare and after-school programs
Great Coffee Hours
Service partnerships
Host for community gatherings
Community Concert Hall:

- ◆ NACO (Newport Area Community Orchestra)
- ◆ Northsong
- ◆ Village Harmony



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HOLY WEEK



Palm Sunday

March 25 10AM

Maundy Thursday

March 29 7PM

Good Friday

March 30 7PM

Easter Vigil

March 31 7PM
(ST MARK'S EPISCOPAL)

Easter Sunrise Service

April 1 6AM
(THE RITTERSHAUSEN'S
217 LAKE PARK ROAD)

Easter Service

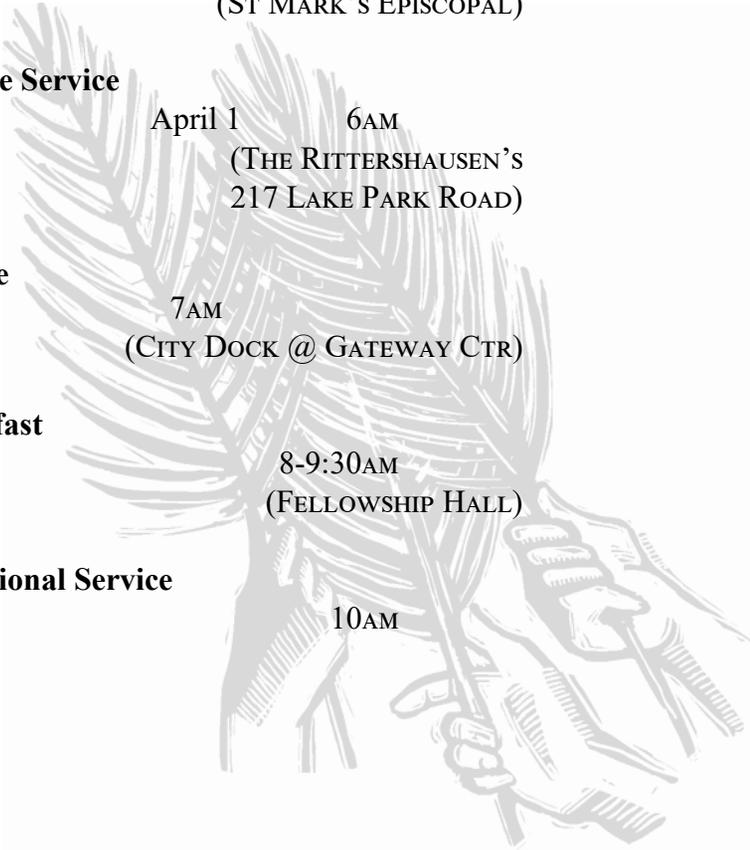
7AM
(CITY DOCK @ GATEWAY CTR)

Easter Breakfast

8-9:30AM
(FELLOWSHIP HALL)

Easter Traditional Service

10AM



**United Church of Newport
63 Third Street
Newport, VT 05855**

