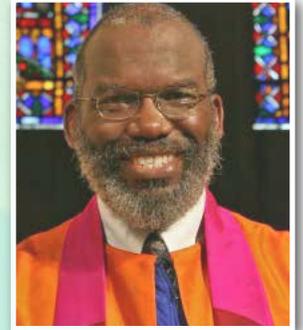


## A PLACE FOR YOU

by Reverend Dr. Arnold Isidore Thomas

**A**t the last supper with his disciples and close friends, Jesus, sensing their anxiety and fear, said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." (John 14:1-3)



*Throughout its history the church has been challenged to go the extra mile in providing space and hospitality to those whose hearts and lives were troubled due to social, political, economic, ethnic, racial, gender, homophobic, and xenophobic oppression. Often we resisted and turned them away because we contributed to such oppression.*

*We are reminded that while Vermont was the first state to enter the Union outlawing slavery, and that for many years Lemuel Haynes, the first African American ordained to Christian ministry, served as pastor to one of Vermont's Congregational churches, he was also immediately dismissed after members discovered their pastor, who could pass for white, had African ancestry. Our churches have at times courageously carried while, at other times, cowardly dropped the ball on matters of Christian hospitality and inclusion. But there are always opportunities to learn and grow from our past.*

*Hospitality begins at home, and I believe Charlotte Congregational Church takes seriously and celebrates the effort of being a spiritual home for all who seek the way of Christ. For this reason I would like to invite members, prospective members, friends and the spiritually curious to attend at least one of several Home Meetings during the last week of April (Sunday, April 24th – Saturday, April 30th) to discuss how we as a church may create a space where as many as possible can feel at home among us.*

*What attracts you to our church? How might the ministry and mission of our church prepare a place where you can feel at home? What do you love to do that satisfies, fulfills and enlivens you; that expresses the real you? What would you like to learn how to do?*

*In responding to these questions we learn and grow together. We faithfully affirm with Christ that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26), and then be about the business of shaping and molding ourselves into an ever evolving household in which each member has a place where he or she may curl up in the warm and cozy blanket of God's loving embrace.*

*Let not your hearts be troubled.*

# APRIL CALENDAR

saturday 2

- CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE FOR MEADIE BROWNELL, 3 PM AT WAKE ROBIN

sunday april 3

- WORSHIP, 10 AM
- COMMUNION
- BRUNCH BUNCH\*, 11:45 AM
- JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP, 4:30 PM

tuesday 5

- BIBLE STUDY, 9:30 AM
- CENTERING PRAYER, 6:30 PM

wednesday 6

- BIBLE STUDY, 7 PM

thursday 7

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

sunday 10

- WORSHIP, 10 AM
- NOAH'S ARK MEETING
- JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP, 4:30 PM

tuesday 12

- BIBLE STUDY, 9:30 AM
- CENTERING PRAYER, 6:30 PM

wednesday 13

- CABINET MEETING, 6:30 PM
- BIBLE STUDY, 7 PM

thursday 14

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

sunday 17

- WORSHIP, 10 AM

tuesday 19

- CENTERING PRAYER, 6:30 PM

thursday 21

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

saturday, 23

- KID'S COOK!, 3 PM

sunday 24

- WORSHIP, 10 AM

monday 25

- DEACON'S MEETING, 6:30 PM

tuesday 26

- CENTERING PRAYER, 6:30 PM

thursday 28

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

\*DUTCH MILL, SHELBURNE



## Charlotte Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

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[charlotteucc@gmavt.net](mailto:charlotteucc@gmavt.net)

[www.charlotteucc.org](http://www.charlotteucc.org)

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*Embraced by the healing love of Jesus Christ and inspired by his teachings, we commit ourselves to prayerful, compassionate, and courageous action in the world.*

Rev. Dr. Arnold Isidore Thomas, INTERIM PASTOR

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Julia Blocksma, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Kim Findlay, COMMUNICATIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Karen Speidel, BOOKKEEPER

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To subscribe by either email or snail mail, please contact us by email at [charlotteucc@gmavt.net](mailto:charlotteucc@gmavt.net) or by phone at 802-425-3176.

# CCC ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

## **NOAH'S ARK IS BOARDING!**

Calling all animals, storytellers and members of Noah's family! The Ark is boarding! Come on Sunday April 10th and let us know who you'd like to be in our presentation of Noah's Ark on June 5th. Scripts and CDs of the music will be given out that day so be sure to come! Everyone is welcome, the more the merrier! We will not meet on April 19th and 26th. Rehearsals will start on Sunday May 1st. Please contact Hadley Bunting for more information: [Hadley\\_abernathy@yahoo.com](mailto:Hadley_abernathy@yahoo.com), (802) 598-1994

## **HOME MEETINGS**

Rev. Arnold is looking for members, prospective members, friends, and spiritual seekers who would be interested in attending or hosting small group home meetings of no more than 6 people to get better acquainted with one another and explore ways that our church may create a space where you, your needs, interests and gifts may find a home. The meetings will be held the last week of April; from Sunday, April 24th-Saturday, April 30th. If you're interested in participating, please sign up in the Vestry following worship, or contact the church office at 802-425-3176. If you wish to host a home meeting, just place an "H" next to your name or inform the church office.

## **LUND "PAMPER YOURSELF" MOTHER'S DAY BASKETS**

Baskets will be available for filling with goodies in the sanctuary in mid-April and should be returned by Sunday, April 5th. These gifts for LUND clients are extremely appreciated and loved. More info to come.

## **CHAMPLAIN ASSOCIATION MEETING**

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 is the day of our SPRING CHAMPLAIN ASSOCIATION MEETING, which will be held at the First Congregational Church of St. Albans. [MORE INFO](#)

We will gather for a light lunch at 12:30 followed by a presentation by Laurie Stavrand, Community Partnership Coordinator for the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. The program will be like the one recently held in Rutland. There will be a presentation and discussion about the refugee situation, plans for Syrian refugees to come to Vermont, stories from those who have resettled in Vermont, and a showing of the award-winning documentary "Welcome to Vermont: Four Stories of Resettled Identity" ... all from 1-3 pm.

## **BE THE CHURCH! THE 221<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE VERMONT CONFERENCE OF THE UCC**

April 29-30, 2016 [MORE INFO](#)

The conference gathers to make our decisions, do our work, and worship together.

WHERE: Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, Vermont

WHEN: Friday and Saturday, April 29 & 30

WHO: Friends; Visitors; Lay Delegates; Members-In-Discernment; Licensed, Commissioned & Ordained Ministers; Officers, Directors, Department & Committee Members; Association Moderators; Past Conference Presidents and Moderators; and current Delegates to General Synod.

# YOUTH GROUPS

## Kids Cook!

(Open to all children age 6 and older)

April 23rd, 3 pm

Susan and Charlie's house in Shelburne, 331 Beach Road, Shelburne. We will cook for the Salvation Army and then those who wish to may join us to help serve the meal in Burlington. Please let Rev. Susan know if your child will be attending so that she can plan for transportation: [scookekitt@mac.com](mailto:scookekitt@mac.com), 985-5617.

## Junior Youth Group

World Religions Course continues!

Sunday April 3rd, 4:30-6 pm, Judaism with Rabbi Naomi Barrel joining us  
Sunday April 10th, 4:30-6 pm, Pulling it all together

## Senior Youth Group

Hike in the works, stayed tuned to Rev. Susan for details forthcoming!



## REFLECTIONS FROM THE FLOCK

*As we enter into this interim time with an intentional focus on getting to know one another and together discerning the direction and needs of our congregation, it would be wonderful to have reflections from friends and members printed here in the Courier. Jeanie Mac-Donough began this endeavor by sharing some fascinating interviews with people. We continue this interesting endeavor with an offering from Marinell Newton.*



Often when I tell people that I'm a social worker who works with families who have children with chronic medical conditions and disabilities, I get a look of pity accompanied with, "Oh, your job must be really hard", followed by, "Thank goodness there are people like you who do this kind of work". The truth is my job is filled with joy and I feel privileged and honored to serve families who let me into the intimate details of their lives. Families teach me every day about humanity through their experiences that I would not otherwise be lucky enough to know about. I'm not sure what it means when I'm told people are thankful there are people like me. I'm no saint...far from it. My family will quickly confirm that point. I want to share the following story to give a glimpse of why I feel the way I do.

I once worked with a Somali family whose child passed away unexpectedly. The next day I was set to go visit the family to offer any comfort I could. Not knowing the customs of the family's culture and religion in regards to a death, I called local contacts to get the lowdown of how I should behave. When I arrived at the family's home, the front door was wide open. As I walked into the living area, I was amazed to see the room filled with the Somali community. There were women in the kitchen cooking, children playing, someone feeding an elderly woman and people sitting from wall to wall. I was the only white person there. As I stood there looking around the room, I was struck by how the Somali community wraps around each other and it occurred to me I was witnessing something sacred. Suddenly, the entire room looked up and noticed my presence and everyone smiled. The women in the room cheerfully waved me over to sit with them, showed me how to wash my hands and gave me tea. They did not hesitate to embrace me as they did each other. They didn't care about my skin color, or that I am from a different culture and religion. Even though we didn't speak the same language, we all understood each other perfectly. There was a God connection in us and between us. We all wrapped around each other that day and were comforted.

It always amazes me when I set out to help families because I'm always the one who receives the most help in the end. So when people say to me "Thank goodness there are people like you who do this kind of work", I often reply, "Thank goodness they let me do this kind of work".

Marinell Newton, MSW, LICSW

Social Work Supervisor, Vermont Department of Health, Children with Special Health Needs  
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Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC  
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#### SERMONS IN APRIL 2016

*April 3rd, Second Sunday of Easter*

Sermon by Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge

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*April 10th, Third Sunday of Easter*

**“Who Do You Love?”** by Rev. Dr. Arnold I. Thomas

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*April 17th, Fourth Sunday of Easter*

**“Shepherds and Sheep Dogs”** by Rev. Dr. Arnold

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*April 24th, Fifth Sunday of Easter*

**“An Outward and Visible Sign”** by Rev. Dr. Arnold

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