



Christian Education & Formation Newsletter July 2021

This summer we continue to imagine worship and programming that embraces everyone, just as they are. The scripture passage from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 reminds us that we are all part of one body, the body of Christ, and individually members of it. Each member brings their special gifts and their unique challenges. This month the focus is on creating inclusive ministries that widen the welcome for persons of all abilities and their families.

[Visit our Website](#)

Featured Resources

Resources for Worship and Faith Formation

- Worship Resources from the [UCC Disabilities Ministries](#)
 - [Top 10 Ways Churches Can Include People With Disabilities](#)
 - [Multisensory Worship Ideas](#)
 - [New Century Hymnal Hymns for A2A Congregations](#)
 - [Ten Commandments of Being Around Users of Wheelchairs](#)
- Jesus set a high standard when He said "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." The call is not limited to children who will sit quietly at His feet and listen, who color between the lines, who raise their hands and wait to be called upon, and who work at grade level. Children's ministries are responsible to be ready to bring children with disabilities to Jesus' feet too. [Every Child Welcome](#) is the guide for leaders and volunteers to assist in purposeful planning and skill development for a ministry inclusive of children with unique needs.
- [Leading A Special Needs Ministry: A Practical Guide to Including Children and Loving Families](#) by Amy Fenton Lee (Updated 2016). This book serves as a practical "how-to" handbook for the family ministry team working to welcome one or 100 children with special needs. Easily referenced guidance is offered for expressing care for parents who are

learning that their child has a diagnosis all the way to developing programs, policies and education for volunteers working with children with disabilities. Example ministry documents are provided throughout this resource guide.

- A community of people with disabilities deserve an option for a totally inclusive service where they are welcome to be themselves completely - without apology. Wayzata Community Church, United Church of Christ, in Wayzata, Minnesota identified and created an opportunity for that option, resulting in "PARABLES: Special Needs. Special Gifts,". Learn how you can re-create this inspiring model of collaborative worship and faith formation in "[Red Fish Theology: Parables – A How-To Guide for Offering a Radically Inclusive Worship Service with the special Needs Community](#)".
- Kathryn Watson is a Sunday school director at Plymouth Congregational Church UCC in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She and her husband have two sons with very different learning personalities—and they inspire her to keep finding ways to make the church more accommodating. Read her blogs at: <https://blog.wearesparkhouse.org/author/kathryn-watson>

Videos

[Erik Carter](#), Ph.D., is Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. His research and teaching focuses on strategies for promoting full participation, belonging, and valued roles in school, work, community, and congregational settings for children and adults with intellectual disability, autism, and multiple disabilities.

For more information watch one (or more) of his presentations:

- [From Barriers to Belonging: The Church and People with Disabilities](#) sponsored by the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.
- [The Church and People with Disabilities: Becoming Communities of Belonging](#) presented at Wheaton College March 14, 2018.
- [Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities](#) presented at the University of Connecticut, based on information from [his book](#) by the same name.

Books


- [Same Lake, Different Boat: Coming Alongside People Touched by Disability, Revised and Updated](#) (2020). When it comes to people with disability, however, we often act like we're in different lakes. Disability can seem frightening, abnormal—or even irrelevant to those who do not experience it. In this book author Stephanie Hubach argues that there is a better way to think of disability, a better way to understand the challenges facing those touched by disability, and a better way to understand the role of the church in the lives of people with differing abilities.
- [Dancing with Disabilities: Opening the Church to All God's Children](#) by Brett Webb-Mitchell (Updated 2008). In this book the author presents his passionate thoughts about what the church could be if those who are "disabled" and those who are "able-bodied" were to understand themselves to be equal partners in the faith community.

Websites

- **All Belong:** <https://allbelong.org/for-churches/church-resources/> All Belong equips congregations and schools to glorify God through purposeful, innovative inclusion of persons with varied abilities.
- [Engaging Disability With The Gospel](#) is the denominational disability ministry of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA). Individuals and families impacted by disability experience unique challenges that often keep them from growing in Christ and finding genuine relationships in their churches. **Engaging Disability** has shared resources and helped churches develop the skill and know how to adapt ministry in ways that enable people with disabilities to grow in faith.
- [Keyministry.org](#) **A Church for Every Child:** Key Ministry was founded to help churches welcome families of children with hidden disabilities. Since 2002, they have provided knowledge, innovation, and experience to the worldwide church as it ministers to and with individuals and families of kids with hidden, developmental, and physical disabilities. In addition to being a disability inclusion ministry resource, they are uniquely called and positioned to serve churches seeking to become more intentional and effective in ministry with children, teens, and adults impacted by mental illness and trauma.

Events

Shine Curriculum Training



The banner features a yellow background with stylized text. On the left, 'LOVE' is written in orange with a sun-like symbol for the 'O', and 'JESUS' is written below it in orange with arrows pointing towards the center. In the middle, 'grow in faith' is written in green cursive. On the right, 'CHANGE THE WORLD' is written in blue block letters, with a globe icon for the 'O' in 'WORLD'. Below the text, it reads: 'A WEBINAR FOR CHURCH LEADERS AND TEACHERS OF THE SHINE CURRICULUM. JOIN US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S NEW IN SHINE FOR FALL 2021!' At the bottom left, it says 'Tuesday, July 27, 7:00 p.m. ET' and at the bottom right, there is a white button with the text 'Register Now!'.

LOVE *grow in faith* **CHANGE THE WORLD**

⇒ JESUS ←

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Confirmation Retreat

Do you ever wonder what the United Church of Christ (UCC) has to do with your life or your church? Do you ever wonder if your beliefs and your dreams fit the UCC? and What does the phrase “God is still speaking” mean anyway? Join us for the Confirmation retreat so that we can talk about questions like these!

[Download the brochure](#) or contact [Ann](#)

[Desrochers](#) for more information.



Employment

New Local Opportunities

- The **Brookline Community Church** is looking for a **part-time Children's Ministry Coordinator** to provide overall leadership and welcome in the Christian Faith Formation of children, including guidance and resources for all aspects of the Children's Ministry program. [Learn more >>](#)
- There is an opening for a **part-time Christian Education Director**, to be responsible for the development and coordination of faith formation for children, youth, and families in accordance with the mission and ministry of the **Stratham Community Church**, United Church of Christ. [Learn more >>](#)
- **Smith Memorial Church in Hillsboro, NH** is looking for a **Youth Group Leader** for their Middle School youth group, and to serve as Administrator for both the Middle and High School youth groups. This is a part-time, stipend position. [Learn more >>](#)
- The **Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC**, is seeking a **part-time Director of Faith Formation**. The Director will be responsible for the church school program nursery through 7th grade. Job responsibilities include: coordinating and overseeing the church school program, working with other church staff, and administrative duties. [Learn more >>](#)
- For **more local opportunities** 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

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9 (NRSV)

