MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends: One of my greatest privileges in life was to hike in Yellowstone National Park with the General President and Minister of the United Church of Christ, The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, immediately before coming to Brattleboro to minister at Centre Church. He is a man of deep faith, formerly Catholic, and a prophetic and pastoral presence in our wider church and world. While he has thousands of friends, I am proud to be one of them. John has followed my ministry at Centre since I arrived and we write one another occasionally. He is a mentor and a role model for me. Therefore, in the wake of the recent Texas law banning abortions for pregnancies more than six weeks (before many women even know they are pregnant) and even in the case of rape and incest, John's reflections on the subject of abortion matter to me. John wrote: "As an abortion rights advocate, trained All Options Counselor who has served on the boards of many abortion rights organizations, General Minister and President of a denomination that supports freedom of conscience and therefore the right of a woman to exercise her agency and autonomy free of either government interference or the watchful eye of self-righteous neighbors, and the father of one very independent woman who ain't going to let any draconian law impede her free rights - I find the Supreme Court's decision NOT to block the application of the most restrictive and unconstitutional antiabortion law in the country to be indefensible, unconscionable, and barbaric. If this is a harbinger of things to come, we are in a world of hurt." Above, John speaks for himself. I applaud him. But I cannot hide behind him. I must also speak for myself. I believe in that which the so-called 'Pro-Life' and so-called 'Pro Choice' lobbies both have in common, a world where there are less or no abortions because there are less or no women who, for whatever reasons, feel desperately in need of them. The difference lies in how we as a society can create an environment whereby women do not feel compelled to have abortions. There are many highly effective ways to limit abortions: improve access to contraception, improve women's access to safe and affordable health care, improve men's accountability in co-creating life, and enabling child care to be more accessible and affordable. These are beneficent ways that enhance the wellbeing of women and limit the number of abortions. What does not limit the number of abortions (at least in a manner that enhances the wellbeing of women) are Texas-Taliban-style bans on a woman's right to choose what she does with her body and how she spends her time and money for the next eighteen years. To prohibit abortion even in the case of rape and incest is Talibanesque! If we are the country of freedom of liberty, then oppressive government interference and oversight restricting a woman's right to make decisions about her body is not the way to go. Bans force women to go elsewhere - be it to another state or another country. If abortion is banned outright, then it forces women risk their lives by undergoing unsafe procedures. The best way to limit abortions is not to ban them-but to support women (health care and contraception) and children (childcare and education) so that they do not feel the need to have abortions. 'Pro-life' folks are also pro-choice people - in that they believe in individual liberty. And 'Pro-choice' people are also pro-life people - in that they value all life: pre- and post-natal life. How ironic! Let us find one another (politically and morally speaking), let us support women and children, and let us limit the number of abortions—not with Taliban-style bans and punishments, but by limiting women's desperate circumstances through the enhancement of women and children's lives after they are born. Since its Eighth General Synod in 1971, the United Church of Christ has affirmed a women's right to choose while seeking to limit the number of abortions carriedout as a response to women's desperate circumstances (1971, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1987, 1989, 1991). See the following: https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/GS-Resolutions-Freedom-of-Choice.pdf "The 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms its historic and courageous leadership in support of freedom of choice as legally supported by Roe vs. Wade, and urges all parts of the church to work toward a society where a full range of reproductive options are available to all women regardless of economic circumstances and to address the root cause that lead to unplanned pregnancies, ignorance, and lack of life options."

[continued on next page]

CENTRE BELLS—October 2021

The newsletter of Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



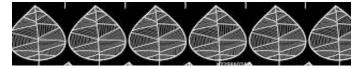
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I will write a correspondence of affirmation and support speaking on behalf of myself and the United Church of Christ to Planned Parenthood in Brattleboro, Vermont as they have stoically endured protests and objections to their very good work to improve the lives of women by limiting the desperate choices they often must make in circumstances more often than not determined by men. And to all the women of Centre Church of all ages, no matter your choices in life, I love you and support you. If you or anyone close to you has ever made a decision that I have never had to make, I affirm you - no matter your choice. May we live in a society where we like Jesus in John 8:1-11 can ask women, "Where are your accusers? Didn't one of them condemn you?" and we can hear women respond, "No, no one condemned me." Love always in Christ, Scott

Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

As I write this, we have had two wonderful worship services together as we celebrate Re-Launching our Church. It was inspiring to be together in our beautiful sanctuary, enjoying the glorious music, the message of inclusiveness and service, the honoring of our Essential Workers and First Responders, and our fellowship with others. Not to mention the food! (We're getting spoiled – mere coffee will not satisfy us any more.) Our only regret is that some people could not be with us due to distance or health concerns.

We will soon have another event to celebrate – our Long-Range Planning Weekend on October 8 – 10. If you have felt detached from the church during this long separation, now is the time to jump back in. Paul Nickerson is an inspiring and practical speaker, and he will lead us in a series of workshops to discuss the future of our church. Come with your comments, questions, and most of all, ideas for the future. If you can't come for the whole weekend, please come to as many sessions as you can. Our future depends on you.



From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

September has been a very musical month! On the 12th, we celebrated MUSIC as folks gathered in the sanctuary for the re-opening of in-person church. Thanks to Alison Hale, Brooks Holmes, and the choir, we enjoyed a service filled with trumpet, flute, and vocal music. On the 18th we enjoyed seeing Bruce Landenberger in a very different role; he graciously provided us with a Prelude, Anthem, and Postlude on his recorder. What fun it was to accompany him!

The choir has been having rehearsals in the sanctuary (larger space than the choir room) with folks wearing N-95 masks. Folks are spread out and keeping distance while singing. The same thing has been occurring on Sundays when the choir shares an anthem. We hope this can continue. We are watching Delta numbers very carefully. In Amherst, MA where I live, First Congregational Church has gone back to online worship as there have been hundreds of new cases of COVID occurring daily. I hold out hope that this doesn't happen in Brattleboro.

On October 10, we plan to have Bonnie Girvan's friend, Athena Burke, sing for us. She writes and performs her own spiritually evocative music. We look forward to hearing her again, as it has been a few years since she was at Centre!



Blooming News!

Now that Centre has returned to in-person worship, we again look to brighten the sanctuary each Sunday with your donations of flowers. As we no longer automatically receive deliveries from Windham Flowers, donors are responsible for their own arrangements, whether it be ordering from a florist, cuttings from one's own garden, or other sources.

Bouquets need not be formal, expensive, or 'professional'. Wildflowers, potted plants, and dried materials are welcome. Price Chopper/Market 32 has an excellent selection of pre-made bouquets, and many choices of bunches to arrange as you please—be creative! There are vases available for your use in the kitchenette.

A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Parlor so you may reserve your special date. If you would like a dedication for the Sunday bulletin, please notify Bruce before the preceding Friday.

If there is any interest, Heidi Mario would be very pleased to offer a workshop in flower arranging, to be held at the church. A small fee would be charged to cover the cost of materials.

Contact Heidi at: hsmario@sover.net / 802.257.4863, or leave a note in her church mailbox. Thank you!

DEACONS

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, is how John Keats characterized this time of year. The sentinel hills blaze crimson and gold. Stalls of the farmers' market all but burst with blushing, fragrant apples, muscular squash, and Suessian gourds in a riot of color. In the chill morning the venerable spire of Centre Church punctuates an ephemeral river of cloud.

A time of endings. The light wanes. We pull spent tomato plants from the fecund soil, cherishing the last seductive ruby fruits on the wizened vines. Hummingbirds, aerial jewels, perform their volant choreography amidst fading blossoms, feasting in preparation for their Autumnal farewell.

Yet, also a time of hope, of renewal. Even for we whose school days are decades past, and a memory even for our children, as the air sharpens there's still that spark of anticipation, the gift of a fresh start, a clean slate, like a strand in our collective DNA.

Thus Centre Church turns a new page, joyfully, thoughtfully returning to worship within hallowed walls, building on the lessons of these past months of anguish and trial, and sowing seeds of the future in the rich soil of our heritage.

We hope you will join us in the harvest. In Faith, Heidi Mario

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

On a sunny day in September three employees of Key Bank (our next door neighbors) came over for 'Neighbors Make a Difference Day'. This is an annual event through which employees of Key Bank all over its territories volunteer to do things to help non -profits in their communities. Being real life neighbors, they called and asked Brattleboro Centre for Children if there were any projects they could do to help out. We were so excited and honored that they thought of us! We set them to work washing windows and pulling weeds. They really helped us tidy up our outside areas. I think when the congregation is coming back, BCC's presentation is important for them to see us as a part of the facility that cares about the impression we make on everyone who comes by. We are grateful to these wonderful volunteers who worked hard to help us, because we are often so busy taking care of the children.

So it goes without saying, they are truly Neighbors Making a Difference! Thank you!

- Nan Mann, Director

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Church School Classes

are now happening whenever Centre Church is having in-person worship. There is nursery care, a class for younger children (age 3 through 2nd grade), and for older children (3rd through 7th grade) which they can attend after attending worship with their families through the Children's Message.

If you have questions, please contact Nan Mann: nanmann17@gmail.com / 802-380-5231.

On September 12, Christian Education with the deft hands of Anne Fecto in the lead, served up an Ice Cream Social for fellowship hour and registered eight children for upcoming church school classes. At the time of this writing, we have planned for our first group classes which were set to begin on September 19 (see below). We have been looking forward to this for months now, and are taking many precautions to protect children and families. Also we have added volunteers to our numbers; Marion Abell, Priscilla Svec, Anne Fecto, Judy Palmer, and Laura Slate joined Nan Mann to support the education of both children and adults in our church. Kate Maisner Weeks is back leading nursery care and supporting the classes if there are no babies to care for that day.

We are using an already purchased curriculum for our classes and are looking forward to the 'benevolent (AKA stewardship) campaign' when we hope to host service projects for the children to support and get involved as their way of being good stewards. The adult book study group is under way and self-guiding its Sunday morning 9:00am meetings. Women's Spirit meets on Thursdays at 4:30pm and these support the other offerings that happen throughout the week that Scott has started during the pandemic to keep us in fellowship. We are happy to be back in person, and hopeful that we will be able to maintain this with safety for all.

Nan Mann, council liaison to Christian Ed

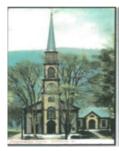
Adult Book Study

Starting **September 19**, we will meet at 9:00am each Sunday in the Heritage Room, masked and distanced, to read and discuss *Fimding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest*, by Suzanne Simard. Newcomers are always welcome and you need not be a church member to participate.

For more information, contact Judy Palmer: judithp41@gmail.com / 603.353.0590.

CENTRE CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES











2030?

WHAT'S IN YOUR FUTURE?

Your Long-Range Planning Team (LRPT) invites you to a series of weekend workshops, discussions, a pot luck meal, and a sermon, all led by the LRPT and our planning consultant The Rev. Paul Nickerson. These are critical sessions to determine Centre church's future and our ongoing mission in the 21st Century.

The future of your church depends upon your active participation and input!

Friday, October 8

2:00pm: Paul arrives. Tour of church building conducted by members of

Buildings & Grounds. Brief tour of downtown Brattleboro (time permitting).

*6:00 pm: Potluck dinner to meet members and friends of the church. Parlor.

Saturday, October 9

8:00-10am: Breakfast meeting with Paul and members of the LRPT.

10:00am-12:00pm: Meeting with church leaders (Council and all board/department chairs).

*12:00-1:00pm: Catered lunch at the church. Church Parlor.

*1:00–2:00pm: Paul will discuss the state of mainline Protestant churches in New England.

Q&A will follow. Sanctuary.

*2:00-3:00 pm: Paul will discuss contemporary best practices employed by churches that

are thriving by becoming more relevant and vital to their communities.

Q&A will follow. Sanctuary.

*3:00-3:30 pm: Coffee break. Church Parlor.

*3:30-5:30 pm: Paul will lead a workshop on developing our Vision and Mission

statements. Church Parlor.

Sunday, October 10

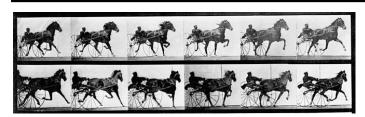
*10:00am: Worship service with Paul Nickerson, guest speaker. Fellowship hour follows.

* Designates an All-Church event.

NOTE: Please mask and practice social distancing at all events.

Questions: Please contact either LRPT Co-chair:

Bob Pu: robertpu2010@gmail.com / April Harkness: april-harkness@comcast.net





MISSION & SERVICE

A continued 'Thank You' to all who support our church's missions through the Second Sunday Offering. In August, \$298 was received for Brattleboro Senior Meals, and the September offering for Loaves & Fishes has not been tallied at this date. In October we will celebrate *Neighbors in Need*, the special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of Justice and Compassion in the U.S..

This year *Neighbors in Need (NIN)* "Unfailing Love" offering is focused on supporting organizations and projects that are serving homeless and immigrant neighbors or communities. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to provide funding grants to UCC churches and organizations leading justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects in their communities. Mission & Service at Centre Church would like to help our neighbors in need by supporting our local groups: Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP), Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDDC), Rural Women's Institute of Vermont, and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. Though each of these groups has their own unique focus, they have been meeting to discuss how they can work together toward a common outcome for people needing to leave their home countries and assimilate into the larger Brattleboro community. To these needs, Centre Church will be giving both to the UCC NIN offering, but also to our local organizations. We would like to call October our Neighbors in Need Month and any extra giving that you can support is sincerely appreciated during this time of great need and migration. We will remain a church of 'Unfailing Love'.

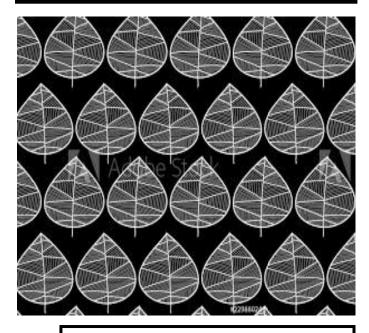
THE CENTRE CHURCH NON-WELCOME CENTER EVENT IS A HUGE SUCCESS!

The Fundraising Committee wishes to thank all the people who have contributed to the Non-Welcome Center Event this summer. We are almost at our goal of \$3,000.

If you still want to donate, please make payments to Centre Congregational Church with a note that your contribution is earmarked for the Centre Church Non-Welcome Center Event.

Remember, his would not have happened without your support.

A most heartfelt thank you to all members and friends of Centre Church!



CONVERSATION on CLIMATE CHANGE



If you are thinking about global warming and would like to discuss it with all its implications, you are invited to join the conversation at the home of Margo Neale on Friday, October 15, 2021 at 7:00pm.

Please contact Margo:

802-579-1602 / margoblue@myfairpoint to reserve a space. Please plan to follow any current COVID guidelines.

Everyone is invited to The GREEN at CENTRE

Friday, October 1, 5:00pm



Autumn Fun Party

- Scarecrow Construction Competition (bring your own materials)
- **Pumpkin Decorating Competition**
- **Tomato Throw at the Minister Challenge**

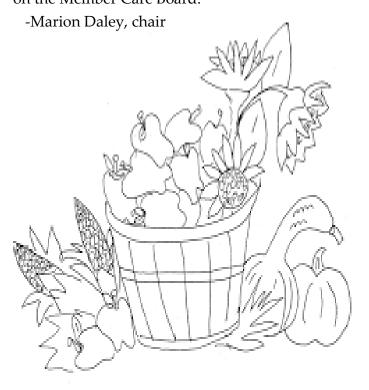
In Cooperation with The Market Place and Gallery Walk

MEMBER CARE

The pandemic has changed the way the Member Care board carries out its responsibilities. Our last meeting was on July 9, at a luncheon held at my home in Putney. Ever since then, it has been communication by email and phone.

The arrangement to have a different member be 'Member Care Person of the Month' came about during reorganization under the leadership of The Rev. Marcia Cox. The Deacons and Member Care board over-lapped on some responsibilities, so we decided which board would do what and when, to eliminate the duplication of responsibilities.

Writing that last paragraph makes me realize how many years some of us have been on the Member Care Board. I took a year off when my husband, Darrel, and I both spent a lot of time at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and Dartmouth-Hitchcock in 2009/2010, but I was asked to rejoin. Judi Miller and Sen Pu spend much time in Florida and Georgia, respectively, but put in double-time when in Vermont. I doubt that Carolyn Smith can remember how long she has served on the Member Care Board. We are all glad for Karen Rydant's willingness to be our representative on Council. Beverly Webster has also served many years and we now have a new member, Holly MacLean, who recently joined us on the Member Care Board.



PEOPLE



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are housebound as of September 26.

Gary Carrier — Dirigo Pines c/o Allison Carrier Lucy 16 Page Place, Orono, ME 04473 207.944.0030

Wanda Godfrey — Vernon Hall 13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354 802.254.2444

Bob Keller

153 Spruce St., Brattleboro, VT 05301 802.257.4588

Judy Myrick

52 Missionary Rd. #4223, Cromwell, CT 06416 860.316.5269

Pat Neer—Thompson House 80 Maple St., Brattleboro, VT 05301

Karen Getty Peter—Pine Rock Manor 3 Denny Hill Rd., Warner, NH 03278

Jane Reed—Pine Heights 187 Oak Grove Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301 802.257.0307

The Rev. Allen Vander Meulen

1 Harvest Circle #301, Lincoln, MA 01773 802.380.0735

Please let the Administrator know if we've missed someone.

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Steve Fecto
- 5 Duo Xi
- 15 Louisa Mann
- 17 Tara Rydant
- 29 Coralie Lefebvre



Apologies for last month's omission of Bonnie Girvan whose birthday was September 24

OCTOBER 2021

**ZOOM events
*Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ⁰⁰ Stewardship team 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk/ Autumn Fun Party 7 ⁰⁰ Climate Change	2
900 Adult Book Study 930 Guided Meditation 1000 Worship / FIA / Blessing of the animals 1200 Deacons 300 Audrey Walker installation	VT Conference UCC convocation	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology** VT Conference UCC convocation Bruce Vacation	VT Conference UCC convocation Bruce Vacation	7 100 UCC Devotional** 400 Sermon discussion** 430 Womens' Spirit 530 Choir rehearsal 700 Worship Team Bruce Vacation	8 LRPT weekend 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ⁰⁰ Stewardship team 6 ⁰⁰ Potluck dinner	9 LRPT weekend 12 ⁰⁰ Catered Lunch 10 ⁰⁰ Lecture 20 ⁰⁰ Lecture 3 ³⁰ Workshop
10 LRPT weekend 9 ⁹⁰ Adult Book Study 9 ³⁰ Guided Meditation 10 ⁹⁰ Worship / FIA / 11 ⁹⁰ Fellowship hour	11 Indigenous Peoples Day OFFICE CLOSED	12 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁹⁰ Pub Theology**	13 11 [®] Staff Meeting 4 [®] BCC Board 6 [®] Mission & Service	14 1000 UCC Devotional** 400 Sermon discussion** 430 Womens' Spirit 530 Choir rehearsal 700 Worship Team		16 10 ^{oo} Brattleboro Literary Festival
17 9 ^{oo} Adult Book Study 9 ^{oo} Guided Meditation 10 ^{oo} Worship / FIA Lay Leader dedication	18 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁹⁰ Pub Theology**	20 11 [®] Staff Meeting 6 [®] Council 6 [®] NAACP	21 1000 UCC Devotional** 400 Sermon discussion** 430 Womens' Spirit 530 Choir rehearsal 700 Worship Team	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ⁰⁰ Stewardship team	23
24 9 ^{oo} Adult Book Study 9 ^{oo} Guided Meditation 10 ^{oo} Worship* World-wide Communion observed	25	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁹⁰ Pub Theology**	27 MAIL CB 11 ^{oo} Staff Meeting	28 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 40 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 43 ⁰⁰ Womens' Spirit 53 ⁰⁰ Choir rehearsal 70 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	30
31 All Saints Day 9 ⁰⁰ Adult Book Study 9 ³⁰ Guided Meditation 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA						

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurchvermont.org -or-facebook page: http://www.centrechurchvermont.org/audio--video.html -or-

https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal -or-From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).



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News items, articles, address changes, and requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should be submitted to the church office: 802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchytorg

OCTOBER LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, October 3, 19th Sunday after Pentecost Job 1:1, 2:1-10 and Ps 26; Gen 2:18-24 and Ps 8; Heb 1:1-4, 2:5-12; **Mk 10:2-16**

Sunday, October 10, 20th Sunday after Pentecost Job 23:1-9, 16-17 and Ps 22:1-15; Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 and Ps 90:12-17; Heb 4:12-16; **Mk 10:17-31**

Sunday, October 17, 21st Sunday after Pentecost Job 38:1-7, (34-41) and Ps 104;1-9, 24, 35c; Isa 53:4-12and Ps 91:9-16; Heb 5:1-10; **Mk 10:35-45**

Sunday, October 24, 22nd Sunday after Pentecost Job 42:1-6, 10-17 and Ps 34:1-8, (19-22); Jer 31:7-9 and Ps 126; Heb 7:23-28; **Mk 10:46-52**

Sunday, October 31, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost **Ruth 1:1-18** and Ps 146; Deut 6:1-9 and Ps 119:1-8; Heb 9:11-14; Mk 12:28-34



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CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301 centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842 Office Hours: M – F / 8:30am–12:30pm

Church Office: 802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org

Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

Facebook: Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT

Instagram: @centrechurchvt

Current news/information in the larger UCC Community: VT Conference: www.vtcucc.org / National: www.ucc.org

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

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centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org

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Administrator: Bruce Landenberger: admin@centrechurchvt.org
Financial Secretary: Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org
Custodian: Emelio McCalla
Council Chair: Lynn Herzog
Treasurer: Anne Fecto
Clerk: Jenifer Ambler