



The Spirit at First July-August 2017

From the Minister's desk.....

Vermont is a beautiful place to live. These green hills and silver waters restore souls. As your minister, please get out and enjoy nature this summer. Get out of the house, turn off your electronics and go for a hike, a swim, a drive. Slow your busy schedules down a bit and spend time with your family and friends. Eat more meals with those you love and appreciate. Listen to the free concerts that are offered at venues throughout our communities.

The beauty and wonder of our natural world inspire us and turn our attention to God. The great prophets and mystics of the faith discern the divine more often than not out in the wilderness. The Israelites found God and created a sacred community with laws, rituals and a tabernacle out in the wilderness. Moses experienced the burning bush and received the law out in the wilderness. Elijah heard the still small voice on a mountain in a cave overlooking a magnificent panorama. Elisha accepted his call to follow in Elijah's footsteps out in the wilds. Jesus cemented his call and worked out his issues in the desert. Outdoor ministry sites across the country inspire folks to give their lives over to God and Christ's Church.

Your job as followers of our God is to get out and connect with the divine as so clearly expressed in our stunning world of discovery and wonder. Play with bugs, feed the birds, get your hands dirty, go for a walk in the rain, sit around a campfire with friends, eat fresh vegetables out of your garden, water ski, sit atop Mansfield looking down at Lake Champlain and then drive to the waterfront in Burlington at sunset and over an ice cream cone from Ben and Jerry's look up to where you were earlier in the day. And as you get out and enjoy nature, remember to be grateful, remember to look for the divine, remember to think deeper thoughts, remember to see God in the people around you, remember that you are an integral part of a massive organism that reflects the Glory of God. I hope to see you out there.

Enjoy,
Rev. Mark

SPECIAL SUNDAYS & OFFERINGS

Summer Worship Service ~ One Service @ 9am

Communion will be shared on July 2nd & August 6th by Intinction

Summer Preaching Schedule

July 2, 2017.....Guest preacher

July 9, 2017.....Devon Thomas

July 16, 2017.....Devon Thomas

July 23, 2017.....Rev. Mark

July 30, 2017.....Devon Thomas

August 6, 2017.....Devon Thomas

August 13, 2017.....Devon Thomas

August 20, 2017.....Devon Thomas

August 27, 2017.....Rev. Mark

September 3, 2017.....Rev. Mark

Vacation Dates

Rev. Mark will be on vacation or on the Jamaican trip from June 28 through July 20th and on vacation again from July 25th through August 20th. While he is away, Devon Thomas (802-310-6517) will be on call for any and all pastoral emergencies. Jen Dooley (802-578-0230) will be on her summer hours, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 10-2 from June 19th through August 14th. She will be on vacation July 10th – 12th and July 26th to August 2nd. Laurie Chipman (802-881-3691) will be away at the Horton Center in NH for July 9th – 15th. If there is an emergency and Devon, Jen or Laurie cannot be reached, then the following people should be contacted. Any church concerns should be directed to our Church President, Brenda Crocket (802-881-5253) and any building emergencies to Trustee Chair, Kevin Meilleur (802-238-4041). Any pastoral issues should be directed to our Deacon chairs, Rick Dooley (802-578-0229) or Mike Bottamini (879-0763). As always, messages can be left for staff by calling the church at 878-5745.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER THOUGHTS

We have officially made it through another year here at Essex. As we wrap up our 2016 - 2017 season I pray that all of my Sisters and Brothers here at First Church have a wonderful summer.

Looking back on the year I would say that things went very well for us, especially considering that we are in a transition period between associate pastors. Nevertheless, I think the fact that we did so well here speaks less to the leadership abilities of those in the pulpit . . . though I would never call that anything other than top notch, but rather from the leadership abilities and commitment that comes from the amazing work of the members of our congregation. This First Congregational Church of Essex Junction has a strong congregation and therefore it is a strong church.

Looking ahead there is one last thing on the agenda for our youth group and that is our trip to Six Flags New England. We will have left on the 25th of June, so if you want to ask me how it went you should be able to by the time you read this letter. The other thing of note for that week will be that I will be traveling to Baltimore where I will be representing the Vermont Conference of the UCC in our general synod.

General synod is a national conference that the UCC holds every two years where we meet up with fellow UCC'ers, go to seminars and vote, vote, vote! As a delegate of the conference I will have the privilege of being one of the people doing the voting, so, I will be representing the Vermont Conference but in truth you are the ones sending me. The cost of sending a delegate to synod is split between the state conference, the local association of churches and the delegate's home church. So I have everyone here to thank for this experience – Thank you!

This will be an interesting experience for me and I appreciate the opportunity to go this early in my ministry. I also appreciate the privilege that you here at the church and those in the association have given me in sending me as your representative. So, if you have a pressing interest in national church politics, feel free to hit me up when I get back on July 5th as I am sure I will have many stories to tell.

The last thing for us all to be aware of is that Mark will be on vacation starting on June 28th. He will be back for a brief period of time on July 21st – 24th and while he is away I will be holding down the fort. If you have summer weddings, baptism or funerals I will be on hand to see to all of those.

Blessings to all of you, may your summer be filled with TONS OF FUN!

Devon Lee Thomas Bridge Associate Minister



Laurie's Lens

Welcome summer! We have had a real mix of temperatures lately, as well as sunny and rainy days. As your summer activities begin I encourage you to find ways to keep your faith alive and stay connected with your God or reconnect with God in a different way...spread your wings. We all love to spend time in God's beautiful great outdoors, which gives us many possibilities...so be creative. Faith formation isn't just something we do here at church, in this building on a Sunday. We all need to keep working on our faith every day, all year long, keeping our relationship to God, with God, a strong and constant growing one. Families and friends can help us do that on an everyday basis. We are all faced with opportunities every day, choices that we have to make, decisions that weigh on us, celebrations that help us rejoice. Be mindful that with every step you take throughout your days...there are always ways to which you can reach out to your God. The way we act toward each other...brothers, sisters, parents, friends, relatives, co-workers, neighbors...can be times when we are tested. So yes, it's important to surround yourself with others of faith, everyone needs a support system, a community of believers who can lift us up and help push our comfort zone ... helping us to grow in our faith and relationship with our God. So...as you enjoy these summer months and you travel and go on a vacation, remember to return to church and share your adventures with us, recharge yourself with the Spirit and be reminded that Jesus walks with us every day, everywhere and life is good when we ask him to be with us on our journey.

Come, stop by and pick up a 'Take Out Church' box. Flat Jesus went with us to Jamaica in 2015 and to the National Youth Event in Florida in 2016. It's a fun reminder for us all that Jesus is with, everywhere, all the time! Post your pictures of Flat Jesus on our Facebook page and share them with your church family. Maybe Flat Jesus will make again to Jamaica this summer?!

Find ways in your community to get involved and lend a helping hand. Our community of the United Church of Christ spreads across New England for me and so I'll be spending a week at Horton Center camp in New Hampshire the week of July 9th. I will be counseling a group of 7th – 9th graders in God's great outdoors and helping them connect or reconnect with their God.

So... Grow in faith this summer! Be the hands and feet of Jesus and keep moving on your spiritual journey!

Blessing & Love, Laurie, Christian Education Director

Faith Formation Classes for 2016-17

Preschool, Kindergarten, First & Second Grade, Third & Fourth Grade, Fifth & Sixth Grade
Junior High (7th & 8th grade), Senior High (9th-12th grade)

We are recruiting volunteers for all our programs. See more information in the Volunteer section. We'd love to hear from you! Contact Laurie.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

This month for our Stewardship Moment we would like to tell you about our Pastor's Fund. Some of you may be hearing about it for the first time and some of you may long have been aware of it but here at First Church Essex we set aside a little bit of money each year to slip to our minister . . . I could leave it at that and it would be funny for a while, but seriously. That money is not intended for Mark, rather it is money that we at the church use to assist those in need within our community here in Essex.

There are a lot of people in our community who are going through hard times. We generally do not see it at the surface of things but there are people dealing with issues of poverty, health and injustice who come to our church because they have nowhere else to go. And our church does not turn them away; we try to help in whatever way we can. This aid comes in forms like Hannaford gift cards that can get people food, to helping a person pay part of their electric bill. In this way the pastor's fund allows for us to be more flexible in addressing the needs of our community.

The Pastor's Fund comes purely from our donations. We do a special offering for it twice a year to fill it and it is distributed at the discretion of the Minister but the aid comes from you, the congregation. The Pastor's Fund is just one way in which giving to our church is able to sow God's love to those who truly need it within our community.

Peace and love be with you,

The Stewardship Committee of Frist Church Essex Junction

Please note this list of the 'Special Offerings' for those who do not have envelopes as a reminder:
Sept 10, Seminary Sunday; **Oct 1**, Neighbors in Need; **Nov 19**, Food Pantry; **Dec 17**, Christmas Fund

Coming up.....

Hannaford Gift Card Sales – 1st and 3rd Sundays after both services.

5% of the value of the card comes back to the Church.

Volunteers Needed! Just a few minutes of your time.... Would you help the Stewardship Committee sell Hannaford Gift Cards? Volunteers are needed to help sell cards on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. If interested, contact Kathy Finnie at kfinnievt@gmail.com and we'll find a date that works for you!

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Music Time During Faith Formation

Music time will resume on September 18th

Cherubs ~ Our Preschool & Kindergarteners gather in the Youth Lounge, sometimes our junior and senior high youth join them as their mentors to sing a song during the first few minutes before moving on to their class. Kim Hamilton is their music leader.



Joyful Noise ~ Our 1st through 6th graders gather in the Marvin Lounge for their music time of songs with motions before moving onto class time. Jessica Moos is their music leader.

Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 6th Grade

now until – September 3th ~ Summer Faith Formation

Self- led Activity Bin in Fellowship Hall available most weeks

Kids bring a parent to FH and watch the service while you spend time being creative.

September 10th ~ Rally Day & Fall Faith Formation Program Begins

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2017



You will be hearing more about the *Humane Society of Chittenden County* who relies completely on outside donations to stay open and help give pets a home.

Your 2017 Total is now up to \$701.59

Remember to bring your Sunday School offering each week and use an envelope in the pews for your money so that you know it will be put towards the Sunday School offering and not be confused with regular offering for the church.

\$1 a week can go a long way!

Faith Formation Family Dish Share

On hold until September. Watch for the update coming in August. These potluck suppers are for all who come to First Church, for we are all a part of this wonderful faith community family with God. Come join the fellowship!





'Take Out Church' Boxes

These 'pizza' size boxes can travel around with you wherever you go and the items inside can help the whole family stay connected to God and help everyone continue to grow in their faith. 'Flat Jesus' is inside! Color and cut it out, take him with you and take some pictures of you and 'Flat Jesus' and post them on our Facebook page as a reminder to us all the Jesus is with us wherever we go. Enjoy the M&M and Skittle prayers, Beach Ball Thanksgiving reflection, a CD of music, Serve Your Neighbor game, Graces to say or sing before a meal and scripture pages to color. See Laurie to collect yours or if you are needing additional resources for your 'Take Out Church' box!



***All our First Church Youth Programs are Parent Supported!
1 to 3 parents/volunteers are needed at each youth group gathering!***

Youth Group bulletin boards can be found in the staff hallway.

Sign up to volunteer your time and/or bring a meal.

Please walk by and sign up or be in touch with one of the staff. Thank you!

All youth and volunteers need to have updated paper work on file each year.

Youth Summer News Enjoy your summer & stay active

- Find ways to volunteer in the community or here at church – many things await you!
 - Join the team at VB Camp on August 7-11th
Be in touch with Laurie so your t-shirt so we have your correct size.
 - Help a neighbor or a friend
- Bring your offering with you for 9am worship and put it in the 'color me' envelopes - support the Humane Society of Chittenden County
 - Find ways and places to connect with your God & have Spirit time
Rally Day, September 11th – 10:15am worship with fun activities for all!

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

Our 5th & 6th graders meet ONCE a month from 11:30-1:30pm

Mission Focus ~ Meal ~ Fellowship

Mark your calendars!

September 17th ~ 11:30am – 12:15pm ~ JYG Call Out

Parents meet in the Youth Lounge on 2nd floor

5th & 6th graders stay gathered in your classroom on 3rd floor

October 1st ~ Junior Youth Group ~ 11:30-1:30pm

Youth Group will meet ONCE a month at this same time.



MUSIC

Musical Offerings and Thank You's

A BIG thank you to each of the talented and dedicated musicians who have volunteered to provide special music for summer Sundays. The Sanctuary Choir and Finally at First appreciate the support.

Here is the summer schedule:

July 2	Beth Volker
July 9	Currier Bell Choir
July 16	Mindy Bickford & Amanda Palmer
July 23	John Mauger & Stephanie Field
July 30	Tina Bleau
August 6	Denise Keating
August 13	Judy Pomainville & Doug Olufsen
August 20	Men at First
August 27	Mindy & Bill Bickford
September 3	Henry Wu

In addition, Abbie Evans hopes to provide violin music on selected Sundays.

Enjoy the summer music!

Marie Johnson
Interim Organist

SAVE THE DATES

July 9th – 15th ~ Laurie is away at Horton Center counseling 7th – 9th graders for Middler Week

July 30th – August 4th ~ HC Goes to VT camp at Rock Point, Burlington -ayouth going into 5th-8th grade
Sign up by July 15th!

August 7-11th ~ Vacation Bible Camp – All ages welcome! Register by contacting Laurie TODAY!

September 10th ~ Rally Day ~ back to two worship services ~ Fun for all!

Vermont Outdoor Ministry Week



Enjoy a fun week at Rock Point Camp in Burlington, VT!
Swimming, hiking, canoeing, service project in Burlington, food, games and much more!

July 30th –August 4th for youth going into 5th - 8th grade

Laura Labrie (College Street UCC) and Dave McGowan (Waterbury UCC) will be our Deans and lead this week of camp! Laurie Chipman will be stopping by and checking in throughout the week.

To register for this camp go to Horton Center website. www.hortoncenter.org

Scholarship Funds are available! See Laurie or Pastor Mark

VT UCC OM Team is recruiting volunteer counselors (18 yrs & older), a waterfront lifeguard and a registered nurse for this camp! Questions? See Laurie!



Vacation Bible Camp 2017

August 7-11, Monday – Friday from 9am to 11:45am

Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!

VB Camp is a week of energy and excitement of seeing God's Love in Action! All are encouraged to join up and be a part of this fun week!



Recruiting for Youth Helpers: Youth (sixth grade or older)

Recruiting Young Adults/College Helpers - volunteering looks great on a resume!

VB Camp Wish List

***Small glass jars with lids (pimento/baby food/etc 55 total); Battery tea lights (35 total)
5 large raw baking potato; Baby carrots (5lbs); Strawberries (4 quarts); Grapes (3 lbs)
Pretzel sticks (2/20oz packages); Raisins/Craisins (1/16oz); Cheese cubes (mild, 6/16oz)
Pretzel pieces (gluten free)– any shape (1/32 oz package); Apples (40); Fruit by the foot (6 pkgs/12 ct)
Vanilla Yogurt (2 large containers); Banana Bread – no nuts (6 loaves)

FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING

JOY (Just Older Youth)



A group for the over 55 crowd (both men & women) meets the first Thursday of each month at 12 noon in the Marvin Lounge. Bring your lunch and we will eat together and then have a program or do something fun. If you have any questions about the group or need a ride please call the office. Please join us with your lunch. **July 6:** please join us for a 2017 VT Legislative update from Lori Houghton and Dylan Giambatista, two of our legislators. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions on this extended legislative session. **August 3:** We will be taking the month of August off, see you on September 7th.



Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1st Friday of Every Month ~ July 7th & August 4th

Come - Help - Eat www.essexeatsout.org

Noontime Book Group



The Noontime Book Group will meet on **July 20** at noon in the Marvin Lounge. This month we are reading a page turning mystery called the **Bone Box: A Novel. Jay Amberg.** Set in Turkey, an international team of archeologists unearth a stone box of the type used in the first century to rebury the dead. It is labeled Jesus of Nazareth. Knowing that some people would kill to get the relics it contained, and that if authenticated it could alter the course of western history, they try to suppress the news until they can deal with it responsibly. An American archeologist is called in and quickly gets sucked into the web of intrigue and mystery that surrounds this momentous story. One of our members described it as being in the same genre as Dan Brown's DaVinci Code. **When you are getting this book be sure to check the author because there are at least two other books, also mysteries, with the same title by different authors. It is available for free on Kindle Unlimited.**

August 16th we will discuss The Forgetting Time by Sharon Guskin. It is the story of a single mother whose young child seems to remember in great detail events from another life. It explores the interesting connection that some young children seem to have with previous lives, but forget before they are able to tell anyone very much about them. When we first mentioned this book at our meeting in June, it started more discussion than most previous books we've read. **Bring your brown bag lunch and join us for fellowship and interesting discussions of some good summer reading.**

Coffee Clatter



Every Friday at 8:05 a.m., Rev Mendes and Devon welcome everyone to come and talk about any subject you would like. We talk politics, camping, travel, church life, community issues....any and everything that comes up. Last week we had a lengthy discussion about what percentage of time the clergy should spend being prophetic or pastoral or as the church's administrator. We meet for one hour, join us for some friendship, fun and support.

The Community of Bridge

Love to play bridge? Well, there are a lot of folks at First Church who do and they get together every month to play for a few hours: every 3rd Friday from 1:30 – 4:00. This



summer the dates are **Fridays, July 21st & August 18th**. There are always some delectable snacks, free coffee and good conversation. All skill levels play and are welcome as we laugh and enjoy each other's company. Join us! The winner takes home Rev. Mark's delicious jam...yum.



Mondays ~ Yoga @ First will be on Hiatus for the Summer

Jonah & his family will be traveling this summer so Yoga will be on hiatus from June 19th through August 21st, we will start again on August 28th.

Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group will meet in Marvin Lounge at 9:30 am on the third Saturday of each month unless otherwise advertised. All women of the church are invited to join us for interesting programs and wonderful fellowship. **Saturday, July 15** we will gather for a visit to Marion Schneider with lunch to follow at Pauline's for those interested. We'll car pool from the church at 9:30. Marion was a faithful member of our group but this past year or so has been unable to join us due to health issues. We hope you can help us reach out and reacquaint ourselves with this special woman. **Saturday, August 19th** we will be taking the month of August off, see you on September 16th.

Ladies Crafting Night Out

Do you knit, crochet or do any other crafty projects that you would like to do in fellowship with others? Join us in the Marvin Lounge the 4th Monday of each month at 7pm, **July 24th & August 28th** for a time of common crafting. All are welcome!



Faith Formation Family Dish Share

On hold until September. Watch for the update coming in August. These potluck suppers are for all who come to First Church, for we are all a part of this wonderful faith community family with God. Come join the fellowship!

Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkbacks, 8:30 – 10am

Each Tuesday morning 15-20+ people meet over coffee and goodies to discuss what went on that week in worship. We expand upon the sermon and explore the things that preaching just cannot get at in twenty minutes. We explore any and every subject that might properly come forward -although we try to leave politics out of it! We laugh, challenge, eat, share our stories and support one another in our life journeys. It is a good group that you would be very welcome to attend.



Wednesday Night Searchers, 7-9pm in Marvin Lounge

We will spend our summer fun watching various movies followed by a lively discussion on the topic. If you have any ideas for movies to watch, let us know!

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Missions Moment

The Missions Committee is exploring membership in the Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) group as a way to become knowledgeable on advocacy issues at a statewide level and allow our congregation to participate in issues we deem to be important to First Congregational Church of Essex Junction's social justice mission work. "VIA is a faith-based, grassroots coalition of congregations that transforms ordinary people into empowered and engaged citizens. Our goal is to create the hope, power, knowledge, and political will needed to make compassion and social justice a reality for all Vermonters."

There are currently 35 member or affiliate congregations, making up about 10,000 Vermonters. For more information, go to their website at viavt.org. They also have a Facebook page and are on Twitter.

We are continuing our dialogue on this topic and will keep you up to date in future newsletter submissions. Have a wonderfully, blessed summer! Your Missions Committee members

2017 Jamaica Mission

The Jamaica Mission team is getting excited about our trip July 11-20th! We are continuing to coordinate with the Rotary Clubs of Essex Junction and Morant Bay, Jamaica to launch the garden project at White Horses Infant and Primary School in St. Thomas Parish, Jamaica. As you can see in the "before" picture below, there is much to be done! We anticipate that the garden will be pegged, plowed and the fencing purchased this month prior to our arrival in July. The team is currently collecting the following items to deliver to the school: Children's toothbrushes, Travel size toothpaste tubes, Pencils, 4x4 Bandages, Medical tape. Your gifts are greatly appreciated!! Look for the large green bucket in the fellowship hall to deposit your donations. Thank-you!

The Garden – "Before" Picture



Mission Possible!



Reach out... Make a difference... Connect with others... Learn something new

“Mission Possible!” is the joint committee (Missions and Christian Education) that plans opportunities for people to put their faith in action. Our goal is to provide hands-on volunteer experiences for all ages, to bring members of our congregation together for mission outreach, and to connect service to learning – about different populations and community needs, and about the many nonprofit organizations that are there to help. For more information about Mission Possible! and how to be part of the planning team or to volunteer, please contact Andrea Sharp at andrea.sharp@gmail.com.

Dismas House

Please consider serving dinner at the Winooski Dismas House. Our volunteers provide dinner for 10-15 residents and staff there, enjoying great food and fellowship. FCCEJ has signed up for the fourth Wednesday in each month on an ongoing basis; **we are looking for volunteers for July 26th and August 23rd.**

Please contact Dan Fortier (danny.fortier@gmail.com) or Peter Schmalz (pnschmalz@comcast.net) if interested. There is also a sign-up sheet in the hallway entering Fellowship Hall. The Dismas House organization describes its purpose as follows: “We continue our mission of reconciling prisoners with society and society with prisoners. With your continued support, we are working locally to serve former prisoners in their difficult transition from prison to the community, assuring harmony in their lives and greater public safety.” We need four (4) people to volunteer for each date (space is limited so that the residents and guests have a meaningful dinner experience. Our FCCEJ group will decide the menu to feed 16-20 people (which includes the FCCEJ cooks), and then purchase and prepare the food (typically includes the main course as well as vegetables or salad – dessert is optional). The Dismas House provides beverages, condiments, set-up and clean-up. There is no age limit on who can volunteer, and you can donate part of the meal even if you are not able to attend. Many people from our community have volunteered and it is a fun, rewarding mission!



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Heavenly Food Pantry Needs Donations

We are in need of regular size jars of jelly and/or jam, cans of tuna fish, boxes of cereal and containers of fruit juice to restock our Food Pantry shelves.

The Summer Food Pantries will be on Monday evenings, **July 10th and August 14th**, 5:30-7:30 and Thursday afternoons, **July 27th and August 24th**, 2-6pm.

We are all set for EGG CARTONS so please hold onto them for now.

2017-18 Faith Formation Volunteers

Many ways to support First Church children and youth...Contact Laurie!

Can you say YES to these statements?

- I have been attending FCCEJ for at least 6 months
- I would like FCCEJ children and youth to continue to grow in their Faith
- I have a willingness to learn and help them, knowing I don't need to have all the answers
- FCCEJ Faith Formation programs are a vital part of our ministry
- I will support this ministry with my time and talents

Thank you to those you have stepped up already for 2017-18...we have SEVERAL MORE spots to fill:

Class Leaders: Jenny Bourn, Sue Conti, Erna Deutsch, _____; *Helpers:* Trista Acebo, _____
Subs: Kaki McGearry, _____; *Nursery Volunteers:* Barbara Williams, _____; *Multi-Age Activity Day Volunteers:* _____; *Narthex & Resource Closet Stewards:* Beth Poratti & Mary Jane Allen;
Spiritual Friends: Donna Burnett, Wayne & Nancy Hall (Oct & Nov), Gail Babinger, Carolyn Ambrosait (May & Oct), _____; *Youth Group:* Andrea Sharp with JYG, _____

Thank you for saying YES! Where would you like to be involved? Contact Laurie to sign up!

- Nursery – join our staff person and be a friendly face to the parents and the littlest ones among us during first service or second. We strive for a two to one ratio in the Nursery.
- Spiritual Friends – join Laurie on the First Sundays of the month on the 2nd floor and we'll have great conversations with the kids. Read a story, have snack, Godly Play time with playdough mats, Faith Talk circle conversations, etc. A little bit of everything happens on this day and everyone returns to worship for communion.
- Faith Formation Class Leaders & Helpers – be a leader or helper in one of our classes from preschool up through senior high youth. Weekly emails go out keeping you connected and sending you plans for the classes on Sunday mornings. All items are gathered for you.
- Multi-Age Activity helpers – preschool up through senior high are together for a time of fellowship across the ages for on these days...for group building activities ... parachute time, games, mission opportunities and enjoying being with each other.
- Youth Group helpers – come be present with a youth! Still a youth at heart...join a group and or bring a meal. Every time youth gather we are always looking for adults to help.

Don't Forget the Red Tent

The Red Tent Project has become even more important as we enter a period where funds for women's health and marginalized immigrant groups may be significantly cut back. Donating woman's hygiene products to JUMP, which serves some of our most vulnerable neighbors, is one positive way we can show that we will continue to support those who will be facing increasingly difficult times. Look for the Red Tent in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings during the next few weeks as we renew our commitment to help in this way. Women's hygiene products may be placed in it on Sunday morning or at any time during the week in the Marvin Lounge.

. Let's make the Red Tent overflow to show our continued love and support for all women.





Acolytes

NEW schedule was just put up...it needs your names! Sign up and be an Acolyte who carries the taper and brings the light of Christ into the Sanctuary at the beginning of worship to remind us that God is with us. Acolytes also will carry the light out at the end of worship to remind us that God continues to be with us wherever we go. This is a great way for you to participate in worship. You can acolyte solo or with another friend or parent. See the calendar on the bulletin board as you walk up to worship and sign up for a future day also.

Ring the Bell

NEW schedule is up and ready for kids/families to ring the church bell 15 minutes before worship begins, at 8:45am. Check the sign up calendar on the bulletin board in the downstairs hallway by the Acolyte sign up sheet. Instructions are on the sign up sheet.



Our Nursery

Our staff of Allie Harris or Kathryn Locke will welcome your little ones on Sunday mornings to our Nursery. Volunteers and parents are welcomed and encouraged to sign up on the schedule on the table outside the Nursery to help us with our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult) and keep us on track with our Safe Conduct Guidelines. If you would like to be added to the email volunteer list, please let Laurie know. Our Nursery is one of the first places that our little ones and their parents feel the love of God and learn that the church is a safe place to be.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

The Next Special Offering is September 10th for Seminary Sunday



The Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is Celebrating ~ Join Us!

The shop is newly renovated and is located at 37 Main Street next to the First Congregational Church. The hours of operation are Tuesday & Wednesday, 10am-3pm, Thursday, 4-8pm and the first Saturday of the month from 9am-12pm. Please stop by say hello and to see the bright, spacious changes in the shop.

We are gladly accepting gently used spring/summer clothing donations at this time.

Many Thanks to our 2016-17 Faith Formation Volunteers!

They graciously gave of their time and energy for children and youth through our program year!

When you see them, please thank them.

Kelley Charland, Barbara Williams, Sue Conti, Aimee Koch, Erna Deutsch, Kim Hamilton, Jenny Bourn, Trista Acebo, Barb Smith, Cathy LaPierre, Marlene Frank, Jessica Moos, Lisa Clark, Kaki McGeary, Carl Wermer, Pete Schmaltz, Shannon McCullen, Josh Sharp, Andrea Sharp, Judy Allen, Donna Burnett, Linda Lou Parker, Elaine Raymond, Jane Schneider and Gail Babinger. Let me also add a big thank you to our wonderful three Stewards who do a lot behind the scenes all year: *Kelley Charland/Nursery; Beth Poratti/Children's Narthex; Mary Jane Allen/ Resource Closet* Blessings to you all!

Still Calling All First Church Quilters ~ With Any And All Quilting Skills Or Even No Quilting Skills

Two squares have been received – all the way from Arizona. Thank you, Jan Hopper. And, there are rumors of others to come but additional squares are still needed. So put on your thinking caps and design a square – individually, jointly with others, or with a church group or committee. In case you missed the instructions the first time around or have misplaced them, they are being reprinted below:

As part of the 150 anniversary celebration, the committee is planning a quilted wall hanging made from squares designed by church members. The squares should tell a story of something the church does, event in which the designer was involved, or what the church means to the designer. It is hoped that the Youth Groups, Faith Formation Classes, JOY group, and other groups will collaborate in designing a square. Individuals are also encouraged to make a square. Construction of the wall hanging (or wall hangings – it would be wonderful if enough squares were collected to do two – one for each side of the sanctuary) will be a three-step process:

1. Designing and making of the squares by groups and individuals (see below for criteria)
2. Church members with portable sewing machines will gather at the church for an old-time sewing bee to sew the squares together. Can't sew – we will need people with irons and with scissors to trim the thread ends
3. Once the wall hanging is sewn together, it will be mounted on a quilting frame (yes, we actually have a member who has an old quilting frame) where it will be "tied" like it would have been in 1867. The frame with the wall hanging will be somewhere in the church for a week or two – everyone from the youngest child to the oldest adult will have the chance to place a tie.

CRITERIA FOR SQUARES

1. Use cotton fabric. Try to avoid fabric colors (like dark reds) that fade quickly.
2. Unfinished squares should be 10 ½ inches
3. Design on squares can be sewn together, appliqued, or done with crewel or cross-stitch embroidery
4. Name or initials of designer should be on front of square
5. Deadline for submitting is July 10.

Questions, call or email Ann Gray, 878-4088 or grayann8@aol.com

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