

***The First Congregational Church
of Essex Junction***
United Church of Christ



***A Welcoming Community, Accepting and
Serving All in the Spirit of Christ***

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, United Church of Christ, is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, because we are all created by a loving God. We seek to live Christ's call for compassion, justice, healing and wholeness in life. Therefore, we welcome into our community persons of every race, gender, age, sexual orientation, faith background, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, mental and physical ability, economic and social position, gender identity and expression, level of education and family structure. We invite all to share in the life, leadership, ordained ministry, lay ministry, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, fellowship, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love.

**One Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452**

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Open and Affirming means that we welcome everyone to First Church including our GLBTQ brothers and sisters.

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ
March 11, 2018
The Fourth Sunday of Lent

A Welcoming Community,

Accepting and Serving All

In the Spirit of Christ

Worship in a Quaker Tradition

As part of our tradition of spiritual exploration and inquiry, we will worship in the tradition of the Quakers. Quakerism, like all traditions, have diversity in their worship expressions. Today, we will err on the side of Quaker modernism and have some limited direction. Traditional Quaker Worship has silence or “expectant waiting” that draws its members into spirit-filled discernment/reflection, which then leads some to share the message they believe God wants the assembly to hear.

Listening to “God’s still small voice” will lead your mind or spirit into thoughts or insights from God that could help the assembly to better understand God’s will in the lives of those gathered. These messages might be about the life of our community or how God is moving in society. Other friends are supposed to be receptive to it and just sit with whatever is spoken; it is considered inappropriate to dispute a previous message but knowing that your message might be inspired by a previous comment is okay. Quaker guidance suggests that it is extremely rare for a person to speak more than once in a single meeting.

“Expectant waiting” is a form of prayer or even meditation where one tries to clear the distractions of the day and focus on discerning God’s leadings in your life, the assembly or the world. Sometimes it is helpful to use the distractions [noise in sanctuary or mind] as a focus to your prayers. And if you think your insights would deepen or help others in their walk with God, then share it.

Quaker worship is less about an indictment of professional clergy then it is about “abolishing passive laity.” We as Congregationalists demand active laity in running the church; Quakers simply apply this to worship life as well.

Some key Quaker teachings, although there are no creeds, that undergird their shared life and worship style include all life being sacred, God is in everyone, God’s inward presence being universally experienced, Divine Revelation being continuous, Simplicity – integrity – community and diversity are essential in our search for the truth, seeking truth and unity are goals, and finally the way opens making the ideal attainable.

Everyone is welcome to speak, no eloquence required; Quaker worship prefers simplicity and directness in speech over polished words and opinionated pomposity.

This allows for others to mill and reflect in an open and honest way.

As we move into our time of worship, let us consider the Quaker ways and beliefs as we wait for the spirit to lead us this morning. In good Quaker tradition, let us enter in silence and do our very best to keep it.....

An Extravagant Welcome

*No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this place.*

Introductory Comments

Lighting the Lenten Candles: Jesus prays in a quiet place....

Children's Message.....The Importance of Silence

After the Children's Message, our children are invited to leave with Laurie and learn about God in our Faith Formation Program. Please collect your children in their classrooms after service. After they leave, let us sit in silence and reflect on the importance of children to God and our lives, Rev. Mark's message to our children and the importance of the Season of Lent in our spiritual lives.

Our First Time of Directed Silence: Prayer

Let us spend ten minutes or so quieting our minds and bodies. Then turning our focus on God's presence in our lives and our concern for those around us. A "Weighty Friend" will begin this time with a non-traditional reading of the Lord's Prayer from New Zealand. If you have specific prayers that will unite or uplift the congregation, then feel free to share them: stand and speak where you are clearly, then simply sit back down.

Our Second Time of Directed Silence: Biblical / Theological Reflection

Let us spend 15-20 minutes reflecting on I Kings 19:7-16 [page 254] that will be read at the beginning of this time. Sit with the text, stew over it a bit, think of its implications in your life, the assembly's and the wider world's. If you feel your insight will uplift the congregation or another's life, then feel free to share: stand and speak where you are clearly, then simply sit back down.

The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they

are seeking my life, to take it away.’

He said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him **that said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He answered, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’** Then the LORD said to him, ‘Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

Our Third Time of Directed Silence: Our Daily Living

After a brief non-biblical reading, we will spend the rest of the hour in silence, reflecting on how God’s leading effects how we live in this world. We know God is within everyone and applying that to how we treat our neighbors and enemies is vital in living into Christ’s way of life. If you feel your insight will uplift the congregation or another’s life, then feel free to share: stand and speak where you are clearly, then simply sit back down.

I am not so much talking about a carefully-tailored philosophic system as about the unorganized but dominant hope which lingers in millions of minds and forms itself into the touchstone of our civilization — the faith that man is sufficient unto himself and has but to strive to bring the good new kingdom in. Hear me, I cry it with all my strength, and my voice rises out of the suffering and the bitter crucible of our times: man is not by nature good. We are all born with a freedom to turn to the good, but the Source of good is Beyond, and the power of human transformation is a given power. We may labor, study and weep for it, which we must do, but in the end it is given.

What else can one read out of our bitter chapter? We have a light within, a light which shows up our poor beggarly selves and points to the all-sufficing God whose life is ever so near yet ever so distant by the immensity of our self-centered wills. Ours is the power to will what God has willed before us. In our human freedom there is no assurance of progress; by ourselves we can only destroy; true freedom consists in our perfect availability to divine will — all else makes for destruction in the long run. The most highly trained and the keenest minds that our world can command, put to work as our guides will, if not bound to the self-

denying spirit which was in Christ, bring us right back to the kind of world we now have. That is what I mean by saying that man is not naturally good. Not only does all absolute human power corrupt but all science and knowledge corrupt, apart from prayer, the everlasting purifier.

Gilbert H. Kilpack
William Penn Lectures, 1946

Dismissal

When we come close to the hour, one of the "Weighty Friends" will rise and shake the hands of the person next to them, which will signal the end of the service. Then, there will be a time for announcements for the betterment of the assembly, after which time people are free to come downstairs for warm and tasty pretzels and an informal time to talk to each other.

Please put your offering in the baskets that are placed at each of the exits ~ thank you.

Deacon: Myrna Doney
1st Service: Mary Jane Allen, Ginny Coe & Sue Conti
2nd Service: Linda Bogardus

The flowers on the altar are given by Sylvia Nyhagen in loving memory of Ed Nyhagen.

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Winslow Ladue
Mike Heston
Carol Janwich

Dustin Keelty
Marion Schneider
Joe Phenix

Bill Bogardus
Eric & Shannon
Alice Williams

Please let the office know if you would like a name added to our Prayer Ministry, you can write it on the Friendship Pad, call or email the office or send us a note, welcome@fcej.org

*** * * TODAY * * ***



Easter Flowers

It's that time again, here are the flower offerings this year from Maplehurst Florist. Please put it in the offering, mail to the office or email Jen at welcome@fcej.org to order and let her know who you would like to remember/honor in the Easter Bulletins. Also, please remember to take your plants with you after Easter to enjoy, plant or give to someone who would enjoy the cheer! Please order by March 26th.

Palm Buds - \$3.95

Single Easter Lily - \$15.00, Double Easter Lily (2 bulbs) - \$30.00

Large Easter Lily (3 bulbs) - \$35.00

Hydrangea or Large Azalea - \$25.00

Tulips, Hyacinths, or Daffodils 7" Container - \$15.00 , 8" Container - \$20.00

6" Rieger Begonia or 8" Bulb Garden - \$20.00

TODAY! ~ Pretzel Sunday

Join us in Fellowship Hall for Fellowship Hour and soft, warm
PRETZELS!



New Nursery Staff

Please help us welcome our new staff person to our Nursery, Adrienne Hurst. Adrienne is currently a senior at the University of Vermont in the Early Childhood Special Education Program. She grew up in Milton, VT and currently lives in Burlington. She enjoys snowboarding, swimming and spending time with her family. She is looking forward to meeting everyone and being a part of our faith community!

* * * **THIS WEEK** * * *

THIS WEDNESDAY, 7-8:30pm ~ Sermon Talkback TWO!

There is now a second evening Sermon Talkback group led by either Rev. Mark or Rev. Josh. There is always pot of decaf ready to go and snacks if we are lucky. Come by yourself or bring a friend and together we will unpack the sermon and explore other topics.



* * * **Children, Youth & Family Announcements** * * *

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2018

Total for 2018 \$163.36

*Your 2018 Offering Choice is **Jamaica School Children** Scholarship money for school uniforms and books for children.*

Keep remembering to bring your offering

\$1 a week can go a long way!

Bring your Faith Formation Sunday School offering each week and use the envelopes in the pews. It is really important to use them so we know where you want your \$ to go.



Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 8th grade

March 11th ~ Pretzel Sunday ~ Peer class time

March 18th ~ Hands On Mission Sunday ~ Church World Service Kits

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

5th - 8th graders meet TWICE a month from 11:30-1:30pm

Faith & Mission Focus ~ Meal ~ Fellowship/Games

Parents sign up for meals and to volunteer is on the JY board

TODAY, March 11th ~ Called to Care Easter basket craft & More

High School Youth @ FCCEJ

March 18th ~ 5pm ~ Meet at church, wear clothes to get dirty, we will start to grow vegetables for our new church garden

*** * * Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate * * ***



Youth Mission Trip to New York City

June 17th-22nd: We're going to NYC for a Mission Trip to work on various projects throughout the city. Any youth 7th grade and up is welcome to attend. \$150 per participant. 50% down as soon as possible. Interested? For more details ask Josh!

Dismas House Meal Volunteers Needed!

We are all set with volunteers for March 28th but are looking for volunteers for April 25th. Please contact Ed Steele at 871-5897 edwardmsteele@msn.com if interested or with any questions. There is also a sign-up sheet in the hallway entering Fellowship Hall.



Next Food Pantry days are Monday, March 12th, 5:30-7:30pm and Thursday, March 22nd, 2-6pm

We are in need of baked beans, tuna fish, cereal, jam & jelly and canned fruit to restock our cabinets.

We are again ALL set with Egg Cartons-thank you SO much!

Got Donations? Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Regular Hours: 10am-3pm Tues & Wed, 4-8pm Thurs

Open Saturday March 17th from 9 am to 1 pm

Last Day for Bag Sale. Fill a Hannaford grocery bag for only \$2

Lots of winter items still available

Open Saturday April 7th from 9 am to 1 pm

Spring and Summer Items on Sale

Start your new Wardrobe



Volunteers Needed for Thursday evening Shift from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you have a friend or relative who might be interested, Please contact Elaine Raymond at ebraymond@gmail.com. The shop provides training. Don't Forget The Thrift Shop is looking for nearly new items.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

March 18th ~ Hands On Mission Sunday
Church World Service Hygiene Kits

It's time to gather more items and complete our hygiene kits that we started in the fall. The CWS drop off location closed for the winter and will open back up in April. On the next page are the items that we need donated to finish the kits. Please sign up and help give to complete the kits and lend a hand this Lenten season. You can sign up in Fellowship Hall on Sundays at the purple table or email Laurie. On March 18th the kids will put these remaining hygiene kits together. If you would like to help on this day with the kids, please let Laurie know.

- 45 wide tooth combs**
- 44 individually wrapped bath size bars of soap**
- 34 fingernail/toenail clippers**
- 31 toothbrushes individually wrapped**

Volunteer and be a Counselor at Camp

Are you 18yrs or older by July? Do you like working with junior youth? Looking for community service or something really good to put on your resumè? Graduating High School, in college or out, you too could have a fun week with free room and board counseling campers during the 2018 summer! Think of it... no cooking or laundry for a week, just great fun in God's outdoors! Especially recruiting for Rock Point week. See Laurie for more information.



*** * * SAVE THE DATES * * ***

Thursday, March 15th ~ Third Thursday Potluck Dish Share 5:45 to 7pm



March 18th ~ Healing Service 7pm



March 25th ~ Palm Sunday
Sleepless Knights (from St. Mike's)
& Laurentian Singers (from SLU)
4pm Concert, Free Will, All Welcome!



March 29th ~ Maundy Thursday 6pm

April 1st ~ Easter Sunday

April 8th, after one 10:15 service ~ Capital Campaign Kickoff Celebration

April 15th, 3-5pm ~ Joe's Big Band Concert



**Foster
Grandparents**

April 29th, after both services ~ Foster Grandparent and RSVP
Programs at United Way of Northwest Vermont
Are you 55+?

We're always looking for older adult volunteers for our RSVP and Foster Grandparent Programs! We connect individuals with various volunteer opportunities at schools and non-profit organizations throughout Northwest Vermont. RSVP Read to Me volunteers serve 1-2 hours a day, 1-2 times a week in preschool settings. RSVP School Buddies volunteers work 1-2 hours a day, 1-2 times a week, supporting elementary aged school children who need extra assistance in one or more academic areas.

Foster Grandparents work in early education settings helping children who need extra support with early literacy and math. Foster Grandparent Volunteers work a minimum of 15 hours per week. They receive a small non-taxable hourly stipend, a free daily meal at site when available, and more! Whether you enjoy working with children, seniors, or animals, we'll do everything we can to find a meaningful volunteer opportunity for you! Interested in learning more about RSVP or Foster Grandparents? Danielle Williams will be joining us on April 29th to talk with us about these programs and answer any questions you have!

THIS WEEK: March 11th - 17th

- TODAY:** 8:30am Worship Service / Sanctuary
9:30-10:15am 150th Quilt Committee/Marvin Lounge
10:15am Worship Service / Sanctuary
11:30 - 12:30 pm Called to Care Meeting / Marvin Lounge
11:30-1:30pm Junior Youth Group / Third Floor/Youth Room/Gym
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Marvin Lounge
- MONDAY:** 9:30 - 11:00 am Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
1:30 - 8:00 pm Food Pantry (open 5:30-7:30pm) / FH & Gym
6:00 - 8:00 pm Boy Scout Troop / Third Floor
5:30 - 6:30 pm Group Victory / Youth Lounge
5:30 - 6:45 pm Yoga with Jonah / Gym
7:00 - 8:00 pm Hospitality Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- TUESDAY:** 8:30 - 10:00 am Sermon Talk Back / Marvin Lounge
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00pm Deacon's Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- WEDNESDAY:** 9:30 - 11:00 am Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall
10:00 am - 3:00pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:30 - 7:00 pm Capital Campaign Steering Committee / Marvin Lounge
7:00 - 8:00 pm Sermon Talk Back II / Youth Lounge
7:00 - 8:30 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall
- THURSDAY:** 12:00 - 1:30 pm Book Discussion Group / Marvin Lounge
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
4:00 - 8:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
5:30 - 7:00 pm Finally @ First / Marvin Lounge
5:30 - 6:45 pm Yoga with Jonah / Fellowship Hall
5:45 - 7:00 pm Third Thursday Potluck / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 7:30 pm Cub Scout (Tiger Den) / Third Floor
6:15 - 7:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
7:00 - 8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
7:00 - 9:00 pm Confirmation Class / Marvin Lounge
- FRIDAY:** ** NEWSLETTER DEADLINE **
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
1:30 - 4:00 pm Bridge Club / Marvin Lounge
- SATURDAY:** 9:00am - 12:00 pm Nepali Community Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH
9:00 am - 1:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
9:30 - 11:30 am Women's Spirituality / Marvin Lounge
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Marvin Lounge

1:00 - 3:00 pm Alice Williams Memorial Service / Sanctuary

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

Church Administrator: *Jen Dooley* [welcome@fccej.org]
Interim Music Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@gmail.com]
Interim Choir Director: *Denise Keating* [j_keating7@comcast.net]
Christian Education Director: *Laurie Chipman* [lchipman@fccej.org]
Associate Pastor: *Rev. Josh Simon* [jsimon@fccej.org]
Senior Pastor: *Rev. Mark Mendes* [mmendes@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: *Jenny Bourn* [jennybourn4@gmail.com]
Currier Bell Choir Director: *Carolyn Harris* [899-6759]
Finally @ First Director: *Rick Dooley* [rickdooley5@gmail.com]
Heavenly Harmony Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@gmail.com]
Joyful Noise: *Jessica Moos* [jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com]
Men At First Director: *Bill Bickford, Jr.* [bill.bickford@aol.com]
Sanctuary Choir Director: *Denise Keating* [j_keating7@comcast.net]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: *Carl Wermer* [879-7650]
Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations until 5/18: *Brenda Crocket* [881-5253]
Treasurer & Historian: *Ann Gray* [878-4088]
Asst. Treasurer: *Dan Petherbridge* [879-0261]
Financial Secretary: *Pat Seaver* [879-4445]
Clerk: *Alison Wermer* [879-7650]
Christian Education: *Jenny Bourn* [802-309-7441]
Communications: *Kevin Dorn* [777-9446]
Deacons: *Betsy Weischedel* [922-2094], *Peter Schmalz* [202-297-3625]
Hospitality: *Mary Jane Allen* [557-1335], *Jim Glatz* [503-5076]
Missions: *Sandy Tallman* [879-0665]
Music: *Judy Larrabee* [236-0604]
Nominating: *Carl Wermer* [879-7650]
Stewardship: *Kathy Finnie* [734-9688]
Trustees: *Kevin Meilleur* [238-4041]
Ushering: *Ann Marie Sullivan* [879-6044]

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop [879-6552] *Sue Wood* suewood@myfairpoint.net or
Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net
Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: *Valerie Gabert* [879-0109]
Called To Care Contact: *Beth Volker* [879-4708]
Nepali Christian Community Contact: *Dan Raut* [310-4371]
Craft Fest Committee Contact: *Linda Bogardus* [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net]



Our Home, Our Future, Our Time – NEWS & NOTES

Getting to Know You...What Campaign Visits Are All About!

The first phase of the Capital Campaign is in full swing. A group of visitors has been busy over the past few weeks meeting with members of the congregation, talking about their relationship with the church, sharing their hopes for our future, and getting to know each other better. More visits will take place after our Campaign Kick-Off Event on Sunday April 8th (see details below). So, if you haven't had a visit yet, you will have that opportunity soon!

Some visitors were initially skeptical when told that the Campaign, and especially the visits, would be “fun.” But that’s exactly what is happening! Bart Frisbie, a member of the Steering Committee, said this about one of his visits: *“Paulette and I have sat in a pew behind Paul Hyde for years. I knew he was retired from IBM, but that was about all I knew. In one visit with Paul and his wife Marilyn, I learned that Paul had worked for IBM for 45 years, and took early retirement to help Marilyn. We had such a great talk. I’m so glad that I got this chance to know both of them better, and it wouldn’t have happened without the Capital Campaign.”*

If you’ve found yourself looking around at our congregation (for years, or months, or maybe just weeks) and wishing you knew more people better, seize this opportunity. Welcome visitors when you are contacted, or even volunteer to be a Campaign Ambassador/Visitor in the second phase of the Campaign. It’s a great way to meet new people, strengthen existing ties—and have fun!

If you are interested in being a Campaign Ambassador, there will be a training session on Saturday, April 7th. Please contact Co-Chairs Dave Johnson or Kaki McGeary to learn more.

CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF CELEBRATION

Sunday April 8th

(after single 10:15 am service)

Get ready for a party! Mark your calendars for the April 8th Campaign Kick-Off Celebration. Please remember that we will have only one service that day (at 10:15 a.m), with the Kick-Off to follow. We will have food, a scavenger hunt, the Big Blue Trunk entertainer, and an exciting announcement about our Campaign’s progress to date! For information about volunteering with set-up, or to donate a baked good, please contact Cathy Shearer at shearercf@gmail.com.

For more information about the Campaign, visit our Capital Campaign page on our website at www.fccej.org and follow the church on Facebook!