



## The Spirit at First June 2018

Your Pastor Ponders.....

This might sound crazy but I am already a bit regretful to miss Josh's summer sermon series that will integrate some famous Broadway shows with scripture, music and a message. It sounds so very creative and interesting. It might also sound crazy but I sort of wanted to be here when the money so generously offered as a gift to the *Our Home, Our Future, Our Time* Capital Campaign starts work on the roof, parking lot and new addition off of the elevator shaft. Normally, you could count on not much going on in the summer at our church, but this summer will be a little busy. So while I am away on vacation, visiting some magnificent National Parks, great things will be occurring here.

One of my favorite comments to hear from folks is when they tell me they are going to visit their daughter in Arizona and they sort of hate to go because they miss so much of what's going on in church: programs, activities, friends, special events, staff initiatives and of course the sermon. They still go but then once back, it takes a couple of weeks to catch up. We are a busy church in season and out.

And seasons are important. One of the things I love about Vermont are the seasons. They shape our activity and outlook and differently for everyone. In winter some folks like to cook soups, sit by the fire and catch up on their reading while others can't wait to get out on the slopes and snowshoe through the woods. The same is true for summer, spring and fall. The seasons give us a lens to our souls and a rhythm to our lives. Vermont, with such distinct and dramatic seasons highlight this fact in powerful and dramatic ways. Normally, I tell folks to rest during the summer and get out doors and thus spend less time in church! But honestly, summer with its alternative schedules allows some people to come to church more often. The earlier time allows some families to get up and get to church and still have a vast majority of the day to go out and explore. The more relaxed worship and the organ each week allows folks to enjoy a different worship experience than the rest of the year. And only one service allows folks to meet up with folks they miss during the year because they attend the "other" service.

As you enjoy being outdoors this summer, then try to squeeze in some church attendances. If you are not a big hiker and you like early worship, them come more often and go out for brunch with a group of friends that you meet in church. And enjoy Josh's sermon series! I will be back in the pulpit in August.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Mark

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### SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS IN JUNE

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#### June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1pm ~ Norm Faunce's Funeral Service

Everyone is invited to attend Norm Faunce's Funeral service on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Norm was a 50+ year member who freely gave of himself to help build our church. Through the decades, Norm and his wife Marge served in many different capacities with grace and a wonderful twinkle in the eye and smile on his face. Norm's daughters and their families will be here for you to support.

## June 3<sup>rd</sup> , ONE SERVICE, 9am ~ Communion

Communion for June will have everyone able come forward to receive the elements.

There will be ONE SERVICE @ 9am, 6/3-9/2.



## June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9am Service ~ Ice Cream Sunday & Capital Campaign Celebration



Ice Cream Sunday is when we celebrate a great year for our Faith Formation Program and simply have fun eating ice cream and playing games. This year we will also be completing the second phase of the campaign where we celebrate all the gifts received to date. We are close to reaching the main goal so come and see if we do! We are at 93% of our goal now and that is a tremendous success but wouldn't it be great to reach the goal and then reach for the STARS. Service starts at 9am and there will be plenty for the kids to do.

## June 10<sup>th</sup>, 9am Service ~ Scout Sunday

Last year we shifted our regular Scout Sunday in February for a June date and turned it into a Jamboree!!! The scouts filled up our lawns with tents, cooked their food outside and made a fire right in front of the church for all to see; it was a blast! This year will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jamboree and Scout Sunday. To add to the regular festivities, we will have a public FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY at 8:00 p.m. for the public to come and dispose of their used and beat up flags. The next day, we will have the scouts participate in the service and recognize all the scouts from our own ranks. Plus I have heard that the scouts are going to make a special treat to share at fellowship hour: last year it was peach cobbler!



## June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:30pm ~ Rev. Josh Simon's Service of Installation

The day has finally arrived when all the churches in the Champlain Association will come and lend their voice of approval and support to us as we celebrate our shared ministry with Josh. It is the last official act of the Associate Pastor Search Committee and the ritual by which our decision is authorized by the denominational powers that be. There will be representatives from the 15 UCC Churches in our area as well as a representative from the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ. Starting at 2:30 p.m., we will hear Josh's journey and theological understandings, then the gathered community will vote him in as officially our Associate Pastor, then we move into a service at 3:00 p.m. where both our church and Josh take vows to fulfill our roles in the relationship. Josh is planning the service, I am sure it will be both interesting and illuminating, one you will not want to miss.

## June 17<sup>th</sup>, 9 am Service ~ New Member's Sunday

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, we will welcome a group of new members who have decided to join our church. They are an enormously talented bunch of folks of all ages and stages and you will want to meet them and welcome them into our midst.



## **Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm ~ Celebrate LGBT+ Pride Month!**

June 28<sup>th</sup> marks a pivotal moment in the movement for LGBT+ rights, the Stonewall Inn Riots. Without the Stonewall Inn Riots, there would be no modern LGBT+ rights movement. In the morning of June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1969, LGBT+ folks had had enough harassment. They decided to stand up for themselves and assert their right to be who they are, wherever they are. Come to First Congregational for an interfaith service honoring and celebrating LGBT+ rights movement. All are welcome.



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## **DEACON'S CORNER**

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### **From June 3<sup>rd</sup> through September 2<sup>nd</sup> we will have ONE worship service each Sunday at 9AM**

Please update your schedules accordingly. While the sometimes-lazy days of summer can certainly fly by, it can also be inspiring, stimulating and refreshing to attend summer worship services. I am particularly looking forward to the month of July, when our Associate Minister, Josh Simon, will be integrating music and thought from the Broadway Musicals, Godspell, Les Miserables, Hamilton, Urinetown and Wicked.

### **Help spread the work of respect and welcome for our Muslim neighbors during Ramadan!**

From hate crimes to legislative discrimination, we see negativity directed against Muslims. This is not who the Deacons at First Congregational Church believe we are. We are a welcoming caring, respectful faith community.

We have an opportunity to demonstrate our care for Muslims in Vermont by supporting the #BlessedRamadan Project, which serves to wish a Blessed Ramadan to our Muslim neighbors with lawn signs. The signs are a public gesture, a sign of goodwill, and an opposition to bigotry and hatefulness.

Ramadan is the month of the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. The annual observance is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is performed to learn compassion, self-restraint, and generosity, this year it is from May 15th through June 14th. Signs on our church lawn will be coming soon, as well as some of your friends' and neighbors' lawns!

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Stay tuned for a discussion regarding the Lord's Prayer, inclusive language and more in the July/August newsletter.

With warmth and peace, Betsy Weischedel

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## ASSOCIATE PASTOR NEWS

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You called me to be your pastor in the middle of November last year. On Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:30pm, here at First Congregational, I will be officially installed as your Associate Pastor! Installation is a service of celebration: celebrating the work of the Associate Pastor Search Committee, celebrating the search process, celebrating a new person into the life of the FCCEJ, and the Champlain Association, and the Vermont Conference. Installation is also a day to recommit ourselves to ministry which strives to provide words of comfort to those who need to be comforted and words of challenge to those who need to be challenged.

I am looking forward to summer in Vermont. I have already appreciated the warm, sunny days to work in the backyard of the parsonage. Soon vegetables and fruits will flourish in the raised garden beds. I enjoy spending time outside, letting me be rejuvenated through the sun and the natural antioxidants in the soil. I hope you will be able to spend time outside soaking in the sun and playing in the soil.

**June 17<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>,** 12 youth and 3 chaperones from our congregation will go to New York City for a week of service. We will work with various agencies throughout the city: urban gardens, food pantries, clothing distribution places, and others. I am looking forward to the Amtrak rides to and from NYC. It will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with them and them with each other. I think with the service and communal time this will be a transformational experience. Please, keep us in your prayers that week.

**Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 7-9pm** a potluck at the parsonage (3 Church St) for young adults (young at heart). There won't be childcare, however, feel free to bring your children along. Please, email [jsimon@fccej.org](mailto:jsimon@fccej.org) to let me know if you plan on attending.

**High School Youth Group: Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm** come to the church to take a break from studying from final exams to eat snacks and watch a movie and just have a good time. We'll decide on the movie together!





## Laurie's Lens

Our Christian Education language has changed over the years and continues to change.

What we used to call Church School or Sunday School is now Faith Formation, which now also covers all ages and programs that we have and not just our Sunday morning. Our format for learning has also changed and continues to change. We try to move around a lot and not just sit on chairs at tables. We continue to adapt and change things up to help keep the learning fun, as in this year we added Hands-On Mission Sundays. I grew up United Methodist, along with many of you who did not grow up UCC (maybe UM, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, etc.) and some of you might not have grown up in the church. This is only to say that my faith has continued to grow and be nurtured as I walk along my faith journey, as I'm sure yours has too. I've continued to learn about God and that it's ok to ask questions. I used to see God as an old man with a white beard was I was little, but as time went by and I continued to be in conversations with others and question my faith...whether at church, youth group events or denominational events or even a friend...my image of God continued to change and the 'he' no longer fit. It was ok that God was no longer a person for me but an all loving being that is everywhere with everyone and so powerful that my mind cannot fully understand it all. God was still God and continues to remain a very important part of who I am, wherever I am, in all decisions I make and love me for who I am ...unconditionally. It is ok that as an adult I still do not know all the answers, but I have made connections with others who will help me to continue to talk about my questions and figure things out ...be with my on this path I walk.

So, as faith formation continues to shape itself and we look for ways to keep things current and fun for the children and youth as well as understanding the importance of allowing them to form their own images of God and not put our images on to them...let us keep our minds open. With all our faith formation volunteers at First Church, I continue to instill in them the importance of not using the pronoun 'he' for God and instead use God in all places. This helps the children and youth to decide who God is for them and not give them an image. We also need be aware that not all children, youth or adults have a loving father figure in their lives so it can be an unhealthy way of referring to God as 'he'. We carry this through to the books we read to the children, the conversations we have with them and the songs they sing.

A couple of years ago when the children and youth were planning their worship service, they wanted to use 'Our God' instead of 'Our Father' when praying the Lord's Prayer in worship, so this is what was printed in the bulletin that Sunday. Since then 'Our God' has been in the children's bulletins for worship, up in the classrooms and for the last year I have added a line 'choose your word for God' at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer and then I list a few suggestions ... Our God, Our Creator, Holy One, Loving Creator, Our Father. Our youth, for many years, have wished there was a nongender pronoun in the English language to use for God. Something other than 'it'. I found this online ...*All titles for God in the Hebrew Bible (Elohim, El, Adonai) are masculine nouns, God is called "he". A book sefer is a masculine noun too. So a book is also called "he". God is no more male than a book is male. God might be referred to as a 'He' in the Bible but non-Hebrew-literate individuals do not always know that in Hebrew language, grammatical gender is not an indicator of actual gender. Hebrew nouns have grammatical gender. Each object is masculine or feminine. There are no gender-neutral pronouns in Hebrew, i.e. there is no equivalent of the English "it". Everything is a "he" or a "she".*

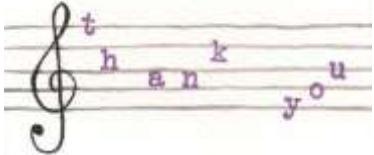
If you sit next to me in worship you will hear me say 'Our God, who art in heaven ...'. What words do you use for God? Do you use more than one? Let us continue to learn and ask questions.

Blessed to be in ministry with you! Laurie, Christian Education Director

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# MUSIC

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A huge thank you for the gift certificate presented to me on my last day as the Interim Organist/Music Director. This past year passed by very quickly working with so many talented musicians. With heartfelt sincerity, I appreciated the opportunity to be part of such an incredible music program.

Marie Johnson

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# STEWARDSHIP

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**Special Offerings:** June-Strengthen The Church, Sept.-Seminary Sunday,  
Oct.-Neighbors in Need, Nov.-Food Pantry, Dec.-Christmas Fund

**Free Money for Our Church, TD Bank is Giving It Away!**

Your Stewardship committee would like to remind you about the AFFINITY PROGRAM we participate in with TD BANK. The highlights are:

- The bank will donate money into our church's account
- It doesn't cost us anything
- We don't have to do anything (well, almost nothing).

The details: **Any** account holder at TD Bank (church member or not) simply indicates that they want to be part of the AFFINITY group with the First Congregational Church. At the end of each year the bank will deposit into our church account a percentage of the BANK profits as a donation. It doesn't cost account holders anything, It is a rare opportunity that really is as good as it sounds.

- **Any** account holder can join, doesn't cost account holders anything,
- Eligible accounts include:  
Business: Checking; Consumer: Checking, Savings, Money Market, CDs, and IRAs
- **Absolute** confidentiality for all participants (no information whatsoever is given to First Church)
- We don't have to buy, redeem or remember to do anything.
- The bank does all the work!!

Please consider opening a new account or asking any account holders you know to join our group. For more details please contact TD Bank directly. Angela Trapani, 878-6904 or [angela.trapani@tdbanknorth.com](mailto:angela.trapani@tdbanknorth.com)

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# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NEWS

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## Our Home, Our Future, Our Time...

As this newsletter article goes to press, we are in the 14<sup>th</sup> week of the *Our Home, Our Future, Our Time* Capital Campaign. We are thrilled to report that our congregation and friends have pledged more than \$768,000 to this Campaign—that's 93% of our \$822,000 goal. If you look at our campaign sign in front of our church, you will see that the church is almost completely filled!

**There is still time to get your pledge in—every pledge matters and together we can reach the top! If you haven't returned your pledge, please do so as soon as possible so that we can celebrate the grand total June 3!**

We hope that everyone who attends First Congregational Church will participate in this important event in the life of our church. This is ***Our Home*** and ***Our Future***—we are truly in this together! Stop by our Campaign table in Fellowship Hall to pick up a pledge form, ask questions, or set up a visit with one of our Campaign Ambassadors. You can also visit our website at [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org) to learn more about the many projects this Campaign will make possible, see our fundraising progress to date, and learn how you can help.

### **Projects to begin Summer 2018!**

The Trustees are working hard to finalize project plans and secure bids for two of our priority projects: roof replacement/repairs & parking lot/vestibule entrance improvements. For the latest news about these projects and the timeline, visit the Campaign page of our website at [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org). *If you choose to make an early pledge payment, this will help reduce the need for bridge loan financing.*

### **Ice Cream Social & Campaign Celebration on Sunday June 3**

Join us on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> for an Ice Cream Sunday to celebrate the end of our Faith Formation year and wonderful Faith Formation volunteers AND celebrate the Capital Campaign, our progress to date, and the hard work of dozens and dozens of Campaign volunteers. Remember we will be on the summer schedule with one service that begins at 9:00 AM.

We hope to see you all on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. THANK YOU to all who have pledged so far, and a special thanks to all who have volunteered to make this Campaign such an incredible coming-together of our entire Church family.

*Inch by inch, row by row  
Gonna make this garden grow  
All it takes is a rake and a hoe  
And a piece of fertile ground  
Inch by inch, row by row  
Someone bless these seeds I sow  
Someone warm them from below  
Till the rain comes tumbling down. ~ Songwriter David Mallett*

In this Campaign, WE are sowing seeds for the future. Sometimes our progress is measured one inch at a time, but *every gift* and *every pledge* helps our garden grow. We ask for God's blessing and we pray that Our Home will be fertile ground for faith and love and hope to grow in all of us, in our families, and for all who follow in our footsteps.

Peace & Blessings, Kaki McGeary & Dave Johnson, Campaign Co-Chairs

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." – Winston Churchill*

# CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



## Music Time During Faith Formation

Cherubs & Joyful Noise will resume having music time on September 18<sup>th</sup>

## Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

### Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ One service at 9am ~ Intergenerational Worship ~ Volunteer Recognition ~ Ice Cream Social  
*Children & youth are encouraged to sign up to be a reader or help usher or greet in worship.*

**June 10<sup>th</sup> – September 2<sup>nd</sup>** ~ 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 9<sup>th</sup>** ~ Welcome Back Sunday & Fall Faith Formation Program Begins



## Acolytes



Acolytes are those who carry the taper and bring 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 all those who are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or above to participate in worship. You can acolyte solo or with another friend or parent. Please sign up on the calendar on the bulletin board as you walk up to worship! We are looking for someone every Sunday. See Laurie for questions.

## Ring the Bell



All children and their families are welcome to sign up and ring the church bell 15 minutes before worship begins. Please sign-up on the calendar on the bulletin board by the Acolyte sheet. Instructions are at the top of the sheet as to which rope to pull and how many times to ring the bell. We love to have our church bell ring every Sunday morning before worship!

## 2018 Faith Formation Offering ~ Jamaica Children ~ Uniforms & Books

**Current Giving Total is \$509.79**

*Keep remembering to bring your Offering!*



\$1 a week can go a long way! If every child and youth contributed a \$1 a week we could raise over \$2000 to help Jamaica kids have uniforms & books so they can go to school and learn to read and write. Bring your offering each week & don't forget to use the children's envelopes in the pews so our counters know your money goes to the Jamaica Children.



## **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.

Junior Youth by Laurie's office / High School Youth by Josh's office Reminder to stay active and be engaged! \*Help a neighbor or a friend \*Bring your offering ~ put it in the plate as general offering or use the 'color me' envelopes and support the Jamaica Children-Uniforms & Books! \*Find ways & places to connect with your God & have Spirit time \*Mark your calendar for upcoming events!

### **Junior Youth @ FCCEJ**

5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet TWICE a month from 11:30-1:30pm

Faith & Mission Focus ~ Meal ~ Fellowship/Games

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

***Enjoy your summer and watch for news of our Fall JY gathering in September!***

### **High School Youth Group @ FCCEJ**

**Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm** ~ Come to the church to take a break from studying for final exams to eat snacks and watch a movie and just have a good time. We'll decide on the movie together!

### **Our Nursery**

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. Adrienne, our staff person, has graduated from UVM and moved to Montana. We wish her the best! We are currently looking for another staff person. If you know of someone, please contact Laurie. Parents ~ please be mindful of our Safe Conduct Guidelines and help us keep to our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult). Volunteer to stay in the Nursery with your child if you see that extra hands will be needed. Thank you for your help.



## **SAVE THE DATES**

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ Begin ONE 9:00am service ~ Ice Cream Social, Celebrate our Volunteers & Capital Campaign

**June 9<sup>th</sup>** ~ Open House at Horton Center in Gorham, NH

**July 29<sup>th</sup> -August 3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ UCC Camp week 'HC goes to VT' at Rock Point (*more info in Camp section*)

**August 6-10<sup>th</sup>** ~ Vacation Bible Camp ~ *Join the Volunteer team ~ Youth & Adults ~ Come join the Fun!*

**September 9<sup>th</sup>** ~ Welcome Back Sunday ~ two services resume

## **CAMP**



### **Vermont Outdoor Ministry Camps**

There is still time to sign up and go to camp!

Go to [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org) or  
[www.silverlakect.org](http://www.silverlakect.org)



Stop by our Outdoor Ministry bulletin board on your way up to the Sanctuary and see the fun t-shirt and paints you could win and take to camp with you this summer! All you need to do is register for a week of camp. Let Laurie know you did and you'll be in the drawing. Need scholarship money to help get there? Let FCCEJ staff know, we can help! Going into 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall? There is still room to come to **Horton Center Goes to VT!** Laurie will be visiting the camp every day at Rock Point. See the description below. Register for this camp on the Horton Center website above.

*Our Vermont OM Week at Rock Point Camp*

**July 29-August 3 ~ Horton Center Goes to Vermont ~ Middler**

\$420, Entering Grades 5-8 in the Fall



Come be a part of a great community of friends at Rock Point, Horton Center style, while we explore along the shores of Lake Champlain. God's beauty will be all around us as we swim, paddle board, hike through the many nature trails, have evening campfires and s'mores, sing, worship, play games and enjoy the amazing sunsets. Rock Point is in Burlington on the site of the Episcopal Conference Center.

**VT UCC Outdoor Ministries (OM) Scholarship Funds**



You can always give to our Camp Scholarship fund and help send our FCCEJ kids to Outdoor Ministry camp for a week... at our Vermont week at Rock Point camp, Horton Center camp in NH, Silver Lake in CT or even Pilgrim Lodge in ME. Outdoor Ministry camps give kids a chance to dive deeper than one can at VB Camp or even on Sunday mornings at church. Kids and youth can live and breathe it for a full week, sleeping in cabins, spending time in God's



outdoors and getting more in touch with who they are and truly seeing that they are not alone. OM gives everyone a chance to grow in their faith, make friends and spread their wings in a fun, safe and Spirit filled atmosphere...whether on the shores of Lake Champlain at Rock Point or on the top of Pine Mountain at Horton Center in NH or beside Silver Lake in CT. Many camps for all ages! You can also give a donation to the VT UCC OM Program that will go to the VT Conference and help support the program this year and in future years. Checks can be made out to First Church with either 'VTUCC OM Program' or 'FCCEJ Camp Scholarship' on the memo line. Blessings and thanks for your support! For questions, please connect with Laurie.



**August 6<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>, M-F 9-11:45am ~ Vacation Bible Camp 2018**

**Rolling River Rampage: Experience the Ride of a Lifetime with 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!

**Calling all KIDS ~ Registration is now OPEN!**

**Groups:** You & Me (toddler & parent/grandparent)

Preschool (three & fours - potty trained) up through those entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall.

# FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING



## Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of Every Month ~ June 1<sup>st</sup>

Come - Help - Eat [www.essex eatsout.org](http://www.essex eatsout.org)



### 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. If you have any questions about the group or need a ride please call the office. Please join us **Thursday, June 7th** at noon in Marvin Lounge for a legislative update from one of our legislatures. Bring your lunch and questions to this important discussion..

### Third Thursday Dish Share

**Third Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> from 5:45 to 7pm**

On hold until September. Watch for the new schedule coming in August. Fellowship dinners are open to all! Come get to know others at First Church



### The Community of Bridge



On the third Friday of every month from 1:30-4pm, a group of FCCEJ members & friends gather to have a little fun playing bridge. This month the date is **June 15<sup>th</sup>**. It is an open group and competition takes the back seat of enjoying each other's company and having fun. We usually also get some home baked cookies and coffee to boot. And on top of all of that, the winner gets a jar of Rev. Mark's famous jam and bragging rights for a month. Come and bring a friend.

### Faith on Tap

Meeting People in Meeting Places outside the Church

Come join us for food and drinks at McGillicuddy's Five Corners, 4 Pearl St, Essex Jct

**Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00-8:00 pm**



*Stay Tuned to the Bulletin for June's Discussion Topic*



### Yoga @ First Offers TWO WEEKLY CLASSES!

Jonah is offering two classes, on Monday PLUS a Thursday class as well. Both classes will meet in the gym from 5:30-6:45. All levels from beginner to experienced are absolutely welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Classes are free but donations are gratefully accepted for FCCEJ.

### 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. Please join us **Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>** at 9:30 at Ginny Coe's home, 25 Rosewood Lane, Essex Jct We'll share favorite children and adult books and our summer plans.



## **\*NEW DAY\* Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, Noontime Book Group**

The Noontime Book Group is reading *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver this month. It's a novel set in Southern Appalachia where families, neighbors and relationships are put at odds when one person's ethics endanger another person's livelihood. Kingsolver's complex characters deal with an abundance of environmental issues such as trying to save a pack of coyotes, the ethics of growing tobacco, and the conflict of using an herbicide to save one species of tree, while endangering another. As usual Kingsolver tackles important issues while weaving an intriguing tale and interesting characters. Please note that our new meeting time is at noon on the third Wednesday of each month in the Marvin Lounge. This month we will gather on June 20th for a brown bag lunch, fellowship and a good discussion. Please join us!

### **'Take Out Church' Boxes**

These 'pizza' size boxes can travel around with you wherever you go and will slide under the seat of your car. 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 him out. Take him with you everywhere you go. Take some pictures of you and 'Flat Jesus' and post them on our Facebook page and let us be reminded that Jesus is with us wherever we go. Enjoy the fun items that are inside. Do you have VB Camp music CD's from previous years, add them to your box. Read or sing a Grace before you have a meal. Talk about how you serve others, read some stories and color some pictures. See Laurie to collect your box. Have a box and running out of items? Contact Laurie for a refill.



### **Coffee Clatter @ Martone's**

Every Friday at 8:05 a.m., Revs Mark and Josh 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. We meet for one hour ~ join us!



### **NEW DAY & TIME ~ 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 Wednesday of each month at **2-4pm, June 27<sup>th</sup>** for a time of common crafting. All are welcome!



### **Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback, 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.

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# MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

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## Missions Moment

The Essex Community Justice Center is located here in Essex Junction behind Rocky's Pizza on Iroquois Avenue. Their vision is "to envision safe, expansive and resilient communities in which the response to conflict and crime is restorative and healing, enhances community and reduces further harms." Their mission: "The Essex Community Justice Center creates opportunities with the communities they serve for restorative approaches to crime and conflict that;

- Promote justice for those affected by crime by focusing on the harm caused
- Allow those responsible for harm to accept active responsibility for addressing and repairing the harm they cause
- Educate, build empathy, restore dignity and enable healing
- Support the needs of those reintegrating from prison into a more connected community life
- Strengthen individuals and the communities we serve through education and support to prevent further harms"

FCCEJ has a goal to have a closer connection with Essex Community Justice Center. We would like to have some volunteers from FCCEJ working there, allow them to host events here at FCCEJ, have them provide education on restorative justice practices and for FCCEJ to support their work by spreading the word in the community and beyond about the services they provide. In April, Susanna from Essex Community Justice Center lead a mini-workshop on holding conversation circles. This is a practice of sitting in a circle and allowing each person have a turn to say something relevant to the topic on hand. It is a democratic practice because it provides room for each participant to be heard and to feel they were heard. The youth who participated enjoyed being able to be given time to express their thoughts without the worry of being interrupted. If you think you might be interested in volunteering at Essex Community Justice Center, please let Josh know and for more information visit the ECJC website at [essexcj.org](http://essexcj.org).

## Dismas House

Across the state of Vermont there are four Dismas Houses that provide shelter and support to men and women making the difficult transition from incarceration to new lives. For several years now, we have once a month been serving a dinner on the 4th Wednesday of the month to the residents of the Winooski Dismas. Living there is a professional manager along with 10-15 people who have been released after serving their prison terms. Our service to Dismas House comes from our belief that all of us are imperfect human beings, but that we all have the potential to be better people, and that that potential can be best realized with the support of others. Our participation in this program helps to lessen the feelings of estrangement that people released from prison are often burdened with. The residents and staff are extremely friendly and appreciative of our help. **We are currently looking for volunteers for May 23<sup>rd</sup>.** Please contact Ed Steele at 871-5897 or



[edwardmsteele@msn.com](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com) if interested or with any questions. A sign-up sheet is in the hallway exiting Fellowship Hall. We need four 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 12-16 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 on who can volunteer, great for retired folks on down and you can donate part of the meal even if you are not able to attend.



### **Jamaica Mission Program Update**

We're very excited to announce that we have put together a team of 17 people (9 youth and 8 adults) for our third intergenerational mission trip to Jamaica in July 2019! This is our largest team yet, and we are excited about the work we'll be able to accomplish. Although the trip seems a long way off, we will begin the process of getting documents in order, making plans, getting to know each other, and organizing our fundraising efforts. Our first team meeting is scheduled for May 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm in the Marvin Lounge. We look forward to sharing more information with you in the fall.

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## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **Craft Fest News ~ Help Needed!**

The Craft Fest in 2017 made almost \$7,000 for the Church which is wonderful news. A large portion of this profit comes from the Silent Auction. This has become a favorite with all our customers. Both Diana Higgins and Phyllis Willey have decided to resign from being the key organizers of the Silent Auction. We are now looking for 2 people who are willing to organize the auction. Both Diana and Phyllis are willing to help their successors and will be available the day of the event to assist. Please contact Linda at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net) if you are interested or have any questions. It would be very sad if the auction wasn't a part of this special event.



### **Heavenly Food Pantry**

Next Heavenly Food Pantry days are Monday, June 11th, 5:30-7:30pm and Thursday, June 22nd, 2-6pm

We are all set right now for donations! Thank you SO much to our FCCEJ family and also the community at large. The Postal Workers Food Drive brought in more than we could have expected as seen by the photo! What an abundance of donations!





## Vacation Bible Camp Art Project

During the week of VBC we will be doing an art project using recyclable caps that will connect with our Rolling River Rampage theme. Are you one who still takes the lids off your containers before you recycle them? If they are 2" or smaller we can use them for our art project. We are really looking for juice and milk cap sizes. Please bring them to church by Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup> and we will put them to use. Watch for the colored VB Camp bin in Fellowship Hall. Thanks for your help!

## 2018-19 Faith Formation Volunteers

*Starting in the Fall*

If these statements hold true for YOU...please connect with Laurie for more information...we need YOU!

- I have been attending and have been a part of FCCEJ for at least 6 months
- I am willing to help our children and youth at church to continue to grow in their faith
- I know it's OK to not have all the answers, but a willingness to learn and help the grow in the faith
- I feel that FCCEJ Faith Formation programs are a vital part of this church and I am willing to support it with my time and talents.

***Many ways to support First Church kids and youth:***

- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, and then we all return to worship for communion.
- Peer Class Leaders & Helpers ~ be a leader or helper in one of our classes from preschool up through eighth grade. Weekly emails go out keeping you connected and sending you plans for the classes on Sunday mornings. Peer classes meet 2 or 3 times a month.
- Hands-On Mission Sundays ~ all ages are together for a time of hands on mission project and learning about an organization and God's love for all people and things.

## Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News

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

**Mark your Calendar – Saturday Open Hours**

Saturdays, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, July 7<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 1 pm

**Saturday, July 21th 9 am to 2 pm Porch Sale**



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We are looking for a tarp or tent covering to use for the Porch

Sale. Please contact Linda Bogardus at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net) if you have something that can be borrowed. We will be collecting Nearly New items for the Porch Sale starting now until July. Please use our drop off container. Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is also looking for more volunteers. Customers keep asking for the shop to be open more Saturdays. Right now we don't have anyone who can assist on a regular basis for another Saturday. If anyone is interested in helping on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of Each month to open the shop, please let Elaine know at [ebrymond@gmail.com](mailto:ebrymond@gmail.com) We are also looking for accessories such as jewelry, scarfs, hats, and purses. Please see if your closet has some items which can be donated.

## **Nurse and Lifeguard needed for Camp**

The VT Outdoor Ministry Team is looking for a NURSE (RN) & a certified LIFEGUARD for our week at Rock Point! Yes, you will be paid! Know someone? Contact Laurie for more information. Think of it... no cooking or laundry for a week, just great fun in God's outdoors!



## **August 6-10 ~ Vacation Bible Camp**

***Rolling River Rampage: Experience the Ride of a Lifetime with God!***

*Monday – Friday from 9am to 11:45am*



***Now Recruiting for ... Station Leaders: Bible Drama ~ Games &  
Opening Session Leader & Photographer***

***Helpers:*** Youth (entering sixth grade & up), College Students/ Adults of all ages! Be a group leader, serve snacks, take pictures and much more! Contact Laurie for more info and to sign up! This is a great way to get community service time.



***VB Camp Wish List:*** 40 ~ 2 Liter Soda Bottles with caps, 3 rolls of Blue Duck Tape, 2 Concrete pillar tubes 24" long

***Looking to borrow:*** 8 Artificial Christmas Trees (different sizes), Collapsible camping chairs, Plastic canoe/raft paddles, Small Inflatable Raft

***Discovery Station Needs:*** 1 – 3 pk of yeast, 2 boxes of Baking Soda, 2 boxes of Cornmeal, 1 small jar of Lemon juice, 1 small jar of Vinegar, 2 small containers of Dish soap, 3 rolls of Paper towels, 10 deep Aluminum Roasting pans, 24 Lemons, 1 large box of Wide Popsicle/Craft Sticks, 1 quart of Liquid Starch

***Snack Station Needs:*** 2 -16oz bags of Large Pretzel Rods, 1 small bag of Large Pretzel Rods Gluten Free, 1 - 14oz pkg of pull apart Twizzlers (Red), 2 bags or boxes of Fish Shaped Pretzel Crackers, 1 large box of Rainbow Goldfish, 7 boxes of Graham crackers, 1 box gluten free Graham crackers, 1 - 12oz package of Chocolate Chips, 15 - 12oz Chocolate bars, 1 - 16 oz bag of Small Pretzel Sticks, 2 large bags Garden Veggie Straws, 5 - 8oz containers of Spreadable Cream Cheese, 10 packages of String Cheese, 4 - 8oz pkg (slices) of Provolone cheese, 5 - 12 oz bags of Large Marshmallows, 1 bag of Mini Marshmallows, 5 bags of Clementines, 5 lbs of Grapes, 3 bags of Apples, 4 pints of Blueberries, 4 cans of Pineapple wedges, 3 packages of Celery, 2 packages of 8" Tortilla wraps, 1 pk of 8" Tortilla wraps (gluten free), 2 medium Watermelons, 4 pints of Strawberries, 12 medium Bananas, 200 sturdy party Toothpicks, 50 Barbeque Skewers, 400 - 10oz recyclable plastic cups, 150 small paper dinner plates, 3 boxes Snack size Ziploc bags, 200 Small snack size paper plates

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# OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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## June Birthdays

1<sup>st</sup> Phyllis Hogel, Alberta Reed, Ann Marie Sullivan 2<sup>nd</sup> Curtis Guild; 3<sup>rd</sup> Erna Deutsch, Louise Kolvoord;  
4<sup>th</sup> Max Smith; 5<sup>th</sup> Claudia Bearman, Paige Bero, Steve Wood; 6<sup>th</sup> Wayne Hathaway; 7<sup>th</sup> Bev Davis, Brenda  
Dawson; 8<sup>th</sup> Janet Astore, Matthew Giannuzzi, Paige King; 9<sup>th</sup> Mindy Bickford, Finn Hamilton, Colleen Messier;  
10<sup>th</sup> Connor Calhoun; 12<sup>th</sup> Sean McCullen, Ann Wells; 13<sup>th</sup> Hadleigh Lefevre, Jeffery Smith; 14<sup>th</sup> June Nadeau;  
15<sup>th</sup> Sarah Metcalf, Ellen Polanshek; 17<sup>th</sup> Brandon Kinney, Leslie O'Neil, Jonathan Stapleton; 18<sup>th</sup> Dennis Conti,  
Cynthia Kelley; 19<sup>th</sup> Christine Catterton, Stephanie Field, Ed Steele; 21<sup>st</sup> Linda Bogardus 22<sup>nd</sup> Henry Gabert, Hans  
Mertens; 23<sup>rd</sup> Kaki McGeary; 24<sup>th</sup> Andrea Cilley; 25<sup>th</sup> Cindy Chadurjian; 26<sup>th</sup> Kathryn Brennan; 27<sup>th</sup> Abigail  
Wood; 28<sup>th</sup> Lori Giannuzzi, Linda Jackson, Suzanne Reardon; 29<sup>th</sup> Peter Schmalz

## Thank You's

Dear Friends, thank you so much for the lovely yellow rose in honor of my eighty-fourth birthday! So very thoughtful. Sincerely, Constance A. Johnson



Dear First Church Family, I have so appreciated the lovely yellow birthday rose! Thank you! It is true that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." Sincerely, Nancy Hayes

Dear Friends at Congregational Church-Thank you very much for the beautiful yellow rose I received on my birthday. It was much appreciated. Most sincerely, Jean Tucker

Dear Church Members, Thanks for my beautiful yellow rose. It's my favorite color.  
I never knew it was so much fun turning 80! Sincerely, Rose Drost

## Update on 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wall Hanging

Twenty-six quilt blocks (squares) were made by First Church members in celebration of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last year. A small group consisting of Gail Babinger, Muriel Nutting, Elaine Raymond, Judy Roy, and Ann Gray have been working on the wall hanging since February. At our first meeting, we laid out the blocks on the floor of Marvin Lounge; and after several different designs, we settled on one we felt showed the blocks the best. It is five blocks by five blocks. Our next step was to bring in fabric pieces that we had at home to help us decide on the color of the borders. It was surprising to see what we thought in our minds would look good did not when we put it next to the blocks!!! Gail and Elaine offered to go to Yankee Pride and ask for suggestions for colors and designs. It took two trips and a lot of help from the Yankee Pride staff but finally the decision was made and fabric purchased. Elaine has "squared up" the blocks as they were not all exactly the same size. Some were slightly over the 10 ½ inches and some were slightly under. Elaine will be contacting the makers of the slightly under blocks to get a little more fabric to add on to the edges. Gail and Muriel will be cutting the strips (or sashing) that goes around each of the blocks. Once that is done, the actual sewing together of the wall

hanging can start. When the top is finished, the wall hanging will be quilted by tying it. Everyone will be invited to help with this effort. After the wall hanging is quilted, it will be bound on the outer edge and then it will be ready to be hung. Since the wall hanging is five blocks by five blocks for a total of twenty-five -- is anyone wondering what happened to the twenty-sixth block. Our plans are to frame it along with a quilt block given to us by Faith Truax which was made by her great grandmother (this historic block was way too fragile and too precious to put in the wall hanging), and hang them next to the wall hanging. The original plan was to type the initials and names of the individuals making the blocks and scan them on to fabric which would be sewn on the back of the wall hanging. Recently, we have heard about someone who embroiders names. Since embroidered names will stand up over time better than a scan, our current plan is to ask everyone who made a block to sign their initials and names. They will be embroidered for the back of the wall hanging. Once we

have worked out the details of collecting the signatures, members making the blocks will be contacted individually with further instructions. We realized that 50 years from now, the significance of the blocks in 2017 may not be known – so anyone making a block will be asked to write a few sentences of why they made the block and what it means to them and/or to First Church. These write-ups will be combined into a scrapbook for displaying near the wall hanging.

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