



From the minister's desk.....

## The Spirit at First January 2019

*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;  
we are now justified by Christ's grace as a gift.....*

Romans 3:23-24

One of the foundational principles of the Protestant Reformation is the affirmation of Paul's writing in the letter to Rome that we all fall short of the glory of God, and are in need of Jesus' love to make us whole. For anyone except little children, we should all be well familiar with our own negative ways of living; our issues. I think we come to self-knowledge as we age due to more leisure time to reflect and the increasing necessity to survive with others. Bettering ourselves as we mature and grow towards God's image of us is known as sanctification.

Paul's wisdom, coming from Jesus' teaching also refers to organizations, which naturally includes the church. The church can never be complacent; the church as a body always needs to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. The early church had to come to the realization that despite being followers of Christ and working to instill divine love into everyone they met, it could still sin. This may sound simplistic, but it took hundreds of years before the church came to fully realize this reality in its shared life. And even today, there are plenty of churches and religious traditions that believe they are following Christ's way correctly while everyone else is not. This naturally is hubris.

Every person, every church, every organization is called to reflect of their shared life and grow in the areas where they have fallen short and lift up the areas where they have succeeded. It seems to not only be a good discipline for growth but one grounded in faith and Christ's own teaching. AA embeds this behavioral corrective when adherents comply with "making a fearless moral inventory" and then make amends with all the people you have negatively affected.

The new year offers all of us an opportunity to enter this reflective process for it affords us a time to look back at the past year and put into action plans for the upcoming year. This last week, I received a letter from a family that had withdrawn from our community; in the letter I finally heard some of the reasoning of why they had left. Their critique and hurt cut me to the quick for they were a blessing to our church and I personally liked them very much. They withdrew from the lack of support their family received and the emphasis of money that they perceived as critical to membership. Our church ever needs to hear these hard truths and work on changing so that we can grow into the community Christ envisioned.

And we also need to proclaim the many positive elements of our church and reinforce those areas and tell others about them: vibrant worship, great music, fantastic children / youth ministry, a progressive yet Christocentric theology, significant outreach / social justice, and a community where folks are friendly and caring. The best way to spread that positive news is to share it by word of mouth: 70 % of new members come to the church because a friend invites them!

So I would invite all of you to take the turning of the year to reflect personally on your life and faith. And I would invite any and all comments concerning our church. All received will be shared with the Deacons as together we think about the spiritual welfare of our church.

May God bless us all in 2019, I am yours in Christ, Rev. Mark

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# SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS IN JANUARY

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## Communion in January

1<sup>st</sup> Service: Pass out

2<sup>nd</sup> Service: Come forward

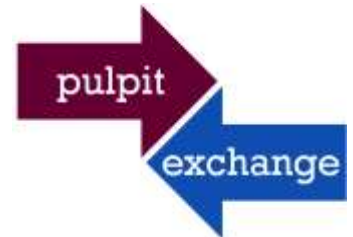


## January 5<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday 4:30pm Service

Our new Saturday evening service has been successful, averaging about 27 people each time and generating good feeling and conversation. It is fairly informal and we end each service with the confluence of communion and fellowship. We meet for roughly 50 minutes in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome.

## January 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Karen Mendes Pulpit Exchange

As many of you know, Rev. Mark's wife Karen is an ordained American Baptist minister and serves the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of Burlington. The Deacons have voted to invite the "other" Rev. Mendes to the pulpit in an exchange. Karen has preached a number of times at FCCEJ to much acclaim. While Rev. Karen Mendes is preaching here, Rev. Mark will be preaching at 1st Baptist Church Burlington @ 9:45am



## January 27<sup>th</sup> ~ Annual Meeting (11:30 am)/ Ask the Pastor Sunday (10am)

The heart of our congregational tradition is meeting once a year for our Annual Meeting. Those gathered at the meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am become the governing body of our church.

What they vote upon stands as policy with neither a committee nor staff member being able to rescind or disregard their vote. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get to the meeting, we will only have ONE SERVICE on January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00am and in light of our congregational ways and tradition, Mark & Josh will answer any questions the congregation has during the sermon time. Attending the service and meeting is perhaps the best way of understanding who we are as a community of faith.

Everyone is welcome at both.

Annual Meeting Sunday



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## SAVE THE DATES

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*March 17<sup>th</sup> ~ Pretzel Sunday*

*April 21<sup>st</sup> ~ Easter*

*August 5-9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 ~ Vacation Bible Camp 2019*

*To Mars and Beyond: Explore Where God's Power Can Take You!*

*Monday – Friday from 9am – 11:45am*

*Recruiting for: Music ~ Snack ~ Discovery ~ Games ~ Bible Drama Leaders*







## Laurie's Lens

What a pageant! Great Sunday everyone! Many thanks to all of you who helped put this year's pageant together. Our group of adults kept stepping forward to help behind the scenes and at rehearsal. Our junior youth who brought their energy, humor and joy to their parts with every line and step they took. Then came all the younger angels, shepherd and sheep that helped fill the pageant and made it more special. Thank you all! The true meaning of Christmas was present. Each one of you brought hope, peace, love and joy to the church! What an awesome present! I hope you all have a merry Christmas and fill the love of Jesus with you as you celebrate your time with family and friends.

In January many things start to happen. One of them is recruiting for the summer camps. I will be a dean this year at Horton Center Camp which is located just outside of Gorham, NH up on the top of Pine Mountain. It has breathtaking views of the White Mountains, including Mt. Washington and Mt. Madison. I'm recruiting counselors to join me and share your love of God's outdoors with campers the week of July 14<sup>th</sup>. Volunteer counselors main job is to help each camper be safe, feel welcomed and have a great week. You will get support from you deans and the summer staff at Horton Center. You have an opportunity to go through a training and your deans will communicate with you throughout the spring. Two counselors stay in each cabin and go throughout the day with their campers, sometime co-leading an activity. Being a counselor is fun, tiring yet energizing, and can have a deep impact on the life of a camper. We have some awesome talent in this church and I know there are several of you who could fill this role. Please pray about being a part of outdoor ministry for 2019.

Recruitment for our summer Vacation Bible Camp in August will also begin. I hope you will plan to join us for *To Mars and Beyond: Explore Where God's Power Can Take You!* We will be looking for leaders for our craft, discovery (science), snack, games, and music stations as well as an opening and closing assembly leader and puppeteer. We also will be looking for youth helpers, those going into 6<sup>th</sup> grade and older. If you haven't been a part of this fun week, I encourage you to join us. We use the full space of the church, welcome in the community of children, youth and parents while having lots of fun learning, growing and celebrating our faith each morning for a full week. Join us and share your talents.

My faith formation research trip plans are coming together. There will be Sundays in January, February and March that I will be away traveling to other UCC churches and seeing their programs first hand, along with their worship, visiting with staff and stopping by other UCC conference offices. Many thanks to all our faith formation volunteers and our Christian Education team for their support and helping me plan further ahead than normal. There are a few volunteer holes that I am looking to fill before mid-January, so if you are wondering how you can help please be in touch. Many things happen behind the scenes, just like with a pageant. If you feel the Spirit nudge you, drop me a note or call. More news will be coming.

As we move through the 12 days of Christmas, continue to let your light shine. Bring the hope, peace, joy and love to those around you and be a witness to the good, hopeful and positive things in this world.

Blessing & Peace,

Laurie Chipman, Christian Education Director



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# STEWARDSHIP

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As I write this during the crazy-busy week before Christmas, it is nice stop and reflect upon our Church and all the wonderful people who make our worship and role in the community possible – YOU! You make our Church what it is. A place to worship, a place to learn about the scriptures, a place of friendship, kindness and acceptance. A place to help the less fortunate. A place to share joys and tears. A place of love and safety.

Thank you for pledging to the 2019 Stewardship Campaign! If you haven't pledged yet, please take a moment to send your pledge information to Pat Seaver at [vtri2@ol.com](mailto:vtri2@ol.com). Your contribution will keep our Church strong, helping it meet the needs of our Congregation and our community.

The beginning of the year is a popular time for personal reassessment. Somehow, when we take down the old calendar and tack up the new, we sense an opportunity to make a fresh start. Let us pray that this new year is a time of grace and wisdom for those of us who seek to recommit our lives to our family, our Church, and our God.

On behalf of your Stewardship Committee, we hope you had a joyous Christmas holiday season, and look forward to 2019 with hope, enthusiasm and gratitude.

Kathy Finnie, Stewardship Committee Chair

## **PICK UP ENVELOPES AFTER WORSHIP SERVICES IN FELLOWSHIP HALL**

**2019 Special Offerings:** January-Endowment Fund, February-Outdoor Ministry, March-One Great Hour of Sharing, April-Pastor's Fund, May-Per Capita

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## CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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### **Music Time During Faith Formation**

***Cherubs*** ~ Preschool - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade gather in the Kindergarten room on Sundays to sing with Jenny Bourn before moving on to their peer group locations.  
***Joyful Noise*** ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders gather in the Marvin Lounge for songs and music with Jessica Moos before moving on to their peer group locations.

## Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

### Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

*December 30<sup>th</sup>* ~ 2 services ~ intergenerational for all ages  
*January 6<sup>th</sup>* ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Spiritual Friends with Preschool & Kindergarteners  
Communion Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship  
*January 13<sup>th</sup>* ~ Music & Peer Group time  
*January 20<sup>th</sup>* ~ Hands On Mission Sunday ~ Celebrating your 2018 Offering  
*January 27<sup>th</sup>* ~ Music & Peer Group time  
*February 3<sup>rd</sup>* ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Spiritual Friends with Preschool & Kindergarteners  
Communion Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship



*Stop by and pick up a copy of our 2018-19 Faith Formation Family Calendar.*

*You can find them in the office hallway and outside the Nursery on Sunday mornings.*



### Acolytes

Acolytes carry the light of Christ into the Sanctuary at the beginning of worship to remind us that God is with us. At the end of worship they carry the light out 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 older to participate in worship. You can acolyte solo or with another friend or parent. Signup sheet is located on the bulletin board before you walk up the steps to worship. Please contact Laurie for more info [lchipman@fcej.org](mailto:lchipman@fcej.org)

### Ring the Bell

Looking for children and families to ring the church bell 15 minutes before worship begins. Signup sheet is located on the bulletin board before you walk up the steps to worship (beside the Acolyte signup). 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 hear our church bell ring before worship!



### 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. Parents ~ please be mindful of our Safe Conduct Guidelines and help us be good stewards of our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult). Please volunteer to stay in the Nursery with your child if you see that extra hands will be needed. Thank you for your help.

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



**Current Giving Total is \$752.67**

**Voting for 2019 Offering will happen January 20<sup>th</sup>**

*Keep remembering to bring your Offering!*

\$1 a week can go a long way! Just think about what you spend \$1 on! 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

**Junior Youth @ FCCEJ**

5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders gather TWICE a month Faith & Mission Focus with Fellowship/Games  
 Parents please stop by and sign up to help provide a meal or snack. Thank you! Mark your calendars!

**January 6<sup>th</sup>** ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ provide a meal

**6<sup>th</sup>** ~ 10:15am Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture

**20<sup>th</sup>** ~ 3pm – 4:30pm ~ provide a snack

**February 3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ provide a meal

**3<sup>rd</sup>** ~ 10:15am Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture

**17<sup>th</sup>** ~ 3pm – 4:30pm ~ provide a snack

*Reminder to stay active and be engaged!*

Help a neighbor or a friend, Earning money – Divide it to 3 Ways  
 Save (in the bank) ~ Give to the Church/donate ~ Yourself (spend or save)  
 Bring your Faith Formation Offering with you on Sunday  
 Find ways and places to connect with your God & have Spirit time

**High School Youth Group @ FCCEJ**

*Mark your calendars!*

**Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>** ~ 5-7pm Relax, Watch Movie, Eat

**Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup>** ~ 11:30am-1:30pm Martin Luther King Jr weekend service project.

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## SUMMER CAMP

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**2019 VT UCC Outdoor Ministry Camp @**  
**The Lake on July 28<sup>th</sup> ~ August 2<sup>nd</sup>**

This year's Deans (plan and direct the week) are:  
*Pastor Susan McKnight, Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters*



Any interest in being a part of this great camp in 2019?



## Counselors ~ Lifeguards

College students....this is a great thing to add to your resume!

See Laurie for more information [lchipman@fccej.org](mailto:lchipman@fccej.org).

Thank you for your continued support of the VT UCC OM camp program!

You can help kids and youth from local churches attend our VT UCC OM week of outdoor ministry camp with your donations to our own FCCEJ Scholarship Fund or support our statewide VT UCC Scholarship Fund. It costs money to build a great week at camp. By giving and supporting you are helping kids dive deeper than one can on Sunday mornings. Kids and youth get to dive in for a full week, 24/7 ...sleeping in cabins, spending time in God's outdoors and getting more in touch with who they are. Outdoor Ministries 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 Camp or on the top of Pine Mountain at Horton Center in NH or beside Silver Lake in CT. Give to OM at our church or send your donation straight to the VT Conference. Please be sure to mark your donation for either 'VTUCC Camp Scholarships' or 'FCCEJ Camp Scholarship' on the memo line of your check.

***FCCEJ Youth who have participated:*** 2016 Counselors ~ Ethan Benton, Kate Tallman  
2017 camper ~ Erik Frivoll, 2018 camper ~ Isabelle Owens  
Who will be on the list for 2019?

## NE UCC Outdoor Ministry Camps

Camp brochures will be out in January. We will have copies here at church & registration is online.

Horton Center Camp in Gorham, NH <http://www.hortoncenter.org/>

Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT <https://www.silverlakect.org/>

Pilgrim Lodge Camp in West Gardiner, ME <https://www.pilgrimlodge.org/>

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# FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING

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## Wednesday Night Searchers, 7pm ~ Resumes January 2<sup>nd</sup>

Each week, a group of folks get together to explore the faith. We do so through books, movies, discussions with members from other religious traditions, TED Talks and anything else we want to do. We will begin meeting after the Christmas break on **January 2<sup>nd</sup>**, where we will discuss a handful of insightful articles collected by Rev. Mendes AND pass out our next focus of Study: *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright. Whether you love Jesus and call him Lord and Savior or struggle with his divinity, you will be welcome to come and discuss those issues with a supportive and loving group of people. Books are available in Jen's office or on a Sunday morning.

## 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. Fight those January BLAHS by joining us January 3<sup>rd</sup> at noon in the Marvin Lounge. We invite you to bring a favorite card or board game to be enjoyed by all. Our rousing game of SCAT in December inspired us to continue to find activities that bring us laughter and JOY. Please join us with your lunch and we will help you fight those winter blues.



## Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of Every Month ~ January 4<sup>th</sup>

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

## Bereavement Support Group

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month, Sharon Dettenrieder and Rev. Mark gather with others in need of reflecting and dealing with the death of a loved one. Losing someone you love remains with you throughout your life and shapes who you are, how you think and the ways in which you interact with others. This group creates a safe space where you can confidentially share your loss and be supported with well tried coping mechanisms. It is not a therapy group but rather an opportunity to share your story and hear others share theirs as together we figure out how we can all move forward on grief's journey. We meet from **7-8:30 on January 10<sup>th</sup>**. All are welcome to attend.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday Potluck Series ~ Intergenerational Game Night

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday potluck this month will be on January 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:45 to 7pm. Bring your favorite board game and we'll have fun playing games. Supper will begin by 6pm and our program will start around 6:30pm or before. Join us! All ages welcome!



## The Community of Bridge

Do you like to play bridge? Do you like to eat cookies and have some fun with other like minded card players? If so, then come and play bridge at church on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month, **January 18<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 – 4:00**. We try to get in three rounds and the winner gets one of Rev. Mendes' famous jams. And you are welcome to 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  
**January 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 pm**



## Yoga and Meditation @ First!



Jonah Moos is offering class on **Tuesdays** at 5:30-6:45pm in the Fellowship Hall. All levels from beginner to experienced are absolutely welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Following Yoga, there will be a Meditation time in the Nursery from 7-7:30pm. You can do one or both! 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. All women of the church are invited to join us for interesting programs and wonderful fellowship. Please join us **January 19<sup>th</sup>** at 9:30 in Marvin Lounge for a community service project. Valentine's for Vets is a national project that brings cards and good wishes to Veterans in hospitals. Our cards will go to the Veteran's hospital in White River Junction. Bring your creativity, supportive thoughts and enjoy this fun worthwhile project. Come and enjoy fellowship and laughter with the wonderful women of FCCEJ.

## 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!



Coffee Fellowship

## Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, Noontime Book Group

The Noontime Book Group will meet at 12:00 on Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. Please join us for friendship, lunch and wonderful sharing and fellowship. Contact Joanne Irwin [jirwin1000@aol.com](mailto:jirwin1000@aol.com) for information on the January book that we are reading.



## Ladies Crafting Time 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, January 23rd** for a time of common crafting. All are welcome!



## Young Adult Gathering

Young adult gathering is Friday, January 25th, 7-9pm. Hannah Tracy and John Wermer are hosting at their place, 14 Sugartree Lane, F6, Essex Junction



## 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**

For almost the past 10 years, Faith Formation has evolved into what it is today, including Hands-On Mission Sundays. We asked Laurie to tell us about how this evolution has taken place.



Soon after Laurie arrived as our Christian Education coordinator in August of 2009, she realized that our congregation, like many others, had a hard time having enough leaders for the classes during school breaks and on holiday weekends. After a discussion with other CE members and staff, they decided to center all group activities in 2010 around the season at the time, the offering that had been chosen or a faith practice like praying or baking pretzels.

From 2010-2012, these activities went from being a rotation to stations that the children did in age groups where they would take part in seasonal hands-on activities in the peer rooms and rotate through them. In the fall of 2013, they were then called Group Activity Days and were turning into more of a full age group activity that would aid in building community among the children and youth and help them all get to know each other better as the children attending are from different schools as well as different towns, such as Colchester, Milton, Jericho, Williston, Essex Town, Essex Junction and Waterbury.

In the fall of 2017, another evolution took place and the name changed to Hands-On Mission Sundays. More and more parents were liking the idea of their children talking about and doing mission activities, so the name fit the activity.

In the Spring of 2018, Laurie came to the Missions Committee and asked us, as a committee, if we would like to be more connected and help brainstorm ideas and perhaps be more hands-on ourselves with these faith formation days. We assisted on a few of these days during the last curriculum year. As faith formation keeps evolving and church life keeps changing and families have more and more going on and the CE staff and committee try to keep families connected and involved, the programs will need to stay fresh and exciting. Laurie says that in the next few years, Hands-On will likely change once again.

## **Dismas House ~ Your Good Deed Will be Much Appreciated**

Across Vermont there are four Dismas Houses that provide shelter and support for men and women who have served prison terms and are making the transition from life in prison to life outside. For several years now, First Congregational Church members have been serving dinner on the 4th Wednesday of each month to the residents of the Dismas House in Winooski. Our participation in this program is of great value in lessening the feelings of estrangement that burden many who have served prison terms. The residents of Dismas House and the paid staff are friendly and appreciative of our help. The staff includes a paid Director and Associate Director who are at Dismas House during weekdays, including during the evening meal. Three of our members prepare the fourth Wednesday



dinner. One of us prepares an entry, another a salad, and a third, a dessert. After we've taken the food to Dismas house, we usually stay and enjoy the meal with the Dismas House residents and staff. If you would like to volunteer for the Church's Dismas House Mission, take a look at the sign-up sheet that's on the bulletin board in the hall leading to the social hall. Questions? Please contact Ed Steele, the current facilitator for the Dismas House Mission if you have questions. His contact information is: (802) 871-5897 or [edwardmsteele@msn.com](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com)



### **5th Annual Jamaica Cabin Fever Calcutta**

The Jamaica Committee is pleased to announce the 5th annual Cabin Fever Calcutta to be held at the Catamount Country Club in Williston on Saturday, March 9, 2019. Mark your calendars to save the date! Cocktails will begin at 5:00 PM with dinner at 6:00 PM. Jamie Polli will begin the Calcutta at 7:00 PM.



**Early bird ticket sales have begun. All tickets purchased by January 15<sup>th</sup> will be entered into the drawing for a \$100 cash prize.** If you purchased a ticket last year, you will have received a letter in early December inviting you to reserve last year's ball number. Everyone is welcome to buy tickets early. To purchase tickets, call or mail your form/request to FCCEJ, stop by the Jamaica table in the fellowship hall beginning January 6<sup>th</sup> or contact Sharon Dettenrieder at 802-871-5308 or [dettenriedeS@hartwick.edu](mailto:dettenriedeS@hartwick.edu). After January 15<sup>th</sup>, team members will be selling tickets as well. Tickets cost \$125 each and include dinner for two and the chance to win the grand prize of \$1000 and other prizes awarded throughout the evening. Checks should be made out to "FCCEJ" with "Jamaica" in the memo.

Hope to see you there!



**The Jamaica team would also like to thank everyone who participated in our first fundraiser by purchasing shares of stock. We so appreciate your support!**

2019 Team Members: Mark & Nicholas Mendes, Rick & Sam Dooley, Caitlin & Kaki McGeary, Christine Czarny, Dave Dewey, Nolan Boerger, Emma Parker, Peter & Zachary Schmalz, Aliyah Watt, Carolyn Rushford and Sharon Dettenrieder

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# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

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

We are making progress! On behalf of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee, we have several exciting project updates to share with you.



The plans for the new vestibule and ADA bathroom near Fellowship Hall have been finalized, and the Trustees are in the process of getting bids from potential contractors. The plan is to begin work on the vestibule and bathroom by April 1, followed by work on the parking lot/site improvements in June. A General Contractor will be hired to oversee this complex and multi-faceted project. We will not be able to use the parking lot entrance while this work takes place, however the Trustees will be working on some new signage and temporary entrance accommodations to minimize the disruption. Stay tuned for more details as we get closer to construction.

The other major work to be completed in 2019 is the Sanctuary Restoration Project, which includes the refurbishing of our historic windows and wooden blinds, plaster repair and a fresh coat of paint throughout the sanctuary (even the pews!). The sanctuary restoration was the number one priority identified by the congregation through our feasibility study, and doing this work will restore and preserve the beauty of **Our Home** for years to come. There will be an opportunity for the congregation to give input into a new sanctuary paint color once we have awarded a contract for the restoration work and we have a better sense of how long that project will take. We have applied for a Historic Preservation Grant to help cover some of our expenses. Grant decisions will be made in early December. Based on the report from historic architect specialist Sally Fishburn, we anticipate that the sanctuary will be open throughout these renovations. We will keep you updated if that changes. For more information about the window and plaster renovation project, Sally Fishburn's full report is available on our website under Capital Campaign Projects.

Last but not least, initial organ repair and maintenance work will take place in spring 2019, either before or after Easter and a contractor has been selected to replace the parsonage parking lot with pavers, which will also occur in the spring.

Thank you all for continuing to support the **Our Home, Our Future, Our Time Capital Campaign**. Our pledge total stands at \$935,616. We appreciate all of the pledge payments made so far, and all of the early pledge payments. As a result, we do not anticipate needing bridge loan financing to complete the projects above. We continue to accept new gifts for the campaign to help us "fill our heart" and reach our \$1.02 million stretch goal. If you would like more information about the Capital Campaign, please contact US.

Wishing you and your loved ones an advent season filled with hope, peace, joy and love.  
Kaki McGeary and Dave Johnson, Co-Chairs

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# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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## **Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News**

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

### **Mark these dates on your Calendar**

Open Saturdays Dec 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 1 pm

The shop is looking for donations of holiday sweaters, men & women's winter coats & boots, winter hats/gloves, and women's shirts. Donations are taken any time in our drop off box.



## **Heavenly Food Pantry**

Next Heavenly Food Pantry days are Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm  
and Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2-6pm

We are in need of fruit juice, boxed mac n' cheese and sample size toothpaste tubes. They are perfect to give out with a toothbrush. Please ask your dentist the next time you have your teeth cleaned if they would donate a case!



We have met some wonderful members of our community who have had food drives in their neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, etc. Many, many thanks goes out to these community partners!



## **Giving Tree Thank You!**

On behalf of those of us who work on the Giving Tree, I want to thank everyone in the congregation for your continuing support of those children in Essex and Westford who we help each Christmas. This year we provided fifty-five children with gifts and treats for their stockings. Our Junior Youth Group created goody bags for each child and Kinney Drug provided additional toys.



Every year we are reminded by the families how much they appreciate the gifts they receive and how much brighter their Christmases are because of the generosity of this congregation.

I want to extend a personal thank you to LindaLou Parker for all of the help she gave me as well as to Anita Guild for her continuing guidance and assistance. A special thank you also needs to go to Jen Dooley for the multiple ways she helped to make this year successful.

The Giving Tree was a huge achievement again due to the commitment of this congregation to bring joy to those in need. Thank you, Elaine Raymond

## **Volunteer for 2018-19 Faith Formation Programs**

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

**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 dough time and return for communion.

**Peer Group Leaders & Helpers** – support one of our groups from preK- 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Weekly email to help keep you connected with plans for groups and special Sundays. All items are gathered for you.

**Hands-On Mission Sunday Helpers** – preschool up through youth are together for a time of fellowship across the ages for on these days with a mission focus and group building activities.

**Youth Group Helpers** – Still a youth at heart? Want to get reconnected with youth today? Join a group and or help with food. Every time youth gather we are always looking for adults to help.



## **Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed**

Winter dates are all up on the Sign Up Genius-please volunteer!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>

## **Thank You From Essex Eats Out**

EEO at FCCEJ is alive and well. This past year we served an average of 57 meals each month with a high of 77 in December. We had a consistent volunteer pool of 14 per month. We couldn't have done any of this without your generous contributions to the meals. Over the last three years people have enjoyed homemade food from 58 FCCEJ supporters. EEO is an important mission to our community because it addresses food insecurity in Essex and supports camaraderie between families. Thank you for all you do for EEO. We look forward to another successful year with the full support of our FCCEJ family.



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## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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### **Bottle/Can Drive**



The Boy Scouts have made a bin for can collection. Right now, the bin is located near the door by the kitchen. Please, drop your cans/bottle there. Thank you for all your donations! Please make sure that you only put in the cans & bottles that are redeemable, not just recyclable





## Heavenly Cents Thrift Store

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is pleased to be giving back to the community with donations to the following local organizations: Essex Senior Center, Essex Community Justice Center, Katie Currier Scholarship Fund, Steps to End Domestic Violence, COTS (Committee On Temporary Shelter), Age Well Meals On Wheels, JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project), Doing business at Heavenly Cents, whether making donations or purchasing goods, strengthens our connections with each other and is good for your wallet, the environment and our community. Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop accepts new and gently used clothing, jewelry, table linens, bedding and household items. All items should be clean, free of stains and tears and household items should be safe, in good working condition, and contain all pieces and parts. Happy holidays and grateful thanks for supporting and donating!

## 2019 Altar Flowers

The chart for altar flowers is up in the hallway leading out of Fellowship Hall. The donation is \$34/Sunday and you can write your name and also who or what event you would like remembered/honored. Contact Jen with any questions [welcome@fceej.org](mailto:welcome@fceej.org)



## Christmas Wishes

To each and every one we are wishing you all the best now and throughout the coming year. With love and so many positive thoughts for you, your family, and our beautiful planet! To all of our dear friends @ FCCEJ, we miss so much being among you and experiencing the full impact of what OUR church stands for: the unconditional welcoming of ALL. We miss you! Moving here has been quite an adjustment for us and our short term memory has been a challenge. However; we are beginning to adjust and discover how we can be helpful; we wish you each and every one a blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy 2018. With love, Dave and Sue Eaton We hope each and every one can feel that these greetings are for YOU!

## January Birthdays

**1<sup>st</sup>** Paulette Frisbie, Nicholas Rushford; **2<sup>nd</sup>** Amy Trimble; **3<sup>rd</sup>** Teddy Owens **4<sup>th</sup>** Donna Dulaney, Chris Laflam, Arthur Winslow; **9<sup>th</sup>** Natalie Whitfield **10<sup>th</sup>** Jen Celia, Jeff Nowell, Sara Sinkewicz, Beth Terry; **11<sup>th</sup>** Steven Donley, Alex Dooley; **13<sup>th</sup>** Josh Simon; **15<sup>th</sup>** Ed Guild, Wayne Hall, Elaine Helmstutler; **18<sup>th</sup>** Harold Bergeron, Bob Rushford; **19<sup>th</sup>** Molly Mannarino; **20<sup>th</sup>** Carolyn Harris; **21<sup>st</sup>** Ed Dean; **24<sup>th</sup>** Penny Williams; **25<sup>th</sup>** Cathy Shearer, Allison Vansteensburg; **26<sup>th</sup>** Ingrid Gilliam, Charlotte Stoneback; **29<sup>th</sup>** Kevin McCullen; **31<sup>st</sup>** Nolan Boerger



What a wonderful surprise to have members of the choir come to my home and sing to me! Of course, I sang along with them! Thank you so much, senior choir.  
They sang to my neighbors, too! Sylvia Nyhagen



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## **ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Please help us clean up our mailing list! If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, or would like to receive it electronically instead, simply:**

- E-mail an “unsubscribe” message to [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) , OR
- Phone us at 802-878-5745, OR
- Mail this page back to us at the address above

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