



A Pastor Ponders.....

The Spirit at First March 2019

“At exactly the same time when Jesus was growing up, there was a movement---call it a political movement, a religious movement, or [as Josephus calls it] a ‘philosophy’----that said that it was time for God alone to be king.”

N.T. Wright: Simply Jesus, pg 41

The Searchers are learning about Jesus and the world in which he grew up and what it means for our lives today as understood by theologian and teacher N.T. Wright. It is a little more traditional reading than we are used to in the Searchers but it opens up to us a new avenue to discuss the faith and apply it to our lives especially around the key figure of Jesus: the central figure of our faith.

What does it mean to say that Jesus believed that God should be king? Jesus did not understand his role as taking on the traditional role of kingship as understood by the Jews nor does it look like he had any interest in becoming the Emperor of the Roman Empire. Jesus modeled a different type of kingship that included servanthood, justice, mercy, forgiveness and healing. He resorted to words instead of wars. He welcomed everyone into his kingdom, even those who disagreed with him and were proven to be unworthy. His go to rule was love and treating your neighbor the way you would like to be treated. How do we claim his mantle for our current culture?

The lectionary group I attended yesterday struggled with Christ’s treatment of an enemy that is entrenched in hatred against you and willing to use violence as a weapon. We dallied with everything from pacifism to the church’s just war theory. We struggled with whether you can love your enemy and still hold them accountable and guard against their destructive behaviors directed against you. We do this with child abusers but can we do it with terrorists? Can we respond with non-violent resistance or is that naïve when confronted with such cruel intentions? Does using force and violence to contain threats to our existence just end up perpetuating a system of economic oppression from the very few against the many....with hindsight it seems that war often tends to do just that?

We all agreed that Christ’s teaching regarding loving our enemies separates us as people of faith from most other philosophies: religious, political or cultural. Thus, it is crucial we struggle with how to live into Christ’s gospel where our enemy is a precious child of God.

Today, as the world lurches right, as various groupings of humanity are pitted against each other, as wealth is controlled by fewer and fewer people, as geopolitical realities seem to be ushering us toward war yet again and as anxiety and fear seem to be on the rise with a vast majority of the people on our planet, we might want to revisit the life and teachings on the greatest teacher who ever lived, one we call friend and Savior and even King.

How does caring for our enemies change our politics both internally and externally? How does offering our shirt in addition to our coat change the dynamics of economic policy? How does turning your cheek to an enemy who wants to kill you help solve the complicated equation of geopolitical realities? How does Christ’s radical concept of love affect the way we interact with those we disagree with politically in our country? How is it even possible to love people who belong to ISIS and want nothing more to destroy the United States of America?

I do not have the answers to these questions, but feel strongly that these are exactly the questions we should be asking of ourselves and our leaders. Christ, in a time when people had fewer rights and less power encouraged those who followed him to discuss these things. And so I hand over his challenge to all of you. Apply your faith to your interactions with family members who think you are an idiot to support the candidate you do. In your workplace, be a productive force for compassion and peace. Refuse to gossip and demonize others in the community. Seek understanding with peoples that think radically different than ourselves. I believe the discussion and shifting our own attitudes will help our personal outlook and perhaps even help to change the world.

Crazy I know, but then I follow a man who was pretty radical in his thinking. Join me. Blessings, Rev. Mark

SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS IN MARCH

Communion in March

1st Service: Pass Elements Out to People; 2nd Service: People Come Up to Receive Elements



Saturday, March 2nd ~ 4:30pm Special Service

We have been holding these alternative services since October and people have appreciated their distinct style. We always get a good crowd of over 25 people. We gather in Fellowship Hall and sit around a table filled with both communion elements and snacks. We listen to the scripture and reflect as a group together, with some people talking and some just listening. We light candles for those who need help and join our hearts together in prayer for them. We sing a couple of songs which are led on a guitar and then we end with a time of fellowship as we share communion [and snacks together]. If you have not tried this new venture and this sounds intriguing, be sure to come and check it out.

Wednesday, March 6th ~ Ash Wednesday Service, 7pm

The season of Lent was developed after Easter and the early church's celebration of Christ's resurrection. The second liturgical season was used to teach people about the faith and prepare them to join the church, which always took place as the sun rose on Easter morning. New Member classes were a year long and the members watched the new initiates to make sure they were worthy of the calling. As the season of Lent developed and other seasons emerged, Lent shortened to forty days and started on a Wednesday. Thus, Ash Wednesday became the start of Lent and encouraged people to deepen their faith by adopting spiritual practices and preparing for Easter. It remains so today and I would encourage everyone to avail yourself of this ancient rite of passage. Taking a little extra time to deepen your spirituality is always a good practice and Rev. Mark has changed it a bit so that it is not so dour and depressing but rather an exercise in thoughtful reflection.

Sunday, March 10th ~ Guest Preacher ~ Rev. Paul Sangree

Rev. Paul Sangree is the new Associate Conference Minister for the Vt Conference of the United Church of Christ, replacing Rev. Pam Lucas. He is an Andover Newton graduate [a little overlap w/ Rev. Mark] and did great parish ministry for 30 years in Massachusetts. He brings a wealth of experience to the table and a boat load of gifts. He will be preaching at both services, but even more importantly, he wants to meet us and learn what our church is all about. Come hear his inspiring message and spend some time getting to know him.

Wednesdays, March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th; April 3rd, 10th & 17th

Lenten Morning Services, 7am

What better way of starting the day than by worshipping our Creator and centering yourself on the Spirit of the Living God. Pastors Mark & Josh want to provide everyone an opportunity to come to church to pray, take communion, sit in silence and hear hopeful words from Jesus' preaching during the season of Lent. The service will be about 30 minutes so that everyone can still get to work on time. This is a new opportunity for folks who want to deepen your journey with the divine in our midst. Come and start your morning at church and see how it transforms your entire day.



January 23, 2019

Dear Partners in Christ:

The vision of a body united - in purpose, in mission, in vision - is one that inspired the birth of our denomination. All of our spiritual impulses reverberate in an effort to call us into a more perfect union. Throughout our shared history as a people of faith and as a part of the Body of Christ, we have challenged ourselves to widen the circle of inclusion. Widening the circle has always come with growth pains as we shed old skins and welcome those whom we had previously thought unwelcome. And, with each new articulation of a more fully expressed Body of Christ we have realized new joy. Through it all we remain focused on the call to be one and committed to meeting the challenges inherent in that call.

We are now living in and through a season when the threats to unity are legion. Talk of walls that mark refugees as threats, labels like 'terrorist' that attach too easily to Muslims, overt racial bias that normalizes fear and hatred, a pandemic of abuse to women with the trigger reflex to forgive the men who author that abuse have turned America into a land many of us no longer recognize and that too many of us are finding harder and harder to reconcile with our faith.

Now more than ever, the Holy Spirit of the Living God and the Risen Christ is seeking to partner with anyone committed to unifying the human community. The gospel mandate to love our neighbor as we love ourselves resonates deep within us. It calls for the better angels among and within us to always resist impulses to hate, to condemn, to vilify, or to castigate. In such a time as this, the United Church of Christ's call to fulfill the prayer of Jesus, that they may all be one, stands as an urgent mandate to disciples who envision a just world for all.

United with you in God's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Dorhauer".

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Officers of the Church

Rev. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Rev. Traci D. Blackmon
Associate General Minister
Justice and Local Church Ministries

Rev. James A. Moos
Associate General Minister
Global Engagement and Operations
Co-executive for Global Ministries

ASSOCIATE PASTOR NEWS



We are fortunate to live in a time when democracy is the norm. Sure, there are struggles with making sure democratic process include more and more people, but for the most part, those who seek to change have a constructive avenue to do so. Jesus and his followers did not have a democratic avenue to solve their issues. They couldn't merely wait for the next election to elect a new person or couldn't run for office themselves. There was no democratic process to removing leaders who abused their power or to process to change policy to better their community. We do have the message that Jesus preached: blessed are the poor; blessed are you who are hungry now; blessed are you who weep now. He also transformed lives through healing. In a democratic society, we help transform lives and bless people through changing the systems within which we live. We have the power as citizens to make our society work better for more people, allowing more people to live with dignity.

When I visited the search committee for the onsite visit, I heard about the cost of housing in our area of Vermont. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as "paying no more than 30% [person's] income for housing cost, including utilities." The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board report that "Fully 47.5% of all Vermont renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs" and "the median price of a primary residence in 2018 was \$217, 500, requiring an annual household income of \$68, 635 and \$20, 695 in cash at closing, while the Vermont median income was \$57,808." As seen, affordable housing as an issue impacts more than low-income earners; it impacts many. Part of the solution to affordable housing is more, better paying jobs. Another way to help with providing affordable housing is to advocate for more financial support for funds like the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. VHCB works with private capital to fund affordable housing projects and land conservation in Vermont.

I recently spent a day to advocate legislators to fully fund the VHCB. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition (VHCC), a group that advocates on behalf of affordable housing and conservation, hosted a Legislative Day. VHCC provided information on what they were requesting and provided a training on how to talk to our legislators. Being a citizen advocate can feel daunting. I found that once my feet were wet, after talking to one of my legislators, then the conversation with the next one went more smoothly. Having these conversations is like swimming it's unfamiliar until you start swimming and then you can't stop swimming. It's also nice because most of our legislators want to hear from their constituents, and since they are not full-time legislators, constituents often provide helpful information that they didn't know. Citizens collectively informing their representatives and advocating on behalf of an issue is a powerful force. It does ensure that our legislators, at least, are aware of the issues that are important to us, in this case affordable housing.

I have been working with a group from Essex, Jericho, and Underhill learning about affordable housing and then advocating for more affordable housing and solutions to ensure that more Vermonters are able to afford housing. There are policies we can advocate for locally that would help provide affordable housing. Many of us could benefit from a group that tries to advocate solutions to housing that many of us need.

High School Youth Group ~ Change Makers: Making Change Series

Sunday, March 10th, 5-7pm

Sunday, March 24th, 11:30am-1:30pm

We're bringing back Holy Spirit Cafe on Sunday, March 31st during second service. Holy Spirit Café is an opportunity for high school students to talk about issues of faith with young adults, many of whom were active in our youth ministry when they were students.

LAURIE'S LENS



As I sit down to write this article I am checking the list minute items off my to do list before I leave for the west coast to visit four more vibrant United Church of Christ churches. On my January road trip to Connecticut we connected with six churches and their staff in ten days. Then in February came a fast weekend trip to Massachusetts visiting with four more UCC vibrant churches and their staff. Needless to say, I have been taking a lot of pictures, many notes and gathering lots of information and ideas. I will connected with you all again on Facebook as I travel to Eugene, OR and Seattle & Bellingham, WA.

My first Sunday back will be March 10th, the first Sunday in Lent and I will have missed the Ash Wednesday service. I always look forward to that service and so my Lenten season will be starting off different this year. Lent is a season that in it's history one was asked to give something up. I have moved away from that and instead follow the more progressive modern idea of taking something on. Maybe it's something we have fallen away from keeping up with or maybe it's something new. I haven't decided what that is yet, but I'm guessing that something will come to mind while I'm visiting the churches on the west coast and seeing and hearing how they prepare and start their Lenten seasons. We will also be one week away from Pretzel Sunday, coming up on March 17th. A really fun Sunday in Lent when we smell and eat pretzels, but also are reminded of how good it is to pray to our God and hear about arms folded over on our chest as a way to pray.

Lent is time when we try to be more intentional about our daily devotional life and prayer time with our God. If you are one who would prefer to have a daily devotion in your inbox of your email, you can subscribe to the UCC's daily devotions at http://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional. We will have some Lenten devotional here that you can pick up. I'm sure you can find a quiet place in your house to sit, maybe it's where the sunshine can touch you as it radiats through your window. Maybe you have that soft comfy chair that everyone in your house knows is your place to sit. I would like to encourage you to place your bible close by, if it's not there already, then add your devotional to that space and set aside ten minutes of your day to sit and connect with your God.

For those of you who like a little history lesson ... Lent is a 40 day journey, not counting Sundays, until we arrive at Easter. According to the Bible, Jesus' death and resurrection occurred around the time of the Jewish Passover, which was celebrated on the first full moon following the vernal equinox. For Christians, today, Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox (or the first day of spring). If the first full moon occurs on the equinox, Easter is the following Sunday. So ... Easter Sunday can fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25th. Once you know when Easter Sunday is...you count back 40 days, not including Sundays, and you will arrive on Ash Wednesday. Easter falls on April 21st this year and so counting back 40 days, except Sundays, we end up on Wednesday, March 6th for Ash Wednesday.

Camps and outdoor ministry is one of my passions, so as I set foot on the ground of two of our UCC sites on the west coast my mind will be thinking of our camps, VB Camp and VT OM, and ways to keep them vibrant. If you are wondering how you can get involved, please send me a note. I will reply.

Blessing & Peace,
Laurie Chipman
Christian Education Director

DEACON'S CORNER

Hello from your Deacons! February is a month of emotional endurance – long cold days and nights, and heavy snows, sometimes keeping us apart from friends and church. For me, it also feels like the busiest month of the year, chock full of family visits and kids activities. My high schoolers seemed to have a hockey or basketball game every night, thanks to the added games that were postponed earlier in the season! As we step forward into March, I feel more stable, whether from school break, sports seasons ending, or the anticipation of Lent approaching. I also feel the similar expectation of snow melting and – dare I say – Springtime? And yet I know many of us aren't convinced. For some of the reasons mentioned above, the month of March can be one of the most challenging. If that's how you feel, you can try spending an hour in Gardener's Supply, or perhaps the fishing section of Dick's Sporting Goods. Or, better yet, come to church and embrace the nuances of the Lenten season. Our ministers and musicians have wonderful things waiting for you, to help celebrate the contradictions, solemnity, celebration and victory that mark the season. At FCCEJ, we also have the March 9th "Calcutta" event to support our mission trip to Jamaica in June, just a few months away (my son Zach and I are extremely fortunate to be going on the trip this year!). We hope that through the services or events, you can join us and be a part of this intriguing and meaningful time of the church year!

Pete

SAVE THE DATES

April 14th ~ Palm Sunday

April 21st ~ Easter



June 2nd ~ Ice Cream Sunday



August 5-9th, 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

MUSIC

Praise-A-Palooza

Praise-a-Palooza was awesome! We have amazing cooks and musicians here at FCCEJ and our surrounding community! The soups, fellowship and music were perfect on a snowy, chilly night! Many thanks for great praise music by Got Grace! (Grace Methodist Church), Malletts Bay Congregational Church UCC, Smokey Newfield Project, and Finally @ First (FCCEJ). We raised \$150 for the music here at FCCEJ-many thanks to all who made it possible and if you missed it, look for the 10th annual event next February!



Music for March

In music, *Lent*, or *Lento*, is a term meaning that the music is very slow. Many of the most beautiful passages of music are marked Lento. The slow rhythm of this music forces the musician to slow down, to breathe deeply, to give patience to sustained notes and spacious pauses. Musicians often find this music to be the most challenging of all, because in music, just like in life, we are perpetually in a hurry. Slow music calms and soothes, and represents deep emotions and gentle hearts. To play slow music is to be present, in the “now”, grounded. Likewise, Lent can be a time to breathe and reflect, and let life’s slower tempo open up space for discovery, for deep enjoyment of small things.

Here at First Church, the Sanctuary Choir are seeking a few more voices for Easter if anyone is feeling like making a short term musical commitment! Finally @ First has been improvising their way around travel schedules and weird Wednesday night ice storms, but still managing to sing some wonderful contemporary songs. Heavenly Harmony has been rehearsing some gorgeous music and will be singing the entire service on the 1st Sunday of April.

March 3	Communion Sunday: Carol away; Denise Keating and Marie Johnson leading the Sanctuary Choir (both services)
March 10	Start of Daylight Savings Time! First Sunday in Lent - Sanctuary Choir (1st service), F@F (2nd service)
March 17	Sanctuary Choir (1st service), F@F (2nd service)
March 24	Sanctuary Choir (1st service), F@F (2nd service)

Looking forward to seeing everyone at worship!

Carol Spradling
Director of Music

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



Music Time During Faith Formation

Cherubs ~ Preschool - 2nd grade gather in the Kindergarten room on Sundays to sing with Jenny Bourn before moving on to their peer group locations.

Joyful Noise ~ 3rd - 8th 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 – 8th Grade

March 3rd ~ 1st Sunday Spiritual Friends with Preschool & Kindergarteners

Communion Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship

March 10th ~ Music & Peer Group time

March 17th ~ Pretzel Sunday & Peer Group time

March 24th ~ Hands On Mission Sunday

March 31st ~ Music & Peer Group time

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

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



Acolytes

Do you wonder why we light candles for worship? Why do we carry the light of Christ into worship and out at the end? Interested in learning why and lighting candles for either worship service? Our signup sheet is located on the downstairs bulletin board in the hallway on your way up to worship. It helps to be in 3rd grade or older so you can reach the candles. Ushers and Deacons can assist you.

Ring the Bell

Do you hear the church bell ring? Volunteers do this every Sunday morning 15 minutes before worship begins. Families, children, youth, anyone. Signup sheet is located on the bulletin board before you walk up the steps to worship (in the downstairs hallway). Instructions are at the top of the signup sheet as to which rope to pull and how many times to ring the bell.



Our Nursery

Our Nursery staff and volunteers are here to help our youngest feel at home. Jennifer Morse and Manu Shrestha have many years of experience with little ones. There is a speaker in the Nursery so you can hear the worship service while you are there. Parents ~ please feel free to stay or return to worship. We ask that you be mindful of our Safe Conduct Guidelines and help us be good stewards of our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult) and volunteer to stay if you are needed.



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

5th - 8th 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!

March 3rd ~ 10:15am Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture

10th ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ JYG ~ provide a meal

17th ~ be a helping on Pretzel Sunday

24th ~ 3pm – 4:30pm ~ JYG ~ provide a snack

April 7th ~ 10:15am Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture

11:30am – 1:30pm ~ JYG ~ provide a meal

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 ~ Change Makers: Making Change Series

Sunday, March 10th, 5-7pm

Sunday, March 24th, 11:30am-1:30pm

We're bringing back Holy Spirit Cafe on Sunday, March 31st during second service. Holy Spirit Café is an opportunity for high school students to talk about issues of faith with young adults, many of whom were active in our youth ministry when they were students.

2019 Faith Formation Offering ~ Spectrum Youth & Family Services

2019 Total is \$48.50

Spectrum Youth & Family Services is the winner for 2019!

Stop by the yellow table and pick up information about Spectrum.

Learn more about this great organization. *Remembering to bring your offering each week!*

\$1 a week can go a long way! Just think what you spend a \$1 on. Use the envelopes in the pews so your money goes to Spectrum and it will not be confused with the regular offering for the church.



SUMMER CAMPS

Vacation Bible Camp

TO MARS and BEYOND: *Exploring Where God's Power Can Take*

You! August 5-9th from 9am to 11:45am

Registration forms are out! Sign up today and mark your calendars!

You & Me Toddlers (attend with parent/adult)

Preschool – 5th grade (grade you are going into in the fall)

Youth Helpers (6th grade and up); Adult helpers

All are welcome!





Registrations for the VT UCC camp @ The LAKE & all camps at Horton Center, NH

are online at <http://www.hortoncenter.org/> Brochures are here at church. Check out discounts in brochure & online!



VT UCC Outdoor Ministry @ The Lake ~ July 28th – Aug 2nd

For Campers going into 5th – 8th grade in the fall of 2019

Deans: *Pastor Susan McKnight & Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters*



FCCEJ Former Participants ...

2016 Counselors ~ Ethan Benton, Kate Tallman 2017 camper ~ Erik Frivoll

2018 camper ~ Isabelle Owens 2018 volunteers ~ Jonah & Jessica Moos, Pastor Josh, Laurie Chipman

Volunteer for this fun UCC week at Rock Point! Help keep OM alive and well in VT!

Daytime Volunteers ~ Full time overnight Counselors ~ Lifeguards Contact Laurie for more information.



Horton Center UCC Camp in Gorham, NH

God's CoStars; July 14th - 20th

For campers going into 6th – 8th grade; Dean ~ *Laurie Chipman*

Laurie is recruiting counselors for this camp! Join her team!

2 other camps happening at HC during this week. One for 3rd – 5th grader and another for 9th – 12th



College Students & Young Adults

Volunteering at camp is a great thing to add to your resume!

Contact Laurie for more information lchipman@fccej.org.

MoreNE UCC Outdoor Ministry Camps

Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT

<https://www.silverlakeect.org/>

Pilgrim Lodge Camp in West Gardiner, ME

<https://www.pilgrimlodge.org/>

STEWARDSHIP

Thinking of Making a Stock Donation?

Just a heads up to let you know that the way to do this has changed. For more info, contact Pat Seaver at vtri2@aol.com or 879-4445 or contact Astrid Fernandez, VT Wealth and Retirement, LLC at 489-5310

2019 Special Offerings: March-One Great Hour of Sharing, April-Pastor's Fund, May-Per Capita, June-Strengthen The Church, Sept-Seminary Sunday, Oct-Neighbors In Need, Nov-Food Pantry, Dec-Christmas Fund

FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING

Wednesday Night Searchers, 7pm



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.

During March, we will continue reading the book, *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright. Whether you love Jesus and call him Lord and Savior or struggle with his divinity, you are welcome to come and discuss those issues with a supportive and loving group of people. Books are still available in Jen's office or on a Sunday morning from Mark or Josh.

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. Join us on **Thursday, March 6 at noon** to watch Netflix tidying up guru, Marie Kondo. As spring approaches, it's a good time to think about ways to reorganize and declutter. Marie Kondo is an organizing consultant and author. Kondo has written four books on organizing which have collectively sold millions of copies and have been translated from Japanese into many languages. She now has a show on Netflix called 'Tidying Up' and calls her KonMari method of tidying up, "spreading the gospel of joy." Bring your lunch as we learn how to unclutter our lives.



Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1st Friday of Every Month ~ March 1st

Come - Help - Eat www.essexeatsout.org

The Community of Bridge



Do you like to play bridge? Did you know that the church has their own Bridge Club? Well we do and we have great fun on the 3rd Friday of every month, 1:30-4pm; March 15th this month. Come and see how Christians play bridge. Come and taste the cooking that June and Carlene make for the occasion. Come and try to win one of Rev. Mark's jams, a prize for the 1st place winner. We have both experts and novices playing so come and learn and or teach!

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 Junction

March 15th from 6:00-8:00 pm



Yoga @ 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. Classes are free but donations are gratefully accepted for FCCEJ.

3rd Thursday Potluck Series

The 3rd Thursday potluck this month will be on **March 21st** from 5:45 to 7pm. Supper will begin by 6pm and our program will start around 6:30pm or before. Join us! All ages welcome!



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 on **Saturday, March 23 at 9:30 in Marvin Lounge**. We will be making Easter Cards for our Called to Care friends and for our veterans in the White River Junction Veterans Medical Center. The cards for our church friends will go into Easter baskets we'll put together in early April. We hope you can join us for this creative and caring project.

Coffee Clatter @ Martone's



This may seem like a foolish question, but if you like to talk and drink coffee, then come down to Martone's every Friday morning from 8-9 for an open conversation. Rev. Mark and/or Josh are there every week and we talk about everything from camping to politics, from deep theological questions to silly jokes, from village life to great vacation spots, from business deals to the best restaurants in town. We laugh, get serious and support each other. Everyone is invited to come to Martone's in the Village center at 8:00 a.m. every week.

Wednesday, March 20th, Noontime Book Group

For March we are reading American Jezebel by Eve La Plante. This is a biography of Anne Hutchinson, a colonial woman who rebelled against the legal, religious and cultural constraints of being a female in her Puritan culture. How difficult it must have been for those women who were completely subservient to the will of their husbands. They had to be strong to survive in the wilderness, yet when they married they became legally non-persons. This is one woman who had the courage to speak up about her convictions. The book should give us some insight into life in those times. It should lead to a most interesting discussion about how far we've come, and how fragile these rights could be. Bring your bag lunch and join us for some good conversation.



Crafty 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, March 27th** 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.



MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



Saturday, March 9th ~ 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. Cocktails will begin at 5:00 PM with dinner at 6:00 PM. Jamie Polli, our MC, will begin the Calcutta at 7:00 PM.

This is a fun night out with lots of great prizes in addition to the grand prize of \$1000!

We will also be holding the popular wine pull, a raffle for an overnight stay/dinner at three great area hotels (the Courtyard Marriott/Bleu Restaurant, Hotel Vermont/Juniper and The Essex/Junction) and a raffle for a tablet! Door prizes include passes to the Water Park at Jay Peak, Family pass to the Champlain Valley Fair, Flynn Theatre tickets, restaurant gift certificates, golf, Smugg's Bash Badge, and more.

Tickets cost \$125 each and include dinner for two and the chance to win the grand prize of \$1000. Checks should be made out to "FCCEJ" with "Calcutta" in the memo line.

NEW THIS YEAR: We will auction off two hours of labor by the 2019 Jamaica Team. Bid to have the 15 member team come to your home to work on a project of your choice for a 2 hour block of time. Spring yard clean-up, window washing, car/garage cleaning...up to you! Must be completed by June 15, 2019.

Tickets may be purchased in any of the following ways:

- Stop by the Jamaica table in the fellowship hall on Sunday mornings
- Contact Sharon Dettenrieder at 802-871-5308, dettenriedeS@hartwick.edu
- See a Jamaica Team member
- Call Jen at FCCEJ



Team members are 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.

Hope to see you there!

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, on the fourth Wednesday of each month, three First Congregational Church members have been preparing dinner for the residents and staff of the Dismas House in Winooski. Attending the meal are typically ten residents, two paid staff members (a Director and Associate Director who work at Dismas House during weekdays), and the three members of the Church who have prepared the food.



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 and staff are friendly and appreciative of our help. The dinner we take consists of an entrée, salad, and dessert. We bring enough food to feed 15 people and stay to 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. His contact information is: (802) 871-5897 or edwardmsteele@msn.com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Calling All Bakers!

Looking To Show Off Your Baker's Hat? Hospitality is looking for some help in showing off your mad baking skills! If you would like to help provide a goodie for any Sunday Fellowship Time, contact Jim Glatz 802-503-5076 glatzjim@gmail.com



Heavenly Food Pantry

Next Heavenly Food Pantry days are Monday, March 11th, 5:30-7:30pm
and Thursday, March 28th, 2-6pm



We are in need of fruit juice, tomato soup, spaghetti sauce 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!

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News

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

Mark these dates on your Calendar

Open Saturdays March 2nd & 16th 9 am to 1 pm

Week of **March 4th** All adult clothing \$2

Week of **March 11th**, All adult clothing \$1

March 26th – 28th Bag sale



Items Needed: Jewelry, Socks, Nightwear and Towels. Spring and Summer Items are being accepted.



Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed

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

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



March 17th ~ Pretzel Sunday

In the Lenten season, we have a special Sunday when our church smells of pretzels! Your CE team sponsors this great Sunday each year and pretzels are baked fresh and ready for all to enjoy at both our fellowship times after each of our worship services.

Yes, we even have some gluten free pretzels. This great morning needs wonderful adult volunteers, like yourself, who will donate items or take a shift in the kitchen to mix and roll out pretzels, help bake or help with clean up. We hope you mark your calendars for this fun day in Lent! The children and youth will start their time in Fellowship Hall rolling pretzels before they move off to peer class time and talk about the history of the pretzel. Youth will be helping the kids throughout the morning and delivering pretzels to each peer group.

Adult volunteer shift times are: 7:30am to 9:30am (mix up dough, roll pretzels & bake); 9:15am-10:30am (bake & set up tables); 10:30-11:30am (bake); 11:30am-12noon (help Hospitality with clean up). See Laurie for questions and to sign up! Sign up sheet for supplies can also be found on the purple table in Fellowship Hall on Sunday morning.



Volunteer and Be a Camp Counselor!

Share your love of God & the outdoors!



Counsel youth on the shores of Lake Champlain for @ THE LAKE, July 28th ~ August 2nd for Campers going into 5th – 8th grade.

OR Join

Laurie at Horton Center and counsel for GOD'S CO-STARs, July 14th ~ 20th for campers going into 6th – 8th grade. Bring your energy and love of kids to this rewarding role. Parents get a discount for their child to attend a camp if you volunteer. See Laurie for more details on both.

Volunteers for Vacation Bible Camp

TO MARS and BEYOND:

Exploring Where God's Power Can Take You!

August 5-9th from 9am to 11:45am



We are looking for many helpers for our fun week in August. Behind the scenes with decoration planning and all the way through our week of camp and after to help organize afterwards.

Our leadership team (so far) is: Bible Drama ~ Allison VanSteensburg; Crafts ~ Jenny Bourn; Snacks ~ Judy Allen & Ginny Coe; Discovery/Science ~ Steve Gorniak (pre-planning only) We continue to recruit for: Games, Music, Group Leaders, Decorators, Photographer, Youth Helpers (6th grade and older). 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 the team and share your talents. Contact Laurie with your questions and for more information.



Nursery Volunteers

Volunteer to stay in the Nursery with Jennifer or Manu. Some Sundays we are looking for a second person to help hold to our Safe Conduct Guidelines. Interested? Please stop by and talk with the person on duty in the Nursery or connect with Laurie. Thanks for your help.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

NEEDED-Old T-Shirts

We are trying to discourage the distribution of plastic grocery bags at our Heavenly Food Pantry by making and distributing reusable tshirt bags. If you have old tshirts that you can donate to be repurposed into a bag, please put them in the box in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to help with this project, please contact LindaLou Parker at vttechie@yahoo.com 999-0998



May 16th ~ Life Line Screening

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings will be at our church on Thursday, May 16th. Ultrasound screenings to Identify risk factors for Cardiovascular disease include; **Carotid Artery** (plaque buildup-a leading cause of stroke), **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm** (an enlargement or weak area in the main blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body), **Peripheral Arterial Disease** (hardening of the arteries in the legs), a **Heart Rhythm Screening** (an EKG to detect Atrial Fibrillation-irregular heartbeat) and an **Osteoporosis Risk Assessment** for men and women. Being proactive about your health by knowing your risks helps you and your doctor address problems early. Register online TODAY at www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle and receive your "Community Circle" discount and your Preferred Appointment!



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

New Addresses

Barbara Williams
715 Maiden Choice Lane
Apt CC509
Catonsville, MD 21228

Dave & Sue Eaton
Brighton Gardens
59 Roxbury Road, #219
Stamford, CT 06902



Hello from the Eatons!

2019 Altar Flowers

We still have twelve dates open for 2019, 6/23, 7/7, 7/21, 7/28, 8/11, 8/25, 9/1, 9/15, 10/20, 10/27, 11/10 & 11/17. 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@fccej.org



March Birthdays

2nd Dave Johnson 3rd Bart Frisbie, Dorothy Knox, Cameron Starkey, Beth Volker 4th Bruce Blackman, Ethan Gibbs, Izzy Owens, Sarah Tallman 5th Jon Roddy 6th Bill Bickford, Donna Burnett, Sam Dooley, David Leach, Makaylah Moos, Beth Warren 8th Parker Bero, Jen Dooley, Abigail Lyman, Betty Marthaler 9th Molly Birmingham, Nicholas Phillippo, Amanda Sinkewicz 10th Lisa Clark, Renee Stapleton 11th Liam John, Mally Powell 12th Ryan Gackenheimer, Josh Sharp 13th Lucca Montelongo 16th Jeremy Brennan 17th Faith Truax 18th Siobhan Pettingill 19th Cathie Goodheart, Tyler Vock 20th Robert Field, Isaac Lyman 21st Toni Taylor 24th Emmerson Stapleton 25th Caitlin Wark 26th Bill Jones, Sean Palmer 27th Tom Shearer 28th Cornelia Abakah, Robert Deal 29th John Wermer 31st Eva Cunningham-Firkey



Thanks for the beautiful yellow rose. It was nice to be remembered. Jo Haines

Dear 1st Church Family – Another birthday! Another year older! Another year to celebrate with a lovely yellow rose! Many thanks, Nancy Parker

Dear First Church Essex, On behalf of the board of the Cooperative Christian Ministry at UVM, please extend our sincere thanks to your entire congregation for your most generous contribution of \$500. We continue to fulfill our mission to “nurture the spirit” through programming and opportunities focused on engaging and expanding the students’ faith. Blessings, Beth Gamache, FBC Burlington, CCM Board

Dear Friends in Essex Junction ~ I want to thank you for your kind gift on the occasion of my retirement from the VT Conference. It has been a joy to share in the life and ministry of so many of our churches. I celebrate the ways that you all have grown and deepened your faith and your life together. You have gracefully danced in the waves of change and have done it well. But most of all I have been humbled by the deep trusting spirit and openness to God’s whispers that were so evident in the Search Committees I worked with at First Church. May God continue to bless your congregation with peace, hope and love.
Shalom, Pam Lucas

Outdoor Ministry Special Offering

Thank you for your continued support for Vermont Conference OM camping program! Your donations on February 24th helped support the scholarship fund that assists youth in attending this one week of UCC camp and supports the programming costs to make this week happen.



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- Phone us at 802-878-5745, OR
- Mail this page back to us at the address above

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