



## The Spirit at First May 2019

A Pastor's ponderings.....

On Easter morning it felt good to finally be able to say alleluia as our children handed us the word on a brightly colored piece of paper and as we sang that "Christ the Lord is Risen today." The children, as always, offered us hope for the future. But coming together as one to proclaim life in the midst of death and hope in the midst of despair despite being a diverse community with different backgrounds, beliefs and political opinions is another sign of hope. After all, the hymn we start the day with proclaims that 'Jesus is Risen', not that he rose long ago. The favorite old hymn doesn't talk about what happened 2000 years ago but what is happening today!

Today, we are united in our saddened hearts for Christians that were singled out for death on Easter day in Sri Lanka, as we were saddened when our Muslim brothers and sisters were singled out in New Zealand a couple of weeks previously. Despite the continued violence, it seems to me that people of good conscience, even from varied religious backgrounds, are coming together to say enough! Violence against anyone based on religion and the way they practice it is simply wrong! Just think if that could become the acceptable and normative way we thought about these killings....a huge intellectual jump from thousands of years of thinking and needless bloodshed. We are moving ever closer to Christ's ways of peace.

This coming Sunday, a day that will be over by the time you read this article, we will have celebrated seven years as an Open and Affirming Church. Our vote way back in 2012 was 97-3 and not one person left the church over the vote. Since that time, we have slowly continued to live into an identity where everyone is welcome regardless of their sexual orientation, political persuasion or their understanding of a specific doctrine! Some might see this as weakness, but I see it as an incredible strength and being in synch with Jesus and his message of love. Together, all of us are building the community that Jesus started building so long ago, a community and way of thinking he died for and a community that he arose to continue to lead and inspire. Yes, welcoming everyone into the fold affirms Christ's resurrection and offers us hope for the future.

In a lesser degree, but maybe not for true Congregationalists, it was also a near miracle to have voted on the color of the sanctuary without spilling blood or having anyone leave in a huff. With an 88 - 55 - 14 vote, the clear choice of the yellowish tinted color with white trim was a clear victor. But everyone seemed excited to be closer to having a sanctuary that is beautiful. With all the work going on in the vestry and the soon to be started parking lot and sanctuary work, it is thrilling to finally be seeing the results. And in spending almost a million dollars, not one major rift or conflict has occurred in the process.....dare I say another sign of resurrection hope.

Finally, we can all agree, that after such a harsh winter, springtime is nature's way of saying that winter is over and new life continues to spring all around us.

To all of you, celebrate Eastertide and atone your eyes to see and your ears to hear the resurrected hope all around us.

Blessings.

Rev. Mark

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## ASSOCIATE PASTOR NEWS

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Happy Easter!

I will be away for most of the Easter season. As of this writing, I haven't had surgery yet. I expect to be in recovery for four weeks. Meaning I should be back towards the end of May or beginning of June. Thank you for your prayers and support over these last few months. The surgery, hopefully, will lead to long term relief, and if you can believe, to me having more energy!

We are starting to put together Confirmation for next year. When I was in Confirmation in a fundamentalist version of Lutheranism, I was required for three years every Wednesday night to sit down and listen to the pastor lecture about doctrine, creeds, learning about Luther: it was not exciting. We were required to write down what the pastor said and to listen obediently. There wasn't much room for questioning what he said. I despised it. Wednesday nights became my most dreaded night of the year. Let me just say, that's not how I roll.

Our confirmation class helps participants explore who they are, become more acquainted with their values. We expect questions and to be challenged. We do this by learning about Christianity past and present, attending worship services of different Christian congregations and going to other non-Christian religious traditions, exploring the biblical stories through an imaginative lens, and so much more. One of the best ways to experience God is through service. Confirmation next time will have one major service project or several smaller service projects for the group to plan. At the end of Confirmation, our participants are welcome to affirm their faith, if they so choose, and to articulate their values and faith, as they understand it at that time.

We would like to expand the length of the Confirmation process. Instead of a one-year program like in the years past, we would like to do a two-year program. Youth who are in eighth and ninth grades would start the program next Fall 2019 and be confirmed in Spring 2021. In the past, we've even had adults join us, like Trista, so adults are welcome. A one-year program means we often miss or are not able to fully discuss the history of the church, the Bible, faith, spirituality, other religious traditions: with a two-year program, we can. A two-year program would also help the group cohere and help Mark and I develop a deeper connection with the group.

Finally with Confirmation, we understand that a two-year program requires a lengthier commitment. Let us know if a two-year program is reasonable. I don't think it will be every week like in the past, but we might modify the schedule. We are here to receive your feedback. Thanks!

To continue to connect the life of our faith throughout the year, we're looking at making sandwiches in July, serving them to people who are homeless in our area, and then we'd gather together afterwards for a debrief and a fun activity. This would be a combined Junior Youth Group and High School Youth Group gathering. Please, keep an eye on for a Doodle Poll in early June.

With Laurie's Christian Education research trip complete, Laurie and I will be sending out a form this month or next month to survey our Christian Education programs, ranging from faith formation on Sunday mornings to our youth groups and to other programs that might be of interest. Our hope is to incorporate

some of the best practices other congregations are using and that fit our congregation. I invite you to attend Laurie's presentation. The survey will help us better understand the time commitments, general interests, and other areas germane to Christian Education and faith formation.

I look forward to being back!

Blessings, Pastor Josh

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## SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS IN MAY

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### **Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> ~ 4:30pm Special Service**

On the first Saturday of each month, we have an alternative worship service. Fellowship Hall is transformed into worship space, communion is observed as a way to commune with God and each other at the same time and each element of the service is interactive. We have been getting between 20-30 people and all of us enjoy the difference. Come experience this new and different approach to worship and bring a friend. It starts at 4:30 and ends easily by 5:30, although many hang around and talk to each other.

### **Communion ~ May 5<sup>th</sup>**

1st Service: elements will be passed out

2nd Service: people will come forward to receive

### **May 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Graduation Sunday**

We have always had a strong children and youth ministry and each year it is fun to remember those who are graduating from High School, College, Graduate School or Technical School. We honor all ages and all stages of graduates!!! We honor them with a Graduation Litany as well as a slide show where we highlight a picture of the graduate as a child and then as a graduate. There are always oohs and aahs and laughter as we remember the many experiences where we have observed them over the years. We encourage everyone with a graduate to send two pictures to the office [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) who will be putting the slide show together. This is another Sunday you do not want to miss!

### **May 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Guest Preacher Rev. Ron Faux**

Rev. Ron and Joan Faux has blessed First Church with their presence. Joan joined the church during the last new member's class and Ron, stood with her, unable to join due to denominational constraints. However, he loves it here and has already become an active member and friend. On May 19th, Rev. Mark will be at a UCC Conference and Rev. Josh will not quite be recovered yet from surgery, so Rev. Ron has gratefully agreed to preach and lead worship. Ron served churches in Hawaii, California and New Mexico and brings a wealth of experience to the church and on May 19th, the pulpit. Be sure to come and hear an experienced ordained minister from the United Methodist Church deliver the week's message. He will be preaching at both services.

### **May 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Memorial Day Evening Service, 7pm**

The Memorial Day Remembrances will begin at First Congo with a worship service where we will remember those who have given their lives to protect our country and way of life, pray and introduce the Grand Marshals to the community. Rev. Mark will work with the parade committee to shape the service and set the tone of the week-end remembrances in town. The Service will start at 7 p.m. and then proceed to the five corners around 8 p.m. for the candlelight ceremony. Everyone is welcome.

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## LAURIE'S LENS

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As I write this article I am looking at my to-do list for this week. Putting the finishing touches on the VT Outdoor Ministry presentation for our VT UCC Annual Meeting later this week at Lake Morey is towards the top. I enjoy being one of your conference delegates (1 out of 5). Connecting with the wider church, seeing and hearing about other churches and their ministry, as well as doing the work of the conference is something that I have done since I arrived here at First and continue to enjoy it. It's very educational and I would encourage others to take a leap and attend next year. You can also connect to the wider church ministry by getting involved in outdoor ministry and volunteer at camp for a day or a week or even joining the VT OM Team and help with planning, recruiting and advertising. Another thing on my list is to continue looking for volunteer counselors to travel with me to Horton Center in NH in July to spend a very rewording week with young youth in God's great outdoors, help them get closer to their God and to possibly step a little out of their comfort zone. This week at the VT Annual Meeting I will also be able to spend time again with my traveling partner, Jennifer Smith from the Congregational Church of Middlebury, who was with me on my travels to CT and MA. We have both had a busy Lent and this time together will be catching up on what has been happening in our churches, but it will also give me a chance to share with her what I saw and learned on my trip to OR & WA.

Back in March I returned from the west coast. This was my last of the three trips visiting other UCC churches, interviewing staff and talking about their vibrant ministry programs and how they work, getting a tour of their building and hearing how they stay vibrant. Thank you all SO much for your support, encouragement, interest and your time that so many of you put into our programs while I was away, helping them to run smoothly in my absence. A special thanks to our CE team and all our program volunteers. You all are awesome and I could not have done these trips without all of your support. I came back and walked right into Lent, a busy and full six weeks of ministry here. In between planning for our programs I found time to work on my PowerPoint presentation of the research trips to CT, MA, OR & WA and my written report. I presented my presentation to our CE team at their April meeting and will present a shorter version to Council at their May meeting. Many of you have asked about my trips and have voiced that you would like to hear about them, so on Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup>, following our second service (around 11:30am in Fellowship Hall), I will do a presentation for the full church with time for you to ask questions. I hope you will put this on your calendars and stay to join in the conversation. All the churches I visited are very active, full of life and ministry and looking forward.

One of the things that I learned and saw on my travels was a slightly different Sunday morning format style for children and youth. This idea went right along with how Pastor Josh and I envisioned moving forward for next year. In order to implement this change we shared with CE our vision of flipping a couple of our faith formation program rooms. CE really liked the idea. So, I invite you all to keep walking the full building as you looking around to see all the changes taking shape. Most of our program rooms will be getting new windows and we are looking for volunteers to help us give them all a fresh new coat of paint, helping our ministry stay vibrant and relevant in these changing times.

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

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## DEACON'S CORNER

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Congrats and Best Wishes to Devon Thomas! Seventeen members of the congregation made the trek to Waterville for Devon's Installation, and we wish him well on his continued journey.

As we get closer to summer and the end of school, we are transitioning to one Summer Sunday Service.

Starting June 2<sup>nd</sup>, we'll have one service at 9am. This schedule will continue until the first Sunday after Labor Day, September 8<sup>th</sup> when we will return to two services, 8:30 & 10:15.

We will have our Saturday 4:30PM service on June 1<sup>st</sup> but, will take a break July through September, and will start back again on October 5<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't already attended this service, I encourage you to try it out. It is a more personal, intimate setting which gives a different perspective and allows for more interaction.

Blessings, Amy Trimble

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## CHURCH COUNCIL

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### **Church Bylaws Being Edited**

The Church Bylaws need to be reviewed and updated as needed every 3-5 years. Work is on-going to make some changes that will be submitted to Church Council for approval in the fall and then put before the Annual Meeting in 2020 for the Church to vote on. The committee working on the updates, Mark Mendes, Josh Simon, Mark Chadurjian, Terri Livak, Ann Gray and Carl Wermer, has been established by Council.

Any member can propose an edit to the current bylaws to the committee for consideration. If you have an edit to submit or are interested in the work being done please contact Carl Wermer [carlw\\_essexvt@outlook.com](mailto:carlw_essexvt@outlook.com). If you simply want to review a copy of the current document please contact the Church Office for a copy [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org).

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## SAVE THE DATE

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*May 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Laurie's Presentation of her travels to UCC churches ~ 11:30am to 12:30pm in FH*

*June 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Jazz Sunday & Ice Cream Social ~ 9am summer service time begins*

*August 5-9 ~ Vacation Bible Camp 2019*

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

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# MUSIC

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## **Music Director's Corner**

Whew! As I write this we are packing up our music on Easter Sunday morning, having sung both services. We also led music for the lovely Holy Thursday and Good Friday services, so the Sanctuary Choir members have put in an enormous amount of time with all of the services, plus extra rehearsals to make sure the music was all ready to go. So thank you, Sanctuary Choir! You are a bedrock of our music program, always ready to go the extra mile.

For me personally, Holy Week was both a joy and a big challenge, as Easter fell right at the tail end of ADL's production of Shrek, Jr. This is my fourth year directing the ADL musicals, and along the way I've gotten to foster the talents of so many young performers who start 6th grade as adorable, squirming children, and exit 8th grade as young men and women. Jesus ministered to the children first. I think it's because 2000 years ago, just like today, children could see truth through insincerity and lies. Thanks to all of the FCCEJ members who came out to support the show. It's really a joy to see my two worlds come together.

Speaking of students... summer music is coming up! If you are a student musician who wants to come and play one of your solo pieces over the summer as a prelude or postlude, get in touch. There are slots open every weekend. College students who are home for the summer, this means you too! And adult instrumentalists, too. Drop me a line about when you want to come and play your solo.

May 1 marks my first anniversary at First Church. This is a truly vibrant, special faith community and I feel very blessed to have been called here to serve as your MD. I have really loved directing the choir and meeting all of the friendly folks that make this church sing - in every sense of the word.

If I haven't gotten to meet you yet - or even if I have - please stop over to the keyboard and say hello. It always brightens my day.

Yours in Christ -

Carol Spradling

[cspradling@fccej.org](mailto:cspradling@fccej.org)

*"Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need"*

*- Frederick Buechner*

## **April 28th ~ Joe Levesque Big Band Concert, 3pm**

The Joe Levesque Big Band will perform a concert in the FCCEJ Sanctuary! The concert is open to the public and a free will offering will be accepted at the door to benefit the church music program. Joe's Big Band is a 17-piece ensemble of accomplished musicians from throughout Northwestern Vermont who share a passion for performing the diverse styles of big band music from the Swing Era to the present. Brian Chipman is a member of the trumpet section and Carol Spradling will be sitting in on piano and vocals. FCCEJ hosts the band's rehearsals on Monday nights in the fellowship hall. Rehearsals are open to anyone who would like to come and listen, or even dance! Rehearsal dates and times are listed in the church calendar. Like Joe's Big Band on Facebook to stay informed of other performance dates and venues!



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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**

*May 5<sup>th</sup>* ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Spiritual Friends with PreK & Kindergarteners

Communion Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship

*May 12<sup>th</sup>* ~ Mother's Day ~ Intergenerational Worship

*May 19<sup>th</sup>* ~ Music & Peer Group time

*May 26<sup>th</sup>* ~ Hands On Mission Sunday ~ make decorations for VB Camp

*June 2<sup>nd</sup>* ~ 9am Ice Cream Sunday/Intergenerational Worship with Communion

*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, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

On Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, this age group talked about what it means to carrying the light of Christ in and out on Sunday mornings for our worship services. Each month this group will talk about acolyting. If you have a child or youth this age who is interested in helping in worship by acolyting, please help them sign up. There is a signup sheet on the bulletin board that you pass by on your way up to worship. It is always fun to acolyte with another person and older youth (& the ushers) can help the younger kids.

## 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.



## Sunday Nursery Room, 8:15 -11:30 am



Our Nursery staff and volunteers, Jennifer & Manu will meet you and help you get settled in on Sunday mornings. Feel free to stay with you little one and hear the worship service by way of a speaker or step out into Fellowship Hall and watch the service on the screen. We want you to feel comfortable here. Children are welcome in worship and throughout our space. We do ask you to be aware of our Safe Conduct Guidelines and help us to be good stewards of our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult) and volunteer to stay if you are needed. Thank you for your cooperation.



**All our First Church Youth Programs are Parent Supported!**  
1 to 2 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; snacks & meals provided by parents ~ sign up on the bulletin board

***Mark your calendars!***

*May 5<sup>th</sup> ~ during 10:15am worship ~ help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture*

*JYG ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm*

*May 19<sup>th</sup> ~ JYG ~ 3 - 4:30pm ~ provide a snack?*

*Youth ~ Watch for an email about gathering this summer to make sandwiches for the homeless.*

**\*\*Parents ~** Pastor Josh is recovering from surgery in May and an extra parent is needed for both our JY gatherings in May. Please contact Laurie to help. ALSO watch for an email to fill out a survey. We would like your feedback and input to help us plan for our 2019-20 program year. More information in Pastor Josh's article.

*Reminder to stay active and be engaged!*

Find ways and places to connect with your God & have Spiritual Prayer time

Earning money – Divide it 3 Ways- Save ~ Give to the Church/donate ~ Yourself (spend or save)

Bring Offering with you on Sundays; Help a neighbor or a friend

### **2019 Faith Formation Offering ~ Spectrum Youth & Family Services**

**2019 Total is \$165.65**

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.



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## **SUMMER CAMPS**

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### **Vacation Bible Camp**

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

***You!*** August 5-9<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:45am

***Registration forms are here! Pick yours up today & mark your calendar!***

You & Me Toddlers (attend with parent/adult)

Preschool – 5<sup>th</sup> grade (grade you are going into in the fall)

Youth Helpers (6<sup>th</sup> grade and up); Adult helpers

All are welcome! We use many of the rooms throughout the church, welcome in and form a community of children, youth and parents who all have a great time learning, growing and celebrating our faith each morning of camp week. Any questions about our program or volunteering, please connect with Laurie.





## **Registrations for Outdoor Ministry Camps Online**

Check out the OM News Board by the Main Church Entrance Glass Doorway

*Camp brochures are posted on the board, 3 age levels offered each week*

Horton Center Camp, NH <http://www.hortoncenter.org/> Silver Lake, CT <https://www.silverlakeect.org/>



## **VT UCC Outdoor Ministry @ The Lake ~ July 28<sup>th</sup> – Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>**

For Campers going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 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 camping alive and well in VT!***

*Daytime Volunteers ~ Full time overnight Counselors ~ Lifeguards 18 years+*

Contact Laurie for more information.



### **God's Co-Stars; July 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>**

For campers going into 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grader and another for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>*



### **College Students & Young Adults**

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

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

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## **FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING**

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### **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. Watch the bulletin to see what we will be exploring next for the month of May.

### **JOY (Just Older Youth), Meets @ 11:30 This Month**

A group for the over 55 crowd (both men & women) meets the first Thursday of each month usually at 12 noon in the Marvin Lounge. Please join us on Thursday, **May 2** at 12 noon and enjoy a vicarious trip to Amsterdam. Linda Lou Parker will share her recent trip to Amsterdam with a slide show. Bring your lunch and enjoy the river cruise and beautiful sights of Amsterdam.





## Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of Every Month ~ May 3<sup>rd</sup>

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

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday Potluck Series

Join us for 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday meal **May 16<sup>th</sup>**! All ages welcome!  
5:45-7pm Look for info on our speaker/s in the weekly bulletin.



### The Community of Bridge



Love to play the game of bridge? Has it been a while and you want to brush up on your oft used bridge skills? Looking for a place that is more friendly than competitive? Then you are free to come and play an afternoon of bridge right at First Church. We have incredible snacks, the conversation is always great and the table talk is always fairly frequent! Plus, there is a prize of Rev. Mark's jam for the winner. We play on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month and so for May, it is on **May 17<sup>th</sup>** and we play from 1:30 -4:00. Everyone is welcome and bring a friend.

### 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.

### 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, May 18 at 9:30 at Ginny Coe's home. We usually do this in June but Ginny's grandson is graduating from high school then. Share a favorite read and your plans for the summer. Ginny lives at 25 Rosewood Lane, Essex Jct.

### 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, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Noontime Book Group

For May we are reading *My Dear Hamilton* by Stephanie Dray & Laura Kamoie. *My Dear Hamilton* is the epic story of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton—a revolutionary woman who, like her new nation, struggled to define herself in the wake of war, betrayal, and tragedy.

Haunting, moving, and beautifully written, Dray and Kamoie used thousands of letters and original sources to tell Eliza's story. Bring your bag lunch and join us for some good conversation and laughs.





### 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, May 22<sup>nd</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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### Jamaica Mission Trip – Collecting School Supplies

The Jamaica trip is fast approaching! With our fundraising behind us, the team is now focused on gathering donations of school supplies to bring with us. The principal of White Horses Infant and Primary School has provided a list of items that are needed at the school. Please consider donating an item. This is a great way to support the school from afar! We will have a collection bin in the fellowship hall beginning Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>.

- #2 pencils
- pencil sharpeners
- erasers
- white board/dry erase markers
- dry erase erasers
- math manipulatives (examples include equivalency cubes/fraction towers, Cuisenaire rods, magnetic base 10 sets, balance sets, liquid measurement sets, time sets, scales)
- children's toothbrushes

We will also be bringing some sports equipment. If you would like to help but prefer to make a financial contribution, please see Sharon Dettenrieder or Carolyn Rushford, or a check could be given and made payable to the church with "Jamaica school supplies" in the memo line. If you have questions about items, please contact Carolyn at [cjrushford@comcast.net](mailto:cjrushford@comcast.net). Thank-you so much for your support!



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.

## **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](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com)

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## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **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](mailto:glatzjim@gmail.com)



### **Heavenly Food Pantry**

Next Heavenly Food Pantry days are Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm  
and Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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!



### **Sunday Nursery Volunteers, 8:15-11:30am**

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. We know you'll have fun playing with the youngest among us!







## **Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed**

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

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

## **Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News**

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

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

Open Saturdays May 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 1 pm

Come and check out the new Spring and Summer Fashions

Nearly New includes lots of new items

Check out our new renovated bathroom, it's beautiful!

Looking for jewelry, dishes, towels, spring and summer clothes. Drop off anytime in the donation bucket.



## **Be a Camp Counselor!**

*Share your love of God & the outdoors!*



**In Need of ONE female Counselor for @ *THE LAKE*, July 28<sup>th</sup> ~ August**

**2<sup>nd</sup> for Campers going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade @ Rock Point Camp**

**Join Laurie at Horton Center and counsel for *GOD's CO-STARs*, July 14<sup>th</sup> ~ 20<sup>th</sup> for campers going into 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 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 5-9<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:45am**



Our leadership team (so far) is: Bible Drama ~ Allison VanSteensburg; Crafts

~ Jenny Bourn; Snacks ~ Judy Allen & Ginny Coe; **Recruiting for: Decorating Assistant, Game**

**Leader, Music Leader, Group Leaders, Decorators, Youth Helpers (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older).** Decorating assistant and decorators are needed way before camp week and work behind the scenes.

Contact Laurie for more information.

## **VB Camp Wish List ~ Donations Are Greatly Appreciated!**

**Bible Drama:** 5 battery operated Craft LED String Lights (clear or white); 1 Tan Paper Grass Table Cloth

**Discover/Science:** 12 empty 35mm Film Canisters; 4 Children's size Safety Goggles or Glasses **Snacks:**

500 white plastic cups (recyclable); 8 cans of pineapple chunks; 4 ~ 16oz bags of large marshmallows; 2 bags of mini marshmallows; 3 boxes of Cheese It crackers; 3~ 12oz bags of mini chocolate chips; 1~ 12oz bag of vanilla chips; 1~ 12 oz bag of strawberry chips; 1~ 12oz bag of carmel chips; 2 tubes of frosting

**Decoration:** 10 rolls of black light weight landscape fabric

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## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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### May 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Graduation Sunday

If you have a graduate from high school, college, technical school or any other program, we want to celebrate them! Send the office [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org), a baby pic, a grad/recent pic and also their plans if they have them. If you need help scanning pics in, bring them to the office and we can help you! Bring your grad on May 19<sup>th</sup>, either service, to celebrate!



### May 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Life Line Screening

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings will be at our church on Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://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

### 2019 Altar Flowers

We still have **four dates** open for 2019, 6/23, 7/7, 7/21, 8/25. 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. Email the office with any questions [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)



Dear Church Family, Thank you for the lovely yellow rose! June Silverman

Thank you for my beautiful yellow rose. It arrived just before the umpteenth snow storm of the year and really raised my morale. Sincerely Toni Taylor

### **May Birthdays**

**1<sup>st</sup>** Sena Meilleur, Collin Parker, James Pettingill, Steve Sharp **2<sup>nd</sup>** Steve Mittl, Jane Schneider  
**3<sup>rd</sup>** Donald Foss, Anna Giannuzzi, Lester Nutting, Jackson Parker, Jean Tucker **4<sup>th</sup>** Jacob Hoy  
**5<sup>th</sup>** Don Gray **6<sup>th</sup>** Grace Parks, Carolyn Rushford **7<sup>th</sup>** Nathaniel Brennan, Laura Cunningham-Firkey  
**8<sup>th</sup>** Pam Blake, Anna Kinney, Cooper Spaulding, Kinlee Spaulding **9<sup>th</sup>** Rose Drost, Marsha Duell  
**10<sup>th</sup>** Mike Bottamini, Allie Harris, Kelvey Spaulding **11<sup>th</sup>** Chris Baker, Jennifer Hoy, Denise Keating, Gretchen Owens, Jackie Parks, Anniella Pettingill **13<sup>th</sup>** Aki Aboukhalil, Eric Lindholm, Alec Mayville  
**14<sup>th</sup>** Jordan Calhoun, Rich Higgins, Alex John **18<sup>th</sup>** Eliza Lynch **19<sup>th</sup>** Wayne Beebe **20<sup>th</sup>** Kyle Ehler-Vock, Marlene Frank, David Hoy **22<sup>nd</sup>** Mindy Mannarino **24<sup>th</sup>** Arlene Bickford, Logan Harris, Becky Relyea **25<sup>th</sup>** Maryann Carlson, Mary Richer, Susan Wood **26<sup>th</sup>** Orion Stapleton, Mary Anne Warren **27<sup>th</sup>** Dan Bashaw, Brian Evans **29<sup>th</sup>** Maureen McKenzie, Leo Wermer **30<sup>th</sup>** Tom James **31<sup>st</sup>** Amanda Palmer, Alyssa Pettingill



### **Church World Service Hygiene Kits on Hands On Mission Sunday**

On April 28<sup>th</sup> the children and youth put together hygiene kits during their faith formation time with our Mission Sunday volunteers. These kits will be dropped off at the Waterbury UCC church (a CWS pick up location) during the first week of May. Church World Service kits are dispersed during and after a natural disaster here in the US and around the world. Many thanks for your donations and help with our mission program for the children and youth here at FCCEJ. Contact Laurie for more information on how you can help with future mission projects.

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## STEWARDSHIP

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### **Per Capita Dues**

In the next few days, all members of FCCEJ should receive a letter in the mail for our annual Per Capita campaign. Each year we are assessed dues based on the number of members listed on our membership data. Each year we ask members to contribute their share of the Per Capita. It is an acknowledgement that membership has costs as well as benefits. This year our church's Per Capita fee is \$13.97. Please consider rounding up your share or paying an additional payment for someone else. Per Capita Sunday is May 12<sup>th</sup>, which is also Mother's Day. You may also mail it in or put it in an envelope marked 'Per Capita' any Sunday you are in worship. Thank you!

percapita

**2019 Special Offerings:** May-Per Capita, June-Strengthen The Church, Sept-Seminary Sunday, Oct-Neighbors In Need, Nov-Food Pantry, Dec-Christmas Fund



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**[www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)**

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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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