

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



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

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

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

Phone: 802-878-5745

Fax: 802-872-8236

E-mail: welcome@fccej.org

Website: www.fccej.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
December 29, 2019

The Fifth Day of Christmas

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

Order of Worship

Prelude

An Extravagant Welcome

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

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

Our Ministers will welcome everyone to church and then highlight some events in our shared life, then the Deacon on Duty will welcome everyone and invite people to raise significant celebrations to the congregation or introduce yourself or a friend as a guest. We encourage everyone to sign the Friendship Book.

A Musical Introit

Call to Worship

Leader: Christmas Eve with the candlelight services and special guests is over. We all sang the great old carols about Jesus' birth and looked with hope toward Christmas day.

People: Thanks God for Christmas!

Leader: On Christmas Day, we opened presents, played with our gifts, ate good food and celebrated with our family and friends all day long.

People: Thanks God for Christmas!

Leader: But Christmas stretches on for twelve days because Jesus' birth was such a big deal! There is no school, lots of snow to play in and lots of ways to enjoy Christ's gifts of peace, hope, joy and love.

People: Thanks God for Christmas!

Leader: So come, let us continue to celebrate Christmas and the special gifts we received. Let today's blessing remind us that God's love will be with us forever. Come, let's celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Prayer of Invocation [composed and led by the Deacon on Duty]

***Opening Hymn**

The First Noel

**The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it
continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

Children's Message

Our Nursery has a speaker for you to listen to the service and is open for children under 3 years. Today is intergenerational worship. Worship items are in the are in the rolling library and by the Nursery hall door for you to collect and bring with you into worship. Please return these items following the service.

**Jesus loves the little children,
All God's children of the world.
Whether young or old or new, Jesus loves us through and through
Teaching us to love all creatures in the world.**

**God has made us all a rainbow.
Colors dancing 'round and 'round.
In our hair and skin and eyes, big and little, every size,
God has made us all a rainbow dancing 'round.**

Pastoral Prayer **and Unison Lord's Prayer**

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer
Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

Congregational Response

Come, O Long Expected Jesus #122

[Lyrics on next page]

**Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set all people free.
From our fears of sins release us, grant us your true liberty.**

**By your own eternal spirit, come to claim us as your own.
By your all sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.**

***Hymn**

What Child Is This

**What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

New Testament Scripture Readings

Epistle Hebrews 2:10-18 [page 170-171]

Gospel Matthew 2:13-23 [page 1-2]

Sermon

Jesus the Child / Jesus the Man

Seminarian Josh Sharp

Its great to welcome Josh back to his home church. He grew up in the church and participated at every level including being a Deacon. Josh is enrolled at Andover Newton Theological School at Yale. He has just finished his first semester. His proud parents are Steve and Andrea Sharp. We are all proud of you Josh!

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

***The Doxology #778**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.***

***Hymn**

We Three Kings

**We three kings of orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and Fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be!
With God our Creator, family all are we,
Let me walk with my fellow in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

*Postlude

*= Please stand if you are able.



*The flowers on the altar are given by
Beth Volker
in loving memory of John Denver
on what would have been his 76th Birthday (12/31/19)*



Today's Ushers & Greeters

- 1st** Greeters: Sylvia Nyhagen & Paulette Frisbie
Ushers: Rob & Maureen Evans
- 2nd** Greeters: (None Registered)
Ushers: (None Registered)



Interested in ushering/greeting? Register by visiting this link:

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

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Marion Schneider	Tom Gibbs	Jeff Noel
Richard Ansell	George Jackson (Linda Jackson's husband)	John Burnett
Robert & Claire Deal	Barb Blanchett	Lester Nutting
Rose Johnson (Doug Ovitt's mother)	Carlene Lawrence	John A & Family

Please, let the office know if you would like a name added to our Prayer Ministry. You may write it on the Friendship Pad; call the office @ 878 5745; or email at welcome@fccej.org. Additionally, prayer requests will be edited regularly. If you find an unintended error or omission, then please, contact the Church office.

Burlington Ecumenical Gospel Choir

We are excited to be reviving this choir and encourage you all to help us spread the word to members new and old! Rehearsals for the Burlington Ecumenical Gospel Choir will be held at New Alpha Missionary Baptist Church (38 So. Winooski Ave, Burlington, 05401) on the following dates and times:

- *January 11 from 1-3pm*
- *February 1 from 1-3pm*
- *February 28 from 6-7:30pm (tentative)*
- *February 29 from 1-3pm*
- *March 6 from 6-7:30pm (tentative)*
- *March 7 (call times and sound checks to be announced)*

Signup at this link: shorturl.at/erGMT

Church Bylaws Review

Between 1st & 2nd Service
Copies of the pending Bylaws updates with rationale are available for members. Please, participate if you are a member as this process is an integral component of our beautiful institution.

Worship in the Fellowship Hall During Sanctuary Renovation

****Begins Sunday, December 29th****

Worship will be in Fellowship hall From Dec. 29th until our Sanctuary Renovation is complete, hopefully before Easter. Wouldn't that be a great celebration: the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the resurrection of our sanctuary! There has been quite a bit of energy and planning for all the various details to make the transition smooth and worship meaningful so plan on coming and participating in this grand adventure. Sunday Services will remain at 8:30 and 10:15 a.m. with the Saturday service remaining on the First Saturday of the month at 4:30 p.m. but the location of the Saturday Service will be the Marvin Lounge.



***** DEADLINE APPROACHING ***
FLOWER CHART**

The 2020 Flower Chart is posted adjacent to the *Mission: Possible* board in the hallway between the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Your contribution allows you to dedicate a beautiful bouquet in memory of a special person or important life event while bolstering the Church's Flower Fund.

We have only one-third of the chart completed.
Please, write your request on the chart as soon as possible.

Coat Hangers/Racks



We have several areas you can hang your coat! **Entering on Church Street?** Stop by Pastor Mark's office and use this coat closet. You probably have noticed our main coat rack off in the Foyer as you enter from the main parking lot. If you pass this one by there is one by the glass doors as you enter the front door of the church. After you walk up the stairs to the Sanctuary there is still another coat closet down the side hall to your right, just before walking into worship.

Prayer Shawls

Feeling Chilly? We have a large stock of warm, hand-made prayer shawls to keep you cozy this year, and they are free to keep! Ask our Ushers/Greeters for help.



Support JUMP!

Part of our church's mission to JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project) is to provide **deodorant**. Our Red Tent Project has been very successful, but we need your donations! Please, find the red tent in the church's Marvin Lounge or Fellowship Hall

Love Baskets made from recycled t-shirts by our Church's children & youth are available in our Marvin Lounge. Bring them to friends & family who are ill or otherwise unable to attend church.

BELLS ARE RINGING... AGAIN!

After a hiatus, our team of handbell ringers will begin practicing every Wednesday night @ 6:30pm in our Sanctuary and playing at services throughout the year. No experience or musical training is necessary and all are welcome! If you are interested, email Organist Carol Spradling (cspradling@fccej.org) for details.

Tax-Incentivized Donations



If you are over age 70 ½ and have Traditional IRA assets, you can satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) requirements by making a Qualified Charitable Distribution to First Church! By directing some (or all) of your IRA distribution to the church, you can support the congregation and our missions in a tax-advantaged way. The distribution amount is not included in your adjusted gross income, which can help you potentially avoid increased taxes on SSI, higher premiums on Medicare, and the loss of deductions/exemptions. If you use the standard deduction on your taxes, this allows you still to get a tax benefit on your gift to the church. If you haven't taken your RMD for 2019 or want to get a jump-start on your 2020 planning please reach out to Pat Seaver (878-4445, vtri2@aol.com) to find out more information. Another great way to support the amazing work being done at FCCEJ is by making a gift of appreciated stock. If you happen to own stocks that have grown in value and you would like to avoid the capital gains taxes on selling those stocks, you can gift them instead! Satisfy or increase your annual pledge by gifting these shares of stock directly to the church. You save on taxes and the church can use those funds to further our ministry.

Donate to Our Church



Our Church is a thriving community with great activity and expanding programs. We've seen growth in our youth ministry. This year we had 16 youth participate in the Christmas Pageant, over 50 children and youth learn about God's love for them at our Vacation Bible Camp, have seen our Junior Youth program increase to 24 overall youth, and we have 9 youth in confirmation. Last year, we helped send 16 young people and adults to Jamaica to be the hands of Christ. Our Sermon Talk back group had 27 people coming last week and continues to draw over 20 people each week. The Joy Group filled the Marvin Lounge as they listened to Bob Vincent and Ann Gray talk church history. Friday morning Coffee Clatter get upwards of ten people many weeks. Our many musical groups continue to produce magnificent music and inspire us all on a weekly basis. We sponsored more kids through our Christmas Giving Tree program than ever before and continue to be a leader in the community in feeding people. **And in 2020, through the Capital Campaign projects, we're going to have a new ceiling and fresh coat of paint to revitalize our beautiful Sanctuary.**

Because so many of our programs are successful, committees asked for more financial resources to help sustain our many vibrant ministries. We need extra help making sure our budget is balanced and our ministries maintained. **Please consider revising your 2020 pledge by \$2-7 per week to help sustain our vibrant ministries and our ability to spread the love of God in tangible ways.** As many of you know, I've had two surgeries this year and multiple medical bills. I originally was going to lower my pledge. After Mark last week talked about how much a difference an additional \$2-7 per week to my pledge would mean to the ministry of our church and the lives of our members and visitors, I increased my pledge by \$2 per week.

If you are able to do so, please contact Pat Seaver at Vtri2@aol.com or find the pledge forms at church to increase your pledge. If you're like me and do most of your finances online, you can donate via PayPal at <http://www.fccej.org/v5/donate-now/> or scan this QR Code (right) using your phone.



Capital Campaign Update

By Kaki McGeary



Sanctuary Restoration Project Update!

Worship Services will be held in Fellowship Hall while the sanctuary is closed for restoration (starting Sunday Dec. 29 through Palm Sunday).

As we shared before, our plaster ceiling must be totally removed and replaced. This work will require temporary scaffolding and we will not be able to use the sanctuary during this time. The entire project should take about 2 months, assuming no major hiccups. The ceiling work will be done first and then it must cure for several weeks, during which time the walls will be patched. Once that is done, painting can begin. Our staff and several volunteers have developed plans to make this temporary move as seamless and comfortable as possible. We ask for prayers that we move through this time of transition with flexibility and grace. We look forward to seeing you all in our new space on Sunday mornings starting right after Christmas!

Lighting Update—We are working with the electrician to install parking lot, sign and steeple lights as soon as possible. Federal grant funds will pay for the parking lot fixtures.

Pledge Payments—Your continued pledge payments are vital to our efforts! We have budgeted for bridge loan financing. While we have not needed it yet, our cash balance is getting low and we will likely need to secure a bridge loan for the Sanctuary Restoration. As always, early pledge payments are welcome to minimize interest expenses.



Special Note: For your convenience, charts containing completion date projections for the Capital Campaign's various projects are posted on bulletin boards throughout the church.

FAITH FORMATION (PreK-8th Grade)

*Interested in Volunteering to help our children & youth?
Contact Laurie Chipman, CED: 878-5745 ext. 103; or lchipman@fccej.org.*

Faith Formation Conversations

PreK – 8th have been talking about the birth of Jesus.

Enjoy our Intergenerational worship Sunday on December 29th singing Christmas carols. There are Christmas coloring books, crayons, model magic & beanies to help you through the service.

On January 5th, our PreK - 2nd graders will be talking about the Magi & the gifts they brought to Jesus. Join us as we celebrate Epiphany and have a birthday party for Jesus.

Sunday Morning Calendar

- **January 5th** ~ 1st Sundays
Intergenerational Worship & Spiritual Friends. PreK – 2nd grade who are looking for more movement can join the Spiritual Friends for a story time and activity. All will return for communion.
- **January 12th** ~ Peer Group Time
- **January 19th** ~ Hands On Mission on 2nd floor
- **January 26th** ~ Peer Group Time for Prek – 2nd



Save the D@tes!

January 26th ~ One service @ 10am
March 29th ~ Pretzel Sunday*

*= tentative date

Faith Formation Music Time

Cherubs ~ Preschool ~ 2nd grade
Joyful Noise ~ 3rd ~ 8th grade

Music time takes place on peer group Sundays. Children and youth then move to peer groups until 11:30am. On these days we encourage parents to move from worship to coffee hour and then up to collect the children. All PreK through 2nd grade need to be signed out by an authorized person. Older children will be excused at 11:30am. Parents can update their list of authorized persons by emailing Laurie.



High School Youth are encouraged to help during faith formation on Sunday mornings. Connect with Laurie for more information. Be a helper on Spiritual Friends, Peer Group or Hands-On Mission Sundays.

Faith Formation Offering

*** Last week to donate! ***
Spectrum Youth & Family Services

2019 Total — \$666.82 (as of 12/8)

Remember to bring your offering each week, \$1 a week can go a long way! Please use the envelopes in the pews so your \$ goes to the right place.



YOUTH MINISTRY (5th-12th Grade)

FCCEJ Confirmation Class

Thursdays @ 7:30-9pm

Confirmation is an intentional time in a person's life, usually a young person, to learn more about Christianity, the Bible, faith, etc. During this time, they start to intentionally form what they believe and how they want to engage society. The confirmands attend other faith tradition's worship services, participate in community service projects, and participate in some capacity at church whether it's through helping with faith formation, reading in worship, etc. It ends with confirmation Sunday when confirmands who want to join the church publicly do so. Anyone in 8th grade or above is welcome to join the Confirmation class. It is a one-year program. Confirmation class will take place most Thursdays, 7:30-9pm, between now and May 31st on Confirmation Sunday.

Junior Youth Calendar

5th - 8th graders

Faith & Mission Focus with Fellowship/Games

Meal donations and snacks for youth times are appreciated!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054fa4a82fa5fc1-fccej>

Mark your calendars & join the FUN! Have a wonderful holiday with family & friends.

January 5th ~ JY time ~ 11:30am to 1:30pm

Sunday morning ~ Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture during 10:15am worship

January 17th-18th ~ JY Overnight ~ 6pm

High School Youth Lock-in

Friday, January 24th @ 6pm—Saturday, January 25th @ 9am

All students are welcome to come for as long as they can stay. We'll eat food, play games, watch a movie, and have lights out around midnight/1 am, and have breakfast in the morning. It's always a blast to be "locked in" the church. Invite your friends, the more the *merrier!*

@ the Lake UCC Camp at Rock Point:

Sunday, July 26 at 2pm to Friday, July 31st at 4pm

For those going into 5th – 8th grade in the fall of 2020. Mark your calendars and sign up to go to the really fun week of camp!

Previous campers ~ Erik Frivoll & Izzy Owens

Vermont Outdoor Ministry Team is now recruiting counselors, life-guards, CIT's and a nurse. Interested? See Laurie. Leadership arrives on July 25th at 4pm and departs by 5pm on the 31st.

National Youth Event

July 20-26, 2020

Calling all youth ages 12-20 by July. Travel with Pastor Josh & Laurie to Purdue University. Four (4) days of worship, music & service project. We need at least 5 youth to make trip happen. Sign up by December 1st with Pastor Josh or Laurie. We are thrilled to go to NYE for this once in four-year extravaganza! Dee Jay Doc Harris and the Refresh Collective will be there. The Guardians of Taos will speak about nonviolence and protecting our sacred water. You can still sign up to attend.

Visit <http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/> for details. Cost is \$250 per youth. Fundraising Event in early 2020.



Deadline to sign up for this fun trip is January 5th. Deposit due February 1st.

THIS WEEK

Yoga @ First

Mondays, 5:30pm-6:45pm

Jonah Moos, FCCEJ member, is offering a free yoga class in our Gymnasium! Jonah collects donations on behalf of our Church. All levels from beginner to experienced are absolutely welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's.

Sermon Talkback Tuesdays

Tuesdays, 8:30-10am

Gather with us in the Marvin Lounge for coffee, baked goods, and a lively discussion of the sermon delivered on Sunday, and much more! Join us for the conversation, the goodies, the camaraderie, or all of the above!



**FCCEJ Offices
Closed for Holidays
*Wednesday, January 1st***

Essex Eats Out

Friday, January 3rd @ 5:30-6:30pm

A free, community-wide dinner open to all (with a special invitation to the needy & lonely) every Friday night throughout the Essex area. FCCEJ hosts Essex Eats Out on the 1st Friday of each month. Donations (to help subsidize the cost of these meals) are solicited but not required. Visit essexeatsout.org for more details. Additionally, you may visit our website for menus of meals hosted at FCCEJ:

<http://www.fccej.org/v5/category/essex-eats-out/>

Coffee Clatter Fridays

Fridays @ 8-9am

This may seem like a foolish question, but if you like to talk and drink coffee, then come down to Martone's for open conversation. Rev. Mark and/or Josh are there every week and 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!**

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

37 Main Street in Essex Junction

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. The Thrift shop accepts new and gently used clothing, jewelry, table linens, bedding and household items. Clothing and linens should be clean, free of stains and tears and household items should be safe, in good working condition and contain all pieces and parts.

Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm; Thursdays 4pm-8pm; 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month, 9am-1pm. The shop will be closed December 23rd to January 7th for the Holiday Season.

Phone: 879-6552.

News: We are pleased to be giving back to the community with \$1200.00 donations to each of the following 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 and JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project).

Questions? Contact Elaine Raymond @ 879-7350 or ebraymond@gmail.com.

JOY (Just Older Youth)

Thursday, January 2nd @ Noon

If you are 55+ please consider joining this active church group. JOY meets at noon on the first Thursday of the month. We strive to present programs that foster learning, fun, or service.

Saturday Worship

Saturday, January 4th @ 4:30pm

**** Moved to Marvin Lounge!****

Our alternative Saturday afternoon worship service continues. Our Saturday services are on the first Saturday of each month. They will continue while the sanctuary is being worked on and the services have moved down into Fellowship Hall. Because of logistical reasons, we will hold the service in the **MARVIN LOUNGE**. Everything else will be the same, just the location.

SAVE THE D@TE!

Hannaford Cards *Sunday, January 5th*

Reload your Hannaford Cards (up to \$500!) OR purchase new ones in \$25, \$50, \$100, and \$200 increments. FCCEJ receives \$5 for every \$100 worth of cards it sells.

Women's Spirituality Group *Saturday, January 18th @ 9:30am*

All women of the church are invited to be a part of this vibrant group. Our programs will address personal growth, community outreach and having fun. Please consider joining us in the Marvin Lounge. Our very own Elaine Helmstutler will be our Artist in Residence. In her words, "Think you can't draw? You're wrong! Come to WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY to learn the basics of seeing and drawing."

Annual Meeting Sunday **& Ask the Pastor**

Sunday, January 26th: Worship @ 10am; Meeting immediately thereafter

The power and authority of the First Congregational Church is grounded in its people when they officially meet each year. In 2020. We want as many people present as possible for there are some significant issues to be determined by the membership. Due to the importance of our form of church governance, we only have one worship service when we schedule the Annual Meeting so that everyone can stay and attend the meeting without having to make two trips. **** Official announcement to follow pending our Church Clerk's formal warning ****

Heavenly Food Pantry

Monday, January 13th @ 5:30-7:30pm

The Pantry would appreciate these donations: *spaghetti sauce, cereal, and chicken noodle soup, and one-dozen egg cartons*. Also, we have several volunteering opportunities! See our church's newsletter for more details; or contact Val Gabert directly @ val.gabert@gmail.com.

Bridge Club

Friday, January 17th @ 1:30pm

Casual potluck-style game of Bridge. Join Pastor Mendes in our Marvin Lounge for a rousing game and a chance to win some of his world-famous jam!

Noontime Book Group *(3rd Monday of each Month)*

Monday, January 20th @ 11:30am

The Noontime Book Group will meet in the Marvin Lounge. Linda Lou Parker will lead the discussion of our first book of the New Year which is *The Secret Wife of Aaron Burr* by Susan Holloway Scott. It is the story of Mary Emmons, who was sold into slavery in India as a child, brought to America during war torn times and eventually became a servant to the woman who would become Aaron Burr's wife. The story is historical fiction, well researched and the characters right out of the American revolutionary time. It's described as the passionate, tangled story of one of the complex, but brilliant founders of our country and the women who stood beside them. Bring your lunch and come enjoy an hour or so of great conversation and friendship.

Dessert & Discussion with the Three Junction Clergy **Wednesday, January 22nd @ 7-8:30pm** **Summit Street School**

Have you ever wondered what Catholics think about the afterlife or homosexuality? Or have you ever wanted to know how Episcopalians walk the tight rope between Catholic like practices in worship and the Protestant's or how our shared story grounded in the English Reformation departed from one another? How do Father Charlie of Holy Family, Priest Kim Hardy and Rev. Mendes differ in how they spend their days and appropriate the Christian faith into their particular tradition? And wouldn't it be fun to observe Father Charlie and Rev. Mark disagreeing over some deep theological issue?

Well, you have that opportunity at the Holy Family Fellowship Hall by the Summit Street School. Each clergy will have some opening statements and then most of the time will be saved for questions and answers. So come, bring a friend and your toughest questions.

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fccej.org]

Associate Pastor: Rev. Josh Simon [jsimon@fccej.org]

Music Director: Carol Spradling [cspradling@fccej.org]

Christian Education Director: Laurie Chipman [lchipman@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Doug Ovitt [welcome@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: Jenny Bourn [jennybourn4@gmail.com]
& Laura Marthaler [Laura.marthaler@gmail.com]

Currier Bell Choir Director: Carolyn Harris [899-6759]

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley [rickdooley5@gmail.com]

Joyful Noise: Jessica Moos [jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com]

Men At First Director: Bill Bickford, Jr. [bill.bickford@aol.com]

Sanctuary Choir/Heavenly Harmony Director: Carol Spradling
[cspradling@fccej.org]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: Carl Wermer [879-7650]

Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations:

Maureen Evans [879-7517]

Treasurer & Historian: Ann Gray [878-4088]

Asst. Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [879-0261]

Financial Secretary: Pat Seaver [879-4445]

Clerk: Alison Wermer [879-7650]

Christian Education: Jenny Bourn [802-309-7441]

Communications: Andrea Sharp [879-0580] or Judy McCullen [878-9794]

Deacons: Betsy Weischedel [922-2094], Peter Schmalz [202-297-3625]

Hospitality: Jim Glatz [503-5076]

Missions: Joanne Irwin [878-2528], Ed Steele [871-5897]

Music: Denise Keating [345-8900]

Nominating: Barb Smith [878-6866]

Stewardship: Jessica Moos [399-8068]

Trustees: Kevin Meilleur [238-4041]

Ushering: Jessica Moos [399-8068]

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop Sue Wood [879-6552] suewood@myfairpoint.net

Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: Valerie Gabert [879-0109]

mission
M O M E N T S
U N I T E D C H U R C H O F C H R I S T

December 29, 2019
First Sunday after Christmas
Cosmic Praise
Psalm 148

Brooks Berndt, the UCC Minister for Environmental Justice, reminds us that our first calling is to care for creation. He writes:

“In Genesis, we find that our first call as people of faith is to tend to God’s creation. In caring for this interconnected world in which we live, this call inevitably entails putting love into action for every living creature and for every economically or racially marginalized community that suffers from environmental harm. Here are some resources to assist you in discerning your call:

- 1) **Educate Yourself:** Sign-up to receive the Pollinator, the UCC’s Environmental Justice e-newsletter. Also, check out the UCC’s monthly Creation Justice Webinar series. Topics include energy efficiency programs for churches, how to go solar, advocacy issues, and more.
- 2) **Learn with Others:** Start a book group to read books like Jim Antal’s book *Climate Church, Climate World*. This thought-provoking book by a noted UCC leader on climate is designed for church groups and includes discussion questions.
- 3) **Become a Creation Justice Church:** A church can seek to be recognized as a congregation that has made caring for God’s creation a central part of its DNA. In six steps, a congregation can become designated by the UCC Environmental Justice Ministry as a Creation Justice Church.
- 4) **Advocate with Your Values:** Connect with the Washington-based organization Earth Ministry to learn about creation care legislative priorities. The UCC Council for Climate Justice also initiated the Creation Care Voter Pledge to encourage values-based voting. Pledges can be made online or gathered for dedication in worship.”

When these types of actions are presented online, they include hyperlinks to various resources. If those links would be helpful, an extended online version of the list above can be found here:

https://www.ucc.org/creation_justice_where_are_you_called_to_serve.

To find a print version of the Care Voter Pledge Card, visit:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/pages/22862/attachments/original/1540580352/Pledge_Card.pdf?1540580352”.

Monday, December 30

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm **Food Pantry Stocking** (Fellowship Hall & Gym) ☺
- 5:30pm - 6:45pm **Yoga @ First** (2nd Floor Programming Room) ☺
- 5:30pm - 6:30pm **Group Victory** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 6:30pm - 9:30pm **Joe's Big Band** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Wednesday, January 1

- HOLIDAY -- FCCEJ Offices Closed** ☺
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm **Finally@First** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm **BSA PLC** (3rd Floor Youth Lounge) ☺
- 6:30pm - 8:00pm **Handbells Choir Rehearsal** (Gymnasium) ☺
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm **Boy Scouts** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Friday, January 3

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:30pm - 8:00pm **Essex Eats Out (Prep Time)** (Kitchen & FH)
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm **Essex Eats Out Community Dinner** (Fellowship Hall & Kitchen) ☺

FCCEJ WEEKLY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 31

- 8:30am - 10:00am **Sermon Talk Back** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Thursday, January 2

- 8:30am - 11:30am **Essex Art League** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 12:00pm - 2:00pm **JOY** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 3:00pm - 4:00pm **Easterseals** (3rd Floor Youth Lounge) ☺
- 5:00pm - 7:00pm **Finance Committee, Budget Meeting** (Marvin Lounge)
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm **Music@First** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 6:00pm - 8:00pm **Cub Scouts** (Gymnasium) ☺
- 7:30pm - 9:00pm **Confirmation** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 8:15pm - 9:15pm **Music @ First** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 8:30pm - 9:30pm **Men @ First** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Saturday, January 4

- 9:00am - 1:00pm **Thrift Store Open** ☺
- 9:00am - 11:00am **Nepali Community Worship** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 4:30pm - 5:45pm **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Sunday, January 5

- 8:30am - 9:45am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 10:15am - 11:30am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 11:30am - 12:30pm **Music Committee** (Choir Loft)
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 6:00pm - 8:00pm **Cub Scout Leader Meeting**