

JANUARY 2020



# SPIRIT@FIRST

*monthly newsletter*

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### Your Pastor's Ponderings

When I was four years old, my father quit his job and with my mother, took us camping for eight months, travelling through our beautiful country seeing sights beyond our imagination. We had never camped before. We had never been trapped in a car for long periods of time before. We had never spent 24 hours a day together for seven days a week for months on end.

There were issues. My sister always kept her window closed with her doll on her pillow on her lap even in the southwest with 100-degree weather. She also kept her rock collection under her feet in the car. As I recall, we kids needed more breaks than my driving father was willing to offer as we spent hour upon hour in the cramped quarters. As the youngest in the family, it seemed that my mom was purposefully holding me back from following my older siblings into all the exciting places of our travels...no you can't go climbing freely in Mesa Verde or take the Gunnison Gorge hike or go swimming in the frigid waters of Lake MacDonald. Filthy bathrooms, extreme weather conditions, sibling bickering,

inconveniences of what seemed like primitive camping and random limitations on my behavior kept a regular flow of complaining ever present. I'm not sure how we survived camping together.

Funny thing, years after we finished camping, every member of my family looked back on our time together as the most rewarding, family strengthening and glorious time in our lives. We laugh about the rocks being thrown out of the closed window one day when my dad was sick of them littering the backseat floor. We relish the hot weather and now I revel in the fact that my dad and I went to the Hardware store while the rest of the family suffered miserably hiking the Gunnison trail. Taking Margaret on the Garden Wall trail in Glacier reminded me how I nearly gave her a heart attack as her four-year-old went scrambling on some really dangerous sections of trail; she would laugh and share how proud she was of my early hiking abilities. And as I watch Robin Williams in his RV movie, I laugh remembering the bathrooms that made my skin crawl.

Interesting how time and perspective change our attitudes so greatly and how what was once horrific experiences become endearing moments of grace and

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companionship. Indeed, they become endearing precisely because of those difficult situations; my family experienced, survived and even thrived in their midst. I have found this to be true through financial hardship, stressful transitions, difficult job situations, disease and even death. God never wants our spirits defeated or our darkness defining. Jesus' resurrection sparks hope and demands an optimistic attitude even in the midst of difficulties.

Honestly, I have to say that I am a bit sick and tired of the transition and changes going on within the church concerning all the work within the capital campaign. The e-mails, conversations and decisions regarding almost every decision is such a burden. The details involved in living through all of the changes is exhausting and the financial implications daunting within our yearly budget talks. And in true congregational fashion, each decision invites critique, compromise and the possibility of a congregational meeting if our church leaders do not come to agreement or loud voices come to the fore. Kudos and extreme gratitude go to Kaki McGeary [the Capital Campaign Committee] and the Trustees who have overseen these projects. As I speak, we are getting ready for the biggest disruption of our entire capital campaign: the plastering and painting of our sanctuary where we must worship outside our sanctuary for months.

I journeyed down this road at a previous church and it was the

same. People grew weary of the change and disruption of the stable and comforting ways of normal church life. Fellowship Hall was not as sacred, usable or comfortable as the sanctuary. But like my family's camping trip, years after the work, everyone in the church looked back with pride, allowing the difficulties and disruptions to act as agents of cementing community spirit. My previous campaign, despite my original belief, was not about the money or even the church facility for that matter, it was about the strengthening of the community.

So, as we prepare to embark on the uncomfortable and disheartening journey to Fellowship Hall, let me invite all of you to suffer along with me as we create memories that will draw us together and deepen our relationships. Let me invite you to come and fill Fellowship Hall as we transform that space into the sacred, as we invest not only our money but our being into Christ's sacred family of faith, as we create history that will one day draw laughter, moans of endearment and corporate strength of character.

I look forward to making history by having more people come to church in Fellowship Hall than during the regular non construction year. If you accept that challenge and make it so then I will host all of you at my home for a springtime party that will knock your socks off!!!

Encouraged by your commitment and love of this church, I am...

*Yours in Christ,*  
Rev. Mark

## Associate Pastor News

**2020 is here!** And what a year it will be. Sadly, I think this will be a difficult year in the life of our nation. I am not usually in the predicting the future business, so I'm not going to start now.

In my January newsletter article last year, I wrote that I don't set new year's resolutions but remind myself of my personal mission statement. I wrote, "Now I just recommit to living the next year as I try to live ever year: knowing that I have one life to live on this planet, I will do everything in my power to live with joy, love, and compassion by spreading God's love and taking action to create a better world." My personal mission statement guides my life. No matter if my life is going well or there's a difficult time, my personal mission statement connects my daily life to the vision and purpose I have for role in the world. I invite you again to think about your personal mission statement for how you desire to live in the world and let it guide your life. Ask yourself these basic questions: What inspires me? What does the world need? What helps me come alive? These questions might help guide in writing your own.

Even though I won't predict the future, I do have words of encouragement and maybe a mantra for 2020: Keep Faith Alive. When there are difficult days this year, Keep Faith Alive. Let us hold onto our Christian faith strengthened through the community of Christ, where love is the means to a peaceable

kingdom. Keep Faith Alive. We do this not by avoiding each other but drawing ourselves closer to one another. Keep Faith Alive. A faith that advocates for a just and peaceful world. Keep Faith Alive. A faith that keeps us going strong where we not only survive, we thrive. Keep Faith Alive.

**May 2-9th:** Carl Wermer, Brenda Dawson, Carolyn Toof, LindaLou Parker, Phyllis Wiley, and I travel to Puerto Rico to repair roofs. We are thrilled to go to Puerto Rico to be the hands of Christ to help repair people’s much needed shelter—one of the basics anyone needs to lead a life that survives and thrives.

Join me on Friday, Jan 17th for **Coffee Sidebar at the Statehouse** from 8:15 am to 9:30 am, organized by Vermont Interfaith Action, leaving FCCEJ at 7:30 am and returning at 2:30 pm. We’ll have conversations with our state legislators about what a moral economy means. That day we will then head over to a local church and have **a training and strategy session** for the rest of the legislative session. When I was a pastoral intern in Santa Fe, a handful of people from the church went and we had a blast talking to our legislators and advocating for ourselves and on behalf of those who can’t make it to the Statehouse. For more details, see me.

Please consider increasing your pledge \$2-7 a week. It will help meet the needs of the youth in our ministry programs and the people we serve through our missions.

Josh Simon  
Associate Pastor

## Laurie’s Lens



Many thanks to our youth who gave of their time and energy, giving the gift of a pageant to the whole congregation. You all were awesome! Thanks to so many of our children who also participated. Our Cherubs began our second service with *Away in a Manger* and *Jingle Bells* making the morning even more special. If you were not able to be with us, I hope you are friends with us on our Facebook group where you can see some of the pictures of this spirit filled Sunday. This was one of my favorite Sundays of the year and you all showed the church and the community that our children and youth programs are alive and well. God Bless!

As we begin 2020, we continue to move forward with all the excitement that our capital campaign is bringing. The children and youth have seen new windows in our area along with newly painted rooms and on December 29<sup>th</sup> we transition our worship to Fellowship Hall while our Sanctuary goes through renovation. Our worship space may change, but our children and youth programs will continue to be active and strong with volunteers and schedule that will carry us through to Easter, when we hope to be back worshipping in our newly painted Sanctuary. I hope you have marked your calendars and keep coming to church to experience worship in a different space and help give us feedback as we move through this transitional period. I always find

that my faith grows and deepens when I worship in different spaces. With transitions comes adapting, so please let us know how your children and youth are doing through these next few months.

On January 5<sup>th</sup> our Spiritual Friends will be with our PreK through 2<sup>nd</sup> for a time of celebration. Epiphany will be only a day away, January 6<sup>th</sup>, and so we celebrate the arrival of the magi to Jesus and his parents with a party. You won’t want to miss it! Think of a birthday party, a time of giving gifts and celebrating love. We will start of course with our story time and then move into a party with balloons, cupcakes, games and lots of fun. Mark your calendars!

Currently our list of youth who have signed up to travel to Purdue University with Pastor Josh and me for the 2020 National Youth Event on July 20-26 is Issy Owens, Tessa Nowell, Zoe Moos, Sam & Mae Dewey. We have our five, but we have room for many more! Have you been thinking about it over your school break? Interested? Have questions? We need to hear from you by January 5<sup>th</sup> so we can book our seats on the bus. This is your chance to see the wider UCC with thousands of other youth worshipping, talking about their faith, doing mission, as well as seeing and hearing what youth from other UCC churches are doing. I attended NYE eight years with some of our now young adults when it was a Purdue as well and traveled to NYE at Disney four years ago. Each one was a great experience. One I hope for all of our youth as it too

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allowed me to grow in my faith. I'm so looking forward to going again in 2020.

So, as we ring in another new year may we remember to stop, breath, meditate, find our place to connect with God and of course have fun as we witness to all that we know a God who loves and accepts everyone. Let your light shine!

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

**Our Home, Our Future,  
Our Time: A Capital  
Campaign Update**

**Sanctuary Restoration Begins December 29!**

Starting on Sunday December 29 through Palm Sunday, worship services will be held in Fellowship Hall while the sanctuary is closed for restoration. During this time, temporary scaffolding will be put up so that our plaster ceiling can be totally removed and replaced. The ceiling work will be done first and then it must cure for several weeks. While the ceiling cures, the cracks in our plaster walls will be patched. Next, the entire sanctuary (including trim and pews), narthex/main stairs and sanctuary stairwell will receive a fresh coat of paint...in a new color palette featuring pale creamy-yellow walls with white trim and woodwork.

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 worshipping with you all in our new space on Sunday mornings starting right after Christmas!

**Security Grant / Outdoor Lighting**

We got the grant! We received a federal grant of \$47,809 for improving security and safety at our church. This grant award includes \$10,000 for new parking lot lights! Also included are funds to add locks to all of our classroom doors and a new "controlled access system" (keyless locks, video cameras at our two main entrances). Now we are just waiting on paperwork. :) Once we have it, we will install the new lighting in the parking lot! The other projects will take a bit longer to implement, so stay tuned for details. In the meantime, we are hoping to have lights for the steeple, church sign and thrift shop sign re-installed soon.

**Pledge Payment Reminder**

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.

Your pledge balance for 2019 can be found on your fall pledge statement. If you have questions about your pledge status, please contact Dan Petherbridge, Campaign Treasurer.

Kaki McGeary & Dave Johnson  
*Capital Campaign Committee*  
*Co-Chairs*

**BYLAWS UPDATES**

The congregation will vote on proposed updates to our existing Bylaws at the Annual Meeting in **January 2020**. Copies of the Bylaws, with these updates included and highlighted, will be available in Church in December. Meeting(s) will be scheduled to allow members to ask any questions they have about the changes and a summary sheet describing some of the more significant ones will be provided. Meeting dates will be shared via announcements at Church and in the bulletin.

Carl Wermer  
*President & Chair, Bylaw*  
*Committee*

## Youth Ministry

We had a great 2019 Youth Ministry program. We saw growth in both of our youth groups. We're excited to build upon our program and continue to expand our community of Christ.

High School Youth Lock-in is **Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>**, 6 pm to 25<sup>th</sup>, 9 am. 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!

### **Junior Youth Calendar**

**5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> ~ JY time ~**

11:30am to 1:30pm

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

**January 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> ~ JY**

**Overnight** ~ 6pm Friday to 9am Saturday

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>** ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm

Sunday morning ~ Help Greet/Usher/Read

Scripture during 10:15am worship

### **Stay active and lend a helping hand!**

Help a neighbor or a friend

If you earn an allowance?

Have a job? Practice dividing your money 3 ways ~

*Save (in a bank) ~ Give to the church/offering ~ You (spend/save/give to an organization)*

Find ways and places to connect with your God & have spiritual time ~ a walk in the woods, quiet time without an electronic device in your hands and maybe praying in color, etc.

### **@ the Lake UCC Camp at Rock Point**

*For those going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall of 2020*

**Sunday, July 26 at 2pm to**

**Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at 4pm**

*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 not recruiting counselors, lifeguards, CIT's and a nurse.

Interested? See Laurie.

Leadership arrives on July 25<sup>th</sup> at 4pm and departs by 5pm on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **National Youth Event (NYE) to Purdue University**

**July 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

National Youth Event is part party, part worship, part education, and part action. It's

Summer camp with air-conditioning. 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.

Full cost is \$650 per person. Youth pay \$250. Fundraiser coming in 2020. More information can be found on the web link below. It will be a great trip that will include a bus ride, service projects, worship, music and much more. Scholarships are available. Deadline: January 5<sup>th</sup>. Deposit due (nonrefundable): February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Check out the NYE 2020 website @ [www.uccpages.org/nye2020/](http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/)



## Faith Formation

### Faith Formation Calendar PreK – 8th grade

**January 5<sup>th</sup>** ~ (on 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays of the month) Intergenerational Worship  
*PreK – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade who are looking for more movement can join the Spiritual Friends for a story time and activity. All will return for communion.*

**12<sup>th</sup>** ~ Peer Group Time

**19<sup>th</sup>** ~ Hands On Mission on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**26<sup>th</sup>** ~ Peer Group Time for Prek – 2<sup>nd</sup>

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>** ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays ~ Intergenerational Worship & Spiritual Friends

**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 Music Time

**Cherubs** ~ Preschool ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
**Joyful Noise** ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ 8<sup>th</sup> 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 at 11:30am. All PreK through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade need to be signed out by an authorized person. Older children will be excused at 11:30am also. Parents can update their list of

authorized persons by emailing Laurie.

### 2019 Faith Formation Offering



## SPECTRUM

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Current Total **\$666.82**

Remember just a \$1 a week can go a long way! So bring your offering each week for Spectrum! Just think what you spend a \$1 on each week. Are you willing to give that amount to help a youth at Spectrum? PLEASE use the Bible story envelopes in the pews so your money goes to Spectrum and it will not be confused with the regular offering for the church.

### Our Nursery

Sunday morning Nursery hours are 8:15am to 11:30am

**Kelsey Carpenter, our Nursery staff worker, will help you and your little one get settled into our Nursery.** Feel free to stop by on your way up to worship. Parents/guardians should feel comfortable staying with their little one or return to worship. We want you to feel comfortable here. Children are welcome in worship and throughout our space. Please help us hold to our Safe Conduct Guidelines of a ratio of 2 infants (under 2 years) to 1 adult and volunteer to stay in the Nursery if needed. Thank you for your cooperation.

*HS Juniors & Seniors who are interested can also be a helper to the Nursery staff worker. Contact Laurie for an interview and you can be our paid second hands in the Nursery.*

## Volunteer

### Acolytes



Every Sunday we carry in the light of Christ and light the worship candles. Then during our sung benediction we carry out the light of Christ to remind us all that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are with us everywhere we go, not just here at church. Ushers are asked to help and assist the acolytes by lighting the taper, then walking with them if they are new to acolyting or would like a partner. Older children or youth are also encourage to be acolytes. Families who are ushering or greeting can acolyte. Please check the sign up sheet on the bulletin board down in the hallway on your way up to worship to see if someone has already signed up. Thank you.



## Missions

### Charitable Donations

At our December meeting, the Missions Committee donated \$500 to the UCC Medical Debt Relief Program which has partnered with RIP Medical Debt to forgive the medical debt of America's most vulnerable communities: the sick, the elderly, the poor, and veterans. It also targets the middle class, driving many families who are barely getting along into poverty.

*"The efforts of the UCC in the Chicago area served as a launching pad, in collaboration with the UCC's 38 conferences and almost 5,000 congregations, to medical debt relief efforts for those living at or below poverty in the 50 states and the District of Columbia we currently serve,"* said the Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries. *"It is the intent of the United Church of Christ to make this tangible ministry of debt abolishment in our denominational regions another expression of the ways we seek to live out our commitment to Three Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, Love of Creation,"* Blackmon said. *"We intend to contribute to a debt abolishment quarterly through Synod 2021, or as long as our churches desire to continue."*

By forgiving this debt we strive to give struggling individuals, and their families, a fresh start. We hope to give those affected the ability to seek the continued medical care they need

and help them back towards financial stability. The committee felt it was a worthy cause and deserved a generous donation.

**Dismas House** *[Republished from the December 2019 SPIRIT@FIRST Issue]*

*"Your Good Deed Will be Much Appreciated"*

**What is Dismas House?** 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 folks who attend our Church have been preparing dinner for the residents and staff of the Dismas House in Winooski. One of us prepares an entrée, another a salad, and a third a dessert. The three of us usually stay to enjoy the meal with the Dismas House residents and staff. They are friendly and appreciative of our help. By participating in the program, we help to lessen the feelings of estrangement that burden folks who have served prison terms.

**Want to volunteer?** If you have never been to Dismas House and would like to volunteer, at least one person from the Church who has already been to Dismas House will be going there on the Wednesday you sign up for. There is a sign-up sheet that's on the bulletin board in the hall leading to the Church's social hall.

**How many?** Attending the meal are typically ten residents, two paid staff members (a Director



**Hours:** Tuesdays & Wednesdays 10am-3pm; Thursdays 4pm-8pm. and 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, 9am-1pm.

**Charitable Deeds:** 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). 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.

**Donations:** 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. All Holiday items will be by Donation for the Week of January 6 and 13<sup>th</sup>. All Men and Women winter coats will be \$3 each for the month of January. The shop is looking for both men and women's warm wool socks.

Happy Holidays and grateful thanks for supporting and donating, from all of the Heavenly Cents volunteers!

Bridget Meyer, Sue Wood, and Linda Bogardus

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and Associate Director who work there during weekdays), and the three of us from the Church who have prepared the food.

**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)

**The Giving Tree**



The Giving Tree has again been a huge success. Fifty-nine children from the Village of Essex, the Town of Essex and

Westford received Christmas gifts thanks to an outpouring of kindness from our congregation. It is always so rewarding to welcome the families to our church to pick up their gifts. They are excited and so very appreciative of the packages, the candy and the fruit that awaits them. Thank you to each of you who helped bring smiles to these families. They want you to know how you made Christmas special and meaningful for their children.



**6th Annual Jamaica Cabin Fever Calcutta**

*\*Early Bird Tickets Now on Sale! \**



The Jamaica Committee is pleased to announce the 6th annual Cabin Fever Calcutta to be held at the Catamount Country Club in Williston on Saturday, March 7, 2020. This is a fun night out with lots of great prizes in addition to the grand prize of \$1000! Tickets cost \$125 each and include dinner for two and the chance to win the grand prize of \$1000 and other prizes awarded throughout the evening.

Early Bird ticket sales have begun! All tickets purchased before January 15, 2020 will be entered into the Early Bird drawing for a \$100 cash prize, drawn at the Calcutta. If you purchased a ball last year, you will have received a letter in the mail in early December with a form to purchase tickets. Anyone interested in purchasing an Early Bird ticket can also contact Sharon Dettenrieder at [dettenriedes@hartwick.edu](mailto:dettenriedes@hartwick.edu) or 802-871-5308 OR see us at the table in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays.



” Thank you for your recent gift of \$250 to PPNNE and for standing with us during this critical time. Now more than ever, our patients need to know that our doors will stay open— supporters like you ensure they will be.”- Meagan Gallagher, President & CEO



“Thank you for your generous donation to the UCC to support USA Emergencies. Your gift of \$500 will help people rebuild their communities and bring comfort to their lives.” – Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President



“Thank you, sincerely, for your \$500 gift. Neighbors, families, and older adults in Vermont will be able to access the food they need when they need...and not a moment too late.” John Sayles, CEO



“Thank you for your generous donation of a transport chair, bath bar, and grab bar. Your support makes a network of services to the aging Vermonters possible.” – Madeline Graham, Associate Director.



**Fellowship & Learning**

First Church aims to pique your interest in God & community with these programs:

**Yoga @ First**

*Mondays, 5:30pm-6:45pm*

Jonah Moos 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 (and other topics!) delivered on Sunday. Join us for the conversation, the goodies, the camaraderie, or all of the above!

**JOY (Just Older Youth)**

*Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 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. Our very own Reverend Mark Mendes will be joining us. Share your thoughts and bring those questions you've been eager to ask. Don't forget your lunch.

**Essex Eats Out**

*Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 5:30pm*

This ongoing service project offers free, community-wide dinners open to all (with a special invitation to the needy & lonely) every Friday night throughout the Essex area. Donations (to help subsidize the cost of these meals) are solicited but not required of all dinner patrons. FCCEJ hosts Essex Eats Out on the first Friday of each month.

**Bridge Holiday Party!**

*Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> @ 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!

**Coffee Clatter**

*Fridays @ 8am*

Martone's in Essex Junction. 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!

**Women's Spirituality**

**Group**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month @ 9:30am.*

*Next meeting: Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>*

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."

**Noontime Book Group**

*(3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each Month)*

*Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 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.

**FCCEJ Confirmation**

**Class**

*Thursdays @ 7:30-9pm, Marvin Lounge*

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 if 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.



**Save the D@tes!**

This is a list of upcoming events at our church and wider faith community:

**Worship in the Fellowship Hall**

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

On December 27th, we will have a work party to clear everything out of the sanctuary to prepare the space for scaffolding going up so that workers can replace the ceiling's plaster and others can paint the entire space. On December 30th, the scaffolding will be installed and then the plastering begins on January 6th, which once completed will lead into the painting. Worship will be in Fellowship hall From Dec. 29th until the project 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

**Communion on January 5<sup>th</sup>**



**1<sup>st</sup> Service:** Handed out  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Service:** Handed out

Lounge.

**Saturday Sanctuary**

**\*Relocated to Marvin Lounge\*  
Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm**

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.

**Annual Meeting Sunday:  
Ask the Pastor**

**Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

The power and authority of the First Congregational Church is grounded in its people when they officially meet each year. In 2020, that occurs on Sunday January 26th and 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. So, on Sunday January 26th at 10 a.m., we will worship as one body and then after worship move right into our Annual Meeting. As a way for the congregation to check in with their clergy, Annual Meeting Sunday is also the day when we schedule the "Ask the Pastor Sunday" so come prepared with some good questions to ask Reverends Mendes and Simon.

**Dessert & Discussion with  
the Three Junction Clergy  
Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 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.

<b>January Birthdays</b>	
FRISBIE, Paulette	01/01
MCINTYRE, Amy	01/02
OWENS, Edward (Teddy)	01/03
DULANEY, Donna	01/04
LAFLAM, Chris	01/04
WINSLOW, Arthur	01/04
NOWELL, Jeff	01/10
SINKEWICZ, Sara	01/10
DONLEY, Steven	01/11
DOOLEY, Alex	01/11
SIMON, Joshua	01/13
BARTLETT, Lincoln	01/15
GUILD, Ed	01/15
HELMSTUTLER, Elaine	01/15
RUSHFORD, Bob	01/18
HARRIS, Carolyn	01/20
DEAN, Ed	01/21
BEACH, George	01/24
WILLIAMS, Penny	01/24
SHEARER, Cathy	01/25
GILLIAM, Ingrid	01/26
MCCULLEN, Kevin	01/29



## Heavenly Food Pantry



The Food Pantry is open to residents of Essex Junction, Essex Town, and Westford. Clients will need an ID for each member of the household and a utility bill to prove their residence. Clients may only visit the Pantry once per calendar month.

### Dates & Hours

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday (December 9th)

@ 5:30pm-7:30pm

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday (December 19th)

@ 2pm-6pm

**\*\* NOT on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday due to Christmas holiday \*\***

### Volunteers Needed!

We're looking for people to help on Pantry days. But, we also need volunteers on other days to assist with a myriad of tasks. Short commitments are OK. Enthusiasm and a fun-loving attitude is desired. We'd love to welcome you into our Missions community. Please, contact Anita Guild ([anitaguild@gmail.com](mailto:anitaguild@gmail.com)) for more details.

## SPY Team "Strengthen Community Connections"

by Wanda Hines; JUMP

This Holiday Season, Chittenden County families in need are very grateful to **St. Paul's Youth (SPY)**. For three Sundays, the

**SPY Team** selflessly sold items they made to church members. They raised \$173.00 which they donated to JUMP to help buy client supplies as well as donating over 375 collected essential personal hygiene items.

Enthusiastic and engaged, in October, the **SPY Team** toured JUMP's Drop-in center to learn first-hand what JUMP does. Then before Thanksgiving, they visited Feeding Chittenden (formerly named Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf) and donated 12 turkeys.

Wanda Hines; JUMP Director appreciatively shared, "It's great that they are becoming exceedingly aware of neighbors in need right in their own backyard...literally down the street."

Also, Hines announced, "With strong admiration, staff, volunteers and clients would like to thank **Marti Churchill; SPY Leader** for her invaluable guidance, spirited dedication and being present everyday heart and soul as a gifted and passionate role model for all youth."

Lastly, Hines offered a very special heartfelt thank you to the SPY Team for helping strengthen community connections and understanding as they go forward and educate neighbors, family and friends about poverty in their own backyards.



Wanda Hines, JUMP Director at Personal Hygiene collection table



Personal Hygiene collection



Marti Churchill SPY Leader and a young member of SPY Nellie Johnson



# January 2020

January 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 29	30	31	Jan 1, 20 HOLIDAY -- FCCEJ Offices	2 8:30am Essex Art League	3 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	4 9:00am Thrift Store Open
			12:00pm Brown Bag	12:00pm JOY (Marvin)	1:30pm Essex Eats Out (Prep Time) (Kitchen & Fellowship Hall)	9:00am Nepali Community Worship
			5:30pm Finally@First	12:00pm Brown Bag	5:30pm Essex Eats Out Community Dinner	1:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)
			6:00pm BSA PLC (3rd)	3:00pm Easterseals (3rd)		4:30pm Worship Service
			6:30pm Handbells Choir	6:00pm Music@First		
			7:00pm Boy Scouts	6:00pm Cub Scouts		
5 8:30am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	6 12:00pm Brown Bag	7 8:30am Sermon Talk Back (Marvin Lounge)	8 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	9 8:00am Jamaica Bound	10 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	11 9:00am Nepali Community Worship (Fellowship Hall)
10:15am Worship Service	1:30pm Food Pantry	12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	1:00pm FCCEJ Staff	9:00am Jamaica	7:30pm Grange (Fellowship Hall)	1:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)
11:30am Music	5:30pm Yoga @ First (2nd)	5:30pm Finance	5:30pm Finally@First	12:00pm Brown Bag		
1:00pm Brown Bag	5:30pm Group Victory	7:00pm Church Council	6:30pm Handbells Choir	3:00pm Easterseals (3rd)		
6:00pm Cub Scout Leader	7:00pm Hospitality		7:00pm Boy Scouts	6:00pm Music@First		
	7:00pm BSA Troop 624			6:30pm Lion Den #10		
12 8:30am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	13 12:00pm Brown Bag	14 8:30am Sermon Talk Back (Marvin Lounge)	15 8:00am Food Shelf Delivery (Fellowship)	16 12:00pm Brown Bag	17 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	18 9:00am Nepali Community Worship
10:15am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	1:30pm Food Pantry	12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	12:00pm Brown Bag	3:00pm Easterseals (3rd)	1:30pm Bridge Club (Marvin Lounge)	9:30am Women's Spirituality (Marvin)
1:00pm Brown Bag	4:00pm Food Pantry (FH)	7:00pm Deacons (Marvin Lounge)	5:30pm Finally@First	6:00pm Music@First		1:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)
6:00pm Venture Crew	5:30pm Food Pantry		6:30pm Handbells Choir	6:30pm Wolf Den (2nd)		
	5:30pm Yoga @ First (2nd)		7:00pm Boy Scouts	6:30pm Tiger Den #9 (3rd)		
	5:30pm Group Victory			7:30pm Confirmation		
19 8:30am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	20 11:30am Noontime Book	21 8:30am Sermon Talk Back (Marvin Lounge)	22 12:00pm Brown Bag	23 8:30am Food Pantry	24 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	25 12:00am Junior Youth Lock-In (Church-Wide)
10:15am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	12:00pm Brown Bag	12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	1:00pm FCCEJ Staff	12:00pm Brown Bag	6:00pm Junior Youth Lock-In (Church-Wide)	9:00am Nepali Community Worship
1:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	1:30pm Food Pantry	7:00pm CE Meeting	2:00pm Crafty Time Out	3:00pm Easterseals (3rd)		1:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)
	5:30pm Yoga @ First (2nd)	7:00pm Missions	5:30pm Finally@First	6:00pm Music@First		
	5:30pm Group Victory		6:30pm Handbells Choir	7:30pm Confirmation		
	7:00pm BSA Troop 624		7:00pm Boy Scouts	8:15pm Music @ First		
26 8:30am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)	27 12:00pm Brown Bag	28 8:30am Sermon Talk Back (Marvin Lounge)	29 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	30 12:00pm Brown Bag	31 12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	Feb 1
10:00am FCCEJ Annual Meeting	1:30pm Food Pantry	12:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall)	5:30pm Finally@First (Fellowship Hall)	3:00pm Easterseals (3rd)		
1:00pm Brown Bag	5:30pm Yoga @ First (2nd)	7:00pm Stewardship	6:30pm Handbells Choir	6:00pm Music@First		
6:00pm Venture Crew	5:30pm Group Victory	7:00pm Trustees (Marvin)	7:00pm Boy Scouts	7:30pm Confirmation		
	6:30pm Joe's Big Band			8:15pm Music @ First		
	7:00pm BSA Troop 624			8:30pm Men @ First		

# 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](mailto:suewood@myfairpoint.net)  
**Heavenly Food Pantry Contact:** Valerie Gabert [879-0109]



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