

***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**

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Website: www.fcej.org

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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
January 12, 2020

The First Sunday After Epiphany

*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 significant 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.

Musical Introit

Prepare Ye (Godspell)

feat. John Maugher
shofar and tenor solo

Call to Worship

Leader: Primordial waters shaped the creation and called life into being.

People. We were born of water from our mother's womb, survive from the earth's waters and retain health from drinking an abundance of water.

Leader: God led the Israelites through the Red Sea Waters, the surging flood of Noah, the River Jordan and into the meaningful baptismal waters of Christ's love.

People: God still gives us life and leads us to health through the power and presence of water. Come, let us worship our God with song.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation

*Opening Hymn

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

#63
[Insert, Right]

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

63

Samuel Longfellow, 1864; alt.

1 Ho - ly Spir - it, truth di - vine, dawn up - on this soul of mine.
2 Ho - ly Spir - it, love di - vine, glow with - in this heart of mine.
3 Ho - ly Spir - it, power di - vine, fill and nerve this will of mine.
4 Ho - ly Spir - it, law di - vine, reign with - in this soul of mine.

Voice of God and in - ward light, wake my spir - it from its night.
Kin - dle ev - ery high de - sire, pu - ri - fy me with your fire.
Bold - ly may I al - ways live, brave - ly serve, and glad - ly give.
Be my law, and I shall be firm - ly bound, for - ev - er free.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Holy Spirit, Truth Divine'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are provided below the vocal line of each system.

Children's Message

Our Nursery has a speaker for you to listen to the service and is open for children under 3 years. After the 2nd service's children's message, PreK-8th grade are welcome to follow Laurie for Faith Formation with music & peer group time. High School youth are welcome. You are welcome to accompany your child(ren), get them settled, stay, or return to worship. Reminder, all children in PreK-2nd need to be signed out an authorized person when peer group time ends at 11:30am.

**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 ("trespasses")

Prayer Requests Offered within the Community

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

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.

Musical Response

Gospel Amen

Anthem

Down To The River To Pray

arr. Koo/Sam

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Prophetic

Isaiah 42:1-10

[page 519]

New Testament Gospel

Matthew 3:1-17

[page 2]

***Hymn of Preparation**

I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

#351

[Insert, Right]

Sermon

Do You / We Sing New Songs?

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

Rain Down/O Healing River

***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.**

***Closing Hymn**

We're Marching to Zion

#382

[Insert, Page After Next]

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Go Now In Peace

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.**

Unison

1 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be
2 When you found the won - der of the Word, I was
3 In the mid - dle a - ges of your life, not too
4 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be

there when you are old, I re - joiced the day you
there to cheer you on; You were raised to praise the
old, no long - er young, I'll be there to guide you
there when you are old, I re - joiced the day you

were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.
liv - ing God, to whom you now be - long.
through the night, com - plete what I've be - gun.
were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold. *St. 4, end*

I was there when you were but a child, with a
Should you find some-one to share your time and you
When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you

*Ps. 48:1-2; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 4:2-11**Isaac Watts, 1707; alt.
Refrain by Robert Lowry, 1867; alt.*

1 Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known; To -
 2 Let those re - fuse to sing who nev - er knew our God; But
 3 God's grace on earth is found, the seeds of glo - ry sown; Ce -
 4 The hill of Zi - on yields a thou-sand sa - cred sweets. Be -
 5 Then let our songs a - bound, and ev - ery tear be dry; We're



geth - er God's great love pro - claim, to - geth - er God's great love pro -
 we our thanks and praise will bring, but we our thanks and praise will
 les - tial fruits on earth - ly ground, ce - les - tial fruits on earth - ly
 fore we reach the heaven-ly fields, be - fore we reach the heaven-ly
 trav - eling through Em - man - uel's ground, we're trav - eling through Em - man - uel's



claim, and thus sur - round the throne, and thus sur-round the throne.
 bring for love so deep and broad, for love so deep and broad.
 ground from faith and hope have grown, from faith and hope have grown.
 fields, or walk the gold - en streets, or walk the gold - en streets.
 ground to great - er worlds on high, to great-er worlds on high.



And thus sur-round the throne, and thus sur - round the throne.

Refrain



We're march - ing to Zi - on, beau-ti-ful, beau-ti-ful Zi - on; We're

We're march-ing on to Zi - on,



march-ing on-ward to Zi - on, the beau-ti-ful cit-y of God.

Zi - on, Zi - on, the

*Postlude

* = Please stand if you are able.



*The flowers on the altar are given by
The Dorn Family
In memory of loved ones.*



***** *IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT* *****

**WARNING FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ESSEX JUNCTION**

January 26, 2020

11:20 A.M.

To the members of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction,

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Church on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 11:20 A.M. to act upon the following business:

- Article I:** To hear and act upon the reports of the Church Officers, Committees and Recognized Groups of the Church.
- Article II:** To act and vote upon the proposed budget for 2020.
- Article III:** To elect all church officers and committees required by the by-laws of the Church and others as may be necessary.
- Article IV:** To review and vote on proposed changes to the Church by-laws.
- Article V:** To give authorization to the Finance Committee to borrow money and sign notes pledging the credit of the Church, if needed, to meet the current expenses of the Church.
- Article VI:** To transact any other business which may properly be brought before this Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the Church,

Alison Wermer, Church Clerk

***** *IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT* *****

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.



OUR USHERS & GREETERS

1st Greeters: Ginny Coe
Ushers: (None Registered)

2nd Greeters: (None Registered)
Ushers: (None Registered)



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

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

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)

Rev. Fred

John A & Family

Rev. Patricia

Russ Dettenrieder

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.

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.



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. Please, write your request on the chart as soon as you are able. We

like to give the florists ample time to artistically convey your sentiments.

TODAY

JUNIOR YOUTH OVERNIGHT

Friday-Saturday, January 17th-18th



Our JOY group (Just Older Youth – anyone 55 and older) is invited to join the fun Friday night from 6-8pm for pizza & SCAT. Please RSVP to Laurie

lchipman@fceej.org

SUPER BOWL SUB SUNDAY

Sunday, February 2nd

Place your order TODAY and support our youth programs! \$10 for a whole, \$6 for a half. Includes chips, cookie, clementine



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 (depending on construction.)



CHURCH BYLAWS

& ANNUAL MEETING WARRANT

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. Additionally, copies of the Warrant are posted throughout the church on orange paper; and there is a copy in this bulletin following the Order of Worship (page 8.)

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@fceej.org) for details.

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.



ANNUAL CABIN FEVER CALCUTTA

March 7, 2020

Tickets on Sale Now!



Tickets for the Annual Cabin Fever Calcutta to benefit the Jamaica Mission Program are on sale now. Tickets purchased by January 15th will be entered into a drawing for \$100. To purchase tickets, see us at the table in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays, contact Sharon Dettenrieder at dettenriedes@hartwick.edu, mail your check to the church, or put your check in the Sunday offering. Please make checks payable to FCCEJ and include your ball # (if assigned) as well as "Calcutta" in the memo line on your check. Also, let us know how many people will be attending. Tickets cost \$125 and include dinner for two. Additional dinners may be purchased for \$20 each. Hope you'll join us for this fun event!

FAITH FORMATION (PreK-8th Grade)

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

FAITH FORMATION CONVERSATIONS

Our PreK – 2nd will be talking about the magi & gifts we can give to Jesus.

3rd – 8th will be reminded of Jesus' birth, magi's gift and talking about Jesus' baptism.

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.— Colossians 4:6



January 26th ~ One service
@ 10am

March 29th ~ Pretzel Sunday

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.

SUNDAY MORNING CALENDAR

- **January 12th** ~ Peer Group Time
- **January 19th** ~ Hands On Mission on 2nd floor
- **January 26th** ~ Peer Group Time
- **February 2nd** ~ 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.



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 TBD in February

2019 Grand Total — \$692.82

We will vote soon for Faith Formation's 2020 charity.

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>

- ◆ **January 12th** ~ presales for Super Bowl Subs before and after services
- ◆ **January 17th-18th** ~ JY Overnight ~ 6pm Friday to 9am Saturday
 - ◆ RSVP with Laurie
- ◆ **January 19th & 26th** ~ presales for Super Bowl Subs before and after services
- ◆ **February 2nd** ~ Super Bowl Sub Sunday making during both services ~ orders picked up.
 - ◆ Arrive Sunday at 8:15am

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.

**Growing
Together
in Faith**

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.

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.

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!

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!

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**

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

37 Main Street in Essex Junction

***** January Sale: All men and women outerwear, jackets and boots are only \$3.00!!! *****

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; and **Saturdays, 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.

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."

SAVE THE D@TE!

Hannaford Cards

Sunday, January 19th



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.** Next date is January 19th!

**FCCEJ Offices
Closed for Holiday
Monday, January 20th**

MLK Jr. Day



Annual Meeting Sunday:

**Ask the Pastor
Sunday, January 26th
Worship @ 10am
Meeting @ 11:20am**

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.

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.

REQUEST TO CHURCHES



The Disaster Response Committee of the Vermont Conference was created to be a part of the recovery process following disasters. A significant role for local churches is that of creating lists of volunteers from among members. The volunteers would be called upon to provide clean up to homes and land; to make meals for families without electricity.

Perhaps also, to babysit children while parents deal with re-organizing their lives and homes.

Recently, following the torrential rain and high winds, a number of homes in Franklin and Lamoille County were damaged and/or basements flooded. The Williston UCC basement was also flooded. The response by the State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has been to seek assistance from the Religious Community. It has been slow in coming because we do not have that volunteer base in place. Any who would like to be on a volunteer list are welcome. Please send Rick Cochran, the coordinator an e-mail at vtvoadpresident@gmail.com or to vtcarrs@gmail.com. Or call Adrienne at 391-7777

Meanwhile, one of our association churches is in need. Can you folks help? Paul Eyer needs us.

We Committee members, Barbara Purinton, Peter Plagge and myself are happy to assist churches in creating the lists and also in recruiting new members for our committee.

We are also developing a working relationship with the Episcopal Diocese Disaster Response Committee.

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.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Kaki McGeary

**UNDER
CONSTRUCTION**

The Sanctuary Restoration Project has begun! Scaffolding is up and work to replace our plaster ceiling will begin soon. As we shared before, our plaster ceiling must be totally removed and replaced. 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.

Worship services will be held in Fellowship Hall while the sanctuary is closed for restoration (Sunday Dec. 29 through Palm Sunday). We look forward to worshipping with you in our new temporary space while construction is underway. Thank you for your patience and flexibility!

Let there be (energy-efficient) light! New LED parking lot light fixtures (and new LED lights for the signs and steeple) are finally being installed! Federal security grant funds will pay for the new parking lot fixtures. Campaign funds will pay for the new sign and steeple lights.

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 need to secure a bridge loan in order to complete 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.

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
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 12, 2020
The Baptism of Christ
Possibilities Unfolding
Matthew 3:13-17

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, (recently elected) Associate General Minister of Global Engagement and Operations of the United Church of Christ, raised her prophetic and poetic voice addressing General Synod delegates (last June). She shared a memory of a clock without hands she'd seen in Clujj-Naropa, Romania, which became for her an image of the contemporary Church. It looks useless, she noted, unable to perform its stated function of telling passers-by the time. Yet it retained power and relevance.

“That clock in Clujj was a source of inspiration for me as a poet and a theologian,” she said. “It reminded me of what the church is and is supposed to be. That clock did not have the ability to tell time anymore, but I could tell from its location and the fact that it was still there that it pointed to a time when things were different.”...

Thompson wove the theme of time throughout her address. Memory of other times comes relatively easy to the Church. Old stories inspire us with the faith and courage of people who have gone before. There is also a history we would prefer to forget, times when the Church has been on the side of injustice. Misunderstood history, anxiety over loss of numbers and resources, and the rise of fascist dogmas all diminish the Church's faithfulness and effectiveness.

She stressed the power of ecumenical partnerships for addressing these challenges. As the UCC's Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, she has seen these strengths first hand. In an interview, she contrasted this vision with the one dominating domestic politics, obsessed with closing borders. “I think that's a challenge to our theologies of love of neighbor and love of neighbor as self,” she said. “We need to be something different.”

Thompson told the delegates: “Yes, the world is changing. Yes, our communities are changing, too. Yes, the resources that are available for ministry and mission are shrinking. None of these markers name or define the relevance of the church, the possibilities we have for ministry, and the services that can be provided in partnership with the communities we serve locally and globally.”

“The time we have is now,” she declared. “The decisions we make are for today. We are living on borrowed time with the commitment to change the world.”*

**Excerpted from an article by Anderson, Eric S. (June 22, 2019) A Vision of Endless Possibilities for Changing the World. Retrieved from*

https://www.ucc.org/news_a_vision_of_endless_possibilities_for_changing_the_world_06212019

Monday, January 13

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm **Food Pantry Stocking** (Fellowship Hall & Gym) ☞
- 4:00pm - 8:00pm **Food Pantry** (FH & Kitchen) ☞
- 5:30pm - 7:30pm **Food Pantry** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 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) ☞
- 6:30pm - 8:00pm **Scout Alumni** (Marvin Lounge)
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm **BSA Troop 624** (3rd Floor Youth Room) ☞

Tuesday, January 14

- 8:30am - 10:00am **Sermon Talk Back** (Marvin Lounge) ☞
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm **Deacons** (Marvin Lounge) ☞

FCCEJ WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 15

- 8:00am - 11:30am **Food Shelf Delivery** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm **Finally@First** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 6:30pm - 8:00pm **Handbells Choir Rehearsal** (Gymnasium) ☞
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm **Boy Scouts** (Fellowship Hall) ☞

Thursday, January 16

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 3:00pm - 4:00pm **Easterseals** (3rd Floor Youth Room) ☞
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm **Music@First** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 6:30pm - 8:00pm **Wolf Den** (2nd Floor) ☞
- 6:30pm - 7:45pm **Tiger Den #9** (3rd Floor Youth Room) ☞
- 7:30pm - 9:00pm **Confirmation** (Marvin Lounge) ☞
- 8:15pm - 9:15pm **Music @ First** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 8:30pm - 9:30pm **Men @ First** (Fellowship Hall) ☞

Friday, January 17

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm **Bridge Club** (Marvin Lounge) ☞
- 6:00pm **Junior Youth Overnight** (Church-wide) →

Saturday, January 18

- ← 9:00am **Junior Youth Overnight** (Church-wide)
- 9:00am - 11:00am **Nepali Community Worship** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 9:30am - 11:30am **Women's Spirituality** (Marvin Lounge)
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 2:00pm - 4:00pm **St. Andrews Pipe Band** (3rd Floor)

Sunday, January 19

- 8:30am - 9:45am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 10:15am - 11:30am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☞
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☞