

***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.*

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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
A United Church of Christ  
January 5, 2019

**The Second Sunday after 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

*King of Kings*

Call to Worship

Leader: Today is the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, the final day of the Christmas season. Though it ends, we will continue to remember the spirit of Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love that has abounded these last several weeks.

**People: Let us hold onto Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love as we move into the new year.**

Leader: May the new year be filled with Peace, Hope, Joy and Love. May God's presence fill our hearts today and sustain us for the year ahead.

**People: Be with us, O God, in our hearts and sustain us. Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn

*Go Tell it on the Mountain*

**Refrain: *Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!***

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.**

*Refrain*

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! Above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.**

*Refrain*

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born, and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

A Time of Confession

Call to Confession

Leader: A new year has begun. Let us leave behind our misdeeds, missteps, mistakes in 2019—whatever might have kept us from God and from our fellow human.

**People: Let us be honest with our God and with ourselves.**

Prayer of Confession:

Leader: Let us confess:

**People: Jesus, Christ, God with us, you came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. We have not always lived up to your expectations for us; fill us with your grace. We are often wrapped up in ourselves; open us to others. We are sometimes slow to learn; teach us of your ever-expanding truth. We waste ourselves in things that do not satisfy; whet our hunger and thirst for justice. We are frequently distracted from love. Direct us to what is most important; your love for us, your will for our lives, and your sustaining perseverance in very circumstance. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

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 – 2nd graders are invited for a time of Faith Formation on the 2nd floor with our Spiritual Friends. You are welcome to accompany your child(ren), help them get settled and stay or return to worship. All will return for Communion.*

**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*

**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**

*On Christmas Night All Christians Sing*

[insert, right]

Old Testament

Jeremiah 31: 7-14

[page 569]

New Testament Scripture Reading

Gospel John 1: 1-18

[page 70]

*Please, refer to scripture readings provided within this bulletin. The words follow the page containing the hymn "On Christmas Night..."*

Sermon

*Jesus is the Prism of the World*

Rev. Simon

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation

Words of Institution

*At both services: the bread will be passed out to the congregation; please wait for the minister to invite you to eat it, so we can all eat it together. This symbolizes our unity in Christ. Drink the cup as the Spirit moves each person to do so, as a sign of the unique gifts we bring to our ministry. Our faith is both an individual and corporate reality.*

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

*From A Distant Home*

**\*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.**

# On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

143

Traditional English carol

Luke 2:8-14; John 1:1-5, 14; Acts 13:38-39

1 On Christ-mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the  
2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er  
3 From out of mys - tery came the Light, which made the an - gels

an - gels bring; On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to  
made us glad; Then why should we on earth be sad, since  
sing this night; From out of mys - tery came the Light, which

hear the news the an - gels bring— News of great  
our Re - deem - er made us glad, When from our  
made the an - gels sing this night: "Glo - ry to

joy, news of great mirth, news of our gra - cious Rul - er's birth.  
sin Christ set us free, all for to gain our lib - er - ty.  
God and peace to all, for - ev - er - more, Al - le - lu - ia!"

# Jeremiah 31:7-14 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

- 7 For thus says the Lord:  
Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
“Save, O Lord, your people,  
the remnant of Israel.”
- 8 See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.
- 9 With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations[a] I will lead them back,  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.
- 10 Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”
- 11 For the Lord has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
- 12 They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.
- 13 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
- 14 I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the Lord.

# John 1:1-18 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

## The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life,[a] and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.[b]

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own,[c] and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,[d] full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon

grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son,[e] who is close to the Father's heart,[f] who has made him known.

**\*Hymn**

*Joy to the World*

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the Earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
The glories of God's righteousness and wonders of God's love,  
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders of God's love.**

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  
Pam Blake & Peter Gray  
In honor of loved ones.*





## Today's Ushers & Greeters

**1st** Greeters: Pam Blake & Peter Gray  
 Ushers: Maureen Evans & Rob Evans

**2nd** Greeters: The Stein Family  
 Ushers: The Stein Family



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

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4fae2daafe3-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

Rev. Patricia

Rev. Fred

*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@fcej.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.



# 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](mailto: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.*



# TODAY

## 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)

### 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.

### 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.)

**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.

### Hannaford Cards



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!

### 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](mailto:cspradling@fccej.org)) for details.



## 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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@fccej.org.*

## Faith Formation Conversations

**PreK – 8<sup>th</sup>** have been talking about the birth of Jesus.

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

**On January 5<sup>th</sup>,** our PreK - 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup>** ~ 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 12<sup>th</sup>** ~ Peer Group Time
- **January 19<sup>th</sup>** ~ Hands On Mission on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- **January 26<sup>th</sup>** ~ Peer Group Time for Prek – 2<sup>nd</sup>



**January 26<sup>th</sup>** ~ One service @ 10am

**March 29<sup>th</sup>** ~ Pretzel Sunday

## 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. 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. 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 Spectrum Youth & Family Services

**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>

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!

## **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 23<sup>rd</sup> to January 7<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:ebraymond@gmail.com).



# SAVE THE D@TE!

## 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](mailto: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!

## 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."

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

**MLK Jr. Day**



## 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.

## Noontime Book Group

**(3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:vtvoadpresident@gmail.com) or to [vtcarrs@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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



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.

# 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]

*mission*  
**M O M E N T S**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 5, 2020  
Second Sunday after Christmas  
**Another Road**  
John 1:(1-9), 10-18

In the United Church of Christ, we often say that we take the Bible too seriously to read it literally. Once we have determined to take the Bible both seriously and not literally, how do we approach this sacred text? One way is through the practice of Lectio Divina, which is Latin for “divine reading.” Lectio Divina, an ancient way of reading the Bible, was introduced by a gentle and loving theologian named Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-395). Lectio Divina is not complicated. A scripture passage is read four times, and each time the experience of the passage is deepened. You can practice Lectio Divina on your own, with a prayer partner or in a small group. This week set aside twenty minutes to try Lectio Divina with the passage from today.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-4*

**Prepare** Find a quiet place where you will be comfortable. You might want to light a candle, play some inspirational music, or spend a few minutes with a beautiful or sacred image. Invite God to join this reading with you, by praying a short prayer like “Meet me here, God.”

**Lectio (Read)** You may want to read the passage aloud. On the first read, listen carefully for any words or phrases that jump out at you. What do you notice? What catches your attention? What surprises you?

**Meditatio (Reflect)** Read a second time. This time ask yourself if you can imagine being part of this story or passage. What does it look, sound, taste, smell, feel like to be part of this scripture? How does the passage remind you of themes, thoughts or feelings in your own life or in the world today?

**Oratio (Respond)** Read a third time. Ask, "From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? How is God inviting me to change? From the lens of scripture, what transformation might be possible in my life?" You may want to record your thoughts in a journal.

**Contemplatio (Rest)** After the final reading, I spend a few moments in silent contemplation, to listen for the voice of the still-speaking God.

## Monday, January 6

- 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) ☺
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm **Hospitality Meeting** (Marvin Lounge)
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm **BSA Troop 624** (3rd Floor Youth Room) ☺

## Tuesday, January 7

- 8:30am - 10:00am **Sermon Talk Back** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm **Finance Committee** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm **Church Council** (Marvin Lounge) ☺

## Wednesday, January 8

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:30pm **FCCEJ Staff Meeting** (Marvin Lounge)
- 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 9

- 8:00am - 9:00am **Jamaica Bound Calcutta Committee** (ML) ☺
- 9:00am - 10:00am **Jamaica Leadership Team** (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 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 - 7:15pm **Lion Den #10** (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 10

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 7:30pm - 10:30pm **Grange** (Fellowship Hall) ☺

## Saturday, January 11

- 9:00am - 11:00am **Nepali Community Worship** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 2:00pm - 4:00pm **St. Andrews Pipe Band** (3rd Floor Youth Room) ☺

# *FCCEJ WEEKLY CALENDAR*

## Sunday, January 12

- 8:30am - 9:45am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 10:15am - 11:30am **Worship Service** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm **Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 6:00pm - 8:00pm **Venture Crew** (Marvin Lounge) ☺