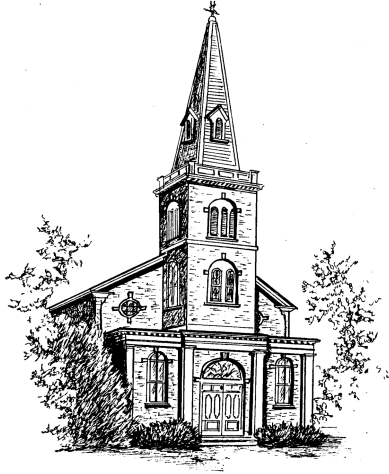


***The First Congregational Church
of Essex Junction***
United Church of Christ



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

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

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

Phone: 802-878-5745

Fax: 802-872-8236

E-mail: welcome@fccej.org

Website: www.fccej.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



WORSHIP @ 1ST CONGO

We have two worship services every Sunday morning at 1st Congo.
We have an Alternative Service on 1st Saturday of every month.

The First Service at 8:30 a.m.

- A Bit More Traditional
- Organ and Piano Music
- Traditional & Contemporary Choral Music
- A Bit More Peace and Quiet
- Professional Nursery Care [birth to age 3]
- A Time of Fellowship & Food Follows

The Second Service at 10:15 a.m.

- A Bit Less Traditional
- The Finally @ First Band Helps Lead Music
- Some Organ and Piano Music
- Faith Formation During Worship [ages 4 & up]
- Professional Nursery Care [birth to age 3]
- A Bit More Energetic and Lively
- A Time for Fellowship and Food Follows

The Saturday Service at 4:30 p.m.

- Informal and Participatory
- Worship NOT in Sanctuary but in Marvin Lounge
- Communion: Sacramental and Community
- Acoustic Guitar

NOTES

- ◆ Communion is on 1st Sunday of Month [all ages]
- ◆ Children / Families Welcome at all Services
- ◆ Everyone Really is Welcome

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
February 16, 2020

*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

Bring Forth the Kingdom

Haugen

Call to Worship

Leader: God, we gather in your house to worship you.

People: With open hearts, we give you our thanks and praise.

Leader: Guide us in all we do as we come seeking you.

People: With happy hearts, we give you our thanks and praise.

Leader: Help us to grow as a community of faith who serves love in your name.

People: With whole hearts, we give you our thanks and praise.

Leader: Come, let us worship the living God who makes all things possible.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation

*Opening Hymn

From All that Dwells Below the Skies

#27

[insert, next page]

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.

[lyrics, next page]

**Jesus loves the little children,
All God's children of the world.**

From All That Dwell below the Skies

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 117

Unison

1 From all that dwell be - low the skies let the Cre - a - tor's praise a -
 2 E - ter - nal are your mer - cies, God; your truth stands ev - er high and

(Harmony) *(Unison)*

rise; Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Let the Re - deem - er's name be
 broad: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Your praise shall sound from shore to

(Harmony)

sung through ev - ery land, by ev - ery tongue. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 shore till suns shall rise and set no more.

(Unison)

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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

Jesus, We Are Here

Je - sus we are here; Je - sus, we are here;

Je - sus, we are here; we are here for you wel - come Je - sus

Choral Anthem

As Long As I Have Music

Besig/Price

Scripture Lessons

Old Testament Deuteronomy 30:15-20 [inserted, next page]

15 See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16 If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God[a] that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

290

*George Croly, 1854; alt.**Gal. 5:25; Matt. 22:37; John 1:32*

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
 3 Have you not bid us love you ev - ery way?
 4 Teach me to feel that you are al - ways nigh;
 5 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wear it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
 All, all your own: soul, heart, and strength, and mind;
 teach me the strug - gles of the soul to bear,
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame;

Stoop to my weak - ness, might - y as you are,
 No an - gel vis - i - tant, no o - pening skies;
 I see your cross—there teach my heart to stay:
 To check the ris - ing doubt, the reb - el sigh;
 The bap - tism of the heaven - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
 O let me seek you, and O let me find.
 teach me the pa - tience of un - an - swered prayer.
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

them, 18 I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, 20 loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

New Testament Matthew 5:21-37 [insert, below and next page]

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,[a] you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult[b] a brother or sister,[c] you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell[d] of fire. 23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister[e] has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,[f] and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court[g] with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.[h] 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.[j]

***Hymn**

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart

#290

[insert, next page]

Sermon

Beyond the Law

Rev. Karen Mendes

Be sure to give a warm welcome to Rev. Karen A. Mendes, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Burlington. Rev. Mark Mendes will be preaching at First Baptist while Karen preaches here. Karen graduated from Andover Newton Theological School in 1995 and has served as an Associate Pastor, chaplain for a preschool and Senior Pastor at First Baptist. She is married to a dynamic and loving UCC pastor and has two wonderful children.

1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-22

John Oxenham, 1908; alt.
St. 3, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1987

1 In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North;
 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev - ery - where their high com - mu - nion find;
 3 In Christ is nei - ther Jew nor Greek, and nei - ther slave nor free;
 4 In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North;

But one com - mu - ni - ty of love through - out the whole wide earth.
 God's ser - vice is the gold - en cord close - bind - ing hu - man - kind.
 For men and wom - en live in God, and all are kin to me.
 One joy - ous, true com - mu - ni - ty through - out the whole wide earth.



*The flowers on the altar are given by
 The Dewey Family
 In memory of all First Responders*



TODAY'S USHERS & GREETERS

1st Service:

Jenny Bourn
 Donna Burnett

2nd Service:

The Stein Family

Interested in ushering/greeting? Register by visiting this link:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>

Offering Our Gifts to God
Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication
Anthem
*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

In Christ There is No East or West

#394

[insert, left page]

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 us walk with each other 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.

OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

Marion Schneider	John A & Family	Graham Sicalowski (Lauren Starkey's son)
Richard Ansell	Rev. Patricia	Peter Gallatly (Denise Keating's brother)
Rober & Claire Deal	The Lavallee Family	Judy Janwich
Barb Blanchette	Heather (Catherine Lapierre's niece)	Jane (Fletch Coolidge's sister-in-law)
George Jackson	Rose Johnson (Doug Ovitt's mom)	Colleen (Matt McGeary's sister)

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.

FAITH FORMATION (PreK-8th Grade)

YOUTH MINISTRY (5th-12th Grade)

Parents are always welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Laurie Chipman, CE Director: 878-5745 ext. 103; or lchipman@fceej.org.

FAITH FORMATION CONVERSATIONS

Feb. 16th our PreK – 2nd grade will be hearing and talking about the beatitudes or the be...attitudes during peer time. Conversations will continue through February on Jesus teaching us the BE...Attitudes.

3rd – 8th will be talking about the next verses of Matthew 5:13-20 and being Salt & Light in the world. We are here to be salt-seasoning and bring out the God-flavors of this earth or think of it as being light and bringing out the God-colors of the world.



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.

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-fceej>

- ◆ **February 16th**
⇒ @ 11:30am-1:30pm: JY time
- ◆ **March 1st & 22nd**
⇒ 11:30am – 1:30pm: JY time
- ◆ **March 1st**
 - ◇ @ 10:15am: Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture
- ◆ **April 5th**
 - ⇒ @ 10:15am: Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture
 - ⇒ @ 11:30am-1:30pm: JY Time

SUNDAY MORNING CALENDAR

- ⊕ **February 16th** ~ Peer Group Time
- ⊕ **February 23rd** ~ Hands On Mission on 2nd floor
- ⊕ **March 1st** ~ 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.
- ⊕ **March 15th** ~ Peer Group Time

FAITH FORMATION OFFERING

**** 2020 Charity TBD in February ****
Current Total: \$50.69 (as of 2/9/2020)

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.

2019 Grand Total — \$692.82
...for Spectrum Youth & Family Services

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 Peer Group Sundays. All PreK through 2nd grade need to be signed out by an authorized person at 11:30am. Parents can update their list of authorized persons by emailing Laurie.

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.

For details, visit:

<http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/>

Cost is \$250 per youth. Fundraising Event in early 2020.

Deposits now due.

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.)

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.** *The Church is closed on Presidents Day, so this will delay Hannaford Card reloads to later in the week.*



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.

LOST&FOUND basket is located on the coat rack shelf in our new Foyer entrance. We purge the contents every three months, so do please check! Additionally, we have many dishes and such in the Kitchen that are not Church property. Please, visit the Kitchen to retrieve your items.

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.



PULPIT EXCHANGE WITH REV. KAREN MENDES

It is a unique situation to have our Senior Pastor's spouse be an ordained American Baptist Minister serving the First Baptist Church of Burlington. Over the years, Rev. Karen Mendes has blessed us by her preaching. In the last couple of years, she and our own Rev. Mark Mendes have exchanged pulpits so that when Rev. KAREN Mendes is here, Rev. MARK Mendes is preaching at the First Baptist Church. This will happen on February 16th at both services. You do NOT want to miss this. Rev. Karen is a great preacher and brings gifts beyond measure.

OUTDOOR MINISTRY SPECIAL OFFERING

A special offering will go to support our VT Outdoor Ministry week of UCC camping for those going into 5th – 8th grade held at the Episcopal site of Rock Point Camp in Burlington on the shores of Lake Champlain. Campers have come from all around ...VT, NH, CO, ME & MA. Volunteers keep this program alive by signing up to be a dean, a counselor, or a daytime volunteer. Your giving will help support the program by paying for a nurse, two lifeguards, volunteers housing and meals at Rock Point as well as scholarship money for Vermont campers. Please give and help children and youth spend a week in God's creation ... sharing, connecting, making friends, learning and growing in faith. Your support helps keep this vibrant ministry alive, providing them with this opportunity to enrich their spiritual journey with relationships and experiences that can last a lifetime. The 2020 week of VTOM is called @ the Lake, July 26th – 31st, and is listed in the Horton Center NH camp brochure found on our OM bulletin board by Laurie's office or online at

hortoncenter.org

THIS WEEK @ FIRST



**FCCEJ
Offices
Closed for
Holiday**
*Monday,
February 17th*

Offices reopen on **Tuesday, February 18th**
All other church activities continue as
scheduled.

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.

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

Monday, February 17th @ 11:30am

The book for February is THE POSTMISTRESS by Sarah Blake. It is the story of two women. One is the postmistress in a small town, and the other is a radio broadcaster from Europe as the Nazis bomb London. The author looks at people caught in the tide of history, and at what we tell to each other and what we choose to keep to ourselves. Bring a brown bag lunch and join us for friendship and conversation as we explore this fascinating book and the ideas it makes us think about.

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!



Lenten Study

*Thursdays @ 10-11:30am
February 27th-April 9th*

“WE ARE BELOVED” is the title of a book to be used to help us understand that, just as God called Jesus “beloved”, each and every one of us is also beloved by God. The seven-week study will begin on Thursday, February 27 and the last gathering will be on Maundy Thursday, April 9. We will meet in Marvin Lounge from 10:00 a.m. until 11:30. Books will be available in the church office. Better hurry; there are only twelve books.

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. Anyone in 8th grade or above is welcome to join the Confirmation class.

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!**

Bridge Club

Friday, February 21st @ 1:30pm

Do you like to play bridge? Do you like to eat cookies and have some fun with other like-minded card players? If so, then come and play bridge at church! You are welcome to bring a friend. We try to get in three rounds and the winner gets one of Rev. Mendes' famous jams.

SAVE THE D@TE!

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 26th @ 7pm

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent; the Church for hundreds and hundreds of years has marked the occasion with a service that draws our attention to the journey to Jerusalem and the Cross. In recent years, the service has moved away from focusing on our abject unworthiness and instead focuses on the power of Christ's journey to Jerusalem and what it means for our lives today. Lent is a time to reflect on significant aspects of the faith and prepare for the joyous celebration of Easter. **Everyone is welcome** and invited to receive ashes on either your forehead or your wrist.



ANNUAL CABIN FEVER CALCUTTA

March 7, 2020

@ 5pm-8:30pm—

Catamount Country Club

Tickets on Sale Now! Benefits the Jamaica Mission Program. Tickets: \$125, include dinner for two; chance to win the \$1000 grand prize; many great door prizes; wine pull, raffles, and the Alumni team auction (2hrs team time for spring project). Additional dinners available @ \$20/ea.

To purchase tickets:

- Visit us at the table in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays.
- Contact Sharon Dettenrieder at dettenriedes@hartwick.edu
- Mail your check to the church.
- Put your check in the Sunday offering payable to FCCEJ.
⇒ Include "Calcutta," your email address and # attending in the memo line on your check.

Saturday Worship

Saturday, March 7th

@ 4:30pm: Marvin Lounge

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



PRETZEL SUNDAY

Sunday, March 29th

**** Volunteers Needed **** Looking for volunteers to help mix up dough and roll out pretzels. Hopeful that we will be back in the Sanctuary by the 29th, if not this great fellowship day will be moved to April 26th.

JOY (Just Older Youth)

Thursday, March 5th @ 12:30pm

If you are 55+ please consider joining our JOY (Just Older Youth) group. We are meeting a half hour later because we need to use the Fellowship Hall but can't get in there until 1. Join us at 12:30 with your lunch and conversation. We'll move into Fellowship Hall at 1pm.

Public Forum: Fair & Impartial Policing

Wednesday, March 18th

@ 7-8:30pm

Captain Garry Scott of the Vermont State Police will lead a public forum regarding critical issues, such as bias in policing; addressing anti-Semitism, hate-motivated crime and incidents that affect LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups; building stronger relationships between law enforcement and the public; building trust within communities of color, marginalized communities and any group that has concerns about access to safety services; examination of VSP policies and procedures; training; recruitment and retention of diverse membership within VSP; collection and analysis of traffic stop and other data; and any other related topics that members wish to discuss. **All members of the public are welcome and invited to attend!**

Something Missing? Check our new "Faith In Action" section (next pages) for more details...

FAITH IN ACTION

'Faith in Action' section was made to sync with the physical church wall bulletins.

HEAVENLY FOOD PANTRY

Hours [Monthly]:
 2nd Monday @ 5:30pm-7:30pm;
 4th Thursday @ 2pm-6pm

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.

Donations: The Pantry would appreciate these donations: *spaghetti sauce, cereal, and chicken noodle* soup. We currently do not need 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.

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 are desired. We'd love to welcome you into our Missions community. Please, contact Anita Guild (anitalguild@gmail.com) for more details.

ESSEX EATS OUT

1st Friday Each Month @ 5:30-6:30pm

A free, community-wide dinner open to all (with a special invitation to the needy & lonely) every Friday night throughout the Essex area. FCCEJ hosts Essex Eats Out on the 1st Friday of each month. Donations (to help subsidize the cost of these meals) are solicited but not required. Visit Essex Eats Out website to view all participating church information and menus; or visit our website for menus of dinners hosted at FCCEJ:

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

FLOWER CHART

The 2020 Flower Chart is posted adjacent to the *Mission: Possible* board in the hallway between the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Your contribution allows you to dedicate a beautiful bouquet in memory of a special person or important life event while bolstering the Church's Flower Fund. We like to give the florists ample time to artistically convey your sentiments. Please, write your request on the chart as soon as you are able. **Vacant dates (as of 2/13/2020):**



<i>19-Apr</i>	<i>26-Jul</i>	<i>27-Sep</i>
<i>31-May</i>	<i>2-Aug</i>	<i>4-Oct</i>
<i>21-Jun</i>	<i>30-Aug</i>	<i>1-Nov</i>
<i>5-Jul</i>	<i>6-Sep</i>	<i>15-Nov</i>
	<i>20-Sep</i>	<i>27-Dec</i>

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

37 Main Street in Essex Junction

Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm;
 Thursdays 4pm-8pm; and Saturdays, 9am-1pm
Phone: 879-6552.

February Sale: All men and women sweaters, scarves, hats, gloves, nightwear are on sale.

News: Shop has a new section filled with fabric and patterns. Especially looking for donations of men's wear including shirts, heavy socks and sweaters.

About: 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.

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

FAITH IN ACTION (Continued...)



DISMAS HOUSE

**** Volunteers Needed ****

Wednesday, April 22nd

We need a volunteer to make an entree for the dinner at Dismas House on **Wednesday, April 22nd**. For information, please contact the Church's coordinator for the Church's Dismas Mission: Ed Steele @ (802) 871-5897; or edwardmsteele@msn.com. Thank you for your support.

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

KNIGHTS OF THE NORTH CASTLE

Quest for the King's Armor

*Armor UP with Truth,
Justice, Peace, Faith &
Salvation*

**August 11^h – 14th @
9am to 11:45am**



All ages, families and friends are welcome to attend! (Use one registration sheet per family)

Group Ages:

- ⊕ You & Me (toddlers accompanied by a parent/grandparent)
- ⊕ Preschool (three & fours & potty trained)
- ⊕ Kindergarten & First Grade (grade you are going into in the fall)
- ⊕ Second & Third Grade
- ⊕ Fourth & Fifth Grade

Recruiting for:

- ⊕ Mission Coordinator
- ⊕ Co -Music Leader
- ⊕ Group Leaders
- ⊕ Snack helpers
- ⊕ Station Assistants
- ⊕ Youth Helpers (6th grade and older)

Volunteer Behind the Scene:

- ⊕ Decorating assistants – help plan
- ⊕ Decorate/Projects - home or church
- ⊕ Decorate days ahead

For questions and more information ~ contact Laurie.

VB Camp Wish List – Coming soon!

@ 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!

****Scholarship money available!****

Previous campers ~ Erik Frivoll & Izzy Owens

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



CONGRATULATIONS to Val

Gabert, recipient of the Essex Rotary Service Above Self Award. Val was recognized for her tremendous work on the Heavenly Food Pantry. Thank you to the three tables of FCCEJ friends and family who came to the award dinner tonight to show their support.

DONATE TO OUR CHURCH



Consider adding a donation to our offering plate during worship. For larger sums of cash and

check donations, please contact Pat Seaver at vttri2@aol.com.



For PayPal and credit cards, visit:

[http://
www.fccej.org/v5/
donate-now/](http://www.fccej.org/v5/donate-now/)

...or scan this QR Code (right) using

your phone.

NOTE: @ 3% Fee is applied to your PayPal contribution. Consider donating a little extra to help us cover this fee!

amazon



Shop at

Amazon.com using Amazon Smile. We receive 0.5% of your purchases!

[http://
smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

Search “**First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**” in the “Charities” section.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NEWS



The Sanctuary Restoration Project is on track to wrap up by Palm Sunday – we cannot wait to welcome everyone back to the sanctuary for Holy Week!

Worship services are being held in Fellowship Hall while the sanctuary is closed for restoration (Sunday Dec. 29 through Palm Sunday). If you haven't been able to come to a service in Fellowship Hall, we hope you will come check it out soon! Many people have commented that they love the cozy feeling and enjoy the chance to

experience worship in a different setting.

The old plaster on the ceiling (and curved wall) was completely removed down to the lathe. This process involved hauling away 11 THOUSAND pounds of old plaster! The new ceiling weighs about the same as the old one... it consists of 5,500 pounds of sand, 4,300 pounds of gypsum, and 1,200 pounds of lime and “gauging plaster” in the new ceiling. We used so much sand that Trowel Trades actually ran out for a short time! The new ceiling will last another 100+ years.

While the ceiling was drying and curing during the month of February, Ron Bisson and his crew patched the many cracks in the wall in the sanctuary, narthex and stairwells. They chiseled out all of the cracked areas and then filled the voids with solid plaster. The walls will be covered with a joint compound to smooth everything out.

Meanwhile, Steve and Kris Griffiths (Griffiths Electric) have been working to update some of our light fixtures and wiring throughout the sanctuary. And, Norm Senna and his crew have begun painting. It is going to be beautiful!

Upcoming Campaign Projects: We are moving forward with plans to add new interior door locks on classrooms and offices, as well as plans for a new controlled-access security systems (including keyless locks on exterior doors and new locks on all classroom/office doors). These improvements will be paid for with funds from our \$47,000 federal grant. The Church Street Entrance will also be updated with new, wider doors to accommodate the new security system and locks. Campaign funds will be used for that portion of the project.

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.

WANT TO HELP? Visit this link to pledge or donate money to our Capital Campaign:

<https://www.fccej.org/v5/capital-campaign/pledge-or-donate/>

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. d [bill.bickford@aol.com]
Sanctuary Choir/Heavenly Harmony Director: Carol Spradling
[cspradling@fccej.org]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: Maureen Evans [233-6127]
Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations:
Cathy Shearer [878-6023]
Treasurer & Historian: Ann Gray [878-4088]
Asst. Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [879-0261]
Financial Secretary: Pat Seaver [879-4445]
Clerk: Christine Sinkewicz [878-4470]
Christian Education: Lisa Clark [872-5849]
Communications: Andrea Sharp [879-0580], Doug Olufsen [482-3064]
Deacons: Judy McCullen [878-9794]
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], Shannon McCullen [922-8792]
Trustees: Kaki McGeary [879-2062]
Ushering: Justin King [238-6273], 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]

**** Note: As of 2/13/2020, some committees have yet to vote on a committee chair. Thus, this list is apt to change again soon. ****

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

February 16, 2020
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
From the Heart
Matthew 5:21-37

Today's scripture contains some of the most challenging sayings of Jesus. Not only does Jesus implore us to take care with our behavior, we are even challenged to watch our thoughts. What if we were able to recognize Christ's forgiveness extends even to the violence of our thoughts?

Try this guided meditation as a place to start that radical forgiveness.

Imagine a beautiful hill and imagine yourself climbing it, never tired in your body, never tired of looking around at this gorgeous place....

Now imagine that you get to the top of the hill, and the view of the valleys and plains around you opens up. You can see a long way. Imagine that the place spread before you is the country of your inner life....

It is populated with all the people you have known and every place you have ever been and everything you have ever done. As you look over it, you can see it at a distance, yet you can see it all clearly....

Take a few moments to locate someone precious, or something that brings you joy, or someplace that brings you peace from sometime in your life. Enjoy your memories and feelings as you look upon that beloved person, object or place....

Now turn your gaze. Somewhere in the vast country of your inner life, there is something that still feels out of place. Somewhere is stored those thoughts that bring you regret.

From your safe place, high on the hill, you can look upon those thoughts with fresh eyes. You can see them for what they are – one part of the country of your inner life, not the whole of it.... Look at it from this distance and with this clarity. See again how the thing you thought, that once seemed so huge, is only one place in the country of your inner life, one part of all the vastness that you have seen and known....

Allow yourself to imagine how it would change the geography of the country of your life if you were to recognize that Christ forgives the thing that needs forgiving....

Would the thing change in shape or color? Would it reflect or absorb the light in a different way? Would it become smaller? Would it disappear altogether, leaving room for something new?

Allow yourself to know that it is already forgiven by a God whose love is more powerful than any human thought....

Notice if anything in you has changed. You might notice that you feel lighter now....

You might feel more satisfied about the future of the country of your life – ready for whatever lies ahead. Renewed, you return back down the hill. You might find yourself walking more quickly now – almost running, your feet almost flying off the ground...

You might want to journal about your experience of entering this meditation, or share it with friends or a spiritual guide like your pastor. Does imagining Christ's forgiveness help it seem closer to you?

Monday, February 17

HOLIDAY -- FCCEJ Offices Closed (Presidents Day)

- 11:30am - 1:30pm Noontime Book Group** (Marvin Lounge) 🗓️
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm Food Pantry Stocking** (Fellowship Hall & Gym) 🗓️
- 5:30pm - 6:45pm Yoga @ First** (2nd Floor Programming Room) 🗓️
- 5:30pm - 6:30pm Group Victory** (Marvin Lounge) 🗓️
- 6:30pm - 8:30pm Scouting Alumni & Friends Committee** (Marvin Lounge)
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm BSA Troop 624** (3rd Floor Youth Room) 🗓️

Wednesday, February 19

- 8:00am - 11:30am Food Shelf Delivery** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 1:30pm - 3:00pm 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) 🗓️

Friday, February 21

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm Bridge Club** (Marvin Lounge) 🗓️

**WEEKLY
CHURCH
CALENDAR**

Tuesday, February 18

- 8:30am - 10:00am Sermon Talk Back** (Marvin Lounge) 🗓️
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm CE Meeting** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Communications Committee** (3rd Floor Youth Room) 🗓️
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Missions Committee** (Marvin Lounge) 🗓️
- 7:30pm - 8:30pm OA Meeting** (2nd Floor Programming Room) 🗓️

Thursday, February 20

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️
- 3:00pm - 4:00pm Easterseals** (3rd Floor) 🗓️
- 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) 🗓️
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Trustees** (Marvin Lounge)
- 7:30pm - 9:00pm Confirmation** (3rd Floor Youth Room) 🗓️
- 8:15pm - 9:15pm Music @ First** (Fellowship Hall) 🗓️

Saturday, February 22

- 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) 🗓️

Sunday, February 23

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

SERMON NOTES