



# SPiRiT@FiRST

## April 2020 Newsletter

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### Your Pastor's Ponderings

Dear Friends,

Let me assure all of you that First Congo Essex Junction will continue to be active in the lives of her members and the wider community as we live into Christ's demand to love each other and our neighbors. However, given the health and safety issues of the Corona outbreak, ***we will be doing church differently*** seeking both to keep our people safe by encouraging them to stay home AND remain a loving community of faith given that we are not together in one place.

#### Cancelled or Limited Groups

Sunday Morning Worship  
Saturday Afternoon Worship  
Faith Formation Program  
Saturday Nepali Worship  
All official Church Committee Meetings  
Face to Face Pastoral Visits  
Essex Eats Out  
All Scouting Groups  
Women's Spirituality  
Jonah's Yoga Group  
Book Group  
Bridge Group  
Sermon Talk Back  
Friday Morning Coffee Clatter  
Just Older Youth [JOY] Group  
Junior and Senior High Youth  
Thrift Shop  
Ron Faux's Lenten Book Group  
Josh Simon's Monday Night Spirituality Group  
Sanctuary Choir Practice  
Currier Bell Choir  
Men @ First and Heavenly Harmony  
Musical Groups  
Knitting and Card Making Groups  
Outside Groups that Use Our Space

To keep our people safe, we will be asking all groups to honor the Vermont Department of Health's guidelines for group meetings and limit and or cease meeting in our space. This means that the following groups will either no longer be physically meeting until the authorities tell us it's safe to meet or for very small groups to practice safe distancing and cleaning measures. All groups, even smaller groups, are encouraged to continue meeting via Zoom or Facebook. The following groups are cancelling or limiting their time together

As you can see, our church has quite a few groups that meet and interact on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Many of our church committees and interactive groups will continue to meet in various ways and our many ministries will remain active but in ways that allows for safety. The alternatives include

- ❖ Sunday Morning Worship: streamed via Facebook page at **9:30 a.m. each Sunday morning.**  
<https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- Go to our Website or our Facebook page and click on the tab.
- Or on FM 104.1 on your FM Radio from the parking lot of the church. This is for folks w/o computers, like the old drive in theaters
- Be interactive with Rev. Mark's phone through texting [802 922-1773]. Allows for prayer requests, children's message responses, and things for which we are grateful.
- Be sure to comment on the Facebook live stream. We utilize this comments section for attendance in lieu of a Friendship Pad.

❖ Sunday Fellowship Hour follows Sunday Worship.

- <http://zoom.us/j/403773331>

❖ Saturday Afternoon Worship: Zoom Each Saturday at 4:30 p.m. <http://zoom.us/j/403773331>

❖ Yoga with Jonah: Mondays and Thursdays at 5:30pm via Zoom. <https://smcvt.zoom.us/j/9484805110>

- ❖ Sermon Talk Back: Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. Via Zoom. <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>  
Storytime with Laurie on Thursdays at 10:30am. <https://zoom.us/j/461548603>
- ❖ Josh Simon's Monday Night Solidarity Group: Mondays at 7pm via Zoom. <http://zoom.us/j/910565449>
- ❖ Face to Face Pastoral Visits: Replaced w/ Phone calls, emails, texts and personal walks upon request [call church office]
- ❖ Junior Youth: Josh and Laurie will gather them electronically weekly.
- ❖ Senior Youth: Josh will gather them electronically weekly.
- ❖ Food Pantry will continue but bring food out to the cars in parking lot.
- ❖ Sanctuary Choir: Carol will engage electronically w/ cool software TBD.
- ❖ Faith Formation Program: Laurie will send electronic and snail mail packets.
- ❖ All official Church Committee Meetings: meet via Zoom, Skype or e-mail.

With so much face to face interactions being impossible, the church staff and volunteers will be reaching out to our members in different ways to check up on them but also to continue to maintain the strong bonds that unite us as a community of faith. So, the following actions will be occurring

- ❖ **Daily Devotionals**: every weekday morning at 8:00 a.m. and again every evening at 8:00 p.m. we will post a brief devotional with a scripture, thought for the day and prayers. Have a candle ready to light to set the stage at home. Rev. Mendes will start the day and Rev. Josh will end the day, but you will be able to access the messages any time during the day via Facebook: just click on the video post. <https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- ❖ **Daily Lunch Break**: via Zoom every weekday at 12 noon. Have lunch with your church friends and just catch up with other church folks. No planned topics of discussion just whatever people want to talk about. <https://zoom.us/j/954072355>
- ★ **Deacons** will call every member and friend every ten days or so just to check in and see if there are any needs the church can help with
- ★ **Resourcing Our Seniors**: many of our members are older and or are in an “at risk” category of folks that are particularly susceptible to the corona virus so we encourage them to stay home and let younger members of the church get their groceries or pharmacy medications and drop them off at their front door. If you are older and need this assistance or are younger and can help with this assistance, please let us know at the church office [802 878-5745]. Or call Rev. Mark at 802 922-1773 or Rev. Josh at 920 858-6601.
- ★ **Faith Formation/Youth**: Laurie will be sending via electronic communication activities that parents can print out and use to help them with their faith development during the break as well as asking if they would like care packages sent to our kids every so often reminding them that they are remembered and loved by the church. Josh will similarly be reaching out to our youth.
- ★ **Our Food Pantry** will remain operational for the time being but the way we operate will be completely different, again to protect both volunteers and clients and to continue fulfilling Christ's call to feed those who are hungry. During this time of isolation and financial concern, we all feel as if this vital aspect of First Church's ministry should continue unabated. We strongly encourage our older Food Pantry volunteers to stay home and ask those of you not at risk who can fill their spots to let us know at the church office [802 878-5745]. For the next distribution, no clients will be allowed in the building, but we will be delivering food to their cars.
- ★ **Zoom and Facebook Technology** In this day when we are physically isolated we are all being challenged to stay connected with new ways of communicating and meeting. One way is through Facebook which is a social media group you can join that allows you to communicate with those you love with pictures, videos and simple typed messages. This is how many folks keep in touch with folks throughout the world. It is free to join. Zoom is another means to communicate where you become a member of Zoom, which allows you to join in a conversation live where folks are live and on camera. Each conversation has a numbered code to type in so that you get the right conversation. If you do not have a computer, you can also use a phone and give the Zoom

operator the same numbered code and then you will be a part of the conversation without the picture. Josh has typed up detailed instructions which will be in the newsletter and e-mail. If you need extra help, call Josh [920 858-6601] or Doug [802 878-5745 ext. 100] for assistance.

These are unsettling times, but the church will continue to reach out to all of you to offer spiritual solace, practical help and a sense of calm in the midst of the storm. We will do everything we can to keep our strong family of faith not only intact but stronger than ever. As we all spend more time at home, let us relish the time with our family, read more, reflect and pray more and get outside to walk more. Let us use this time to call your friends and or people from the church just to chat and see how they are doing.....maybe even to introduce yourself to someone from the church you do not know! Jesus' message of new life guides us to be hopeful and optimistic: to find positives in the midst of difficult times, to be calm in the midst of the storm, to be strengthened in the midst of weakening experiences and to proactive in spreading love. As followers of Jesus, let us never be defeated or discouraged but instead see this time as a way to strengthen our faith and build up the ties that bind us together.

On behalf of all the staff and church leadership, I am  
Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Mark

### **Associate Pastor News**

What a time to be alive! It is exhausting, nerve-wracking, stressful, lonely, tiring time. Even though every day is the same, staying home, trying to avoid COVID-19, there is something new every day. The next month at least is going to be rough. Most experts don't think the virus will peak in the USA until early May. The next month we will see more cases, more severe ones, and more deaths. It is a hard fact. It is bone chillingly sad. We are allowed to grieve in this moment, grieving made harder since we cannot embrace most of our loved ones. There will be deaths of friends and family we cannot fully mourn with in-person funerals for months from now. If any happen here, we will find ways to grieve and to mourn and to celebrate their lives—even if we cannot meet in-person together for some time for now. There will be friends and family members who are hospitalized and it will hurt even more because we will not be able to be by their side, to provide them some comfort as they try to fight off the virus. As a pastor, it is hard knowing that some who I minister to, I won't be able to visit in the hospital. Those of us, all of us, who are home socially distancing—so our doctors and nurses and all of the medical staff have a fighting chance to save as many lives by not overwhelming our hospitals—will find it more and more difficult to stay cooped up in our homes. And even if we know no one who becomes critically sick or dies, we will see the sickness and death on our TVs and our computers. All of this is going to happen, maybe not all of it to us, but it will in some way. I urge you during this time to give yourself a break. You might be teleworking from home, but if you need a break during the work day, do so. I urge you during this time to lift up prayers of lament. Let your tears flow. Let yourself feel the pain, for suppressing your emotions hurts and only prolongs your healing. When you need someone to talk with, call us, reach out to us. Join us for our virtual conversations and programs. We are in this together. For me, God is always in relationships. God is an experience. When two or three are gathered in God's name, God is present and holding us together. We don't need to be physically present to be present. God is with us and is holding us. God did not reign this virus down on us. God isn't a magician. God works within the reality of the universe which includes virus mutating and jumping from animals to humans. But Thomas Jay Oord says, God helps us squeeze the good out of the bad. I believe God is helping us as a community of faith squeeze some goodness out of this bad time in our world's history. I truly do. We are in this together. And when we are able as a community of faith to join together, we will mourn those who have died and we will celebrate getting through this moment in time.

## Laurie's Lens

Faith Formation is changing in our new virtual world. I am now sending out a weekly email with stories, conversation questions, activities and more that you can do with your children and youth on Sunday mornings or sometime during the week. Our world is changing around us and so we are adapting to how we can connect and ways to do this. We are turning to the Zoom online platform to meet virtually. I had been meeting with conference wide groups this way for a while now, when we couldn't meet face to face. I just had a meeting this morning chatting with other faith formation educators around our area in Vermont. We talked about ways we have started to do ministry anew, sharing these ideas with each other. I also have been watching how the west coast, who has been in this virtual ministry world longer than we have, and seeing how they are connecting and supporting their congregations. As we travel this new path of ministry I hope you will reach out and let me know you and your family are doing, pass along ideas and let me know what is not working. We are all so used to seeing people, giving hand shakes, hugs and high five's. Please help us navigate our Sundays with you and our weekly ministry programs. So much of our job has been changing and we'd love your feedback.



Pretzel Sunday will Sunday, March 29th in a virtual way. I will be sending out the pretzel recipe in my email and I'm asking Pastor Josh to add it to his weekly email as well. You get to decide when on Sunday you will make pretzels at your house. Maybe you would like to rise early and start your dough so that your pretzels will be baked and warm, ready during worship or right after we finish our 9:30am virtual worship service.

Maybe your family would like to move right into the kitchen when worship finishes and start mixing up the dough then. It's all up to you. I invite you to google pretzels and read about it's history. They have been around for hundreds of years connecting children and people to the act of prayer, especially during the season of Lent. Here is one that I found. <http://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2013/06/the-history-of-pretzels/>

As we continue through this Lenten season please share with me your thoughts, ideas and feedback as we move through this new time of faith formation. I continue to read my daily devotion from the UCC in my inbox as my morning prayer. [http://www.ucc.org/daily\\_devotional](http://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional) May you find peace, calm, and the presence of God around you as we continue to walk through Lent, growing closer to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Blessing & Peace to you,  
Laurie Chipman  
*Christian Education Director*

## Carol's Corner

Dear all - well, there is only one piece of news that we are all pondering. This pandemic has upended our lives and upended our community - for now. However, as we continue to worship, there will continue to be music.

As of right now (March 20), I am intending to provide live piano music at worship, in coordination with Rick Dooley. The plan is to have 2, or a maximum of 3, people on site each week, to provide hymn accompaniments and special music while maintaining the smallest possible human-to-human footprint in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday.

Am asking everyone to understand that I need to work (mostly) from home - am at-risk, with three recent bouts of pneumonia and chronic asthma. Sharing ideas for how to do church differently has been important to me this week, and I've been busy touching base with colleagues from all over the country through social media platforms. I've got not only great ideas, but inspiration and consolation.

There will continue to be choir practices, though of a remote variety using eCamm, Zoom, or a concurrent video service like JamKazam. I'm currently video testing all three platforms. I'm also created a Facebook group for the choir so that we can stay together as a community and share messages and friendship.

March is always the busiest time in my calendar, and COVID hasn't changed that; it's just changed the format. Easter approaches, and even though our hearts may not feel as sunny as in some other Aprils, it is to Easter, and Alleluia, that time leads.

In our homes, we meet to worship,  
far away from sacred space.  
By the Spirit, Christ is with us,  
making this a holy place.  
In these days of social distance,  
we are called to meet apart.  
Still we pray for one another,  
hold each other in our heart.  
If this time indeed is holy,  
we must keep it truly so.  
Even in our isolation,  
God's rich blessings overflow.  
We avoid the world's distractions,  
set our minds on things above:  
Patience, kindness, goodness, mercy,  
faith, joy, peace, abiding love.  
*R. G. Huff – 03/17/2020*

This is a hymn written by a colleague who is a music minister and a professor at a seminary in Texas. I felt immediately consoled as I read it, and will share it musically in worship in coming weeks (insert, left).

### **Communications Committee**

Please join us in a big shout out to Charlotte Frivoll for her instrumental help in the design of our new church logo! Yes, Church Council has approved the logo and we are beginning to use it whenever we can – check it out at the top of this newsletter! We also put an ad in the Vermont Wedding Magazine advertising our church space for weddings and receptions. We look forward to showing off our new sanctuary soon. Lastly, we are constantly adding information to the website and our Facebook pages about how we will be worshipping and programmatic changes related to the COVID 19 virus. Visit the “Church Life Updates” page on our website <http://fcej.org/>; or

<https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/events/>

### **Our Home, Our Future, Our Time Capital Campaign Update**

Even as the coronavirus has changed our church life in many ways, the Sanctuary Restoration Project is still underway and we are nearing the finish line. The scaffolding is GONE, and the plaster work is nearly complete and much of the sanctuary has been painted. Our painters continue to work on the trim in the sanctuary and will then move on to the pews.

Of course, so much is up in the air and out of our hands. We will make adjustments to our timelines in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. We will be back in our beloved sanctuary soon enough – and it is going to be beautiful.

**Upcoming Campaign Projects:** We continue to move 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. We anticipate that this work will take place in early June after we switch to one service.

**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.

Dave Johnson & Kaki McGeary, Capital Campaign Co-Chairs

### **Trustee Notes**

Much of the work of the Trustees is focused on Capital Campaign projects. But the Trustees Committee is also hard at work to maintain our facilities and fix anything that breaks. We are also updating the Facilities Master Plan to plan for future needs, and we are creating a Routine Maintenance Schedule. We still hope to have a Spring Clean-Up day to take care of small projects/sprucing up inside & outside. Stay tuned for details.

Kaki McGeary, Trustee Chair

### Youth Ministry



**VT Outdoor Ministry Team is RECRUITING** We are in need of **2** Volunteer Female Counselors; **2** Paid Lifeguards (1 needs to be over 21yrs – can be counselors too); **1** Paid Nurse. Interested? Contact Laurie. Volunteer training coming in early June. Volunteer Leadership team arrives on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm and departs at 5pm on Friday the 31<sup>st</sup>. Help us continue this very important ministry.

**Current Team for @ the Lake camp:**

❖ *Co-Deans:* Abigail Diehl-Noble (New Haven Pastor) & Ed Sunday-Winters

(Greensboro Pastor)

- ❖ *Male Counselors:* Shawn Bracebridge (East Dummerston Pastor) & James Merriam (Newport Pastor)
- ❖ *Daytime Volunteers:* Susan McKnight (retired pastor), Laura Labrie (College St.), Jason Vanderlaan (College St. Youth Director), Hollie Friot (Barre Cong. Dir. Of Children & Families)
- ❖ *Program Leaders:* Bert Marshall (Interim Pastor at Barre UCC – singing/songwriting), Kurt Shaffert (Interim Pastor - comic book writing)

### **UCC NYE trip to Purdue University – postponed to 2021**

Due to the Covid-19 NYE will not be taking place this July, but instead is being postponed, just like the summer Olympics, to July 2021. More information to come. If you have any questions you can reach out to Pastor Josh or Laurie.

### Camps



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

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

**Sunday, July 26 at 2pm to Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at 4pm**



Registration is OPEN! Go to <https://hortoncenter.org/camps/> ***Yes, Register for camp! At this time it is unknown what will be happening this summer. All camps are moving ahead with planning, recruiting staff and planning programs. Our UCC camps do have a refund and reimbursement policy in place so PLEASE do not hesitate to sign up your child for camp!***

**FCCEJ has Scholarships funds to help you attend – partials and full!!**

*Previous campers ~ Erik Frivoll & Izzy Owens*

Join our community of friends at Rock Point as we explore the shores of Lake Champlain, enjoy the beauty all around us, go swimming, paddle boarding, hiking, have campfires, sing, worship, play, participate in community service and enjoy the amazing sunsets! Note: Campers arrive and depart directly from Rock Point Camp, <https://www.rockpointvt.org/camp>, Episcopal Conference Center in Burlington.

**More camps to choose from on the Horton Center website!**



## Vacation Bible Camp

KNIGHTS OF THE NORTH CASTLE

Quest For the King's Armor

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

**August 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:45am**

**All ages, families and friends are welcome to attend!**

*(Use one registration sheet per family)*

Age Groups for You & Me Toddlers (*accompanied by a parent/grandparent*) on up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

\*\*\*Plans are moving ahead for our VB Camp week. Please to not hesitate to register! The leadership team met earlier in March and our wish list will be coming out soon. Please watch for more news in your weekly emails from church. For more questions and information feel free to be in touch with Laurie.

**Leadership Team:** *Assembly Leader ~ Jessica Moos; Bible Drama ~ Allison VanSteensburg; Decorating Assistant ~ Jenny Bourn; Games ~ Sue Wood; Science/Discovery ~ Justin King; Snacks ~ Judy Allen & Ginny Coe; Media/Photos ~ Doug Olufsen; Co-Music Leader ~ Laura Cunningham Firkey*

**Recruiting for Volunteers:** Decorators (help from home or here at church), Group Leaders, Co-Music Leader, Mission Coordinator, Station Assistants, Youth Helpers (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older)

## Faith Formation

**Faith Formation is a little different now...**

Laurie is sending an weekly FCCEJ Faith Formation email to all families who have children in our Nursery up through 12<sup>th</sup> grade programs titled Faith Formation at Home. If you would also like to see this in your inbox please let her know. If you have not been seeing this in your inbox, please check your spam folders and if you don't find it let Laurie know. Inside you will find news, bible stories, activities and ways to engage your children and youth in faith formation at home as we walk through this new path of ministry together

### **Faith Formation Music**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKkbIZtqhyQ>

In Laurie's weekly emails she will also be including some uplifting and inspirational music and songs to sing along with listen to.

### **2020 Faith Formation Offering**

*Current total is: \$117.20*

...for Vermont Adaptive Sports [www.vermontadaptive.org](http://www.vermontadaptive.org)

Find a jar at home/container and put it in a location where you sit down to watch our worship service on Sunday mornings. Put your offering in the jar each week. Watch your jar fill up. If it starts to overflow, have your parents write a check for that amount and mail it to the church. Make sure they write 'Faith Formation Offering' in the memo line. Address the envelope to the church and write 'Att: Pat Seaver' below it.

*Check out additional videos here about this organization here*

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFOSQkWLx5QvMx1jV7udoyg>

Remember just a \$1 a week can go a long way! Just think what you normally spend a \$1 on each week.

## **2019 Spectrum Youth Services news**

*This just in ...*

*“So grateful for your donation of \$920.89. Please thank the children and youth at the church for selecting us. It is a great help! All funds that we are receiving now will go towards our efforts to help homeless youth who are suffering from the coronavirus. We have two homeless teens who are exhibiting symptoms right now. One was tested and we’ll know in three days if she has it, praying she does not. We have had to isolate them and transport them to a place in Shelburne. There will be many extra costs to us for caring for them and other youth who are sure to come down with it, so thank you and your children there for caring.”*

-Mark Redmond, Executive Director at Spectrum

## **Nursery**

Our Nursery room is still holding items for our Fellowship Hall worship services. When the Sanctuary is all finished all worship items will be going back to their normal locations and the carpet will be cleaned so that it is ready for our little ones to return to the Nursery room when Sunday morning services resume at the church.

## **Missions**

### **Hannaford Cards**

Hannaford Reloads are still available for purchase. However, tangible gift cards are not available until further notice. Reload dates continue to be the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. For April, those dates are April 5<sup>th</sup> & April 19<sup>th</sup>, respectively. If you wish to reload a card that you purchased from the church, you may pay by check or BillPay. Make checks payable to “FCCEJ” with the memo “Hannaford Cards” and the reload date. Mail to:

First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

1 Church Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Or, contact your financial institution to inquire about automated BillPay options. (FCCEJ as a non-profit does not endorse any for-profit institutions offering BillPay.) We currently do not recommend cash payments for health and logistical reasons.

For all payments, please include:

1. Your full name (or recipient’s name if you’re reloading on someone else’s behalf)
2. The last three digits of the card to be reloaded. Note: this must be a card that you’ve purchased from the church. If you’re reloading a card not purchased directly from the church, we need the full card number.
3. The amount of money to be loaded onto the card.

### **Heavenly Cents**

The Thrift Store was closed for most of March. We will reopen soon, but our schedule is apt to be different. Now is a good time to box up spring and summer items as we seek donations for when we reopen!

### **Heavenly Food Pantry**

The Food Pantry operates twice a month offering food to residents of Essex, Essex Junction, and Westford on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday @ 5:30pm and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday @ 2pm-6pm. For April, this would be April 13<sup>th</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>, respectively. Due to the evolving nature of the current health crisis, the Food Pantry’s schedule is strictly tentative, and precautions are being taken to maximize the health and security of all such as utilizing a “drive thru” pickup process to limit people from congregating within the church space. We ask that interested persons call closer to the aforementioned dates for updated information. The church email is [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org); and phone is 1 802 878 5745 extension 100.



## Volunteer

### Church Booth Helpers

Summer is Coming! Assuming that COVID-19 has moved on and our quarantines are lifted, the First Congregational Church is trying to organize a booth to sell food at both the July 4th Festivities and the EJ Block Party on August 1. Do you flip a mean burger? Do you have a great Michigan sauce? Have you attended these events and thought, "I wish someone were selling (fill in the blank)?" Do you have another good idea of a food product we could sell? If so, please contact Cathy Shearer ([10cshearer@comcast.net](mailto:10cshearer@comcast.net)) to share your ideas and culinary talents.



### VT Outdoor Ministry Team is RECRUITING

We are in need of 2 Volunteer Female Counselors; 2 Paid Lifeguards (1 needs to be over 21yrs – can be counselors too); 1 Paid Nurse  
Interested? Contact Laurie. Volunteer training coming in early June. Volunteer Leadership team arrives on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm and departs at 5pm on Friday the 31<sup>st</sup>. Help us continue this very important ministry.

### *Current Team for @ the Lake camp:*

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*Male Counselors:* Shawn Bracebridge (East Dummerston Pastor) & James Merriam (Newport Pastor)

*Daytime Volunteers:* Susan McKnight (retired pastor), Laura Labrie (College St.), Jason Vanderlaan (College St. Youth Director), Hollie Friot (Barre Cong. Dir. Of Children & Families)

*Program Leaders:* Bert Marshall (Interim Pastor at Barre UCC – singing/songwriting), Kurt Shaffert (Interim Pastor - comic book writing)

## Everything Flowers

**2020 EASTER FLOWERS.** We continue to receive flower requests for Easter for which a belated service will be hosted. (Date/time TBD.) If you are still interested in buying flowers to honor a loved one or special event during the Easter season, then email [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org); or call 1 (802) 878-5745 ext. 100. In your requests, please include 1) your name, 2) the reason for your flower donation (e.g. "in memory of Jane"), 3) the flower type that you want, 4) the quantity, and 5) your contact information (especially if you leave a voicemail so that the Church Administrator can contact you if more details or clarification are needed.) Here are the prices:

**Palm Buds** (\$3.95); **Easter Lily** (1 bulb @\$15; 2 bulb @\$30; 3/ bulbs @\$35); **Hydrangea or Large Azalea** (\$25); **Tulips, Hyacinths, or Daffodils** (7" Container @\$15; 8" @\$20); **6" Rieger Begonia or 8" Bulb Garden** (\$20, 10" @ \$30)

**ALTAR FLOWERS:** We continue to take altar flower requests. The following dates are vacant. Should you wish to buy flowers for the church in memory of a loved one or special event, please email [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org); or call 1 802 878 5745 extension 100 and leave a message that states 1) your name, 2) the reason for your flowers (e.g. "in memory of Jim"), and 3) the date on which you wish to dedicate said flowers. Here are the date vacancies:

31-May-20; 7-Jun-20; 14-Jun-20; 21-Jun-20; 28-Jun-20; 5-Jul-20; 12-Jul-20; 19-Jul-20  
26-Jul-20; 2-Aug-20; 9-Aug-2; 16-Aug-20; 23-Aug-20; 30-Aug-20; 6-Sep-20; 13-Sep-20; 20-Sep-20; 27-Sep-20; 4-Oct-20; 11-Oct-20; 18-Oct-20; 25-Oct-20; 1-Nov-20; 8-Nov-20; 15-Nov-20

## April Birthdays

MESSIER, Carla	04/01
CODDINGTON, Lynn	04/02
CILLEY, Lib	04/03
SAVAGE, Cheryl	04/03
DEAL, Claire	04/04
DORN, Kevin	04/05
SILVERMAN, June	04/05
SULLIVAN, Mike	04/05
KOCH, Darryl	04/06
GRENON, Katherine	04/07
MCGEARY, Caitlin	04/07
BAKER, Sandra	04/08
HAMILTON, Kim	04/08
KINAMAN, Lilo	04/08
FOSS, Suzanne	04/09
GRENON, Nova Louise	04/09
CALHOUN, Paul	04/10
HOPPER, Jan	04/11
NOEL, Blakely	04/12
KING, Genevieve	04/14
SEAVER, Pat	04/14
CLARK, Ashley	04/15
MUDGETT-RUSSELL, Barbara	04/16
BELIVEAU, Lyn	04/18
COE, Ginny	04/18
HAYES, Nancy	04/18
ADAMS, Betty	04/19
GOEDKEN, Linus	04/20
PORATTI, John	04/22
BAKER, Anna	04/23
MITCHELL, Steven	04/24
BRENNAN, Ciaran	04/25
HARRIS, Dick	04/26
WERMER, Carl	04/26
ALDEN, Deb	04/27
PETTINGILL, Davin	04/27
DONEY, Myrna	04/28
BASHAW, Jennifer	04/29
WAHL, Hannah	04/29
CLARK, Ryan	04/30

## Ministry Directory

\*\*\* Be advised that staff and volunteers are working from home due to the current shelter-in-place order from Governor Scott. There are currently no regular office hours, though staff are generally available Monday through Friday. \*\*\*

### Church Staff

Senior Pastor: **Rev. Mark Mendes** [mmendes@fcej.org]  
Associate Pastor: **Rev. Josh Simon** [jsimon@fcej.org]  
Music Director: **Carol Spradling** [cspradling@fcej.org]  
Christian Education Director: **Laurie Chipman** [lchipman@fcej.org]  
Church Administrator: **Doug Ovitt** [welcome@fcej.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@fcej.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], **Judy McCullen** [878-9794]  
Deacons: **Judy Larrabee-Pomainville** [236-0604]  
Hospitality: **Jim Glatz** [503-5076]  
Missions: **Joanne Irwin** [878-2528], **Ed Steele** [871-5897]  
Music: **Denise Keating** [345-8900]  
Nominating: **Barb Smith** [310-2491]  
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] [woodsusanjane@gmail.com](mailto:woodsusanjane@gmail.com)  
Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: **Valerie Gabert** [879-0109]

**First Congregational Church of EJ**  
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**ESSEX JCT, VT 05452**  
**Phone: 802-878-5745**  
**Fax: 802-872-8236**  
**Email: [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)**  
**Web: [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)**

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