



**SPIRIT@FIRST**  
*monthly newsletter*

**FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH** *of Essex Junction*  
*Love. Serve. Grow.*

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***...July/August 2020***

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**Your Pastor's Ponderings**

**T**he coronavirus pandemic has brought the world to a screeching halt while economies, scientists, governments, businesses and all types of organizations reel in response with varying degrees of success in adequately dealing with the disease' implications for our lives. So many people have died and mourning their loss is an overdue process and anguished task that must take place as we move into a post pandemic world.

Everything we do as a church has changed. Yes, it has taken an enormous amount of energy and the changes take away the bread of butter of every church: living in a community of love. We all miss worshipping together, talking at fellowship hour, sharing communion together, hugging, laughing at jokes, engaging in discussions of importance, meeting to conduct the business of the church, and getting together to learn, sing, think, play, sew, create and volunteer together. I just miss seeing you all's faces.

The price this pandemic is having is taking its toll.

However, we are Christians and despite the darkness, low points and death, we experience light, highpoints and life. We are a resurrection people; we look for the silver lining; we make lemonade; we grow and learn through the pain; we look to the future with hope; nothing defeats Christ's indefatigable spirit, nothing!!! I cannot tell you how impressed I am with so many of you who have adapted and continue to live within the unknown future of the pandemic with vigor, enthusiasm and love.

With offices set up at home, people and businesses alike are envisioning a new workplace where more and more people work from home...adaptation and creativity. Why spend so much on flying people to conferences when a well-orchestrated Zoom meeting can accomplish the same thing? Parents are sharing with me how delighted they are to be spending more time with their kids, seeing their imaginations roam as they bike and explore their neighborhoods like never before and asking, "now why is it my children spend five days a week doing an organized sport?" Gardens are looking better than ever before; home projects are being completed like never before. Families are playing games and actually talking. Last week at Sermon Talkback, a number of folks shared that they have been catching up with old friends and seeing if they are weathering this scary whirlwind. People are sleeping more, walking more, biking more, getting our on a trail or the lake more. I do not think that it is coincidental that with the new angle of sight and a new set of priorities emerging that there has been an enormous and worldwide protest over the killing of yet another black man at the hands of a police officer. Dark times demand and call for change, growth, adaptation, and creativity.

If you have not noticed life is booming in the midst of this pandemic and constraints upon our behaviors. The tomb is empty. The challenge has been set. The call to life has yet again been offered and answered. And I say, amen! Most of the great movements have been born out of the darkest of times. The same has been true in the life of your church. No one is able to come to our physical church worship service but our ministry is booming. Attendance at our streaming services is double what our numbers were at our physical services. No one is here, but the financial commitment to both our regular and our capital campaign

pledges is endearing and speaks of hope. There has been a new time commitment by a great number of people to make our church look good inside and out and so halls are being painted, gardens re-purposed, mulch spread, grass re-planted and watered and more....an investment for the future and life! And both programs and committees continue to meet, conduct business and plan for next fall and beyond. Laurie and her gang are all set for what will be a tremendous online VBCamp! The staff has already outlined a tremendous curriculum and strategy to teach the faith next year including a Lenten adult confirmation class. The Heavenly Food Pantry has adapted and continues to give away more food than ever even as the Thrift Store has worked hard to get safely open and respond to the needs of folks in the community.....positive energy, overcoming fear, standing up for love and compassion!

Outside of the real and palpable anguish of not seeing each other physically, your church's ministry continues to be a vibrant and active community of faith attesting to the ongoing life of a God who comes out strongest in times of distress and darkness. These are awfully trying times, but I have no doubt that we will come through this stronger than ever and well prepared to shape a new ministry for a new as yet undetermined era.....a renaissance of spirit.

So get out there [metaphorically for many of us] and plant those seeds of faith, spread around Christ's love a bit, explore life and people in new and technological ways, call people with greetings, get outside and enjoy the beauty of creation, play some games with your partner or kids, talk more, listen more and relish the life that is set before us. In so doing these things you will be a part of Christ's witness that life conquers death, that ordered creation comes out of chaos, that the arc of justice is an ever present reality and that love binds all things together.

*Blessings on your summer,  
Rev. Mark*

### Associate Pastor News

Summer finally is here. From what we know about the novel coronavirus, it seems that gathering outside while wearing facemasks is a low-risk activity. In July and August, every Wednesday at 10 am, I am hosting parking lot office hours. You can find me either under a shady tree or under the canopy. Drive on up or walk up and we'll talk about whatever you want to talk about. Also, every Monday at 12 pm, I will have lunch outside on the church grounds under the shade. We will maintain physical distance and wear masks as much as possible as we eat and socialize. If there is rain, we will not eat lunch inside. This is a wonderful chance to utilize the conditions that reduce the chances of spreading the virus while socializing and connecting with each other. For youth ministry events this Summer, please check the Youth Ministry News section. We have many opportunities for youth to socialize with each other and to serve their community.

*Rev. Simon, Associate Pastor*

### Laurie's Lens



Summer is here and our wonderful volunteers are all working hard to make Vacation Bible Camp @ home fun for all ages. They are recording their stations for you to enjoy and getting items ready for you to pick up on Sunday Kick-Off! A family style VB Camp with flexibility for what time of the day works best for your family to have fun learning about God and doing all the fun activities. Each family that registers their children and youth will receive an email with links and a password to our online videos and the link to our evening Zoom of fellowship. Each evening our camper knights will get to meet each other and meet the VB Camp team, so even if your family decides that VBC works best in the evening they can just break away and say hello to everyone on Zoom. VB Camp is free, so register today! You won't want to miss out meeting Sparky and learning to armor up for truth, justice, peace, faith & salvation with God!

UCC Outdoor ministry will also be bringing fun camps to you online and our VT OM team is working hard to bring HC @ home @ the Lake to you with fun and inspirational morning watches, activity videos and evening Zoom vespers and everything is also FREE! But you need to register at least 2 weeks before the start of camp! I'd like to encourage all upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders to set aside July 25-31<sup>st</sup> and go online and register today! There are only 30 slots for each of the HC @ home camps. If you have ever wanted to try camp and were not sure of staying overnight for a full week, here is your chance to get a feel of camp as well as meet many of the adults who help to make our @ the Lake a fun Spirit filled week for everyone!

Another program I am working on this summer is a new one for FCCEJ! We have consistently seen our older Junior Youth pushing our faith conversations and dialogues to go deeper, so to help this happen we will be switching our JY age range to be for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders. I have also seen an interest with our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders to dive deeper with faith conversations than what our Sunday morning time allows so this fall I will lead an hour long program for upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders, along with a parent. The vision is to create a bonding experience, bringing together child/parent/faith friends with a hands-on activity/mission connection and of course food. Parents, please watch your inbox for a survey coming your way so that you can share your feedback on day/time of when to gather, name for this group, and when to begin (late August or September).

I'll be taking some time off the end of June/early July and will be back in the office on July 6<sup>th</sup>. I pray you all have a safe summer and I look forward to seeing you online for camp and in the community!

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

## Communications

Way back in February, before we ever uttered the words “social distancing” and masks became part of our everyday attire, the Communications committee purchased an advertisement spot in the Green Mountain Weddings magazine for 2020. With our beautifully refurbished sanctuary, we were excited to welcome people to enjoy our space for their wedding celebrations. We are happy to share that the print version of the publication is finally available. It is not yet published online, but hopefully it will be soon.



The transformation of the website has continued since our last update. Two new main menu items have been added: “Serving Others” and “Grow in Faith”. The Serving Others area features different ways that our church aids others through programs like the Heavenly Food Pantry, supporting JUMP, the Jamaica Mission Trip and others. The Grow in Faith area is focused on educational and enrichment opportunities for our children, youth & adults. This area will be where families will go in August to access all of the materials for Vacation Bible Camp @Home. The website is our best way to reach people right now while we are constrained in what we can do in person.

Please take an opportunity to browse the website at [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org) and stay tuned as further improvements are made over the summer. Please contact the church office via e-mail at [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) or call 878-5745 if you have any questions.

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

We have made tremendous progress on our long list of campaign projects. "Our Home" will be beautiful, ready & waiting for everyone's safe return – hopefully sometime this fall! We are very excited to report that almost all of our major main goal projects are complete (or will be soon), along with a few stretch goal projects. Visit the Capital Campaign Project page of our website for the latest information and pictures!

**So, What's Happening Now?** Several projects in the administrative wing are currently underway. We removed old asbestos tile and installed new flooring throughout the halls and the staff offices (the preschool wing of the building was completed last summer). Volunteers are giving the hallways a fresh coat of paint – getting rid of the old blue trim and two-toned walls and switching to creamy walls and white trim to give a consistent color scheme throughout the building. New, wider (and more accessible) doors have been ordered for the Church Street entrance, and we will soon be installing a new security and keyless entry system thanks to a \$47,000 federal grant from the Department of Homeland Security. Interior classroom/office locks have already been replaced to allow the doors to be locked from the inside (another grant-funded project).

**What's next?** All that remains from our "main goal" project list is the heating and insulation work in the Pastor's Office and Marvin Lounge, renovation of the two small bathrooms on the lower level, and the Kitchen! Once the bathrooms, heating and insulation work are complete, we will see how much money remains for the Kitchen and any remaining stretch goal projects.

**Pledge Payments:** In these challenging times, we know that many folks are dealing with financial uncertainty and hardship and taking care of yourself and your family is the top priority. For the capital campaign, early pledge payments will help us avoid the need to access the bridge loan and help minimize (or even eliminate) interest expenses. That said, our bridge loan remains available if we need it. Thank you all for your continued support!

Dave Johnson & Kaki McGeary, Capital Campaign Co-Chairs

## Trustees

In addition to managing all of the Capital Campaign improvement projects, your Trustees continue to maintain our facilities and fix anything essential that breaks. We have invested in some turf care maintenance to try and restore our lawn, and several large areas needed re-seeding due to the parking lot work last summer. Other upcoming projects: replace the furnace at the Sawyer House, find ways to soundproof the daycare area to minimize disruption to our staff, fix leaks in our heating system, schedule maintenance for the elevator and lift...and the list goes on! A tremendous amount of work goes into each and every project and repair. Thank you to Frank Smith, Ed Guild, Phil Bourn, Dennis Conti & Ann Gray for the many hours you spend taking good care of our buildings and grounds!

### **Volunteers Needed!**

We STILL have some indoor painting projects and would love a few more hands to help get us to the finish line. Please let me or Pastor Josh know if you would like to help! We can coordinate/stagger volunteer shifts/jobs in order to keep everybody safe. AND...special thanks to the following volunteers...

- ❖ **Painters** – Dave Johnson, Kaki McGeary, Ed Guild, Kevin Meilleur, Kristen Benoit, Laurie Chipman & Mark Mendes
- ❖ **Gardeners** – the Guziak Family, Mike Bottamini, Phyllis Willey, Carl Wermer, Josh Simon, Cathy Shearer, Dennis Conti, Phil Bourn & Sue Wood

Kaki McGeary, *Trustee Chair*

## Youth Ministry

Junior Youth, Confirmands and parents enjoyed a fun hike on June 7<sup>th</sup> at Niquette Bay State Park. We had a group of 21 along with a couple of well-behaved dogs. We wore our masks, practiced social distancing, saw some great views and brought our own lunch for a nice relaxing time at the beach before we returned to our cars and headed on our way.

**Upcoming Ways for 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade Youth to stay connected! Sign up with Pastor Josh**

### ***Opportunities to Volunteer:***

***Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup> & August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am***

Bag food for the Food Pantry here at church. Can only take 10-15 youth on July 11<sup>th</sup>. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> we will also be helping with the Thrift Shop Porch & Church Lawn sale so more youth can sign up.

### ***Fun Group Activities:***

***Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup> & August 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am***

Meet at church with bag lunch. Parents come along on hike or drop at hike location and pick up there. Those who meet at church will caravan to hike location (TBA). Watch your emails for updates.

### **New age range for JY group**

To help foster deeper faith conversations, JY will be changing to 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders. New 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade program will be starting in late August or September. Watch for more news on both.

### **UCC NYE - some things online for 2020**

This trip has been pushed out to July 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some virtual things are still happening. So, whether you were planning to go or not you are all encouraged to check out this link and keep watching the NYE website. <https://bit.ly/3etiOms>

## Camps



**Our Vermont Camp at Rock Point**  
*for those going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade*  
**Monday – Friday from July 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>**

The VT Outdoor Ministries Team of volunteers along with this year's co-deans, Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters & Laurie Chipman, and @ the Lake daytime volunteers a fun week for you!

Join us and register for FREE on HC@home at

[www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org). There will be daily morning watches at 9am, activity blocks and live evening vespers on Zoom at 7pm. We have a goal to bring as much flavor of @ the Lake to you with HC@home as we can. We will connect to the water and offer ideas for community service.



**HC@home is FREE:** Our UCC camps hope you will reach out and sign up for an outdoor ministry camp or two this summer, free of charge! HC@home has a mission to continue to give campers the experience of building sacred community, encouraging time spent outdoors and continuing our faith journeys alongside one another while keeping everyone safe. Have you been interested in attending an outdoor ministries camp, but were not sure what it was like or the timing just didn't work out? Well, here is your chance! Take a leap and sign up for camp! All the camp titles now begin with HC@home and are now FREE! They run from Monday to Friday. No weekends are scheduled. There are only 30 slots per camp, so register TODAY before they are full. You must register 2 weeks prior to camp starting so that you receive the online links and your @ home box in the mail. Go visit [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org) NOW! Questions? Contact either Tim Hughes on the HC website or connect with Laurie.



## Vacation Bible Camp @ Home: 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>**

**Drive Thru KICK-OFF Sunday**  
**August 9<sup>th</sup> from 4-5pm**

*VB Camp Team will greet you in their bright orange t-shirts as you drive thru the church parking lot and collect your take home bags.*

Vacation Bible Camp @ home 2020 Knights of the North Castle – Quest of the King's Armor will be a flexible and safe program for the whole family and for all ages on August 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Our VB Camp team of volunteers have been armoring up with truth, justice, peace, faith & salvation as they continue to work to moving our normal in-person stations onto videos that families can watch and then do the activities from the safety of their own home. Families need to register for camp ([www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org) look for the KONO logo) so that you receive the VBC news email with our secure link and password to the videos along with a Zoom link to meet the VBC team, Sparky the puppet and build community. We will kick off our week with a drive thru the church parking lot on Sunday afternoon from 4-5pm. At this time families will be welcomed by the VBC team and collecting their take home bags. Starting on Monday, camper knights will have fun creating their own costume and making a belt of truth, breastplate of justice, shoes of peace, shield of faith and helmet of salvation and much more. Families will have the flexibility to decide when VBC happens in their daily schedule (morning, afternoon or evening). We look forward to seeing everyone on Friday night at 7pm in the church parking lot for a safe and in-person celebration. Camper will be encouraged to 'be strong in the Lord' and wear their knight costumes, a mask and practice social distancing.

**VB Camp Wish List:** *For @Home Crafts & Snacks* - We are looking for many items to help our @ home experience of camp be as fun as it is in person. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054FA4A82FA5FC1-fccej2>

REGISTER online at [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org). (Use one registration sheet per family) Fun for the whole family! All are welcome! **Youth need to register on the form and contact Laurie by July 9th.**

## Faith Formation

### **Faith Formation Programming - Summer**

#### **PreK – 8th grade**

I hope you have a fun and safe summer. Remember that church is just a click away. Join in for worship. Attend Vacation Bible Camp at home. Attend one or more Outdoor Ministry camps from home – all are free [www.hortoncenter.org/camps/](http://www.hortoncenter.org/camps/). You can go back and find past Faith @ Home emails and reread the stories or just stay with the last one on June 10<sup>th</sup> that has lots of stories to read and talk about over the summer. We do not know yet what the fall brings, so please keep watching for updates in your inbox.

### **2020 Faith Formation Offering**

**Current total is: \$117.20 (unchanged since March 15<sup>th</sup>)**

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

Even though we are not meeting at church on Sundays, you can still give by mailing in your offering. Just make a note in the memo line of the check and write 'Faith Formation Offering' or 'VT Adaptive Sports'. Remember just a \$1 a week can go a long way! Put your money aside and then pass it to your parents and have them write a check to the church.

*Earn an allowance? Practice dividing your money three ways:*

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

## Missions

### **Dismas House Needs Your Help**

Because of the corona pandemic, Church volunteers have not been taking the food they have prepared into the Dismas House and enjoying a dinner with the House residents. However, we've still been preparing meals as a service to the residents who still need and appreciate our help. You will recall, working as a team of three, we take an entrée, salad, and dessert to Dismas House the fourth Wednesday of each month. If you would like to volunteer or would like to get information about the Church's Dismas House Mission, please get in touch with the Church's Dismas House facilitator: Ed Steele 802-871-5897 <[edwardmsteele@msn.com](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com)>

**Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop Porch Sale  
and Craft Fest Nearly New**  
*Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 9am-1pm*  
@ Thrift Shop front and back lawns

We are excited to be combing both fundraisers this year. Since we don't know what the fall will allow, a smaller version of nearly new will be held in the summer. All the items saved from cleaning this Spring can now be donated to the Church. Donations for the event are as follows:

1. Thrift Shop can take donations up to the event. Please use the drop off bin for donations. We accept linens, blankets, summer clothes for children and adults, shoes, purses and jewelry.
2. Nearly New will accept donations from 7 to 9 am on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are looking for kid toys, dishes, holiday decorations, books, kitchen items, lamps, frames, pictures. Please don't drop off electronics, skis, large furniture and records.

All church members can help with the following:

1. 4 volunteers to help Setup Tables for both events between 8 am and 9 am. Also, volunteers to help setup tents.
2. 6 volunteers for Nearly New tables
3. 2 Volunteers to help direct traffic for morning drop off.
4. 4 Volunteers to help with packing up left over items.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Linda Bogardus at [linda.bogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:linda.bogardus@myfairpoint.net)

### **Hannaford Gift Cards are still available!**

The church receives \$5 for each \$100 Gift Card we sell or reload. We appreciate this fundraising now more than ever! *Want to get started?* Email Doug, our Church Administrator, for details: [welcome@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.org).

**Heavenly Food Pantry** continues to operate monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday ~ 5:30-7:30pm and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday ~ 2-6pm. The summer Pantry dates are July 13<sup>th</sup>, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 10<sup>th</sup>, and August 27<sup>th</sup>. Questions or Concerns? Please, email [welcome@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.org) or call the church at 1 (802) 878-5745 ext. 100.

Safely receiving food: Due to current health directives, the shopping process will be modified, and food will be delivered to vehicles in the Church parking lot. Clients will stay in their vehicles, where a volunteer will gather family information and bagged food will be placed in car trunks. This way, exposure will be strictly limited for both clients and volunteers.

Donations: The Pantry's most needed items are toothpaste, baked beans, tomato soup, chicken noodle soup, corn, peas. The pantry has plenty of dish soap. For the last couple of weeks in May, the church's administrative wing is undergoing construction. The blue tote immediately outside of our Church Street entrance will be accessible to those delivering donations.

## Altar Flowers

We continue to take altar flower requests. The following dates are vacant. **July 5 & July 26.** Email [welcome@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.org) or call 1 (802) 878 5745 if you are interested in honoring a loved one or special event.

## Boy Scouts of America

### Scouting@Home Update

Our three BSA units; Pack 630, Troop 624 and Venture Crew 6689; are still actively meeting while we all keep safe at home during the pandemic. Using Zoom there have been pack, troop, and crew meetings, Scoutmaster Conferences, Order of the Arrow elections, Games, Movies, Pet Shows, Songs, and more. They have participated in Virtual Campouts with each scout camping in their own yard. All of the youth (and young adults) are continuing to work on advancement, and they are having fun and staying connected. We are still waiting to see if summer camps or scheduled trips to the BSA high adventure bases will happen but we remain active, optimistic and excited for more Scouting adventures!

Kevin McCullen, *BSA Chartered Organization Representative*

## Worship & Fellowship Services

### When Will We Finally Worship IN Church???

Church Council has empowered their Executive Committee to oversee the decisions regarding the when and how of life returning to normalcy at church. Due to the serious nature of the disease and its accompanying safe distancing and the size of our worshipping community, they have decided to be cautious when it comes to the safety and welfare of our members. So for the time being, they have set the date of September 15<sup>th</sup> to get back in the sanctuary WITH THE PRIVISO that in mid to late August the Executive Committee will re-evaluate their decision with current information and either re-affirm that date or extend it. An exhaustive letter went out last week and is on our webpage specifying all the ins and outs of their decision. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, we want all of you present when the doors finally open and we worship as one unified body of Christ. With fervent hope for that day the Executive Committee asks for your continued prayers in our decision making. Blessings for you all...will be with you live in church until then...

*We recommend that you review our worship bulletins ahead of time. They serve as primers for your participation; and all are welcome to participate! To access our worship bulletins, visit this link: <https://www.fcej.org/v5/category/bulletins/>*

- ⊕ **Sunday Worship** at 9am starting June 7th, 2020 lasting through the summer months @ <https://bit.ly/3eIhV9P> (YouTube link which we shortened for easier typing)
- ⊕ **Fellowship Hour**, after Sunday Service at 10:30am @ <https://zoom.us/j/980588369>
- ⊕ **Saturday Worship**, 1st Saturday of Each Month (recess in July and August) at 4:30pm @ <http://zoom.us/j/403773331>
- ⊕ **Daily Devotionals**, Weekdays 8am and 8pm @ <https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- ⊕ **Sermon Talk Back**, Tuesday at 8:30am @ <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ⊕ **Outdoor Pastoral Visits**, Wednesdays at 10am @ Church Grounds (Parking Lot and Thrift Shop.)
- ⊕ **Prayer Circle**, Wednesdays at 7:30pm @ <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731198775>
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter**, Thursdays at 8am @ <https://zoom.us/j/97659276694>
- ⊕ *Church Committees* utilize Zoom as needed. Please, contact the relevant committee chair for details.
- ⊕ *Don't have a webcam? No problem!* Visit our Facebook Events page and click your desired event for a list of phone numbers that you can call to join by telephone/cellphone. (There are numbers for people living abroad): <https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/events/>



## Outdoor Pastoral Visits

With pastoral care taking the backseat to the health and welfare of our people, Rev. Mark and Rev. Josh would like to offer you some options just in case you feel a pastoral visit would be helpful to your lives. First, each of them will be offering a drive by pastoral care option starting in July. Every Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. for at least an hour, one of our pastors will be sitting in a chair

close to the parking lot where you can either drive by and have a conversation or come and sit in your own chair that you bring and have a sit down with appropriate space between you. Rev. Josh will be covering July and Rev. Mark will be covering August. The other option would be to e-mail or call either one of them and set up a time to go for a pastoral walk around the neighborhood with them. Naturally you could always call them and talk on the phone or set up a Zoom meeting with them but if you want the personal touch.... you now have options.

### SUMMER PREACHING SCHEDULE

**Rev. Josh Simon:** July 5, 12, 19, 26

*Have your own communion elements ready for July 5th*

**Rev. Mark Mendes:** August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & September 6, 13

*Have your own communion elements ready for August 2nd & Sept. 6th*

**There may be a surprise guest preacher in August. Stay alert...**

## Prayer Circle – Wednesdays at 7:30pm

Each Wednesday you are invited to join us on Zoom for a peaceful time of coming together in love with God. Josh, Laurie and Mark will rotate each week leading the prayer circle with a deacon. We will share an image to help center ourselves. You can join us with or without video. You can sit in silence, use the chat feature to request your prayer or you can share a prayer and add your voice to the circle. You can stay for the full half hour or join when it's convenient. This can also be a time for meditation and personal reflection. A helpful tip on Zoom is to use a pair of ear buds to help block out the sounds around you and focus on God. Join us wherever you are and however your heart feels. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731198775>

**The Noontime Book Group** will hold a Zoom Meeting on Monday, July 20th at 11:30am. Our Meeting ID number is 626841083. This month we are reading *Woman in Red: Magdalene speaks*. This book is a well-researched, but fictional saga of Mary Magdalene's relationship with Jesus. She reveals untold secrets, prophecies, and teachings of Jesus. The book has raised many controversies among both Christians and atheists. While much of the book is fiction, it does give a well-researched picture of the culture and life of women in Biblical times. Linda Lou Parker will lead our discussion. In August we will read *A Place for Us* by Fatima Farheen Mirna. We see the joy and struggle of cultural and generational clashes as an Indian family deals with differing traditions in moving to America. We follow the family's story from when two parents arrive in America to where each of their children leave to try to find their own place in a new world, while still trying to find their way back home. Jane Schneider will lead this discussion. Join us on July 20 and again on August 17 at 11:30. Bring your lunch and/ or a tall cool drink and enjoy being with friends for fellowship and some interesting discussion. Anyone who enjoys reading and talking about what you've read is welcome.

## Birthdays

\*\*\* Note: List contains staff, active members, active non-members, and their children (same household). \*\*\*

WRIGHTINGTON, Marion	07/01	NYHAGEN, Sylvia	07/27	EVANS, Bobby	08/22
STARKEY, Lauren	07/03	SINKEWICZ, Christine	07/27	ANTONE, Carolyn	08/23
JOHNSON, Rachel	07/04	CHATES, Harriet	07/28	BAKER, Ryan	08/24
MENDES, Margaret	07/04	LYNCH, Tessa	07/29	CULVER, Abby	08/24
ABOUKHALIL, Emo	07/05	ACEBO, Trista	07/30	AHOKAS, Rachel	08/25
HOLDEN, Mark	07/05	BOERGER, Kiley	07/30	DEUTSCH, Stefan	08/25
GABERT, Sawyer	07/07	CROCKET, Daniel	07/30	MCCLINTOCK, Celia	08/26
HOFFMAN, Vincent	07/07	HATHAWAY, Sheila	07/30	ALDEN, John	08/27
LAFLAM, Tamsin	07/08	ISHAM, Barbara	07/30	CHEEK, Gene	08/27
DONLEY, Luann	07/09	BENTON, Lanie	07/31	MCCULLEN, Judy	08/27
HOUGHTON, Martha	07/09	JACKSON, Brad	07/31	FRIVOLL, Charlotte	08/29
ISHAM, Ira	07/09	SINKEWICZ, Robert	07/31	May	
WEISCHEDEL, Betsy	07/09	CHERNYSHOV, Luisa	07/31	BROOKS, Carolyn	08/30
GILLIAM, Christine	07/10	MENDES, Mark	08/01	HOY, Adam	08/30
JONES, Grace	07/10	CHIPMAN, Laurie	08/01	MEILLEUR, Kevin	08/30
EDWARDS, Norma	07/12	CONTI, Sue	08/02	MITTL, Jan	08/30
ABAKAH, Josephine	07/14	KING, Henry	08/03	KELLY, Calvin	08/31
DEAL, Langston	07/14	ALLEN, Dick	08/03		
BUCHSPICS, Grace	07/15	CHARLAND, Mallory	08/04		
EVANS, Ben	07/15	CLARK, Matt	08/04		
MARTIN, Tucker	07/15	CULVER, Melissa	08/04		
NOWELL, Tessa	07/15	RAYMOND, Francis	08/04		
DEAL, Lillian	07/16	SMITH, Barb	08/04		
JACKSON, George	07/16	SZYMANSKI, Marissa	08/04		
KNAPP, Jackie	07/16	TOOF, Carolyn	08/04		
CLEMENT, Eloise	07/17	WHITFIELD, Hope	08/04		
HERLIHY, Christina	07/17	DAIGLE, Carol	08/04		
BOURN, Isabelle	07/18	WILLIAMS, Pat	08/07		
CHIPMAN, Brian	07/18	BERO, Peter	08/07		
HOFFMAN, Alessandra	07/18	SMITH, Val	08/08		
MOOS, Zoe	07/18	FRIVOLL, Lois	08/08		
CUNNINGHAM-FIRKEY, Emily	07/18		08/09		
MARTHALER, Lily	07/19	GIANNUZZI, Bruce	08/09		
BLACKMAN, Judy	07/20	SMITH, Gary	08/09		
KNIGHT, Dax	07/21	SCHNEIDER, Russell	08/09		
FRANK, Courtney	07/21	LIVAK, Terri	08/12		
PETHERBRIDGE, Dan	07/22	GORNIAC, Liam	08/13		
STAPLETON, Walker	07/22	SPRADLING, Carol	08/14		
VINCENT, Marilyn	07/22	CODDINGTON, Bill	08/14		
CARPENTER, Kelsey	07/23	MOREAU, Judy	08/16		
MESSIER, Clay	07/25	NOEL, Matthew	08/16		
ROBINSON, Eric	07/25	MCCULLEN, Shannon	08/16		
FRIVOLL, JanRoald	07/25	WARK, Amanda	08/17		
BOTTAMINI, Diane	07/26	CALHOUN, Kimberly	08/18		
	07/26	EVANS, Rob	08/19		
	07/27	JOHNSON, Marie	08/19		
		BABINGER, Fred	08/21		
			08/22		

# 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:** 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 [802-236-0604]  
**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]

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ESSEX JCT, VT 05452**

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Facebook: [@firstcongregationalej](https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej)**

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