



SPIRIT@FIRST

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

October 2020. *In this issue...*

- *Your Pastor's Ponderings*
- *Associate Pastor News*
- *Laurie's Lens*
- *Music Director's Musings*
- *Deacons Corner*
- *Communications*
- *Trustees*
- *Capital Campaign Update*
- *Faith Formation*
- *Youth Ministry*
- *Missions*
- *Worship & Fellowship*
- *Birthdays*
- *Ministry Directory*

Your Pastor's Ponderings

When I lived in the South, one of the interesting things that occurred during election season was when more conservative churches handed out "Voting Guides" to their membership to help them decide how Christians should vote based on the various political issues of the day. So, the various issues would be listed like gun rights, immigration, fiscal responsibility, abortion, etc. and then each candidate would be judged on each specific issue. The judgements would then help the voter determine how candidates fared in terms of "Christian" values. This same type of process was used years later by Sojourners magazine using issues that the left was concerned about. Interestingly enough, candidates that the guides supported just happened to be the candidates that ended up being recommended as the most qualified.

As we enter the final stages of our election, I wanted to explore a similar process but from a theological point of view. My training is in discerning God's will in our lives from the biblical perspective. So instead of focusing on political issues, I wanted to focus on significant biblical themes that for centuries have defined our understanding of God. Then let all of you as followers of the Living God apply the biblical foundations of the faith to your own political decision making. Seven is a holy number so here we go....

1. God is love. In both the old and new testaments when the law was summed up, the kernel was always love. Loving your God, neighbor, self, and Jesus even added loving your enemy. Prophets and kings, the disciples and letter writers, everyone ended up with love. The candidate that embraces, exudes, and expresses love most clearly is the candidate that God would support.
2. God desires relationship. God's nature as the Trinity is relational. God's first act is to establish a working relationship with humanity. God then is actively engaged in trying to have the relationships within the human family be healthy through laws, separation of powers, familial organization, establishing justice and peaceful civic life. The opposite of relationship is isolation, self-absorption, and self-aggrandizement. The desire for a healthy relationship is closely tied to love since love is always manifested in relationship. The candidate that builds up relationship and the ties that bind us together as a people and world is the candidate that God would support.
3. God demands justice. From the foundational story of the Exodus where God takes the side of the oppressed slaves to the side of the Pharaoh [divine right of kings] to the harsh words of prophets standing up against the rich and on the side of the poor to God's gift of the law which made certain behaviors illegal for everyone equally to Christ's radical idea that when you care for the least among us you are actually caring for Jesus: the entire scripture points to God's concern and care for the marginalized. The candidate who most cares for the poor, oppressed, immigrant, imprisoned, widow and orphan is the candidate that God would support.
4. God is truth. One of the foundational beliefs of scripture is that God is omnipotent and or all knowing. This puts knowledge and truth at the center of God's presence. Jesus affirms this when he says that he is the truth and or the word. The old testament's early focus not on sin but on bringing order to chaos also highlights this foundational nature of the Divine. And this truth is not just religious or theological truth but all truth. Therefore, Church and religious folks have gotten in trouble when they have denied scientific truth for the sake of their religious doctrines. All truth points to God and if your faith relies on

non-truths, then it is not aligned with one of the foundational principles of God. The candidate that stand for, honors, and affirms truth most clearly is the one God would support.

5. God wants peace. One of the outcomes of God coming into our world and our own personal lives is to lead one to peace. This is caught up in the old testament with the concept of shalom. This shalom concerns itself both with the peace we seek within our own hearts and lives but the peace within a nation and world. Prophets wanted instruments of war to be turned into instruments of farming. Jesus is known as the Prince of Peace and this is perhaps one of the reasons he demands that we forgive everyone and even love our enemies. And Paul declares that is as much as it depends upon you, you should live in peace with everyone. The candidate that creates, exudes, and affirms peace, both internal and external, is the candidate that God would support.
6. God's presence and love is for all people. This may sound obvious, but God's creation is for all God's children; God's food, water, building material, air, and beauty should be accessible to everyone. God's law tries to ensure this in law through the Year of Jubilee a time when all debt is cancelled, and land ownership reverts to being equally distributed to the original owners. God's covenants with Noah and Abraham and then again with Jesus are all more inclusive then exclusive. Jesus, the disciples and later Paul all have a radical belief that everyone is welcome to follow Jesus, that Jesus' love applies to everyone. Unfortunately, humanity including religious folks have preferred to see the promise, the resources, and the love as solely theirs. But time and again, God has broken down human barriers and walls to emphasize God's inclusive nature and love. The candidate that draws people together and stands up for the rights of minority groups of all kinds is the candidate that God would support.
7. God wants us to be thankful. Thankfulness has many different facets. Being thankful brings with it a sense of humility that what you have comes from God and not just your own hands. Being thankful also brings with it a sense of joy for the blessings that we have bestowed upon us. Being thankful has also always brought with it a sense of obligation or even better and opportunity to share your blessings with others. Therefore, thankfulness becomes a way of life. The candidate that expresses thankfulness through their sense of humility, joy and compassion for others is the candidate that God would choose.

Naturally, all these feed off each other and are intertwined with each other, but all of these are foundational truths about God that are clearly and consistently expressed from the beginning of Genesis to the concluding book of Revelation. I would encourage all of you to incorporate these meta-narratives from the bibles into your deliberations about the various candidates running for office. Naturally, this is not a scientific exercise but hopefully one that is thoughtful. May God be with all of you and our country as we seek to move forward with civility and respect.

Blessings for your journey.....
.....Rev. Mark

Associate Pastor News

We have experienced a plague, hurricanes, extreme wildfires, and more. I have heard many, many people say our times feel like we are living in the apocalypse. I am sure that notion comes from popular understandings that there will be many plagues and signs. Apocalyptic literature in the Bible and elsewhere actually has a lot of hope in it. Hope for a better tomorrow. There is hope that all that is broken, all that is corrupt, all that is hurtful and harmful will wither away and a new society will come forth. Apocalyptic literature is not predictive of the future two thousand years later. Apocalyptic literature provided hope for the original intended audience, for it would not be hope for them if there was no expectation that their lives would be radically altered for the better within close to their lifetimes.

The people in the Bible did not live in countries where the people could vote or express themselves freely. No elections to redress corruption, economic suppression, speed limits, water and sewage management, taxes, or anything else, for that matter. People who spoke up either ended up on the cross or killed in coliseums. Sadly, due to the circumstances of the times, they could hope for another empire to wipe out the empire that was causing them pain. This is what happened to the Israelites the Babylonian empire took many of the wealthiest members of Israelite society into captivity and the empire destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. They were finally

released and allowed to return to Israel and to rebuild their capital city when the Persian empire defeated the Babylonians. Cyrus the Great returned the Israelites to Jerusalem. In the book of Ezra, Cyrus proclaims, “All the kingdoms of the earth has the LORD, the God of heaven, given me; and God has charged me to build God a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” And often they viewed God’s divine hand in their salvation from the empire that was opposing them. This is highlighted in the apocalyptic book of Daniel. Daniel represents Israel. He is held in captivity in the Nebuchadnezzar’s palace. N. place edict that for 30-day prayer was supposed to only be directed to him, not to God or to anyone else. Daniel refuses and is thrown into the lion’s den. When he is saved from death, he represents Israel’s salvation from the Babylonians. He represents the hope of a people to be freed from their oppressor.

I am thankful that God has led humanity to a place where there can be peaceful and democratic ways to redress wrongs. We do I often wonder what the narrative of an apocalyptic literature written today would be like. How does living in a time with democracy shape the narrative? How would it begin? How would it end? Where is the hope?

Rev. Simon, *Associate Pastor*

Laurie’s Lens



Our new fall faith formation began on Sunday, September 13th with families of children wearing masks in our church parking lot. It was a fun time of handing out bibles to our 3rd graders and some of our younger children who didn’t have a bible at home, having fun on our sidewalk chalk course with some dancing for Jesus, along with getting a balloon and a family Faith@Home bag. We were very grateful for Hospitality offering hot coco and coffee. Thank you! On all other other Sundays Faith@Home will be on Zoom. I will lead a time for children, youth & parents that starts with a greeting, then a song, builds community, has a few talking points, answers questions and ends with a song or prayer. Each Sunday, whether we are in person or on Zoom, begins at 9am and we conclude our time by 9:30am (at the latest on Zoom). Our time in the parking lot, FFO, has a flexible ending time as many are enjoying the fellowship that this offers (some stayed until 10am). I hope you all mark your calendars for FFO on October 13th with the Blessing of the Animals. Don’t forget to bring your pet with you for Pastor Mark or Pastor Josh to give a blessing. We will have balloons again, new items for your F@H bags so bring yours back with you (hang it on the door the night before) and bubbles. Hospitality will be back with hot coco, coffee and cidar. Youth are encouraged to sign up with Laurie to help work a station. We can espeically use your help with balloons and bubbles. Our young children love to see you and it’s a great way for us to stay connected through the ages and build community.

For those of you with children (8th grade or under) who were not able to be with us in person on the 13th for FFO, your family Faith@Home bag was delivered to your door (others who live a distance away I reached out to). Many thanks to Joanne Irwin and Jane Schneider for helping with the deliveries. The Faith@Home emails have started up again. These will come to your inbox on Wednesday with additional information that goes along with the items in your bags. All items are low key and can be started at any time. We know you are all still working on getting into a rhythm this fall and we didn’t want to add more to your plate and yet still be a resource for you to keep your faith moving and growing. For our high school youth and families, who also receive the weekly email, I would like to encourage you to look to our Faith @ Home webpage on our website under the drop down menu ‘Grow in Faith’ for visuals, activities and more information. We have descriptions there of how to set up a prayer station at home and blowing bubble prayers. One of my children’s messages from September was just added, a few more may be also, as I speak about items that are in your Faith@Home bags.

I hope to soon bring together on Zoom anyone who is interested in volunteering with our faith formation program either online or in person.

Please share your thoughts about the programs this fall. I’d love to chat and hear your feedback or ideas you have as we move forward.

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

Music Director's Musings

Dear FCCEJ community - I hope you had a summer that allowed you as much peace, health, and rejuvenation as possible under these circumstances.

I was very fortunate to spend some time by a small lake near the Adirondacks High Peaks. The highlight of this trip was watching the Perseid meteor showers from a kayak in the middle of the lake. With so little light pollution, the stars themselves put on a light show.

Though choir has been on hiatus, I spent much of my working summer preparing a workshop series I was asked to lead... the American Guild of Organists hired me to teach a course on what the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir has done to re-invent ourselves as a virtual ensemble. 350 music directors from around the world tuned into watch my webinar on the how-tos of creating a basic virtual choir from home, so they could begin recording their own groups.

As we head through the fall, many people have been asking about singing in live worship. As of this writing, this has still been deemed unsafe in indoor spaces. When we sing, we forcefully exhale air - and it is in that exhaled air that COVID-19 spreads. While six feet apart is deemed safe for most public situations, unfortunately, that distance is thought to be 20 feet or more during singing. The research on this is emerging, but the scientific consensus is that at the moment, there is no safe way to sing indoors in groups.

The sanctuary choir did have a brief in-person hymn-sing in the outdoor fresh air tonight, as a small group, masked and social distancing. It was wonderful to hear each other's voices. We will continue to primarily use Zoom for rehearsals but will come together in person outdoors as Mother Nature allows.

You will hear the choir's wonderful harmonies in worship singing new songs and hymns, beginning September 20th. Anyone interested in the choir is very welcome; just send me a message and I can add you to the list.

At our Sunday worship services, I'd like to continue to welcome guest musicians into the rotation. Choir and F@F will provide hymns and anthems, but there is always room for additional talent. Please reach out to me (cspradling@fccej.org)... if you forget that email address you can email any staff member and they'll forward to me. I'll coordinate with you to get your music on the schedule. Likewise feel free to reach out for any reason... questions especially.

I want to thank Pastor Josh for spearheading our streamed worship initiative. He spends many hours behind the scenes putting the services together with hard-working volunteers. Thanks, Josh and worship team!

In conclusion: my thoughts and prayers to everyone as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters...

Carol Spradling, *Music Director*

Deacons Corner

"Life Story & Personal Memoir Club"

Have you wanted to write your life story? Or perhaps just memorialize some major events or experiences from your life thus far (while your memory is still somewhat clear)? FCCEJ member Peter Schmalz is interested in starting a Life Story or memoir "club" this Fall. Pete is not a writer or biographer - he is a government bureaucrat. He also is not necessarily looking to find out YOUR life story. But he has been reading up on life story and memoir writing, listening to podcasts from personal historians, and is learning some techniques to begin writing down parts of HIS life story. If you are interested in partnering up in an informal "club" to work on your life story, please reach out to him. It will be a casual process - to learn some different ways to capture your memories, and maybe get something down on paper that you can share with family and friends (or just keep for yourself). Once we know who would like to do this, the group can decide how often they would like to meet (mostly likely on Zoom or in a telephone conference call, but Pete would like this to be open to those who may lack the technology, so don't let that deter you). The timing seems right, with the pandemic keeping many of us cooped up indoors, and seasons changing -- this will be a fun project to work on through the winter and share time with your church friends. Please email Pete at pnschmalz@comcast.net or text him at 202-297-3625, and let him know you are interested. Feel free to include a friend!

Communications

In the last month the Grow in Faith area of the website expanded with the addition of the Faith @ Home page. This page will be a go-to resource for families to explore Faith practices and resources in ways that are convenient for them. This page will continue to grow as new elements are added including music and links to other resources. We encourage you to check it out and watch over time as Laurie Chipman along with the Christian Education committee discern ways to support families with additional resources.

The Communications Committee is creating SignUp Genius pages to help manage volunteer opportunities. The Heavenly Food Pantry page on the website has the link for our new SignUp Genius so people can volunteer online for Food Pantry distribution days. The next areas that will be enabled for online volunteer registration are Dismas House and the Thrift Shop. As the SignUp Genius pages are implemented, they will be added to our website. Additional SignUp Genius pages will be created as volunteer opportunities return to our church life.

The Communications Committee is continuing to research a Calendar for the website, and we will share with you once we have found a solution that meets our needs for ease of use for staff as well as our church members and friends.

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. Contact the church office via e-mail at welcome@fccej.org or by calling 878-5745 ext. 100 if you have any questions.

Trustees

Your Trustees worked very hard over the summer months take care of our building and grounds! Here's the latest news:

Elevator: Our elevator is about 30 years old. At our inspection earlier this summer, we were told that it is time for us to start planning to modernize the elevator with new electrical controls and a variety of other upgrades. Bay State Elevator, our long-time elevator service provider, has recommended modernization over replacement. The estimate for modernization is about \$70K (gulp!), plus the cost of some electrical work. Replacing the elevator would cost twice that much, and we are told that modernization will last at least as long as a new one. The Trustees are doing our due diligence to review the estimate and to determine the best path forward. Obviously, this is a VERY large, unexpected capital expense for essential equipment, and we did not know about it when we developed the budget for the Capital Campaign. We are planning to apply for a grant to cover part of the cost, and we are exploring other funding options. The good news is that nothing needs to happen immediately. We are just being proactive, and Bay State said this is something we should be planning and budgeting to do in the next 1-3 years.

Other Repairs/Maintenance: The furnace at Sawyer House has been replaced. We have had routine maintenance done for our main boiler and have a state inspection at the end of September. We have added compost bins to comply with the new state law. We are still working on plans to soundproof the daycare area to minimize disruption to our staff.

Grounds/Landscaping: We invested in rebuilding our turf/lawn and will be doing some aeration and re-seeding this fall. This will hopefully create a better surface for everyone to use and enjoy during outside events and ministry! Volunteers also removed the dying lilac and some old/dead juniper ground cover in front of the church. The lilac had been dug up and replanted due to the parking lot work, and it never recovered. The junipers were damaged during the scaffolding equipment last winter, and the scaffolding company paid for their replacement. We also removed the tall, leggy lilac on the other side of the church so that new plantings will be symmetrical. Thank you to volunteers Carl Wermer, Phyllis & John Willey, Rev. Mark and Kaki McGeary.

Last but not least...The Barn: We cleaned out the barn and hauled away about 2.5 TONS (5,000 lbs.) of old junk and debris! That is a lot of junk!

****Fall Clean Update –Date TBD - Watch the weekly email & bulletins for details****

Kaki McGeary, *Trustees Chair*

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

Fall is here! Things are looking quite spiffy over at the church and we glad to be wrapping up a few major projects inside. The new exterior doors at the Church Street entrance are so much more welcoming than the old metal ones. They have really brightened up the office area by letting in so much more natural light. We will be finishing up the hallway flooring project during the week of September 21-25...we were waiting on a few new stair treads to come in. The electricians have been working hard to replace all of our emergency exit signs and lights, upgrade our fire alarm control panel, and install the new controlled-access security system (grant-funded). Part of the new security system will be key card locks at all of our entrances and video camera monitors at Church Street and Parking Lot entrances. The next project on our list is adding insulation to the exterior walls in the Marvin Lounge.

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, your continued pledge payments and even early pledge payments will help us avoid the need to access the bridge loan and help minimize (or even eliminate) interest expenses. Thank you for your continued support.

Dave Johnson & Kaki McGeary, *Capital Campaign Co-Chairs*

Faith Formation

Faith Formation is at 9- 9:30am on Sundays

Fall Theme ~ Journey toward God

Faith @ Home with Laurie ~ 9am Zoom time ~ 30 minutes max.

September 27th & October 4th

2nd Sunday of the month ~ FFO in the Church Parking Lot

October 11th ~ Blessings of the Animals (bring your pet), Balloons, Bubbles & More

Remember to bring your Faith@Home bags with you to refill.

Rain date will be the following Sunday the 18th.

2020 Faith Formation Offering

Current total is: \$117.20 (unchanged since March 15th)

Vermont Adaptive Sports 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)

***** NEW *** Young Apostiles (3rd – 5th graders with a parent)**

Begins on Sunday, October 18th ~ Join Laurie from 4 to 4:30pm in the church parking lot.

We will gather, in a socially distance circle wearing masks, and talk about our mission project and how it connects to our faith. Kits will be passed out to all young apostiles to put together at home. We gather back again on Sunday, November 15th at the same time, returning the finished items. If the weather is not good, on either Sunday, it will be a drive through to hand off or collect the supplies/instructions or to return them (entering on the Church Street side to the parking lot). This program will connect our faith with an outreach mission each month. Parents – please share any thoughts and feedback. Laurie would love to hear your thoughts.

Youth Ministry

Opportunities to Volunteer:

Bag food for the Food Pantry. If you are over 16yrs old, help with distribution. Look for postings on our Facebook group or the Signup Genus links on our website.

Junior Youth (6th-8th):

Paper work and a survey were mailed out to all JYer's and we will be compiling your answers and feedback. Kick off was on September 23rd, Wednesday from 5-6pm. We are currently looking at Sunday afternoons or Wednesday evenings to gather at least twice a month. Please watch the JY weekly emails and the church weekly emails for the latest information. We plan to meet in person outside at church or in the safely in the building. If we are not able to do either one we will gather on Zoom. Stay tuned and please pass in your feedback. Thank you!

High School Youth:

Information coming from Pastor Josh. For questions, please reach out to him.

Missions

Heavenly Food Pantry: *An Appeal to the Congregation*

Volunteers: We need your help sorting & distributing food. *Visit this link to sign up!* <https://bit.ly/3iVomZ2>

With the advent of Covid-19, the Heavenly Food Pantry has changed its ways of delivering groceries to food-challenged people in our community. We have been grateful for younger and older folks stepping up to help distribute the food during this time, from those who sort food as it arrives at the pantry, to those who pick up food from the grocery store, to those who pre-bag cans and boxes of food prior to the distribution and to those who actually deliver the food to waiting clients' vehicles in the parking lot. So much has changed, and we want to recognize the people who have been such fantastic helpers.

Covid-19 has also been the cause of another blessing for the Pantry. We have seen very generous donations to our mission in response to the increased need to get food to those who are struggling to feed their families. Given these donations, the Pantry committee is looking for ways to enhance our ability to meet this greater need. We are currently considering purchasing milk vouchers to provide another protein source to our clients. We are also planning to distribute Hannaford gift cards so that folks can purchase food items that the Pantry does not stock.

We would like to ask members of the congregation to provide us with any ideas that you may have that would benefit the population we serve. We welcome your suggestions and would carefully consider each one. We are also currently in the process of asking additional people to join the Pantry committee. As always, we welcome new volunteers which are vitally needed at this time. Thank you in advance for any assistance you may provide.

In mission together,

Mary Richer
Suzanne Reardon
Anita Guild
Valerie Gabert
Mary-Ellen Grove
Elaine Raymond

Heavenly Food Pantry operates monthly on the 2nd Monday ~ 5:30-7:30pm [October 12th] and 4th Thursday ~ 2-6pm [October 22nd]. *Questions or Concerns?* Please, email welcome@fcej.org or call the church at 1 (802) 878-5745 ext. 100.

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is located at 37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT, diagonally adjacent to our church!

Hours: Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10am-1pm; Wednesdays, 4-8pm.

News: Thanks to many hands and customers, the August 22nd Porch Sale was a success! There were many great donations and masked shoppers. Thanks to the use of the large tent set up by the Boy Scouts, shoppers were able to maintain appropriate distances when shopping. It was wonderful to be able see several of our FCCEJ community members. The sale raised over \$1,500. This number is comparable to the amount we make in the fall sale (~\$2,000) which is exciting. Being outdoors, we were able to also sell several larger pieces. It was nice to not only be able to put a "+" in the fundraising line, but also to be together in joyful spirit during this COVID era. Thanks in particular to Linda Bogardus, Jenny Bourne, Maureen McKenzie, Kaki McGeary, Jessica Moos, Sue Conti. Andrea Sharp, Phyllis Willey, Josh Simon and everyone else who helped out. It is always nice to have lots of customers visit the shop, but particularly new faces. As we change from our summer to fall/winter inventory, our regular hours continue to be the same.

Volunteer! We are always looking for new volunteers for any of the three shifts and also welcome fall and winter donations during our open hours. We are grateful to be able to serve our community, particularly during this time of the pandemic. If you and someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350 or email her: ebraymond@gmail.com.

Flu Shot Clinic: Sunday, October 25th at 10:30am-2pm @ Fellowship Hall

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Visit this link to sign up: <https://bit.ly/3mF45cm>

We want to help keep you healthy!! Walgreens Pharmacy will be coming to provide a flu vaccine clinic in our safe space! Shots will be given in Fellowship Hall to one person/household at a time in five-minute intervals. Sign up in advance to reserve your spot. Walk-in appointments will be available if possible. Please arrive a few minutes before your appointment to fill out the paperwork. A few important reminders:

- Remember to bring your payment or insurance information with you
- Check-in by the outside door to Fellowship Hall and collect a form for each person being vaccinated. Please wait in the parking lot (or in your car) until it is your turn.
- Enter through the parking lot door to Fellowship Hall and exit out the front wooden doors. *Masks are required.*

***Shots are for those 20+ years old. Folks younger than that will need to get their vaccines from their doctor's office.*

***If you are over 65 - there is special flu vaccine for you; let us know if you are over 65 so that the pharmacist knows how many of each vaccine to bring.*

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Maureen Evans, 233-6127.

Jamaica Service Program

The Jamaica team would like to give a shout out to all the wonderful businesses who have donated prizes to us for the Calcutta over the past six years. Their generosity has helped make our Jamaica service program possible. This continues to be a difficult time for many businesses in our community, so we'd like to encourage you to support these folks if you can...order take out, play a round of golf, buy a gift certificate for next year. If you do, please let them know that you are there in appreciation of their past support of the FCCEJ Jamaica program! Thank you for helping us give a little back!

Arrowhead Golf Course
Blue Paddle Bistro
Catamount B&B
Catamount Country Club
Champlain Valley Expo
Chef's Corners
Cody's
Courtyard Marriott/Bleu
Flynn Theatre
El Gato
Essex Cinemas

Farmhouse Group
Firebird/Nest
Hilton Burlington
Hotel Vermont/Juniper
Jamaican Supreme
Jay Peak Water Park
Jericho Café and Tavern
Joyce's Noodle House
Jules on the Green
Leunig's
Lyric Theatre

Mark's BBQ
On Tap
Red Panda
Rocky Ridge Golf Club
Shelburne Vineyard
Skinny Pancake
Smuggler's Notch/Bash Badge
Snowflake Chocolates
Switchback
The Essex Culinary Resort & Spa
Zachary's Pizza

2020 Silent Auction Needs Your Help

Without the in-person Craft Fest event this fall, the Auction Committee is brainstorming new ways to raise money for the Church. We'd still like to have an auction, either online or by dropping off bids on an appointed day. Businesses have suffered greatly this year, so we don't expect them to be able to give as generously as they have in the past. So, to succeed, we will need your help! Please consider what talent, activity, or goods/services *you* can donate to be auctioned off. Here are some ideas:

- A cooking/crafting/music lesson
- A themed dinner or picnic, delivered
- A car wash/vacuum
- A pie/jam/batch of cookies
- x hours of lawn mowing/leaf raking/gardening
- A weekend at your cottage/camp
- An afternoon out on your boat
- A themed gift basket
- A room makeover
- An original artwork or craft
- An antique or collectible that you are willing to part with
- A gift card or gift certificate to a local business - *and this has the double benefit of helping local businesses that have been hit hard by the pandemic closures!*

Use your imagination! We need all donations to be finalized by OCTOBER 30th so that we can advertise and have a successful fundraiser! Please drop off your donations to the Church office or email one of the coordinators (below) so we can pick up from you. Many thanks in advance! We look forward to seeing what our wonderful Church family will produce!

Wendy Wark (wbwark@gmail.com) & Phyllis Willey (willeykrewe@yahoo.com), *Auction Coordinators*

Crop Walk Launches September 2020: *Sunday, October 18, at 11: 20 am*

This fall it will be our pleasure to host a multigenerational walk to support the World Church Services faith-based response to local, regional, and global hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. Please watch for the September live launch for details and plan to join us for a physically distant walk up and down Main St (pandemic conditions pending) to support this great cause.

Worship & Fellowship Services

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.fccej.org/v5/category/bulletins/>



Visit this link to view our official calendar of events: <http://fccej.org/v5/calendar>

You may also visit our Facebook events page: <http://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/events/>

We offer regular worship and fellowship opportunities, too! These include:

- ⊕ **Worship, Sundays at 10am** (Communion: Monthly, 1st Sundays) @ <http://youtube.com/c/fccej>
- ⊕ **Fellowship Hour, after Worship** @ <http://zoom.us/j/980588369>
- ⊕ **Faith Formation, Monthly on 2nd Sunday at 9am** @ Church Grounds
- ⊕ **Daily Devotionals, Weekdays 8am and 8pm** @ <http://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- ⊕ **Monday Luncheon, Mondays at Noon** @ Church Grounds
- ⊕ **Sermon Talk Back, Tuesday at 8:30am** @ <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ⊕ **Outdoor Pastoral Visits, Wednesdays at 1pm** @ Church Grounds
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter, Thursdays at 8am** @ <http://zoom.us/j/97659276694>

Noontime Book Group: 3rd Monday at 11:30 am @ Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/626841083>

Next meeting is October 19th. This month we are reading a novel by Julia Alvarez. Ms. Alvarez has been an artist in residence at Middlebury College, and much of what she writes is about the Dominican Republic where she comes from. *In the Time of Butterflies* is the story of three sisters who try to work for the political resistance of a brutal dictator and his regime. Gail Babinger will lead the discussion.

Blessing of the Animals: Sunday, October 11th at ~9am and ~11am

Official Facebook Event Link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/946778635836016>



God created and loves all critters in this world and out of that love comes humanity's love for their pets. On October 11th, join Rev.'s Mark and Josh in the church parking lot @ 39 Main Street before service (@ 9am) and after service (@ 11am). They will bless any animal you bring to the church. They will pray for their health and safety as well as being a good friend to every owner. All are welcome to bring their pets and invite a friend who loves theirs. **COVID19**

Health Precautions apply, including mask-wearing and social distancing.

Reformation/Bible Sunday: Sunday, October 25th @ 10am

Official Facebook Event Link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/329364755040583/>

One of the great outcomes of the movement of the spirit in the Protestant Reformation is Luther's, "*Sola Scriptura*" belief or the primary authority of scripture when interpreting the faith for the people.

Protestants go to the bible when issues of life come up. We do not seek traditions to give us the answer.

In Sunday School, we do not teach doctrines and traditions, but bible stories. We do this so that each person can work out their own salvation. The minister does not grant it or even get in the way of one's relationship to God. On October 25th, we will embody this philosophy of faith with a special teleworship service about the Bible.

Special Note Regarding Hannaford Cards

Hannaford contracted a new third-party called CashStar to manage all aspects of its Hannaford gift cards. Starting **October 1st**, any cards not issued by CashStar will not be eligible for reloads. Don't worry: you can spend money on any Hannaford cards that you already purchased before CashStar took over. The church is happy to assist you with this transition. Please call 1 802 878 5745 ext. 100 or email welcome@fceej.org.

Birthdays

*Carlene Lawrence's
93rd Birthday!*

I wanted to let you know that Mom's birthday is on October 2nd, and she will be 93-years old! Well-wishers may mail a card to her at this address:

**18 Carmichael St
Apt. 301
Essex Jct., VT 05452**

Sincerely,
Carla Lawrence
(Carlene's Daughter)

PETHERBRIDGE, Bonita	10/01	LEAVITT, Dick	10/07	SWEAT, Isaiah	10/20
AMBROSAIT, Carolyn	10/02	HYDE, Paul	10/09	WARREN, Ashley	10/20
LAWRENCE, Carlene	10/02	HAYES, Deanna	10/11	GILLIAM, Samantha	10/23
WATT, Aliyah	10/02	HIGGINS, Zach	10/11	HEWETT, Anne	10/23
BABINGER, Gail	10/03	KRAUSS, Sophie	10/12	PAQUETTE, Ethan	10/23
KELLY, Shannon	10/03	MITCHELL, Marilyn	10/12	WERMER, Alison	10/24
PARKER, Holly	10/03	MOOS, Jonah	10/12	CHADURJIAN, Mark	10/26
DOOLEY, Rick	10/04	CURRIER, Bernie	10/13	DEUTSCH, Martin	10/26
GOEDKEN, Andrea	10/04	DOOLEY, Nate	10/13	WILSON, Russell	10/27
SMITH, Hannah	10/04	MCCLINTOCK, Mary	10/13	OVITT, Doug	10/28
BURNETT, John	10/05	SCHMALZ, Gordon	10/13	YOULEN, Miller	10/28
CIEPLICKI, Kelli	10/05	DONLEY, Kevin	10/14	PALMER, Liam	10/29
WELLS, Joe	10/06	BOERGER, Lauren	10/15	PAUL, Beth	10/29
BOYD, John	10/07	CHARLAND, Kelley	10/16	COE, Jeff	10/30
CILLEY, Jed	10/07	PORATTI, Jessica	10/18	HOFFMAN, Kim	10/30
FORCIER, Mia	10/07	PUTNAM, Lillian	10/18	KEITHCART, William	10/30
FRANK, Meaghan	10/07	HAYES, Stephen	10/19	NOVAK, Zachary	10/30
JACOBS, Joyce	10/07	JACKSON, Michelle	10/19	GRIFFITHS, Mason	10/31
JOHN, Ethan	10/07	LEAVITT, Sylvia	10/19	HOUGHTON, Carl	10/31
KRESS, David	10/07	FRANK, Nicole	10/20	STARKEY, Gorden	10/31

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: (Incumbent, Pending)
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 [878-3068] woodsusanjane@gmail.com
Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: Valerie Gabert [879-0109]

First Congregational Church of EJ
1 CHURCH STREET
ESSEX JCT, VT 05452
Phone: 802-878-5745 Fax: 802-872-8236
Email: welcome@fccej.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
PERMIT #598

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Please help us clean up our mailing list! If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, or would like to receive it electronically instead, simply:

- E-mail an “unsubscribe” message to welcome@fccej.org ,
- Phone us at 802-878-5745, OR
- Mail this page back to us at the address above

Find Us Online!



FCCEJ.ORG



FCCEJ



FIRSTCONGREGATIONALEJ



FCCEJ_802