



SPIRIT@FIRST

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

November 2020. *In this issue...*

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Your Pastor's Ponderings

It is a bittersweet scene God brings Moses to the top of Mount Nebo and shows him the promised land. His legacy of progeny, his dream of living in a land flowing with milk and honey, his vision of uniting the Israelites into one community, his years of following God's direction all caught up with this view of Israel's future home and God's declaration that he would never step foot there must have caught him with up in a mixture of sadness and exhaustion. The questions rattling around in his brain must have kept him up at night: would Joshua be able to lead his stiff necked people, when they crossed the Jordan would they be met with hostility by the current inhabitants, would God empower Joshua to protect and guide the people, would the various tribes and factions be able to stick together, would his life's work be for naught or be the beginning of a religious community that would last forever?

Being at the top of a mountain brings out such deep reflections. I guess that is why we do not call it quits upon getting three quarters of the way up; we want the long view, we want the accomplishment, we want the time to rest before moving on.

This year's election feels the same to me. Everyone I talk to, including myself, is fatigued from journeying through these last four years. We are approaching the apex of the mountain and from our view cannot adequately determine what the future will hold. Generations of promise and hard work gird our fragile selves as we stand on the top of an election that is markedly different than any known in our history. Will we be able to get past the divisions and difficulties of our day? Will we be able to finally deal with one of our nation's primordial sins and finally speak of the skeletal remains of racism in honest and reparative ways? Will we finally be able to stamp out white nationalists and the vile and violence they offer too freely to our beloved country? Will we continue to allow the obscenely rich to manipulate our government and media to their benefit and our expense?

Like Moses, we are on top of Mount Washington, exhausted and sad with both our history and future dreams in our hearts wondering what will come to pass in two weeks. The hard work accomplished through the generations between Abraham and Sarah to Moses ended up coming to fruition. Three thousand years later, with all the normal anguished pain and celebratory joy that life inevitably brings, their community, vision, hope and faith survived and flourishes even in the midst of our current crossroads.

Being within the same spiritual lineage as Moses, I am absolutely positive that after this year's election, life will go on, faith will survive, the resilient human spirit of hope will continue to shine, and First Church will preach the same message of Christ's love for all people as we remain a strong active community where we are kind in caring for one another. Like Moses, we may not make it to the promised land, but the journey's end is secured. We may not be psychologically settled, and our country may not be singing Kum By Yah in perfect choral parts but our faith will still guide us forward toward the promised land.

May the journey be a bit brighter than lately.... Looking forward to travelling with you, I am
Yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark Mendes, *Senior Pastor*

Associate Pastor News

I do not know what to tell you. I do not know what words of comfort to provide you. November 2020 can't come soon enough, and it will be here too soon. I think we can all agree the year leading to November 2020 was not what we expected it to be, and while I have hope for a more stable and clear year ahead, I fear it will not. In conversation with many of you, I know you share these concerns, too. The unknowns, perhaps as always, are too unknowable. I do think one thing is certain: whatever happens on election day, anger and frustration will be felt. Many are concerned that there will be violence and rioting. For their evidence, we have seen violent outbreaks already with Kyle Rittenhouse killing excessive force protestors in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Michael Reinhoehl killing a pro-Trump protestor in Portland, Oregon, and more recently the news about the men who were arrested for planning to kidnap and probably murder the governor of Michigan. These have troubled us to the point of feeling it might be a harbinger of the near future. I do not know if that will be the case. It might or not be. I do not want to linger in despair. Because, we have also seen the greatest outpouring of non-violent activism since the 60s. People have shown up to protests and marches, donated, made calls to their legislators, registered, and voted for their preferred candidates and causes. I cannot control what others might do in response to the election. I do know the work for social and economic justice (for a fairer, kinder, more compassionate society) continues beyond November 3rd regardless of who wins or claims victory.

The only thing I can control is my own response: for that, I place my hope in the presence of God to remind me of my call to love my neighbors and to love my enemies. I place my hope in the actions Jesus blesses in Matthew 5: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Rev. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor*

Laurie's Lens



How great it has been to see families gathering safely in our parking lot on the 2nd Sunday of the month! Seeing you all brings a smile to my face and a song in my heart. If you have not been able to join us yet I hope November will be that month. Mark your calendars for the 15th! We will be having communion as a group all together and it will be special time you won't want to miss! Bring your Faith@Home bag with you so it's easy to collect your next new items to take home and do with your family. We'll be handing out items to help you get started with your Advent season and preparing for the birth of Christ.

The first Sunday of Advent is in November this year, on the 29th. It's the first of four Sundays that lead us to Christmas and the Christmas season (12 days long). Do you have an advent wreath at home? They are simple to make and do not have to be made of live evergreens. The four candles help us prepare and get ready. You can light another candle each Sunday during worship. The color we think of in the church for the season of advent is purple, but there is a little pink in this season too. As you decorate your home for the holidays with green and red, find some purple and pink to add in somewhere. Maybe it's just the candles in your advent wreath (3 purple and 1 pink) to start, but keep looking and maybe you'll find a picture or something more that you have and help decorate the season.

Remember to keep checking 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. A few of my children's messages

(Continued on next page...)

from September were added and I'm hoping to add a few more as we move along.

Please share your thoughts about the programs this fall. I'd love to chat and hear your feedback on how the program has been working or not working for your family.

Peace & Blessings,
Laurie Chipman, *Christian Education Director*

Music Director's Musings

Dear First Church community: It's so hard to write a message for this November from several weeks ahead. It feels like we are heading into an election that could rock our democracy to its very core. We are in unprecedented times. I know many of us echo my sense of unease.

Our music ministry continues its vibrant "virtual" presence with choir and praise band music being recorded in people's homes. All of us who make the recorded music put in incredibly long hours recording, mixing, and producing each song, and we really do appreciate when people notice and enjoy the music at weekly worship.

Currently we're planning holiday services. None of us wanted to be where we are for Christmas 2020 - all of us want to be together in our beloved and beautiful sanctuary.

My plan is to produce carols and choir singing to help make your season merrier.

We are also interested in working with children who may wish to play instrumental music. If your child plays a musical instrument and may wish to participate, please reach out to me and I can put you in touch with the folks putting that initiative together.

I will be visiting Arizona in early November. I remember in 2016, hearing my sister in Phoenix tell me about the 8-hour lines that people (especially people in minority areas) were spending at the polls. I will be out there handing out bottled water and moral support. If you want to join me in messages of moral support, please text me at (802) 881-8353.

Be safe and be strong,
Carol Spradling, *Music Director*

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

Our Church Street entrance and bathrooms (on the lower level) are looking great - the new doors, flooring and paint have really brightened up the office wing and made it feel so much more welcoming. We have brand-new LED emergency exit signs throughout the building and an upgraded fire alarm control panel. We are still installing 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.

Planning is underway to add insulation to the exterior walls in the Marvin Lounge. This project provides an opportunity to give the room a much-needed make-over...so we are looking into new paint, carpet and some new bookshelves/media wall as well. We hope to begin work in the Marvin Lounge sometime in November/early December. Stay tuned for more details!

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*

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee (Dick Harris, Marsha Duell, Carl Wermer and Barb Smith) are actively seeking folks to fill openings on numerous committees. We are all keenly aware of how it takes so many of us, doing our part, to continue and strengthen our work at FCCEJ. The following committees have openings: Nominating, Christian Education, Hospitality, Missions, Music, Stewardship, and Ushering. We hope you might consider giving of your time and talents to one of these important committees. For more information or to answer questions about a possible committee of interest, please contact Barb Smith (802-310-2491 or Bsmithalburgh@gmail.com), the present Chair of Nominating. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Communications

Several SignUp Genius pages have been created to help manage volunteer opportunities. To access a menu of all of the available SignUp options from the church website, visit this link: <https://bit.ly/2Hly8WD>. Or, you can visit our website (<http://www.fccej.org>), navigate to the Get Involved page which is found under the Serving Others menu item. On this page you will find a SignUp Genius image on the right side; when you click that image, a new page will open showing all of the different opportunities to help out. You can sign up to provide flowers for worship, prepare food for Dismas House, assist with the Food Pantry and help in the Thrift Shop. 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 if you have any questions.

Faith Formation

Join us and help be connected as we **Journey toward God** this fall. Join us in person with some new activities this month as we stay warm out in the parking lot reconnecting with others. We'll have new items do at home and take with you by bringing your Faith@Home bag with you that Sunday. Join us on Zoom and meet a new special guest each Sunday. So far, we have had Abigail Evans and Curtis Guild as guests. It was great to see them as found out where they see God in their lives and hear their history with FCCEJ. Mark your calendars!

- **Faith Formation: 9- 9:30am on Sundays**
- ***Faith @ Home with Laurie on Zoom: All Sundays except 2nd Sunday of the Month***
 - **November 1st, and November 15th**
- **2nd Sunday ~ FFO in our Parking Lot**
 - **November 8th ~ Communion & More**
 - *Rain date will be the following Sunday*

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.

***** NEW *** Young Apostles (3rd – 5th graders & a parent)**

Coming up on November 15th

**3rd Sunday of the Month @ 4- 4:30pm with Laurie
in FCCEJ parking lot**

Did you miss the gathering on October 18th? Contact Laurie or stop by the church for your kit. Enjoy making your cross suncatchers and write down where you shine your light. Feel the light of Jesus in you, around you and shining in what you do. Where does your family shine their light?

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)

Mark your calendars and join the fun on the 15th! 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 apostles 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 with Laurie. Help us grow this new program.

Youth Ministry

Opportunities to Volunteer: Visit our Signup Genus page and see where you can volunteer. <https://bit.ly/2Hly8WD>

Junior Youth Calendar (6th-8th):

- **Wednesday, Oct. 28th** ~ Pumpkin carving & Pageant read through
- **Sunday, Nov. 8th** ~ Join the fun at FFO
- **Wednesday, Nov. 11th** ~ Pageant rehearsal
- **Sunday, Nov. 22nd** ~ Pageant rehearsal
- **Wednesday, Dec. 2nd** ~ Pageant recording
- **Sunday, Dec. 6th** ~ Pageant recording

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 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!

Missions



2020 Crop Walk

Sunday, October 18th the much-anticipated Crop Walk took place at FCCEJ. A multigenerational group of 20 church members, family, and friends marched down Main St. with signs and a banner bringing attention to our mission to End Hunger locally, regionally and internationally. \$2,890. were raised to benefit this event. Our sincere thanks go out to all who donated and participated in this important campaign to provide food, education, and resources to families in the U.S. and around the world.

The Giving Tree – Begins the week of Thanksgiving on November 23rd, 2020

Christmas is coming! Once again, the members of this church have the opportunity to provide gifts to needy children in our community. Because of Covid-19, The Giving Tree will look a bit different. There will not be an actual “giving tree” set up in the narthex since the church will be closed. Instead, we are using Sign-Up Genius, a digital registration service accessed on the church’s web page at fccej.org, to select the gifts we want to purchase. Each child will still receive three gifts – two for articles of clothing and one for a toy, book, game, or gift card. Once again, if you or your family wants to purchase all three gifts for a child, you will have that option. (Continued on next page...)

One challenging issue this year is that there will be no actual gift tags to tuck in your handbag or pocket. There will be the need for each of us to note the identifying number of the gift we take and to mark each gift physically and clearly with its associated number so that the gift goes to the correct child.

If that seems confusing for some, Doug, the church's administrator, and Elaine Raymond (879 7350), will be available to take calls to help folks choose a gift(s) to purchase. As before the opportunity to choose a gift will begin the week of Thanksgiving on November 23.

There is always great anticipation around the Giving Tree, and we hope you will join us again in making this Christmas a season of hope and love for so many children in Essex. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350 or ebaymond@gmail.com.

Heavenly Food Pantry

Distributions: *Monday, November 9th and Thursday, November 19th.* It operates monthly on the *2nd Monday ~ 5:30-7:30pm* and *4th Thursday (3rd Thursdays in November and December) ~ 2-6pm.* *Questions or Concerns?* Please, email welcom@fceej.org or call the church at 1 (802) 878-5745 ext. 100.

Residents of Essex, Essex Junction and Westford are welcome to enter the parking lot at First Congregational Church of Essex Junction using the Church Street entrance. Vehicles will be ushered to a pickup spot after showing proof of residence and identification for each family member, including children. Food will be delivered to the vehicle's trunk, thereby ensuring a safe contactless delivery. There are no income requirements to receive food, but additional items from the USDA are available to those who verify their income falls below federally mandated guidelines! Those needing food but unable to attend can call Pastor Josh at 878-5745 to make other arrangements. We have shopping carts to borrow to get food home for those without vehicles for those living within walking distance!

Volunteers: We need your help sorting & distributing food. *Sign up here* → <https://bit.ly/3iVomZ2>

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 a crew of volunteers from both our church and community, the Thrift Shop transitioned from summer to winter inventory late September. Customer traffic has been steady as well as donations received. We accept donations only when the shop is open: Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10-1 and Wednesdays from 4-8pm. We are no longer accepting books but need men's and women's clothing (especially warm sweaters) in good condition as well as linens. If you are interested in volunteering a shift, contact Elaine Raymond at ebaymond@gmail.com or if you have donations and need to arrange an appointment, contact Sue Wood at woodsusanjane@gmail.com. Thanks to all of you who are helping us serve those in our community!

Volunteer! We are always looking for new volunteers for any of the three shifts and 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: ebaymond@gmail.com.

Dismas House. On the fourth Wednesday of each month, three church volunteers prepare a meal for the residents of Dismas House in Winooski (103 E Allen Street). Dismas House is home to 10 people who have recently completed prison sentences and are taking steps to get back on their feet. Typically, one of our volunteers prepares an entrée (usually a one-pot entrée, such as a stew), a second volunteer provides a salad, and a third volunteer, a dessert. Please visit <https://bit.ly/34igZGf> to visit our SignUp Genius page and register as well as request more information.

Alternatively, you may contact the Church's Dismas House facilitator, Ed Steele, by phone (802-871-5897) or email (edwardmsteele@msn.com).

2020 Silent Auction *** **POSTPONED** ***

It is with a heavy heart the Craft Fest committee decided to cancel the event this year. This includes the Silent Auction. We felt in the interest of our community, it was best to postpone until 2021. Our Nearly New sale in August was a huge success and we thank everyone for making donations. The Sale made \$1,500 from everyone donations. We will have a Nearly New sale in August and again in November next year. Please don't forget the Thrift Shop accepts nearly new items, lines, and clothes. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Linda at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net. Thank you for your support.

The Craft Fest Committee

Linda Bogardus, Ann Gray, Maureen McKenzie, Mary Gratton, Wendy Wark,
Phyllis Willey, Cathy Shearer, Val Galbert, Elaine Raymond

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/>
- ⊕ **Sermon Talk Back, Tuesday at 8:30am** @ <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter, Thursdays at 8am** @ <http://zoom.us/j/97659276694>

The Noontime Book Group will meet on **Monday, November 16th @ 11:30** via Zoom (ID# 626 841 083)

*** For the Zoom meeting password, contact Joanne Irwin @ joanne.h.irwin@gmail.com

The Noontime Book Group will meet on Monday November 16 at 11:30 via Zoom. This month's selection is Why I Left the Amish by Saloma Miller Furlong. Raised in an Amish community in Ohio, Ms. Furlong shares in this memoir her return to her roots for her father's funeral. With it come a flood of memories of her dysfunctional family, abuse at the hands of her brother, mental illness, and the strict traditions of her Amish community. Looking for freedom, education, and a satisfying life, she fled to Burlington Vermont where she found friendship, love and much more. She was still conflicted with guilt, sadness of leaving her family and trying to reconcile all she had ever known with a new life she found in the "English" world. We hope you will join us for fellowship and an intriguing discussion of this book

Caring Circles

Our church has been working very hard to continue our mission of serving God in our community and keeping worship going during these last few challenging months. Most of us have said at one point or another that we miss personal contact, we miss talking to each other, and we miss HUGS. The Deacons and staff have been doing a wonderful job of checking in on folks, but many feel that more frequent calls or emails would make them feel more personally connected at this time.

We are starting a new program to bring small groups of 3-6 people together by phone or by email. These folks would check in on each other every few days with brief phone calls, emails or even cards. There are currently several groups starting up. We hope that this will be a way to stay in touch with old friends, enrich casual acquaintances and even get to know a few new people. We hope that no one is feeling lonely or without contact from their church family. These Caring Circles will give you a chance not only to keep your own church connection lively, but also to help some who might be feeling out of the loop right now.

If you would like more information or want to participate, please call the church office at 802-878-5745 or contact Joanne Irwin 802-8782528.

Grasping for Much Needed Grace: 20 Days of Nonpartisan Prayer

Official Facebook Event Page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/671665820451044>

Our nation and society are deeply divided so the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ invites you to unite in prayer for our country. Beginning October 15th and for the 20 days preceding the 2020 presidential election, we urge you to join in this intensive prayer initiative as we daily petition God for wisdom, patience, courage, healing, and peace. Visit this link: <http://vtcucc.org/election-prayers/>

Birthdays

FRANKENBURG, Peter	11/03	LAPIERRE, Cathy	11/19
IRISH, Ginger	11/03	PARKS, Kevin	11/20
CARNEY, Tim	11/04	WARK, Wendy	11/21
HARRIS, Anne	11/04	WILLEY, Maura	11/21
HYDE, Marilyn	11/05	LEFEVRE, Kallen	11/22
LEVANWAY, Malcolm	11/05	OWENS, Edward	11/22
ALLEN, Judy	11/09	WOLINSKY, Ava	11/22
BUCHSPICS, Lew	11/09	GORNIK, Aaron	11/23
FRIVOLL, Erik Yoan Woo	11/09	MOOS, Jessica	11/24
GABERT, Conor	11/11	SHEARER, Jamie	11/24
DEWEY, Sam	11/12	PORATTI, Beth	11/26
SMITH, Frank	11/15	TALLMAN, Sandy	11/26
TURNER, Sally	11/15	DEAN, Linda	11/28
FAUX, Ron	11/18	CATE, Jina	11/29
GROVE, Mary-Ellen	11/18	STEIN, Adelaide	11/29
ISHAM, Easton	11/18	STIMSON, Scarlet	11/30

Thank You!

"I thank you very much for the beautiful rose on my 91st birthday. It means a great deal as always. I hope to be attending in the near future. That is when we can sit in the Sanctuary as usual." *Sincerely,*
Bob Vincent

"I was so happy to see and hear all of the well-wishers who drove by my home on my birthday!" Joyce Jacobs

2021 Stewardship Campaign: Welcome to the Journey! Part 3

In October, the church mailed several letters to raise funds for our Stewardship Campaign. Due to space limitations, Parts 1 and 2 are linked below. The entirety of Part 3 is embedded within this newsletter as well as a snapshot of our Narrative Budget.

- <https://www.fccej.org/v5/2021-stewardship-campaign-welcome-to-the-journey/>
- <https://www.fccej.org/v5/2021-stewardship-campaign-welcome-to-the-journey-part-2/>

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Dear Friends: Luckily, the Israelites did sing and offer prayers to God in Babylon and they became the only deported people of their day to ever maintain their national identity. Within a generation they returned home, re-built their temple with a renewed spiritual awakening, re-established civic organization, and watched as the economic underpinnings became strong once again.

First Church continuing to sing our song in the midst of the worst pandemic in a hundred years is a tribute to the faith and devotion of our members and friends. Worship, music, meetings, giving, outreach, and mutual support are all continuing to occur because of you.... thank you! Like the Israelites in Babylon, all of you know the importance of keeping First Church running smoothly now so that our witness to Christ’s love in the future might remain strong.

“By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept, remembering Zion.
 On the poplars of that land we hung up our harps,
 There our captors asked of us the lyrics of our songs
 and urged us to be joyful.
 ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ they said
 How could we sing a song of Zion in a foreign land?”

The importance of keeping our pledges steady during the next year of uncertainty is crucial to our continued well-being. Let me encourage everyone to spend a little time thinking about the importance of First Church in your lives and in the wider life of Essex and then pray some and figure out what you intend to pledge to the church this next year. Please consider level funding your pledge and if possible, even raising it a bit to make up for the government coronavirus loan/grant that we will not be getting in 2021.

Together, we can remain strong and keep our beloved church looking to the future with hope. Your pledge will allow us to create an accurate budget and keep paying our bills.

On behalf of the Church Council, I offer you
 Blessings and Gratitude
 Rev. Mark Mendes

<p style="text-align: center;">Worship & Spiritual Life 22% of budget (\$93,867)</p> <p>Worship is at the heart of everything we do at First Church. Our mission statement describes us as “a welcoming community, accepting and serving all in the spirit of Christ.” Your support of our pastor, Mark Mendes, Associate Pastor Joshua Simon, and church staff allows them to bring the spirit of Christ to each of us. They, along with many volunteers, conduct weekly worship services, adult education gatherings and spiritual discussions. They also visit members and friends who are in the hospital, nursing homes or homebound.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Building and Grounds 30% of budget (\$127,116)</p> <p>Maintaining our church properties is a significant investment in time and resources. We take pride in providing a safe and welcoming space for meetings, fellowship, worship, and others in our “home.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Music 12% of budget (\$51,113)</p> <p>We have an incredible Music ministry in this church comprised of our seven choirs: Cherubs, Currie Bell Choir, Finally at First, Heavenly Harmony, Joyful Noise, Men at First and the Sanctuary Choir. Carol Spradling is our Music Director, and your generous support funds this staff position, allows the choirs to purchase supplies, and maintains and improves our instruments.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mission 16% of budget (\$67,228)</p> <p>Your monetary gifts help our church and the United Church of Christ finance its missions in our community, Vermont, the United States and throughout the world. Some of the local organizations we support include: J.U.M.P. (Joint Urban Ministry Program), Nepali Church, Essex CHIPS Healthy Snack program, Dismas House, Essex Meals on Wheels. With your generous support, we can make a difference in the lives of the people we serve.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Christian Education & Youth 20% of budget (\$81,788)</p> <p>We love and invest in our children and youth within this church! A strong Christian Education program is essential for everyone looking for a church to call home. Your gifts support our Christian Education Director, Laurie Chipman, the weekly Faith Formation classes, the incredible Youth Groups, and many adult education programs.</p>	

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]
Asst. Financial Secretary: Rob Sinkewicz [878-4470]
Asst. Financial Secretary: Pam Blake [872-8204]
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 McGearry [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]

November 2020

November 2020							December 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	27	28	29	30	31		
29	30												

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov 1 10:00am Worship Service (YOUTUBE)	2 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 2:00pm Thrift Shop Advisory Committee (Fellowship Hall) 7:30pm Group Victory (2nd Floor Programming Room)	3 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 5:30pm Finance Committee (ZOOM) 7:00pm Council (ZOOM)	4 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am FCCEJ: Staff Meeting (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)	5 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 8:00am Thursday Coffee Clatter (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 3:00pm Food Pantry Meeting (Fellowship Hall) 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal (ZOOM; Church Grounds)	6 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM)	7 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)
8 9:00am Faith Formation w/ Communion (Church Grounds) 10:00am Worship Service (YOUTUBE)	9 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 5:30pm Food Pantry (PARKING LOT) 7:30pm Group Victory (2nd Floor Programming Room)	10 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 7:00pm Deacons Committee (ZOOM)	11 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am FCCEJ: Staff Meeting (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)	12 8:00am Calcutta Committee 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 8:00am Thursday Coffee Clatter (ZOOM) 9:00am Jamaica Leadership Team (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 3:00pm Food Pantry Meeting (Fellowship Hall) 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal (ZOOM; Church Grounds)	13 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Blue Spruce Grange (Church Grounds) 7:30pm Blue Spruce Grange (2nd Floor Programming Room)	14 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)
15 10:00am Worship Service (YOUTUBE) 2:00pm Holy Family: Food Dropoff (Fellowship Hall)	16 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 11:30am Noontime Book Group (ZOOM) 7:30pm Group Victory (2nd Floor Programming Room)	17 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 7:00pm Communications Committee (ZOOM) 7:00pm Missions Committee (ZOOM)	18 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am FCCEJ: Staff Meeting (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT) 7:00pm St. Andrew's Pipe Band of Vermont (2nd Floor Programming Room; Gymnasium)	19 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 8:00am Thursday Coffee Clatter (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 2:00pm Meeting of Friends (2nd Floor Programming Room) 3:00pm Food Pantry Meeting (Fellowship Hall) 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal (ZOOM; Church Grounds)	20 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM)	21 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)
22 10:00am Worship Service (YOUTUBE)	23 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 7:30pm Group Victory (2nd Floor Programming Room)	24 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 5:30pm Finance Committee (ZOOM) 7:00pm Stewardship Committee (ZOOM) 7:00pm Trustees Committee (ZOOM)	25 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 10:00am FCCEJ: Staff Meeting (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)	26 HOLIDAY -- Offices Closed (Thanksgiving) 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 8:00am Thursday Coffee Clatter (ZOOM) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 2:00pm Food Pantry (PARKING LOT) 3:00pm Food Pantry Meeting (Fellowship Hall) 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal (ZOOM; Church Grounds)	27 HOLIDAY -- Offices Closed (Day After Thanksgiving) 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 4:00pm Blue Spruce Grange (Church Grounds) 7:30pm Blue Spruce Grange (2nd Floor Programming Room)	28 10:00am Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop (37 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT)
29 10:00am Worship Service (YOUTUBE)	30 8:00am Daily Devotional (FACEBOOK) 11:30am Brown Bag (ZOOM) 7:30pm Group Victory (2nd Floor Programming Room)	Dec 1	2	3	4	5