



SPIRIT @ FIRST

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

June 2022: In this issue...

- *Your Pastor Ponders* Cover
- *Simon Sez* 2
- *Laurie's Lens* 3
- *Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, Vacation Bible Camp* 4
- *Camping Ministry*..... 5
- *Deacons Corner, Community Concerts*..... 6
- *Missions, Jamaica* 7
- *Worship & Connection*..... Insert

Your Pastor Ponders...

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

(Isaiah 2:4)

When will this madness of mass killing end? In Buffalo, New York, a young white nationalist drives 100 miles to murder 10 innocent people of color. In Uvalde, Texas, 19 elementary school children and 2 adults were murdered by a young man. Columbine, Parkland, Sandy Hook and more had murderers come to their schools and kill innocent children. My own child had an event at Essex High School that will affect him for the rest of his life and police in Montpelier seized weapons that were compiled seemingly for the same reason.

When will violence and the mass murder of our children end? No longer can parents say, "it won't happen at your school," to their children. A therapeutic specialist on NPR yesterday corrected a social commentator who was implying that this type of violence is the new normal; the expert on school shootings said killing innocent children should never be accepted or seen as normal; it is abhorrent. How do our children live with such an existential threat? What psychological damage is being done to an entire generation of children, not to mention the rest of us? What does it do to a school child to sit in silence in a small inner room for a couple of hours not knowing what type of violence is awaiting outside or even coming to them?

How can we as a society abide by such a reality? How can politicians spout the right to own military style semi-automatic weapons while our children are dying at such a high rate and with such consistency? How can the NRA have such a stranglehold on the political process even when a majority of their members favor realistic forms on controlling the most extreme weapons and limiting young and mentally ill individuals from owning guns? Everyone knows that a vast majority of our citizens favor some control of militaristic weapons! How long must this madness go on?

Despite some warring going on when Israel was entering the promised land, a clear and distinct message against war and in favor of peace came to the fore. When we read Isaiah on Christmas Eve and fondly await the Prince of Peace to be born, let us remember that Isaiah's God-inspired words were on the side of turning your instruments of war into agricultural tools. Those messianic words were the heart of Christ's message of peace and when Jesus challenged the violent war machine and the political corruption of the Jewish leaders, he was put to death, preaching forgiveness and peace every step of the way. The Old Testament God of the Prophets and the New Testament God found in Jesus would both be in favor of limiting the instruments of war that keep killing our children. Politicians, concerned for their financial war chest, manipulate the gospel and screw it every which way to support the NRA's ill-conceived, short sighted and cynically inclined understanding of militaristic guns in the hands of young, mentally ill, or angry folk, many of whom are white nationalists rising to the red herring of that insipid agenda. I am pretty doggone certain our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ would not be supporting either the free-wheeling nature of gun ownership in this country nor the white supremacists who self righteously murder, maim and disempower God's children of color.

All of us should do everything within our power to reign in this madness and help our country rid itself of violence that manifests itself in the mass murders of our children. We should all help end the madness with every ounce of muster we can draw upon. It is our duty as followers of Jesus Christ to do so.

With a saddened and heavy heart, I am

Yours in Christ.

Rev. Mark

Simon Sez...



The mighty trees extends their roots into the ground, holding them in place in sunny and stormy days. A wind may shake the leaves, but the tree stays in place.

We are like trees. When we are not rooted, a challenging moment, event, happening may destroy us. We are like trees. We need to be rooted. Circumstances of life may push us and try to destroy us. Grounding ourselves in something deeper may help us withstand moments, events, happenings whatever it may be. The theologian Paul Tillich described God as the ground of all being. God grounds us, is the root and source of all love. *“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God for ever and ever.”*

(Psalm 52:8)

Forests are communities. The trees of a forest support each other. Trees are known to provide sustenance to other trees who have fallen and trees turned into stumps. We are like trees of a forest. Church community is a source of sustenance. *“The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap, showing that the Lord is upright; God is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in God.”* (Psalm 92: 12-15)

Summer weather is here and the school breaks are right around the corner. While we may not see you as much this summer, we want to assure you that we will be here and ready to see you. The plan for July is to bring back the Broadway musical sermon series. We hope you can join us for one or more Sundays.

Pastor Josh

Dear Friends,

On a recent six-hour road trip from Cleveland to Indianapolis to plan our next national gathering there at General Synod in 2023, I was reminded again why the United Church of Christ is so important - why you are so important!

First, I talked with **one of our pastors whose church was under threat.**

During Lent, the congregation was singing hymns written by racial minorities. They had chosen the theme “Lenten Fast form Whiteness”. Because of their stance, they were receiving an average of **five hate calls per minute.**

Shortly following this call, I got a text from the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. We connect monthly to share mutual support for our work. Her text read:

*I just got a call from the Trevor Project legal director. Last night Alabama added amendments to their anti-trans legislation. It includes a felony with **up to 10 years in prison for doctors providing trans-affirming health care and the forced outing of trans kids.** They are asking heads of denominations to make strong condemnation statements as part of a veto campaign aimed at the Governor. Would you be willing to make a statement and ask other heads of churches if they are also willing?*

I assured her that the UCC would be heard on this matter.

Then I opened an email informing me that Ohio was **introducing ‘Don’t Say Gay’ legislation.**

This is our America.

And this is your United Church of Christ:

We cannot and will not be silent in the face of racism.

We cannot and will not be silent in the face of transphobia.

We cannot and will not be silent in the face of homophobia.

We fight it all. With and in love, we confront the injustices of our day. We will not stop preaching love until the hatred ends and all God’s children are loved, safe, and honored because of who they are.

In many ways, this is just another day in the life of the United Church of Christ seeking to live out **our purpose:**

to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength,

to love our neighbors as ourselves

to fulfill our vision of those loves building a just world for all!

Our witness matters in the world. ***Your witness matters in this world.*** We can only do this work together.

Shalom,

Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer

General Minister and President

Our spring weather has been giving us a taste of summer lately. For some of you, summer means that you are off on adventures and we don't see much of you. We do hope you will mark your calendars and join us at our 9am worship service on June 5th. It will be a joyous day with Confirmation Sunday, thanking our Faith Formation & Youth Volunteers, sharing Communion, presenting a check to EDD Adaptive Sports from the Faith Formation Offering this year and ending with our Ice Cream Social after the service. You won't want to miss this spirit filled Sunday because it's also Pentecost!

To the early Jews in the Old Testament, Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of the wheat harvest that came during the months of May and June. Then we move to the early disciples of Jesus, gathered in Jerusalem for this feast (after Jesus had left them) and suddenly the sound of a howling wind filled the entire house where they were in Jerusalem. It is said that tongues of fire came and rested on each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and started to speak in other languages. This sound of a howling wind (just a sound and no real wind) was heard in the town and a crowd started gathering. The disciples were in shock, as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to suddenly speak in another language and yet they could understand each other in their own native language. Jerusalem at this time was now filled with many Jews from around the region who spoke in different languages and dialects. The power of the Holy Spirit made it possible to do all this. No interpreter needed. Does it blow your mind? Hard to grasp, yes?

Pentecost is the oldest feast day and what is now referred to as the birthday of the church, because following the speaking in tongues Peter comes out and speaks to the large crowd that gathered about repentance and Jesus Christ. It is said that by the end of the day, over 3,000 people joined the Church. So, 50 days after Easter, Pentecost arrives on our church calendar sometime between the middle of May and early June.

Come join us and wear red, or flame colors. Help us celebrate this great day in the life of the church as we welcome new members here at FCCEJ and feel the Spirit move!

Peace & Blessings to you all,

Laurie Chipman

Christian Education Director

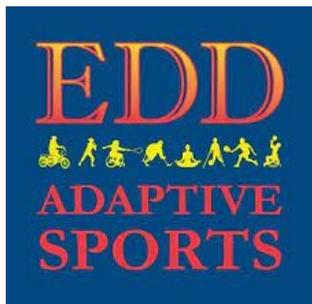
Volunteer Recruitment for 2022-23 Program Year



Yes! Recruiting has begun for our next programmatic year of faith formation. If you enjoy learning right along with children and youth, encouraging them in their faith journey, please reach out to Laurie. Faith is not taught, faith is caught! Let us help each catch the faith, and catch some yourselves. You don't need to know all the answers. We encourage all to ask questions and learn as we go. Church life much fuller when we help others, learn and grow and be a witness for Jesus. You can volunteer as often as you like. Teams are being formed for all our peer groups. Maybe that's once a month or maybe that's every Sunday. You decide. There are always two volunteers with each peer group so you

are never the only one. Our Safe Conduct training and weekly emails from Laurie will keep you connected and supported. Feel free to reach out to Laurie and she can help you figure out where is the best fit for you. We'd love for our high school youth to volunteer as well with our peer groups, giving back and continuing to learn on their faith journey as well. Plus volunteering gains you community service hours which are sometimes needed for high school class/graduation, look great on your resume and your college application. Please contact Laurie: lchipman@fccej.org.

2021-22 Faith Formation Offering



EDD Adaptive Sports ~ www.eddfund.org

EDD Adaptive Sports helps to engage those who will always need assistance and additional support to play all those fun sports we like to enjoy. They help those who have a permanent physical condition. Many thanks to all who have giving to our offering. Great job! We will be writing a check for at least \$482.00 and passing it off a check on June 5th to Gretchen Owens, Executive Director of EDD Adaptive Sports and a member of our congregation. Join us and help us celebrate this year's offering. Ice Cream Social to follow our 9am worship!

Faith Formation & Youth Ministry

****Watch for Faith@Home emails in your inbox****

Summer Faith Formation

We have items in our Narthex and in our moveable Library in Fellowship for children and the young at heart during our summer 9am worship services (June through Labor Day weekend). Please take and use to help your feel more comfortable and welcomed as you sit in the Sanctuary or decide to move and wiggle around more in our Fellowship Hall. Please take your craft project home with you or pass it along to someone. Supplies should go back to their locations (please take the crayons in baggies with you).

Young Apostles

(3rd – 5th graders & a Parent/Grandparent)

Recreation, Bible study, mission projects, laughing & talking, and, most important, creating bonds that will steer our children into lasting friendships in their teen years. This is all found in Young Apostles. Our next gathering will either be in late September or early October. This group will be moving to quarterly gatherings for our next program year. If you have attended any of the gatherings, please pass along your feedback to Laurie lchipman@fccej.org, as this will help with our future planning

Join the Youth Ministry Team

Pastor Josh and Laurie are looking for a few more adults to add to this fun team. Do you like to plan or gather with youth? Help them grow in their faith? Be a mentor? Interested? Questions? Want to hear more? Wondering how you can help this team and our youth? Reach out to Josh, Laurie or Barb Smith and/or Kathryn Brennan (team members). One goal is to expand the number of adults that our youth get to know here at FCCEJ and therefore help them be more likely to keep church in their live and their faith growing.



Vacation Bible Camp - Coming August 8-12, 2022 - Mark your calendars!!!

Food Truck Party: On a Roll with God!

9am to 11:45am - Program starts at 9am. Parents can drop off beginning at 8:45am or stay and join us.

Outside on the church lawn or inside on a rainy day.

Join the fun! Registration is open and ready! **Register online:** <https://www.fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/>. **Same link to sign up and volunteer!**

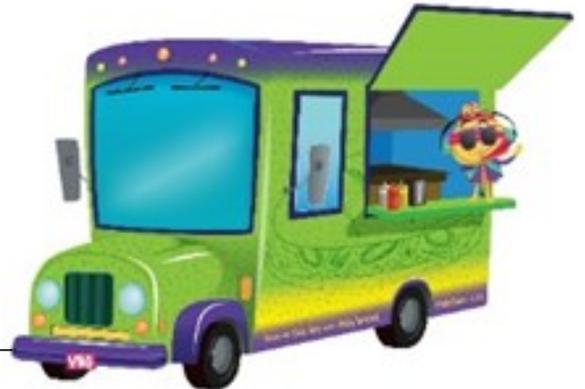
You & Me Toddler (not potty-trained, attend with an adult) up thru current 5th graders

Youth Assistants – 6th grade and up

VB Camp Team is Coming Together!

All volunteers arrive by 8:30am for our morning team meeting and depart by noon. Not sure where or how to get involved? See the blank spaces below and contact Laurie. There's a place for everyone at VB Camp!

- ⇒ **Crafts** – Judy Roy
- ⇒ **Decorations** – Allison VanSteensburg
- ⇒ **Music Leader** – Laura Cunningham Firkey
- ⇒ **Photographer** – Linda Lou Parker
- ⇒ **Snacks** – Nancy Milne & Lauren Starkey
- ⇒ **Tech Crew** - Doug Olefsen
- ⇒ **Games** - Eric Lindholm / _____
- ⇒ **Opening/Closing "Head Chef"** - _____
- ⇒ **Puppeteer** - _____
- ⇒ **Science Leader** - _____ (planning complete—thank you, Justin King!)
- ⇒ **Youth Assistants** – 6th grade and older (be a group leader or help at a station) – _____
- ⇒ **Canopy Set-up** (the week before camp) - _____
- ⇒ **Backdrop Assembly** (weeks ahead) - _____



Camping Ministry

FCCEJ Camping Trips



Whether you like to camp in a tent, lean-to or a camper we hope you will join us! Our camping weekend of June 24-26 is at Lake Carmi State Park. Labor Day weekend will be at Grande Isle State Park, September 2-4. Book your campsite! Arrive Friday afternoon/evening and receive a welcome packet at your campsite that will include our flexible schedule, map of where our FCCEJ families are located and ways we can build community. Plans so far include a scavenger hunt, a hike, lawn games, swimming/beach time, picnic style lunch or supper and an evening of s'mores around a campfire. Come enjoy Sunday worship in God's great outdoors (known as morning watch for outdoor ministry). On Labor Day weekend we may also have Sunday evening vespers.

Join us for the full duration of the weekends or the days/nights that work for you. Flexible is our middle name. Pass along your site # to Laurie or Pastor Mark so we can add you to our email group that will receive info prior to each camping weekend.

Outdoor Ministry Camps



FCCEJ Camp Scholarships await you! For children, youth, adults or families. Connect with Laurie or a pastor and let us know which outdoor ministry camp at either Horton Center (NH), Silver Lake Conference Center (CT) or Pilgrim Lodge (ME) that you would like to attend. Funds are also available to help you and your family attend one or both of our FCCEJ camping weekends in Vermont.

Attending a week of OM camp is a powerful way to connect with God, get to know others while enriching your faith. If you like VB Camp then you are really going to enjoy your time at OM camp. There will be a fun schedule with a 24/7 experience that will be life changing and a cool adventure.

Family Camp Weekend at Horton Center

'Family & Friends – Beginnings' on Memorial Day weekend May 27-30th. All ages are welcome! Really.

It's also Leadership weekend at Horton Center for high school youth to gain some skills. Here's your chance to check it out HC with your family or attend by yourself. All ages are welcome this weekend. Come enjoy God's beautiful place on top of Pine Mountain outside of Gorham, NH.

Laurie is waiting to register until she knows you are planning to attend. HC offers many activities including hiking, caving, rock climbing, nature walks, arts & crafts, field games, campfires and s'mores, and just sitting on the porch in an Adirondack chair looking at the views.

https://hortoncenter.org/summer_camp_sessions/family-friends-beginnings/

Visit their website for more pictures of the great views on top of Pine Mountain: www.hortoncenter.org

Open House Day @ Horton Center is on Saturday, June 18th from 11am to 4pm. Take a drive and check it out!



FREE Little Art Gallery & Library

Onsite at bottom of ramp to Church St. entrance

Stop by ~ Pick out a book ~ Leave a book

Donate to FCCEJ

Your donations support music, youth, missions, adult enrichment, Thrift Shop, Food Pantry, and more! We are also a United Church of Christ "5 for 5" participant in these fundraisers: Per Capita, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need and The Christmas Fund. Here are a few ways that you may help our ministry:

- ⇒ **Send a Check or use BillPay.** This is a remote service that issues one-time or recurring check payments by mail. Please contact your banking institution for details. Please note the reason for your donation in the check's memo line (e.g., "missions").
- ⇒ **Shop using Amazon Smile.** We receive 0.5% of your purchases! To start, visit <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/03-0212216>
- ⇒ **Send money via PayPal.** We accept electronic donations! Visit paypal.me/fccej. (A PayPal account is not required to donate money.)

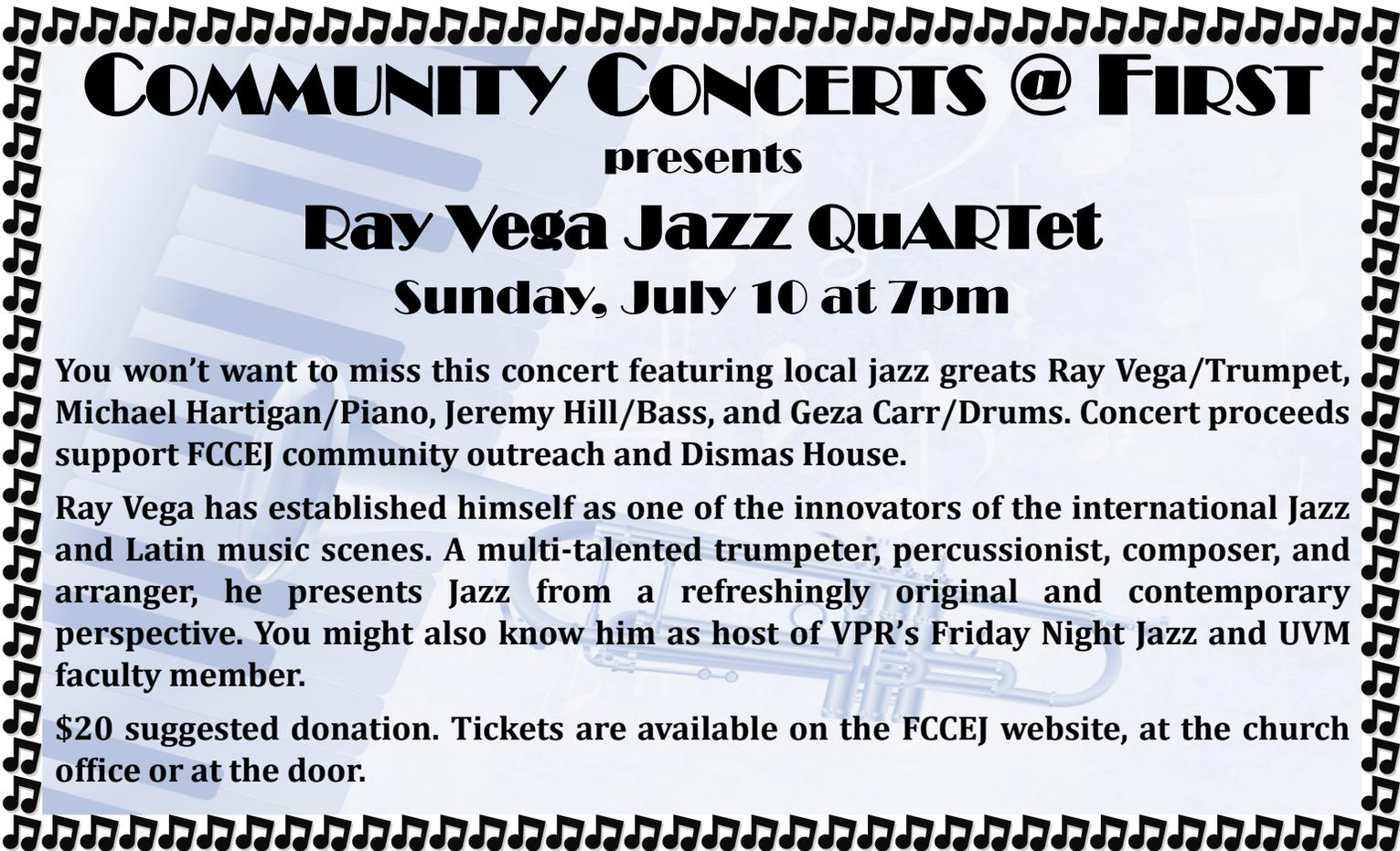
Deacon's Corner

I was born in October, 1973, ten months after the historic [Roe V. Wade](#) decision protected pregnant women's right to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction. My conception was unplanned and my mother thought long and hard on whether or not to have an abortion. She was unmarried, struggling financially, and knew that it would be challenging to raise a child on her own. After praying, consulting friends, and taking a deep inventory of where she was in life, she told my father that she had decided to continue with the pregnancy. He would be welcome to join her family, but she had made her decision on her own. My birth was celebrated as a joyful event. I was cherished by both my parents and they were married when I was six months old. Sometimes, I imagine how my life would be different if my mother had not been able to make her own decision, if she had lived in a state with more regressive abortion laws, or I was born before 1973. What a violation it would have been had she been forced to carry me to term without making her own choice. How much would I have been resented? Could that have changed the other decisions she made?

Recently, the [draft Supreme Court decision](#) that would overturn Roe V. Wade was leaked, and that document has sent a shockwave through our community, as a right that many of us thought was enshrined and unassailable has been shown to be fragile and vulnerable. Since 1971, the UCC [on a national setting](#) has been strongly in favor of protecting women's right to choose. In the 8th Synod, we called for the "repeal of all legal prohibitions of physician-performed abortions." The intent of this was to "take abortion out of the realm of the penal law and make voluntary and legally safe abortions available for all women." (to read all of the UCC's statements on this issue, go to their [website](#)).

This year, the Vermont legislature has adopted [proposal 5](#), which would amend the state constitution to ensure that every Vermonter has the right to personal reproductive liberty. While the Deacons recognize that women's reproductive rights and the choice to have an abortion are deeply personal, and that there may be folks in our congregation who have different opinions on this issue, we believe that it is part of the mission of our church to speak clearly and respectfully on issues of importance. With that in mind, we will be opening this conversation up in the coming months. We welcome any and all of you to share with us your thoughts, feelings and experiences on this topic.

With Love and Light,
Jonah Moos

A decorative border consisting of a musical staff with notes and a treble clef, framing the central text.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS @ FIRST

presents

Ray Vega Jazz QuARTet

Sunday, July 10 at 7pm

You won't want to miss this concert featuring local jazz greats Ray Vega/Trumpet, Michael Hartigan/Piano, Jeremy Hill/Bass, and Geza Carr/Drums. Concert proceeds support FCCEJ community outreach and Dismas House.

Ray Vega has established himself as one of the innovators of the international Jazz and Latin music scenes. A multi-talented trumpeter, percussionist, composer, and arranger, he presents Jazz from a refreshingly original and contemporary perspective. You might also know him as host of VPR's Friday Night Jazz and UVM faculty member.

\$20 suggested donation. Tickets are available on the FCCEJ website, at the church office or at the door.

Missions Committee

June Special Offering - Strengthen the Church: Your Missions Committee members invite you to support this United Church of Christ (UCC) special offering. According to the UCC website, "The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults." When giving, please note on your donation that the funds are for the Strengthen the Church Special Offering. To find out more about this special offering and to watch videos about it, please go to the UCC website: <https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/strengthen-the-church/>

New Subcommittee for Racial Justice Advocacy: At our May meeting, members of the Missions Committee voted to form a subcommittee that would advocate for racial justice. The formation of this subcommittee has been a process that began with several church study groups that used United Church of Christ curriculum entitled, White Privilege Let's Talk: A Resource for Transformational Dialogue. A number of participants of this study group formed a Racial Justice Group, which is now supported as a subcommittee of the Missions Committee.



Calling All Bakers: During the church lawn sale on July 23rd, the missions committee is holding a bake sale. Ann Marie Sullivan is the missions committee esteemed member who will be organizing this bake sale. So, all bakers are asked to save this date with further information coming soon!

Donation to the Essex Junction Cemetery Association: The Essex Junction Cemetery Association is responsible for the upkeep and care of the Village Cemetery and Fairview Cemetery. At our May meeting, Missions Committee members voted to support the work of the cemetery association with a \$500 donation. For more information on the organization, please visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/essexjctcemeteryassoc/>

Jamaica Mission Program Update –

Next Trip June 2023??

We've had great news from our contacts in Jamaica! The students at the White Horses School are now all attending in person after a long period of remote learning. The friendly, long-term staff at Golden Shores Resort, where we stay while in St. Thomas, are well and business is up and running. They all look forward to our return.

The Jamaica Leadership Team is considering taking a team to Jamaica in June 2023. We'd love to get a sense of who would be interested in participating. Youth must be 16 by September 1st, 2023. We are trying to be as prepared as possible for this new era of living with COVID. For this reason, we are encouraging a parent to travel with their youth for this trip, although this is not required. All participants must be fully vaccinated for COVID.

If you are interested in participating (no commitment necessary at this time), or would like to learn more, please let a member of the leadership team know. You may connect with us at church or via home/email.

Sharon Dettenrieder	dettenriedes@hartwick.edu
Carolyn Rushford	cjrushford@comcast.net
Kaki McGeary	kakimcgeary@comcast.net
Pete Schmalz	pnschmalz@comcast.net
Mark Mendes	mmendes@fccej.org
Josh Simon	jsimon@fccej.org

We will also reach out directly to youth who have expressed interest in the past and/or who will be eligible. We look forward to hearing from you and are hopeful and excited about resuming our service program in Jamaica!

W
O
R
S
H
I
P
&
C
O
N
N
E
C
T
I
O
N

Heartfelt Thanks

We sincerely thank the congregation for the beautiful, Vermont-made, granite cheese boards presented to us during worship services on May 22. It has been our pleasure to share our musical talents during the past year. A very special thank you to the choir too! Music is alive and well at First Church!!!

Denise and Marie



Dear Church Family,

Thanks so much for my lovely yellow rose on my birthday. It's good there's something pleasant about getting old. I'm looking forward to getting to church more, since the weather's improved. Hoping to see you all soon.

Love and prayers,

Rose Drost

P.S. Thanks for all your cards and calls.



Greetings,

We thank you for the Easter greetings and basket that were delivered to our home. Please extend our appreciation to all who were involved, those who created, organized and delivered the baskets.

With appreciation,

Valerie & Gary Smith



Dear Church Family,

I was very surprised to receive an Easter basket from you.

Thank you very much for the multitude of things the Easter basket held; the hand sanitizer, Kleenex, wipes, maple-oatmeal breakfast cereal, mints, seeds to plant, Oil of Olay moisturizer, a necklace, God's eye, the cross, the Chapstick, and the egg with decorations inside to make an egg tree if I so desire. The necklace is very pretty also.

Many thanks again for everything.

Sincerely,

Judy Moreau

Craft Fest Summer Event

- Saturday, July 23rd, 9am to 1pm
- Nearly New Lawn Sale / Free Will Offering Sale
- Donations can be dropped at the Church from 7am to 9am on the day of the sale
- Please note the following for donations:
 - Furniture is accepted and if not sold will be put out for free. If the furniture is still not taken by Sunday then we ask you to come back to pick-up.
- Books:
 - Cook books, Fiction, Non-fiction and Children's books. Please no college textbooks or instruction manuals.
- Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop will be open to accept clothing donations.
- No stuffed animals please.
- Please contact Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net for more information. Thank you!



Guest Bakers & Hosts Wanted!

FCCEJ is FULL of amazing bakers and friendly people and your Hospitality Team would love to spotlight any of that amazing energy on a Sunday for Fellowship Time.

Have you wanted to volunteer but don't have a lot of extra time? Do you have a wonderful recipe that you would like to try out with a crowd? Would you like to help out hosting with us or be a sub for a Sunday? We would love the help! Contact Jen Dooley via email at dooleyj2000@comcast.net or by phone/text at 802-578-0230 for more information!

Sunday Morning Summer Worship - 9:00am

Streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)

We are pleased to offer in-person, intergenerational worship with masks encouraged but not required. Faith Formation is on hiatus for the summer. Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Sermon Talk Back

Join us every Tuesday from 8:30-10am to talk about the Sunday scripture and message. This provides opportunities to delve deeper into scripture and hear perspectives of others in our faith community. We meet in Marvin Lounge and via Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>.

Friday Coffee Clatter

All are invited to Martone's in Essex Junction on Friday mornings from 8 to 9. Get coffee and baked goods with Rev. Mark and other faith friends and talk about absolutely anything! The mask policy is determined by Martone's. We laugh often while discussing aspects of life and current events. It's a great way to start your day!

Monthly Bridge Group

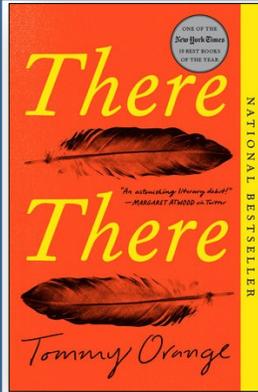
Each month, folks get together to play bridge. The skill level is diverse; some know all sorts of strange conventions and others just like to get together to dabble with the game and catch up on "the haps" in our community. We have snacks and Rev. Mark offers a jar of homemade jam to the winning score. We meet in Marvin Lounge on the 3rd Friday of each month from 1:30 to 4pm. Our June date is 6/17—see you there!

Celebrating Graduates



Do you have a graduate in the family? Graduation Sunday is June 19! Email Jen at the church office (welcome@fccej.org) the following info:

- ◆ Name of graduate
- ◆ Graduation/recent picture & baby/young picture
- ◆ School (high school, undergrad, graduate) & degree if applicable
- ◆ Their plans for the future
- ◆ The deadline for submissions is noon, June 13.
- ◆ Contact the church office for more information.



Noontime Book Group

The Noontime Book Group will meet on Monday, June 20 at 11:30am. This will be a hybrid meeting in both the Marvin Lounge and in a Zoom Meeting format. Contact Joanne Irwin for Meeting ID and Passcode.

This month we are reading "There There" by Tommy Orange. Twelve Native American characters are traveling to a large Pow Wow; each with their own pain and challenges in search of their own identity in both their ancestral traditions and modern American culture. Please bring a brown bag lunch and join us for lively conversation and thought-provoking discussion.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

SULLIVAN, Ann Marie	06/01	WELLS, Ann	06/12	MAUGER, Lorelai	06/22
BOYD, Susan	06/03	NADEAU, June	06/14	MCGEARY, Kaki	06/23
DEUTSCH, Erna	06/03	METCALF, Sarah	06/15	CILLEY, Andrea	06/24
KOLVOORD, Louise	06/03	KINNEY, Brandon	06/17	CHADURJIAN, Cindy	06/25
BERO, Paige	06/05	O'NEIL, Leslie	06/17	SARGENT, Paula	06/25
WOOD, Steven	06/05	STAPLETON, Jonathan	06/17	BRENNAN, Kathryn	06/26
HATHAWAY, Wayne	06/06	CONTI, Dennis	06/18	WOOD, Abigail	06/27
DAVIS, Bev	06/07	FAUX, Joan	06/18	GIANNUZZI, Lori	06/28
DAWSON, Brenda	06/07	CATTERTON, Christine	06/19	JACKSON, Linda	06/28
GIANNUZZI, Matthew	06/08	FIELD, Stephanie	06/19	NOEL, Whitney	06/28
BICKFORD, Mindy	06/09	STEELE, Edward	06/19	REARDON, Suzanne	06/28
HAMILTON, Finn	06/09	BOGARDUS, Linda	06/21	HOFFMAN, Nadine	06/29
MESSIER, Colleen	06/09	KINNEY, Alan	06/21	SCHMALZ, Peter	06/29
CALHOUN, Connor	06/10	MAUGER, Rory	06/21		
MCCULLEN, Sean	06/12	GABERT, Henry	06/22		

First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
1 Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Phone: 802-878-5745
Email: welcome@fccej.org

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

**Sunday Morning Intergenerational
Summer Worship - 9am**

In-person and streamed via youtube.com/c/fcej
Music: Bethany Blake leads our musical offerings
Finally @ First Praise Band is on summer hiatus
Communion is served on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Visit us online:



FCCEJ.ORG



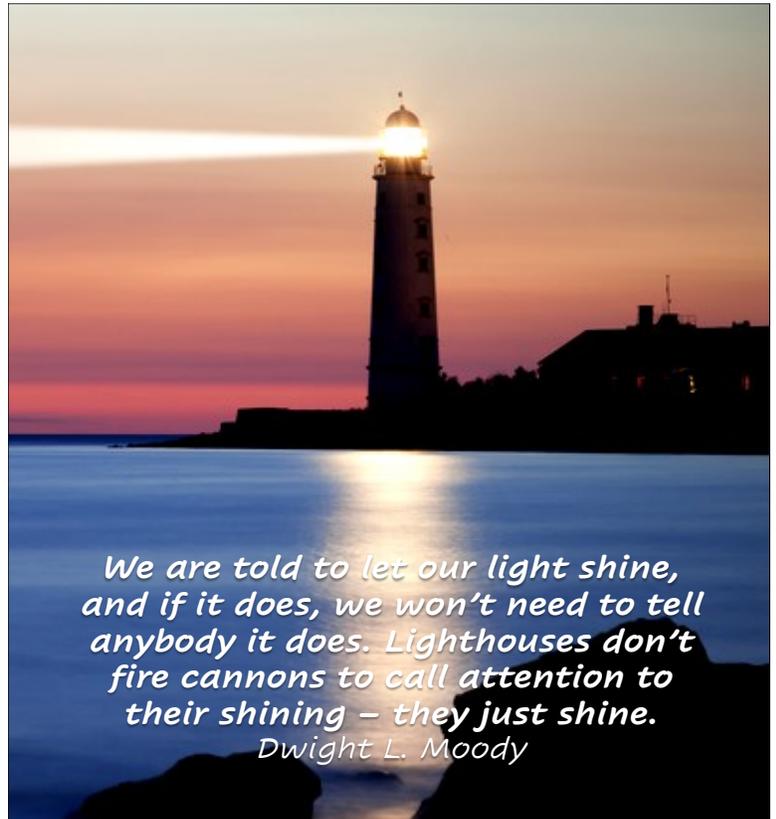
FCCEJ



FCCEJ_802



FIRSTCONGREGATIONALEJ



*We are told to let our light shine,
and if it does, we won't need to tell
anybody it does. Lighthouses don't
fire cannons to call attention to
their shining – they just shine.
Dwight L. Moody*