



SPIRIT @ FIRST

monthly newsletter

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH of Essex Junction

Love. Serve. Grow.

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Your Pastor's Ponderings.....

Now that fall has arrived, I have been gathering with my colleagues and reflecting on scriptures, the church and the changes all of us are dealing with in our various communities of faith. Without exception, everyone speaks about emerging from the pandemic into a different paradigm of religious life. The church is different post Covid, but then so is everything else: from education to foreign policy, from economics to medicine, from issues of justice to family dynamics, from employment to travel. Some of my colleagues have argued that these changes were well underway before the pandemic and that the crises only heightened and accelerated the changes. One way or another, all of our lives have changed dramatically in the last few years.

Our church has changed as well. How we worship or provide Faith Formation to our children, how we raise money and conduct the administrative aspect of the church, how we analyze our successes or shortcomings, how we reach out pastorally to our people: with all of these areas of ministry and more, our church is constantly searching for ways to keep up with the changes in the wider society.

Phyllis Tickle, a religious sociologist has theorized that every 500 years the world and the many tentacles of life goes through a paradigm shift. In religious life, Jesus initiated a paradigm shift, then around 500 C.E. the church became enmeshed with government, then in 1000 the split between eastern and western Christianity, then in 1500 came the Protestant Reformation and then our current situation with technology, scientific knowledge, energy issues and the green movement. A Jewish colleague of hers suggested that you can go back at least 2000 years the other way and discover the same thing: return from exile, the divided kingdom, the exodus, etc. Tickle proposes that not only did religious life dramatically change but the wider society as well. So while the church was changing during the Protestant reformation, we also had the rise of the middle/merchant class, the exploration of the world, a new economic reality, the birth of the printing press, changes in geo-political understandings, etc.

Whether you agree with Tickle or not, it is clear that times are changing for the church as well as the wider society. In my generation, what was once a societal expectation of church attendance has disappeared. Sunday school with a set curriculum of biblical information has been replaced with Faith Formation and the idea that we develop our relationship with God and Jesus first and faithful behaviors will naturally follow. Our members come to church less often, but still find it vitally important to have our church strong and vibrant for them when they are here. Over the last fifty years fewer people pledge financially to the church and what they do pledge is less. There has been a dramatic rise in conservative Christianity which has led to deep and righteous divisiveness and an embattled mentality that is quite intense both in individual churches as well as denominational life. Everyone in the trenches knows we are changing and our Conference Minister Rev. Lynn Bujnak describes it as fixing the plane while in flight.

First Church has changed pretty dramatically in the fifteen years since my arrival. With a bit of grace, our lay and professional leaders have been flexible and have tried to adapt to the changes going on around us. We have invested quite a bit of money into technology which allows our worship services to be seen from home and our committees able to include folks from home or Florida. Laurie and CE continue to adapt our program to families that are struggling to find quality time together and children that are increasingly busy with activities. Each year gets a bit harder to find volunteers to fill the many positions [over 100] that allow our church to run smoothly. Finding qualified organists is like finding a needle in a haystack. And building bridges to community organizations in our desire to change society for the better is often fraught with suspicion and even animosity and yet this Sunday we are welcoming over ten social service agencies that we have partnered with into our worship service to highlight the importance of working together for change.

Continued on next page...

We continue to change and adapt our message and ways of being to keep up with where the Holy Spirit is leading us. As you know in your own lives and work, it is both exhausting and expensive. I would ask all of us to consider these things and respond in the following ways.

1. Participate more to keep the church strong: worship, committees and volunteering.
2. Share your ideas with Rev. Mark about how our church can adapt and change.
3. Support the church financially [Stewardship is asking for a 10% increase].
4. Be gracious with staff, lay leaders and each other during these anxious times.
5. Be optimistic knowing that times of change lead to a new and healthier paradigm.
6. Have faith that God is leading us to a brighter future.

May God bless us all and our beloved church as we strive to respond to the Holy Spirit in shaping our future around the ways of Christ's love and compassion. Looking forward to working with you all, I am

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Mark

SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER

Mission / World Communion Sunday October 1, 2023

Mission is a sacred part of our faith. Spreading God's message of love expressed through Jesus' teaching necessarily means that we engage with the wider community. Our church has partnered with a host of social service agencies whose mission corresponds to our own. By partnering with these organizations, our church not only lives out Christ's mandate to transform society into a better place in which to live but it also strengthens our church community. We are far better as a faith community through these partnerships. At both services on October 1st, we will have fourteen social service groups represented both in our worship service and in the Fellowship Hall with tables full of information and opportunities for service. Be sure to come and check out all the groups with which we partner and bring a friend.

25th Anniversary Celebration of Our Heavenly Food Pantry October 15, 2023

Twenty five years ago, Mary Richer and Suzanne Reardon attended the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ. At that meeting, they attended a workshop on Food Pantries and determined that there was a great need in the Essex community for a Food Pantry. They did the background research, worked with church leadership, and created the Heavenly Food Pantry, which served 11 families on their first distribution day. Over the years, who our food pantry served and how they served has changed and grown but the central philosophy has stayed constant: provide food for folks in need and offer it with a sense of respect and dignity. For twenty five years, our church has lived into Christ's command to feed the hungry. It is **without question** one of the most respected and important ministries of our church. On October 15th, we will celebrate this milestone at both worship services by hearing testimonials and historical vignettes about the creation and growth of the Heavenly Food Pantry. Let us all gather to honor the dedication and work of so many people who continue to make this ministry so vital and successful.

FCCEJ President's Message

I've had the honor of being the President of FCCEJ for the past two years. Previously, I had been on several committees which gave me the chance to meet people and learn how the church works. Some committees were brisk and efficient, some were not, but they all were made up of good people working hard and laughing together. Many people have asked me why I accepted the role of President- and the answer is quite simple. I agreed to serve this church because I care about it. I care about the church as an organization, I care about its faith, its mission, its music, and most of all, its people. This church has nurtured me and my family for over 25 years. I feel a tremendous sense of gratitude to the people who make this church truly a community. This fall, when the Stewardship Campaign starts, or when someone from Nominating asks you to serve, please think about helping this church continue to grow and care. You make our work possible!

In Peace and Love,
Cathy Shearer

As I write this article September is almost over. The start of a new program year is underway and my calendar has been filling up with gatherings of our groups meeting after church. This last Sunday was so much fun hanging with six of our 3rd – 5th graders, our J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) group – formerly Young Apostles and a parent, as we talked about and learned the seasons of the church year and practiced carrying in and out the light of Christ. Acolyte is an old Greek verb that means to follow and they, like us all, are learning to follow Christ. There are several seasons for the church year that begins with Advent and moves through Ordinary Time, including a season of Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Eastertide and Pentecost. Four main colors are repeated over and over again throughout the year. The color of the season is displayed in the Sanctuary with the paraments that are draped on and behind the altar, hanging on the pulpit, and on the lectern. White for purity (Christmas, Easter), Green for Ordinary Time, Purple for royalty (Advent and Lent) and Red for the Holy Spirit (Pentecost).

The previous Sunday, our Junior High Youth gathered and played a game in the Gym while the ovens warmed up to bake individual pizzas for lunch, eat our meal on the 3rd floor as we shared our highs and lows of our week. We then moved into friendship bracelets and playing foosball. Great way to close our time together! It was lovely to see these three youth have fun together with Barb Smith and myself. One even played their parent in foosball before leaving. We hope those who were not able to make it that day will be able to come to our next gatherings in October, hoping to double the size of the group and then some. These Junior High Youth will be putting the plans together for the church wide Halloween Party on October 29th that will be held in the Fellowship Hall following the second service. Feel free to come to church in a costume that day and enjoy the games, food and fun.

During October my goal is to focus more on our Senior High Youth and do more reaching out to this very busy bunch of talented individuals. They already are involved in a wide array of extra curricular activities from sports, to music, theatre (behind and on the stage), and much more. You may have noticed my posts on our Facebook group sharing dates of their upcoming events. I've been asking parents to share their youth's calendar/dates of events so that I and others can come support them in the community. This is tough for one person to do alone, so I'm reaching out to those of you who love attending events to join me in support our youth. Each week I will post a few locations. It is good for our youth and their parents to see their church family out in the community lending support.

All these groups lift my spirits each and every time we gather together. Their energy, interests, and our conversations continue to feed me. I pray parents will help encourage their children and youth to attend the gatherings so that we continue to build community, growing as we support each other, connect with peers, unplug to help our mental health and finding ways to reach out to the greater community.

Are you wondering how you can help support our children or youth ministry programs? Reach out and let's chat. There is always something for everyone. Currently, we're searching for a Library Steward to help with our moveable library in Fellowship Hall.

Blessings,

Laurie Chipman

Christian Education Director

THANK YOU!

The CE Committee would like to thank the following people for their help with the Welcome Back Sunday picnic:

- ◆ All the people who baked yummy goodies to share for dessert.
- ◆ Donna Burnett for shopping at Costco.
- ◆ Jessica Moos for shopping at Hannford's.
- ◆ Peter Schmaltz for serving as sous-chef to Kevin McCullen in preparing hotdogs and burgers.
- ◆ Beth Volker, Brenda Dawson, Amanda Palmer and Beth Warren for help in setting up, keeping things moving, and cleaning up after the event.
- ◆ To all the people who were there that made the occasion a wonderful time of fellowship as we begin another church year.

We are grateful!

- Your Christian Education Committee:

Derek Lyman, Kevin McCullen, Erna Deutsch, Whitney Noel, Jessica Moos, Judy Roy, Laurie Chipman, Terry Stein, Terri Livak

Faith Formation News

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

Faith Formation Calendar

October 1 ~ Communion / Spiritual Friends during 2nd Service (PreK through 2nd)

October 8, 15, 22, & 29 ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)

Offering

Current total \$105.75

2023-24 organization will be voted on October 29th. You will need to be present to vote.

Remember to bring your offering each Sunday and help the fund grow.

2023-24 Program Year Recruitment

We are moving right along with our fall faith formation and youth programs. Many thanks to these volunteers. If you would like to join the fun, please reach out to Laurie.

Faith Formation Peer Group Volunteers:

PreK & K – Derek Lyman, Barb Isham, Amanda Palmer, Ann Marie Sullivan

1st & 2nd – Matt Noel, Jenny Bourn

3rd, 4th & 5th – Justin King, Mel Gibson-King, Judy Roy, Lauren Starkey

6th – 8th – Laurie Chipman

Spiritual Friends (currently seeking more – read a story, pass out snack, playdough activity, return for communion):

Mary Anne Warren, Jessica Moos

Youth Ministry Team:

Bill Bickford Jr., Elizabeth Miller, Barb Smith, Carl Wermer

Library Steward:

Currently looking for one or more persons to help tidy the tower library and transition to a selection of books for all ages.

Youth Ministry

Youth time helps to reaffirm church as being a safe space to build self-confidence, find out who you are, and carry it throughout your life. A valuable tool. It is foundationally about loving God and our neighbor, being in community with each other and living out the love that was given so freely to us!

JH & SH Youth Board

Stop by and check it out in the staff hallway! You'll find calendars, paperwork & applications.

Please fill out your paperwork and bring it with you to the next gathering.

Parents – Please share your youth's calendar of events with Laurie so she can come support them as well as share with the wider church community.

Junior High Youth ~ 6th- 8th grade ~ 11:30-1:30pm

October 1st & 15th ~ Weave for Humane Society & Plan Halloween Party

October 29th ~ Host Halloween Party (11:30-12:30) in Fellowship Hall & clean up

Senior High Youth ~ 9th – 12th grade ~

Thursday, October 5th ~ 6:30-8pm

Sunday, October 22nd ~ 11:30-1:30pm

If these times are not good for you, please reach out and share a time that works in your schedule.

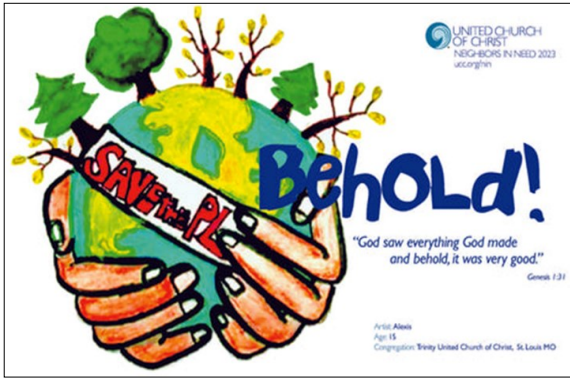
Nursery Staff (Senior High Youth & College Students)

Reminder to staff to sign up on the calendar for slots (first come first serve). Calendar dates now go out through

December. If you are interested in adding your name to the Nursery staff list (currently at 8), please reach out to Laurie at lchipman@fcej.org .

Missions Committee

October Special Offering:



Your Missions Committee members would like to remind you of an important United Church of Christ (UCC) offering for October – The Neighbors in Need Offering. The theme for this year’s UCC Neighbors in Need Offering is “BEHOLD”. According to the UCC website, this year’s focus is on environmental justice... “Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet! Please join us in promoting this year’s NIN “Behold!” campaign at your church.

As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.” Please mark your donation as for the Neighbors in Need Offering. Thank you for supporting this important UCC offering. For more information about this offering, please go to the UCC website: www.ucc.org/neighbors-in-need-special-mission-offering/

Racial Justice Group

Sunday, October 15 at 3pm

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas

“Black Angels of the Green Mountains: The Challenge of Black Abolitionists in Antebellum Vermont”

Are you concerned about racial equity in our state and country? Would you like to learn about the history and how to move forward? Please join us for a lively lecture and discussion about this very important topic. This event is free and open to the public so bring a friend!

Rev. Thomas is currently pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Jericho. Prior to returning to Vermont, he served as Minister for Education, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations at the Riverside Church in NYC and Adjunct Professor of Religion at New York Theological Seminary. Dr Thomas received his BA from Hiram College, his Master of Divinity from Yale University and his Doctorate in Ministry from Hartford Seminary. He has a long and rich resume including lead roles in local repertory theater and is a lyricist whose words have been published in hymns.

Montana Service Trip

The intergenerational team traveling to Montana in June 2024 will have a table on Mission Sunday with information about the Blackfeet Reservation where we will be participating in a service project.

The Blackfeet Reservation is in northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains and is bordered on the north by Canada and on the west by Glacier National Park. There are three branches of the Blackfeet peoples—the Northern Blackfeet (Siksika), the Blood and the Piegan or Pikuni. The tribe call themselves “Niitsitapi” (nee-itsee-TAH-peh) meaning “the real people.” It is believed that the Blackfeet people got their name from the color of their moccasins that were either painted black or darkened with ashes.

<https://tribalnations.mt.gov/Directory/BlackfeetNation>

The severe droughts in the plains states these past several years have had a particularly hard impact on the Blackfeet land, a large percentage of which is agricultural. In addition to losing crops, they also lost many plants used in ceremonies, such as sweet grass.

The team is looking forward to learning more about the Blackfeet people and their culture. We will need your help to travel there and are developing a fall fundraiser that will be rolled out in November. Stay tuned!

Essex CHIPS presents, *Our American Family*

Tuesday, October 3 at 7pm in the T-Rex Theatre at the Essex Experience, 21 Essex Way #300.

Addiction is an all-encompassing force not only in the lives of the afflicted, but also those around them. Captured at a pivotal “nothing to lose” moment over the course of a year, OUR AMERICAN FAMILY is a radically honest portrait of five family members grappling with the legacy of generational addiction as they fight to heal resentments and pull each other out of the deepest depths.

Screening followed by in-person discussion with Linda Geraghty, matriarch of family featured in the film.

Tickets are FREE, please preregister at: <https://tinyurl.com/29auxnnd>. Film recommended for ages 16 and up due to language and thematic elements about substance use. More about the film may be found at: <https://ouramericanfamilyfilm.com/>. Refreshments available for purchase. Questions email: office@essexchips.org

Heavenly Food Pantry is Turning 25!



It is with excitement and celebration that the Heavenly Food Pantry, a mission of the FCCEJ, announces plans to celebrate the Pantry's 25 years of feeding the communities of the City of Essex, the Town of Essex and Westford. On Sunday, October 15, everyone who has volunteered over those 25 years or been active in any way at the Pantry is invited to attend a service at the church to be recognized for your kindness and generosity in making the Pantry the success that it is today.

We are proud of the efforts of so many who have offered their help not only on the days when the pantry is open for food distribution but also to those who pick up donations from places like Hannaford's grocery store or Costco, to those who deliver food to places like Mansfield Place or Whitcomb Woods, Town Meadows, the Salvation Army or Chittenden Feeds, and to those who generously give food and monetary assistance to the Pantry. Community Groups like the Rotary, the Lions' Club, Holy Family Catholic Church as well as local schools which donate food and services will also be honored.

Please come to help us celebrate. There will be Pantry staff speaking, great music and CAKE!



The Giving Tree

Christmas is coming and that means it's time to start thinking about our Giving Tree! This meaningful program gives our faith family the opportunity to provide gifts to needy children in our community.

We will have a physical "giving tree" set up in the narthex with tags on it as well as the online "tree" via Sign-Up Genius through our web page— www.fccej.org. If needed, Jen, the church's administrator, and Elaine Raymond (879-7350), will be available to take calls to assist folks with selecting gift tags.

As in the past, each child will receive three gifts – two articles of clothing and one toy, book, game or gift card. Once again, if you or your family want to purchase all three gifts for a child, you will have that option.

Remember if you use Sign-Up Genius, there is not an actual gift tag to tuck in your handbag or pocket when choosing a gift. It will be up to you to mark the gift with the tag number(s) and attach it to your gift once it is wrapped. There will be the need for each of us to note the identifying number of the gift we sign up for and to physically clearly mark each gift with its associated number so that the gift goes to the correct child.

The opportunity to choose a gift will begin on November 16, the week of Thanksgiving.

There is always great anticipation and excitement 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 and Westford. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350 or ebraymond@gmail.com.



Sunflower Quilt for Ukraine

During the November Craft Fest, one of the Silent Auction items will be this beautiful handmade quilt, submitted by the Missions Committee to benefit Ukraine. This lovely quilt was made by Anna Dorey, sister of Catherine LaPierre. Anna enjoys making these wonderful hand quilted items from, baby blankets to coverlets and now this beautiful queen coverlet. Hand stitched with buttons. It will be a treasure for any household!



Deacons

Greetings from your Deacons! It's hard to believe that we are already into foliage season and that, believe it or not, the Deacons are already talking about Advent and Christmas!! And before anyone asks, we did red last year so this year's decorations will be burgundy! As we all settle into our Autumn routines and deal with the changing seasons, let's take care of each other and ourselves. If you need something from your Church family, please call the Church office, include a note on the sign in sheets at service, or talk to a Deacon. And Happy Autumn!!!

Judy McCullen, Co-Chair Deacons

OCTOBER is STEWARDSHIP MONTH

As a Congregational Church, we are responsible for our own purported beliefs, spiritual rituals, faith formation curriculum, internal administrative structure and finances. There are no outside organizations that help us pay our bills: no bishop with deep pockets, no denominational structure with extra money. Our ministry solely relies on pledges from our members and rental income from our property; the more money we raise, the more ministry we can accomplish. If we come up short, then our programs and ministry must adjust downward since almost everyone agrees to maintain a balanced budget.

So once a year during, the month of October, we ask our members to think and pray about their financial gift for the year to the church. There will be an information letter and pledge card going out through the mail; there will be a skit to highlight themes of giving to the church. There will be members that will talk or write about why they personally give to the church. (There may even be a couple of sermons about giving to the church.) The skit, *"Fintech at First"*, which will make you think a bit and laugh, will be presented on October 22 during worship. We will conclude our season of giving on October 29th when everyone who is able to financially support the church is asked to come forward and place their pledge card on the altar. The Stewardship Committee's goal for pledges is \$375,000, which represents a 10% increase from last year's pledged amount. We ask that all of our members and friends prayerfully consider what their pledge might be this year and if you are able to increase it a bit due to the ever increasing costs of maintaining our building and programs. Thank you!



Gratitude.

So Many Ways to Give.

Here's the "Fintech at First" cast rehearsing for their skit to kick off the 2024 Stewardship Campaign on October 22.

They show us that we don't necessarily all speak the same technical jargon!

Yet we all have a common goal of supporting FCCEJ and seeing our church continue to thrive in our mission. We are hard at work getting ready to entertain you!

Camps

Vacation Bible Camp Survey

Many thanks to those of you who have filled out a survey with volunteer and parent questions, helping us plan and decide on dates for 2024. If you have not, please take a moment to fill out one of these surveys.

VBC Parents

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeak7UsfpAv0RnJgtXRHDglOtUiiqnAkPsObRd2HctNBkaSxQ/viewform>

VBC Volunteers

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdzcYsMUt1_6cBIBIXYiBwur4I0Q_HyCvf9p1kh3Yp15-lzqw/viewform

Outdoor Ministry

FCCEJ Family Camping

It's time to book our location and dates for the 2024 summer season. Interested in camping with other families from church? Enjoy eating a meal or two together and have great fellowship while you learn more about your church friends and family? Fill out this Google survey so that we have your input. Thank you!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSef_An5jcVIvXDfAK-1bksi6o900eDSg1MBFaRypQNYT6vQ4A/viewform

Craft Fest - Saturday, November 11

Everyone has fun and fabulous ways to get involved with the Craft Fest!

Please pick any of the following:

Sweet Shoppe: We are looking for volunteers to make a wide variety of items, so bring out your creativity! Some suggested items include various breads, sweet rolls, cookies, donuts or donut holes, homemade candy/brittle/fudge, any type of bars, popcorn balls, trail mix. If anyone is doing some canning, a jar or two of pickles, relish, jams & jellies or other items would be welcome. We are especially looking for all kinds of pies. They are popular!

Please make sure whatever you contribute is individually wrapped (or in small portions) so that no food is being directly handled. For more information or to sign up for an item, please email Mary Gratton at mgrat14@comcast.net.

Luncheon: Calling all cooks! The luncheon would appreciate assistance with the following:

Butternut squash soup, meat chili, vegetarian chili, green chili and mac and cheese. The following items are needed: Hotdog Rolls, Soda, Bottled Water, Bottled Lemonade, Napkins, Plastic Utensils, Ketchup & Mustard Packets. Please contact Elaine Raymond to donate any of the above food items at ebraymond@gmail.com.

Silent Auction: The following are items which people enjoy bidding on: Original artwork, Quilts and quilted table runners, restaurant gift certificates, sporting events tickets, prepared dinners, estate jewelry. Donations should be dropped off at the church office. We are excited to offer the following theme baskets this year: Ice Cream, Kitchen, Little Girl, Halloween, Beach/Summer, Coffee, Margarita, Garden, Book/Leisure, Baby, Maple products, Picnic, Holiday, Wine, Movie, Dog, Tea. We are looking for cash donations so gift cards can be added to the theme baskets. Donations can be placed in the offering plate or brought to the church office. We would appreciate large wicker baskets with handle for our theme baskets. Donations can be left in Marvin Lounge.

Accessory Room: Time to organize your jewelry boxes and make a donation! Donations can include pins, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. In addition, we are having a kids table so any glitzy items include barrettes and headbands. The room includes donations of scarfs and pocketbooks.

Crafters: We currently have a wait list for crafters. If you are interested in being added to the list, please contact Ann Gray at grayann8@aol.com.

Nearly New: We will be accepting donations starting Sunday, October 29th through Friday, November 10th and they may be brought directly to the gym. We are also looking for paper bags and reusable bags to use at the sale.

Please refrain from donating the following due to cost of disposal if not sold:

- No text book, magazines, encyclopedias, rip or torn books
- **No answering machines, de-humidifiers, humidifiers, heaters, computers, printers, DVD players or TVs**
- No bed pillows or mattress pads
- No booster seats, car seats, stuff animals, strollers
- No sharp knives, household chemicals, light bulbs
- No large furniture

Please note sign-up sheets will be available in Fellowship Hall starting Sunday October 15th after both services. We will need volunteers to greet shoppers, monitor silent auction, assist in kitchen, work in Sweet Shoppe, setup, and clean up. We also need cleanup crew for the gym on Sunday. You can sign up at our table or contact Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net.

Thank you from the Craft Fest committee including Cathy Lapierre, Mary Gratton, Gail Cromie, Elaine Raymond, Maureen McKenzie, and Sue Conti. For further information, please contact Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net or call 802-872-8972.

SERMON TALKBACK

For fifteen years, there has been a group of people who meet every Tuesday morning to discuss the worship service, the sermon content and anything else that might come up. We support each other and laugh and cry as we explore the faith and how it applies to our lives. There is plenty of disagreement in outlook and theology but we are united in our love of FCCEJ and each other. If you are looking for a group to join, we meet every Tuesday morning from 8:30am until 10am in the Marvin Lounge. All are welcome.

COFFEE CLATTER

Every Friday morning at 8m, join Pastor Mark at Martone's Market & Café for an hour of lively conversation and friendly banter. Grab a cup of coffee and/or a tasty treat and spend some time in community.

BRIDGE GROUP

If you like to play bridge, you are welcome to come and have a little fun. We have snacks and, unlike many other bridge venues, we are simply there to learn and enjoy the time together: no crazy competitiveness! We play three rounds and the high score wins a home made jam by Rev. Mark. Everyone is welcome so bring a friend.

Lunchtime Book Group

The Book Group will meet on Monday, October 16 at 11:30 in the Marvin Lounge. This month we are reading *Bread and Roses Too* by Katherine Paterson. It takes place in the time after a major textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts. A young daughter of Italian immigrant parents becomes the protector of a little boy, afraid to go home to his abusive father. Come, bring a brown bag lunch, and join us for good fellowship and a lively discussion.

New Members Class Offered

Have you found a place where you are welcomed? Do you appreciate a faith that encourages you to use your mind? Are you looking for a church that teaches values of love, kindness, inclusion and forgiveness to your children? Do you appreciate great music from multiple choral or musical groups? Do you feel the warmth and support of our staff and members? Do you want to be a part of an organization that helps to better the structures and tone of the wider Essex community?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then we would love you to come and explore what membership in our church means. On October 22nd, after second service, around 11:30am, we are offering a New Members Class where you can learn about our church and her many ministries. You will learn about our history, as well as what our denomination, the United Church of Christ, stands for and how they operate. Lunch is provided and if you need child care, please call the church office at 802 878-5745 and let us know.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

PETHERBRIDGE, Bonita	10/01	HAYES, Deanna	10/11
AMBROSAIT, Carolyn	10/02	MITCHELL, Marilyn	10/12
WATT, Aliyah	10/02	MOOS, Jonah	10/12
BABINGER, Gail	10/03	CURRIER, Bernie	10/13
DOOLEY, Rick	10/04	JACKSON, Michelle	10/19
GOEDKEN, Andrea	10/04	LEAVITT, Sylvia	10/19
BURNETT, John	10/05	FRANK, Nicole	10/20
WELLS, Joe	10/06	HEWETT, Anne	10/23
BOYD, John	10/07	WERMER, Alison	10/24
CILLEY, Jed	10/07	CHADURJIAN, Mark	10/26
FRANK, Meaghan	10/07	ALLEN, Nancy	10/27
JACOBS, Joyce	10/07	PAUL, Beth	10/29
LEAVITT, Dick	10/07	HOFFMAN, Kim	10/30
MCHUGH, Mary	10/07	KEITHCART, William	10/30
HYDE, Paul	10/09	HOUGHTON, Carl	10/31

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 Worship:

8:30 - In-person and streamed via youtube.com/c/fcej

Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and provides accompaniment

10:15 - In-person—Faith Formation for PreK - 8th grade

Music: Finally @ First Praise Band

Communion is served on the 1st Sunday of each month at each service—all are welcome at Christ's table

Visit us online:



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