



# SPIRIT @ FIRST

monthly newsletter

FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

## November 2023: In this issue...

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### Your Pastor's Ponderings.....

Some of you may know that I have wanted a bear to come into my yard for quite some time. I am strangely drawn to bears and have identified with them for a very long time and I think it would be cool to be able to tell my friends from the civilized parts of my past that I had a top predator and powerful creature in my back yard....."well that's life in Vermont" I'd tell them with a twinkle in my eye and a little pride in my voice.

Well, last night it happened. As I walked out on my deck around 1:30am and enjoyed the cool air and the silence of a night without the IBM hum, I saw it, a good-sized black bear in my neighbors back yard, maybe fifty feet away. The familiar gait and ramble of their walk assured me that it wasn't a big dog but an actual bear in my sight. I laughed with sheer enjoyment at the thought! The moon was bright so it was easy to see but the night shadows finally lost him/her to their nightly meanderings. I did not walk over to the neighbors fence to observe where it got off to in the shadows since bears are powerful and could do me significant harm if surprised or protecting their cubs. With a contented sigh, I enjoyed the moment a bit longer and went to bed.

This morning, I got up and as is my custom, walked out on the back deck to see what the day would bring. There right in front of my eyes was the evidence of the bear's visit the night before. The big black night visitor must have made it to my yard and pulled my bird feeders and suet feeder down to consume their sustenance for the upcoming winter hibernation: proof of the visit! It will cost me some money for the privilege of having the bear in my yard!

It is a strange feeling to be drawn to bears but to be a bit scared of them as well. They are magnificent creatures of great beauty and strength, but besides ourselves, they remain the top predators of our continent. They pretty much go and do what they want. As I pondered these thoughts, it occurred to me that many people understand God in the same way. They are drawn to God's presence from their own primordial depth, but are a bit cautious due to the powerful nature of the Divine and God's freedom to go and do whatever they want. And like my nocturnal visitor, God surprises us and leaves evidence of their presence spewed around the backyard of our lives. Naturally, when God enters your life, there will be a cost associated with the privilege.

Some cannot connect the dots and see the results of God's visitation. Some are fearful of the power and simply do not go looking. Some throw caution to the wind, spare no cost and devote significant portions of their time in their search for the Creator's presence in our world. Most folks are cautious but yearning, so remain safely on their decks a decent distance apart, seeing glimpses, shadows and results of God and that is enough.

It is my good luck to have seen a number of bears on trails and roadsides with my favorite experiences being those where I am alone on a trail and come across a lone bear. Some have stood up on their hind legs, some have taken a good long look at me and some have barely noticed. All of the experiences have embodied both the ecstatic joy and cautious fear of being in their presence. My experiences of God have been the same. As we approach the Advent Season when we acknowledge God's presence coming into the world, let us open our hearts to welcome God anew. Let us approach God with humility, knowing the unlimited power displayed over the centuries. Let us face our fears knowing that neither bears nor God are our natural enemies. Let us look for the evidence of God in our midst knowing that it is spewed all over the universe and our lives. And let us keep our feeders and our suet out a bit too long so that God might come looking.....

Good luck on your encounters. I am yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark



# SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER



## Communion / New Member's Sunday

November 5

**ONE Service for Everyone at 10am**

The Deacons, in conjunction with the staff, have decided to have one united worship service on the first Sunday of each month at 10 am: Communion Sundays [**this starts on November 5**]. They moved in this direction because they had heard for a while that many folks would like the opportunity to worship and commune with fellow members that go to the “other” service. In addition, since the Sanctuary Choir covers both services with their beautiful music on communion Sundays, we thought that having two services exactly the same was not needed. The rest of the Sundays in the month will continue to have two distinct services since some folks are drawn to a more traditional service with choral music and some are drawn to a less traditional service with our praise band. Having both allows everyone to attend the service that brings them the most joy and meaning. The change also came about because people regularly watching the service on line have diminished the number of folks actually sitting in the pews; so having one service will fill the sanctuary a bit better.

We are also thrilled to be welcoming three new wonderful members on November 5!

**Note:** This change of service time on November 5 also occurs on the Sunday when we need to adjust our clocks back [fall back] for daylight savings time.

## **Come, Decorate the Church for Advent & Christmas**

**November 26**



Each year on the Sunday before Advent begins, the Deacons ask anyone who is interested to join them in decorating the church. We put up the wreaths and ribbons, we set up the manger scene outside, we get the advent wreath ready, we set up the Christmas Trees and we listen to Christmas carols, snack on goodies a bit and have fun. This year, the Deacons invite you to come and join them in decorating the sanctuary at 11:30am on Sunday November 26.



## **First "Drop-In" Choir Day: Sunday, November 5!!!**

This new opportunity is for anyone who enjoys singing but cannot commit to Thursday evening rehearsals. On the first Sunday of November, if you would like to join the Sanctuary Choir and sing a simple anthem, please plan on arriving around 9:30 am. We will hand out the music and rehearse it before the service begins at 10. Reminder that it our clocks "fall back" that day. Anyone who wishes to have more advance notice of the music may request a copy from Bethany. The choir plans on hosting these drop-in events a few times each year.

### **Deacons**

Greetings from your Deacons! There's a definite chill in the air and the days are growing shorter. It's time to get back into all those activities that languished during the summer. Looking for something to do? The Food Pantry is always looking for volunteers, as is the Thrift Shop. There are opportunities within Christian Education—reach out to Laurie Chipman for more information on those. Do you enjoy reading? The Lunchtime Book Group meets on the third Monday of each month (except November, because of Thanksgiving—see their article on the Connections page). There's also Sermon Talkback in Marvin Lounge every Tuesday morning at 8:30am and Coffee Clatter at Martone's on Friday mornings at 8am. These are just a few of the many opportunities to connect in our warm and welcoming church community.

*Betty Busciglio, Deacon*

### **Communications**

Have you checked out our Social Media lately? Andrea Hickey, our Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist, has been sharing a lot of information about things happening at the Church including Mission Sunday, the Racial Justice speaker, reels from several members for Stewardship and so much more. It is great to see this happening and we hope it will engage our church family and our local community.

The Communications Committee has also been discussing how to clearly communicate the worship schedule change for the first Sunday of the month. Our website locations that list the worship information have been updated to reflect these changes.



## Laurie's Lens

Huge thanks to our junior high youth and all those who helped make our Halloween Party a fun event for everyone! If you were not able to join us, you were missed.

As I sit in my office this week, I am looking at Christmas pageants and will be selecting two productions to suggest to our youth on November 5th. They will review them and then decide which one we present this year. It will be another collaboration of youth and adults coming together, working together and having great fellowship as we build community and share the meaning of the birth of Christ in our midst. Rehearsals begin November 19th, following second service at the normal youth time, and will continue through Sunday December 10th. Pageant Sunday is December 17th at both the 8:30 and 10:15am services. If you are interested in being a part of this fun project, please let me know as there are many levels and ways you can get involved. Maybe you have a skill and talent for set design, props, costumes, helping others with their lines or participating in the pageant itself. The pageant is also a great way for our youth to connect with other adults in our congregation. Please be in touch.

We had an awesome group of SHY at our gathering last Sunday. They painted, put up a white board with the help of Bart & Paulette Frisbie, and participated in wonderful conversation around the lunch table. If others of you have a skill set you'd like to share with our senior high youth, or you're willing to assist them with a project, please reach out to me. I am always looking for more adults to volunteer with the youth and help them make more connections in the church and with her people.

There is another group of adults who help our youth and that's our Youth Ministry Team. Many thanks to all of them as they provide support, help plan, and participate at youth events and gatherings. They are the back bone of the program. Our current team is Bill Bickford Jr., Elizabeth Miller, Barb Smith, and Carl Wermer will be coming aboard soon. If you like to plan events, connect with your younger side or get to know others in the church, consider this important ministry. Please reach out if you have questions and would like to enquire about joining the team.

### ***To all our families, parents, and grandparents:***

Please encourage your children and youth to come participate in Faith Formation, J.A.M., and our youth gatherings of JHY and SHY. All gatherings are way more fun and our children and youth get more out of them when we have more in attendance. They will build community, grow and support each other, connect with their peers and their faith will be richer for participating.

Are you someone who like to organize? I'm looking for someone to be our Library Steward. They would start by organizing the books and items on the library tower in Fellowship Hall. This tower could use a makeover so that we can add adult books to it and make it into a place where there is something for all ages on a Sunday morning. If you are wondering if this is a good fit for, please reach out to me.

Lastly, if you have a student away at college or one at home, please send in their address as we would like to be able to reach out to them and send them some love from FCCEJ. Thank you.

Blessed to be on my faith journey with you all,

Laurie Chipman

Christian Education Director



# Faith Formation News

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

## Faith Formation Calendar

**November 5** ~ Communion / Spiritual Friends (PreK through 2nd) - **One Service at 10am**

**November 12 & 19** ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)

**November 26** ~ All Family Worship

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## Faith Formation Offering

**2023-2024—Ice Cream Aunties Mission of Aloha (Lahaina Fire Relief)**

**Current total \$403.75**

Remember to bring your offering each Sunday and help the fund grow. Come learn more about ways we can support the children and families of Lahaina in Maui, Hawaii.

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## Youth Ministry

*Youth time helps 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!**

JH (6th-8th) & SH (9th-12th) Information

Youth Time information, Calendars, Nursery Applications, etc.

Please fill out and bring your paperwork with you with you come to JHY or SHY. Thank you!

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

### Youth Calendar:

**November 5** ~ **JHY** 11:30-1:30pm ~ Take down Haunted Room & read pageant

**November 12** ~ **SHY** 1-3pm ~ Hands on Projects

If these times are not good for you, please reach out to Laurie.

### Save the Dates:

**December 17** ~ Pageant Sunday at both services

**May 5** ~ COTS Walk ~ JHY & SHY

**July 28-31** ~ New England Regional Youth Event @ Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center, in Sharon, CT for all youth ages 13-18. Youth are invited to join together and attend this awesome experience! RYE will be a place to grow your spirit and connect with other youth from all over New England. This beautiful outdoor ministry site features swimming, boating, and a challenge course for team building. *More details coming soon.*

### 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 January. On the 1st Sundays of the month you will arrive 15 minutes earlier for our 10am service. Others who would like to join the staff, please contact Laurie for an interview and orientation. You earn \$20 per worship service.

### FCCEJ Summer Camp Dates

Thank you for your feedback! Much appreciated.



**Mark your calendars NOW for Vacation Bible Camp ~ August 5-9th**

Morning session 9am-12noon OR All-Day session 9am to 4pm

Interested in helping put things together ahead of VBC? See Laurie.



### Family Camping

August 9-11, 2024 at Button Bay State Park.

The church is booking sites. Reach out to Laurie to sign up for one. Join in the fun of great fellowship and getting to know other FCCEJ families.

*Picture taken at Branbury State Park, August 2023*



# Stewardship Through the Decades (part 2)

Submitted by Ann Gray, Historian

In the stewardship article in the September newsletter, I asked if any long-time member could shed some light on a few stewardship campaigns that are intriguing. To refresh your memory, here they are:

- 1985 – the campaign was a pony express with trail bosses and station agents.
- 1988 – the campaign consisted of branch managers and tree bosses with Fred Allen’s real maple syrup buckets visiting each church family
- “neighborhood books” and “pick up drivers” were mentioned several times

Rev. Mark responded, “The Pony Express came out of the UCC denominational offices and had saddle bags and included having riders go to each home and pick up the pledges like the old Pony Express folks. For many years, there was some type of gimmick like that to entice people to give and/or make it a bit lighthearted.”

Mary Winslow also remembers the Pony Express. She said: “I do remember some about the 1985 campaign that had a pony express theme. There were "trails" developed with several families/couples/individuals on each trail based on the physical proximity of the neighborhoods. There was a paper saddle bag used for each trail that had pledge cards and information in it. This saddle bag looked like the leather kind that would sit behind the saddle on the rump of a horse and hang down on each side of the horse. The saddle bag was delivered by the trail boss to the first person on the list. That person completed their pledge, put the sealed pledge back into the saddle bag, and brought the bag to the next person/family on the list. The trail boss monitored the progression of the saddle bag to make sure the delivery back to the church was not impeded by any "lame horses" or "pokey riders". My children were young then and they enjoyed helping to deliver the saddle bag to the next person on the list and they enjoyed learning about the original pony express. That's what I remember. I hope my memories are correct and not skewed by the many years since 1985.”

There may have been some “lame horses” and “pokey riders” back in 1985 but I’m sure that in 2023 there are none at FCCEJ and all the pledge cards will be returned by Pledge Sunday, October 29.



## REMINDER: Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 5!

### CLOCKS BACK—HOW-TO GUIDE

Analog clock: take off the wall. Find the time adjust screw on the back. Turn to correct time. Spend 5 minutes trying to put the clock back on the wall.



**CHECK**

**\*ALARMS  
\*DETECTORS**



Sundial: move one house to the left

**CHANGE**

**\*BATTERIES  
\*BULBS**

Oven: Just start pushing buttons. And try not to burn the house down, please.



**REPAIR**

**\*WIRING  
\*GADGETS**



Car: Go to college and get an engineering degree. Or just wait 6 months until the time changes again.

# Missions Committee

## November Special Offering:

The Missions Committee is asking you to donate to the Heavenly Food Pantry with this special offering in November. The Heavenly Food Pantry at FCCEJ has been providing food support to our neighbors since 1998. Please consider giving to this important aspect of our church's outreach. Please clearly mark your donation as a contribution to the Food Pantry.

## Spectrum VT's Detail Works (a social enterprise of Spectrum Youth and Family Services):

Do you need your car or truck detailed? Detail Works offers Burlington-area youth experience and on-the-job training. More than that, they learn social skills while dealing with members of the public. Check them out and schedule an appointment today at [detailworksvt.com](http://detailworksvt.com) or 802-497-2296! They are conveniently located at 22 Avenue C, Williston, Vermont.

(P.S. Two gift certificates for Detail Works will be in the Silent Auction at the Craft Fest!! Bid on them and get your car or truck detailed!)

## Climate Hope Cards Headed for Delivery:

Action Network informed FCCEJ that a delegation of United Church of Christ (UCC) clergy and laity delivered 8,000 postcards from across the country to the staff of the Environmental Protection Agency on October 13th. The delegation met with EPA staff for an hour and included Mallory Luca, the 17-year-old winner of the Climate Hope Art Contest whose art appears on the front of the postcards. Our church was a participant in collecting cards and some of our youth participated in the art contest, including Addie Stein who created the art on this page. Thank you to all who helped with this project!



## The Giving Tree

On Sunday, November 19, gift tags will be available on the Christmas Tree in the Narthex and online via Sign-Up Genius until all tags are taken. Due to multiple requests, more physical tags will be available on the tree in church. The tags will include the opportunity to take all three tags for one child if desired. Once the tags have been taken, gifts will be welcomed at the church and stored until they are distributed to families.

We know that this is a favorite mission of FCCEJ. Families express their gratitude every year for our generosity. We hope you enjoy this opportunity to bring joy to kids in the City of Essex, the Town of Essex and Westford.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350 or [ebraymond@gmail.com](mailto: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!



## Celebrating our Veterans

Wreaths Across America is a great way to honor our American Veterans. Check out the opportunity to provide wreaths for this year's December 16th celebration: [www.wreathsassamerica.org/pages/41908/Overview/?relatedId=150000&fbclid=IwAR2kBjN1xgqEfW0qiSOM5rpocEFljsEePz27Lbbxb522djfr9gXGS9J8Xlw](http://www.wreathsassamerica.org/pages/41908/Overview/?relatedId=150000&fbclid=IwAR2kBjN1xgqEfW0qiSOM5rpocEFljsEePz27Lbbxb522djfr9gXGS9J8Xlw)

## **Montana Service Trip**

Have you seen the poster for the Montana Team Service Trip? Check out our “plane” in Fellowship Hall and learn how you can help us travel to Montana. Perhaps you could help us get our luggage on board by virtually purchasing a carry-on or a different baggage option. We also will need help with boarding and there are several virtual categories from which to choose. The team will be in Fellowship Hall during the month of November with our “plane” poster and luggage tags. Be sure to write Montana on your check and fill out a luggage tag.

As you check out our poster, you will be meeting our team members. There are seventeen of us who will be embarking on this intergenerational trip in June of 2024. We are working with Global Volunteers who have met with the Blackfeet people to determine what service projects are desired. We will learn more about those options in the spring.

We appreciate your assistance with spreading the word about this domestic service trip by distributing the postcards with the QR code (available at the table in the Fellowship Hall). This makes it super easy to donate to this service trip. We are most grateful for your support!

Did you know?

The Blackfoot tribe can be referred to as “Blackfoot” or “Blackfeet,” though the Blackfoot call themselves the Niitsitapi (nee-itsee-TAH-peh) or “The Original People.”

“Blackfoot practices are often rooted in ancient stories. For example, they say that once, when Napi was being blown about by a strong wind, he grasped a black birch. The tree bent but did not break, enabling Napi to resist the buffeting gale. To this day the Blackfoot make their tipi pegs from black birch. They believe that just as this tree helped Napi, it will also keep Blackfoot tipis from blowing down.”

*(The Story of the Blackfoot People, The Blackfoot Gallery Committee, p. 18)*

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## **Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News!**

### **Happy Fall!**

The transition to Fall and Winter items in mid-September was a success! We opened on Saturday, September 23, at 10am and had another record day with sales over \$800! Thanks again to the many generous community members who make donations, so we may continue to meet our mission of serving others, both in sale items and financial donations to local organizations.

We continue to explore ways to reuse and recycle items donated that we cannot sell by reaching out to folks who reuse and recycle. We welcome donations of gently used items in good resalable quality. We accept women’s and men’s clothing, shoes, boots, children’s clothing from 2T up, children’s shoes, boots, winter coats, hats, mittens. Also jewelry, linens such as bedding towels, etc., household items, games and puzzles. We no longer accept infant clothing, books, toys and larger items.

Please spread the “good word” of the shop’s mission to your friends and if you are interested in volunteering, contact Elaine Raymond—802-879-7350, Sue Wood—802-878-3068 or Sandy Tallman—802-879-0665.

We are open for shopping and receiving donations on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10am-1pm and Wednesday evenings from 4-7pm.

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## **Community Concerts @ First**

### **Cantiamo presents “A Musical Feast”**

Join us on Sunday November 12 at 3pm in the Sanctuary as we wrap up our 2023 concert season. Cantiamo Vocal Ensemble will present “A Musical Feast”. A delightful array of musical “flavors” will be featured including spirituals, folk songs and a dance tune from Quebec. Cantiamo is the auditioned small ensemble drawn from members of Bella Voce Women’s Chorus under the leadership of Artistic Director, Dr. Dawn Willis.

Concert proceeds will support Vermont flood relief. Concert proceeds will support Vermont flood relief and FCCEJ.

Tickets are available online by scanning the QR code or with the link below:

<https://sevendaystickets.com/events/cantiamo-choral-ensemble-a-musical-feast-11-12-2023>





## Craft Fest Celebration - Saturday, November 11

There are fun and fabulous ways for everyone at Craft Fest! Sign-up sheets will be in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 5. We need greeters, Silent Auction monitors, kitchen assistants, Sweet Shoppe attendants, and setup/clean up crew. You can sign up at our table or contact Linda at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net).

**Sweet Shoppe:** We are looking for volunteers to make a wide variety of items, so bring on 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 individually wrap all contributions (or provide small portions) so that no food is directly handled. For more information, contact Mary Gratton at [mgrat14@comcast.net](mailto:mgrat14@comcast.net).

**Luncheon:** Calling all cooks! The luncheon would appreciate donations of the following:

Butternut squash soup, meat chili, vegetarian chili, green chili, and mac & cheese. The following items are also 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](mailto:ebraymond@gmail.com).

**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.

**Nearly New:** We will be accepting donations **through Friday, November 10th** and they may be brought directly to the gym. We are also looking for paper and/or 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, ripped or torn books
- No electronic equipment of any kind
- No large furniture

### **CRAFTERS**

The following is a list of crafters for your shopping enjoyment:

**Emily Houle & Sara Mandeville** – paintings and prints of various sizes available; assortment of homemade ornaments, embroidery art jewelry, and sewn home goods (flannel napkins, toiletries bags, and cat toys).

**Terri Livak** – Original watercolors, holiday decorations, quilted table runners, place mats and toppers. Quilted items are being phased out and will be sold at a discount.

**Sandy Plant** – hand-made knitted hats, mittens, and scarves of all sizes. For all ages, in all colors and types of yarn.

**Ginny Coe** – handmade knit hats (all sizes), dishcloths, scrubbies, baby bibs

**Ann Gray** – hand-made dog sweaters and coats (item close out sales); scarves and hats for wine bottles.

**Patrick Kelly (AKA Maple State Guitars)** - will be selling and taking orders for hand-made Cigar Box Guitars.

**Cathy Lapierre** – handmade and designed treasure surprise boxes and Dream Jars.

**Chris Selin** – original art block paintings of local Vermont scenes mounted on hardwood blocks. Also selling fine-crafted wood utensils

**Essex Community Historical Society** – 2024 historic calendars, slate tiles from roof of Fort Ethan Allen Water Tower with hand painted scenes of the Tower.

**Camella Cyr** -- Fiber Art, Visible Stitching (Boro Sashiko & Kiwandi), Crochet & Needle Felting

**Allie Gratton** – knitted dish scrubbies, gift tags, glitter ornaments, crocheted potholders, dish cloths, baby blankets.

**Justin and Genevieve King** – blankets and jewelry

**Mark and Karen Mendes** -- Christmas ornaments, toys and other items made out of felt.

**Essex Art League** (two tables) – Various artists from the Essex Art League will display their art and sell framed and unframed originals, cards and take commissions.

**Beth Soules** -- mittens and holiday items (wine covers, ornaments, gift card holders) from repurposed sweaters, coats and fabric. Some materials have come from Heavenly Cents Thrift Store.

**Jen Ellis** – Bernie's mitten maker will be selling mittens and autographed copies of her book.



## SILENT AUCTION

The following are items we have (so far) for you to bid on:

- ◆ Tea basket with Uncommon Grounds gift card
- ◆ Baby basket
- ◆ Four UVM Men's Basketball tickets with T-Shirts donated by UVM Athletic Department
- ◆ Pair of stools donated by Judy Allen
- ◆ Zebra wood antique dresser
- ◆ Antique oak dresser
- ◆ Brass & marble kaleidoscope
- ◆ Chocolate pearl jewelry set
- ◆ 4 prints Handcrafted by Polanshek
- ◆ Green turquoise bracelet
- ◆ Artesia 56 Chevy
- ◆ Sermon by Mark Mendes
- ◆ Ice cream basket with Ben & Jerry's ice cream
- ◆ Kitchen/baking basket
- ◆ Kids Fun Tote
- ◆ Beach/Summer Bag
- ◆ Margarita basket
- ◆ Garden basket
- ◆ Book/Leisure basket with Phoenix Books \$30 gift card donated by Ann Gray
- ◆ Home sweet home with Heavenly Cents gift certificate for \$20
- ◆ Maple & honey container
- ◆ Men's themed basket with \$20 Auto Zone gift card
- ◆ Coffee with Starbucks Gift Card \$10 Donated by Maureen Mackenzie
- ◆ Picnic basket
- ◆ Camping basket
- ◆ Wine tasting basket
- ◆ Dog friendly basket
- ◆ Christmas runner donated by Terri Livak
- ◆ Red/white/blue Longaberger basket
- ◆ Crystal platter with cupcakes donated by Gail Cromie
- ◆ Colorful platter with Mackenzie Ham
- ◆ JRS Cole print of Larrow Farm donated by Judy Allen
- ◆ Portable AC mini donated by Beth Volker
- ◆ *Bernie's Mitten Maker* book, Jen Ellis mittens, Bernie Socks donated by Jen Ellis
- ◆ Vintage Pyrex set of 3 bowls
- ◆ (4) 30-minute computer class donated by Jen Kelly
- ◆ Chess set
- ◆ Bird feeder & True Value gift card
- ◆ Pamper Basket with Color Style Nails certificate donated by Kayla Glerum and haircut/style certificate donated by Allyssa Parish
- ◆ Holiday basket with Quality Bakery gift card for dozen donuts
- ◆ Gift certificate for Month of Membership at Williston Jazzercise
- ◆ New ceiling fan donated by Judy Allen
- ◆ Lasagna for 8, salad, bread, dessert and a bottle of wine donated by Sue Wood
- ◆ Flower basket with \$50 gift certificate from Maplehurst Florist
- ◆ Winter survival kit basket
- ◆ Essex Bidens Ace Hardware \$50 gift certificate
- ◆ Restaurant gift basket: \$25 gift certificate for Vespa's Pizza & Maliwan Thai Restaurant
- ◆ Restaurant gift basket: \$25 gift certificate for McGillcuddy's and Cody's restaurant
- ◆ Game basket with \$25 Turner Toys gift certificate
- ◆ Basket with home-made holiday cards donated by Andrea Sharp
- ◆ Tray with holiday cookies donated by Betty Busciglio
- ◆ (2) \$125 gift certificates to Detail Works (supporting Spectrum Services)

**Our local business sponsors have been very generous, please make a point to visit their establishments and thank them for their support.**

Thank you from the Craft Fest Committee!

*Cathy Lapierre, Mary Gratton, Gail Cromie, Elaine Raymond, Ann Gray, Maureen McKenzie, Sue Conti*

For further information, please contact Linda Bogardus at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net) or call 802-872-8972.





## Reiki II

Awaken Your Healing Connection

### Reiki Practitioner

- Learn about emotional, mental & spiritual healing.
- Learn how to send distant healing.
- Listen to your inner calling and learn about this powerful work. Reiki Energy finds YOU!

December 2, 2023  
 First Congregational Church  
 Essex Junction, VT  
 9:30am-1:30pm

Register Online  
[www.kristiecallahan.com](http://www.kristiecallahan.com)

## Reiki 1

### "Awaken Your Inner Healer"

This class  
**YOU WILL:**

- ◆ Learn about the history and benefits of Reiki Energy.
- ◆ Ground and Center your energy.
- ◆ Learn about your Chakra and energy fields.
- ◆ Receive attunement to Reiki, handbook and certificate.

Come be part of a loving, supportive community on your journey!

December 16th, 2023  
 First Congregational Church Essex Junction, VT


[WWW.KRISTIECALLAHAN.COM](http://WWW.KRISTIECALLAHAN.COM)

## Vermont Interfaith Action

*Transforming People and Communities*



### PATTI CASEY CONCERT

Saturday, November 11 at 7 pm  
 First Congregational Church of Burlington  
 38 Winooski Ave.

Mark your calendars for a concert by the renowned Vermont artist Patti Casey. Patti has recorded five award-winning albums featuring her signature New England folk-storytelling-bluegrass style. She will be joined by multi-instrumentalist Colin McCaffrey.

If you're not familiar with Patti, you're in for a treat. When not writing, performing, and singing, she has written and directed music for Burlington's Vermont Stage Company. She was a founding member, songwriter, and signature lead singer for VT's all-star Bluegrass Gospel Project. Her album "The Heart of a Waiting Boy" was named Best Album of 2010 by the Times Argus/Rutland Herald, and was the fourth most-played album in the worldwide folk circuit on Folk DJ Radio. Patti provided soundtrack music for Pasture Productions' award-winning independent film "The Summer of Walter Hacks," and for the independent documentary film "Brush and Pen: Artists and Writers of the White Mountains." She has toured nationally with Vermont's venerable folk band The Woods Tea Company, and with Shady Rill.

**This concert kicks off the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of VIA's national network, Faith in Action,** which consists of 45 federations in 21 states and 4 countries, inclusive of some 1 million people.

Tickets are \$30 per person and available through via this link:

[www.classy.org/event/patti-casey-benefit-concert-for-via/e529011/register/new/select-tickets](http://www.classy.org/event/patti-casey-benefit-concert-for-via/e529011/register/new/select-tickets)





### 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, come and have a little fun twice a month. We have snacks and unlike many other bridge venues, we are simply there to learn and enjoy the time together: no crazy competitiveness: all levels of players are welcome! We play three rounds and the high score wins a home made jam by Rev. Mark. Everyone is welcome so bring a friend. We meet on the first and third Fridays of the month at 1:30pm in Marvin Lounge.

### SEARCHERS IN NOVEMBER

#### **Podcasts and Movies**

For the month of November, the Wednesday Night Searchers Group will be alternating between listening to "On Point" episodes of people we have studied with Christa Tippett AND interesting movies with religious themes: *Leap of Faith* with Steve Martin and *Chocolat* with Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp. After listening and watching, we will discuss the religious themes in each. We will be meeting on Wednesday nights November 1, 8, 15, and 29 [not 22 due to Thanksgiving]. So come and meet some interesting and thoughtful folks, learn and discuss interesting topics, and have a little fun.

### **Lunchtime Book Group**

The Book Group will meet at 11:30 on Monday, November 13, in the 2nd Floor Program Room. Please note that this is the second Monday this month because the third Monday falls during Thanksgiving week. We will be discussing *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders.

Described as an "experimental historical novel", it explores the effect that his grief over his young son Willie's death may have had on the decisions Lincoln made leading up to the Civil War. Bring your brown bag lunch and join us for fellowship and an interesting discussion.

### **Grieving thru the Holidays: Coping Strategies**

Are you recently bereaved or someone who still finds the holidays challenging years after a loss? Do you want to better understand and support a loved one who is grieving? This informational session will include such topics as Understanding Grief; Traditions - Old & New; Making Plans; Setting Realistic Expectations; and Self-Care.

The session will be led by Mary McHugh and Sharon Dettenrieder, who have worked in Grief Support for many years.

Thursday, November 9, 10-11:30am at FCCEJ in Marvin Lounge. For more information, please contact Mary at (920) 664-5230 or [mmmchugh@hotmail.com](mailto:mmmchugh@hotmail.com).

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

FRANKENBURG, Peter	11/03
CARNEY, Tim	11/04
HARRIS, Anne	11/04
ALLEN, Judy	11/09
FRIVOLL, Erik Yoan Woo	11/09
DEWEY, Sam	11/12
SMITH, Frank	11/15
TURNER, Sally	11/15
FAUX, Ron	11/18
GROVE, Mary-Ellen	11/18
ISHAM, Easton	11/18
LAPIERRE, Cathy	11/19
OWENS, Edward	11/21
WARK, Wendy	11/21
WILLEY, Maura	11/21
GILES, Howard	11/22
MOOS, Jessica	11/24
SHEARER, Jamie	11/24
PORATTI, Beth	11/26
TALLMAN, Sandy	11/26
DEAN, Linda	11/28
CATE, Jina	11/29
STEIN, Adelaide	11/29
STIMSON, Scarlet	11/30



**First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**

1 Church Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
Phone: 802-878-5745  
Email: [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)

**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Sunday Morning Worship:**

**~First Sunday of Each Month~**

**One Service at 10am**

with Holy Communion and Sanctuary Choir

**~Other Sundays Throughout the Month~**

**8:30** - In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej)

Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and provides accompaniment

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

Music: Finally @ First Praise Band

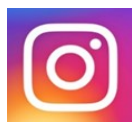
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