



SPirit @ FIRSt

monthly newsletter

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH of Essex Junction

Love. Serve. Grow.

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Your Pastor's Ponderings.....

EMMANUEL

Last night blanketed our land with the cold whiteness of snow: winter has begun. In Miami Florida, where I grew up, there were different seasons but nothing so dramatic and life changing as snow and cold. We had the windy season and the dry season and the rainy season, but nothing that demanded the trees to change color and drop their leaves while the world awaited unique frozen droplets of water that made everything look fresh and new. There is something magical about the seasons and cycles of awe inspiring earth and having our religious rituals dovetail with earth's cycles inexplicably genius. How can this confluence of the physical and spiritual do anything but touch our souls with a power and presence that is both deep and ancient?

So I love the Christmas narrative and all of its lessons for our lives. It's a sweet story, but within this ancient pericope are all the lessons that Jesus teaches later in his ministry if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. The birth narrative is like an opening paragraph in a dissertation that hints of things to come. Just listen.....

The Birth as Incarnation: When Jesus was born he was defined as Emmanuel which means "God with us". This has become the hallmark doctrine of the birth narrative and it simply means that the God of the universe is not some entity up and away from us but a presence that walks and talks with us and enters history and our lives with purpose and promise. Jesus brings the presence of God into our lives.

The Intimate Connection between Body and Spirit: With God's Spirit embedded in the body of a human woman, we see the intimate connection between the physical and spiritual world in our midst. The physical becomes sacred and the spiritual becomes embodied within us. Jesus being both human and divine reflects that same reality reflected within the earth and every single living creature on our planet. Jesus makes our existence filled with sacredness.

God's Call for Justice: One cannot love Christ's birth narrative and not see Christ's challenge to the rich and powerful of the earth. Mary's song promises the rich and powerful will be brought down and the poor and oppressed will be lifted up. All of the prophecies in Isaiah that promise the coming Messiah speak of this same movement of justice. This is poignantly seen when Herod kills the innocent babies since the Messiah threatens his rule and hold on power. One can easily see this reality in Christ's humble beginnings, Mary riding on a donkey, shepherds being included in the miracle and the escape to Egypt. Jesus stands for justice even before he speaks.

The Inclusion of the Magi: Not only were the poor included in Christ's birth but so were the intellectuals of a different culture who came to bear witness to the reality of the Christ child and God's entrance into our world. Mary, the chosen vessel for carrying baby Jesus, was a young woman who was having a child out of wedlock. Non Jews, the poor, perceived sinners with questionable values, hard working business people trying to make ends meet: all were included in the story of Christ's birth. Jesus widens God's welcome before he can even walk.

Continued on next page...

Sacrifice and Pain: part of Christ's story is the cross and the pain he suffers at the hands of humanity and life. No one escapes the vicissitudes of this life with its tragedies, fears and anxieties and Jesus embodies this reality in the birth story. Naturally, Mary feels the pain when she gives birth and when she hears that her heart will be broken due to Christ in her life, the young holy family feels it when the prophetess Anna expresses who Jesus is and what he will do, they feel the fear as they flee for their lives across the wilderness to Egypt as children are brutally murdered. We romanticize the story but a bare manger, a foreign land, prophecies of doom and judgement all add the pain that came into their lives when Jesus was born. Jesus shares the anguish of pain and suffering with all of us.

Love Comes and Remains: Our God loves us and does not want us to be scared of the divine presence but rather feel the ongoing and consistent nature of God's love for us. In John's birth narrative we hear that God sent Jesus to us because of God's love for us. Time and time again throughout scripture, God just keeps coming to us for relationship and mutual love. We sense that love in Mary's and Joseph's love for their child. We see that love driving the shepherds and Magi to the manger. We see that love every time we hold our own children and want the best for them.

You have to love the opening paragraph of God's thesis about coming into our lives in a real and palpable way. It's the beginning of the church year and it tells us what is to come both in our lives and in the world's reaction to God's presence. The church's seasons and the journey we go through all year with the selection of scriptures and rituals tells the same story. So let's get comfy in our overstuffed chair and settle in for the tale of a lifetime. Looking forward to sharing it with you.

With Fondness for you and the story, I am

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark

Deacons

Watch out! Here it comes – the holiday rush! The deacons were busy decorating the church for our Advent/Christmas season and putting up the Nativity set. You will also see the main pulpit placed in the center of our worship space for the month of December. This will make the set up easier for our much loved Pageant coming on December 17th.

We enjoyed hearing all the positive feedback regarding one service on our 1st Sunday communion. It was great to be together as one family. To further facilitate knowledge of our family community, the deacons have discussed streaming our 2nd service once a month. Blessings to all as we journey through Advent to Christmas – thankful for the gifts of Church, Family and Friends!

Mary McHugh

Montana Service Trip

The Montana Team baggage handlers are working hard to make certain that all of our virtual luggage is on our "plane" and ready for take-off to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. You can help by purchasing a carry-on bag or suitcase or another piece virtual luggage. Stop by our table in Fellowship Hall to see our poster and learn a little bit about the Blackfeet people.

We are looking forward to our 7th ***Cabin Fever Calcutta*** scheduled for March 9, 2024, at the Catamount Country Club. There will be a buffet dinner and lots of merriment with our MC, Jamie Polli. Plan to join us for this evening of fellowship in early March when we are all ready to be out and about.

Once again, we will be offering an Early Bird ticket option. Those purchasing a ticket prior to January 15th will be entered into a drawing, to be held at the Calcutta, for a \$100 cash prize. Watch for information about this opportunity. We are most grateful for the congregational support of this intergenerational service trip.

SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

One United Communion Service

December 3, 2023 at 10am

A couple of meetings ago, the Deacons voted to try bringing our two worship services together for communion on the first Sunday of the month. Normally, Bethany and the Sanctuary Choir play at the 8:30am service and Rick and Finally @ First play at the second 10:15am service. To ensure that folks at both services are able to hear both styles of worship music, we agreed long ago that on Communion Sundays, Bethany and the Sanctuary Choir would play at both services while Rick and Finally @ First would play at both services on the 5th Sundays of the month.

So when the Deacons discussed the possibility at length, they voted to have the first Sunday as the union service since communion is sacred and since Bethany and the Sanctuary Choir already sang at both services. This would cause the least disruption and offer us the joy of communion with folks we do not always see on a communion day: a two-for-one double blessing. So there will be ONE SERVICE for our monthly communion service on December 3rd at 10am. See you all there!

Christmas Pageant Sunday

December 17, 2023

Performed at 8:30 & 10:15am

Each year, our Christian Education and Youth Director, Laurie Chipman, gathers volunteers and actors to present the Christmas story. Not only is this a delightful tradition that we look forward to every year, but we often see afresh one of the most intriguing stories of the bible. And to top it all off, we love watching our kids work with some of our "seasoned" church actors to make the old story come to life. This year, the birth of Jesus will be presented at both services [8:30 & 10:15] on December 17th and a shorter follow up skit with the Magi will be presented at the Combined Communion Service on January 7th at 10am, another two-fer! This is a great Sunday to being a friend and enjoy some holiday cheer.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

December 24th

A Sunday Morning of Lessons & Carols ~ One Service @ 10am

There will be one morning worship service at 10am Christmas Eve. We will come together to sing the old carols and hear the ancient story of Jesus' birth. We are also welcoming the Currier Bell Choir back as they play for our delight. This is the perfect service for those of you who do not like coming out in the darkness later in the day. There is no better way to start the day than by remembering Christ's birth and singing with joy!

Candlelight Services

Families & Children of all Ages 5pm

Our children's heads are filled with sugar plums and presents, Saint Nicholas, and family rituals of fun, love and joy. Our 5pm service is geared to them as guests from another time and age tell the story in a unique way and guide us all in the singing of carols, praying for those whom we love and lighting of candles. Our entire staff will be sick and out of commission and replaced by some interesting characters. Come and enjoy this tradition and be sure to invite the family down the street looking for something to do.

Lessons and Carols at 9pm

Pre-Service Concert at 8:30pm

This is our traditional service of Lessons and Carols. We start with some incredible music from our many choirs and finish with spreading Christ's light to the entire congregation and the world. In between the concert and the spreading of Christ's light, we hear the story and sing the carols. Come and remember your own childhood and those who are no longer here but singing to the glory of God right next to us and in our hearts.

Lessons, Carols and Holy Communion at 11pm

There is something perfect about singing to God's glory for the entrance of the divine son into our world and lighting the candle that represents his entrance right at midnight of the anniversary when he came. Finally @ First leads this service with great music while we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We revel in welcoming Christ into our lives through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All is quiet and beautiful as we all reflect on Christ's entrance and presence in our lives. The service is at 11pm and will end at the stroke of midnight. What better way of ending the day.

There will be one Worship Service on December 31st at 10am

There will be One Worship Service at 10am on January 7th for Communion

Laurie's Lens

There is excitement in my office! I am so thrilled to have our Children's Ministry Coordinator hired and here working alongside me. Please help me welcome Elizabeth Miller to the position of leading our Faith Formation peer groups and Spiritual Friends Sunday programs. Elizabeth has been part of this church for a few years now, participating with our youth program and a part of the parent discussion on the book 'New Directions for Holy Questions'. She has a deep faith, looks for ways to be more involved and support her faith community, a love for children, and willingness to help them grow in their faith. She has been attending the first service, so I look forward to introducing her to those of you who attend the second service.

Christmas pageant rehearsals have begun and there is enthusiasm in retelling the old story of the birth of Christ. If you have not been able to join rehearsals yet, it's not too late. Junior and senior high youth and interested adults are welcome on Sundays from 11:30am to 1:30pm. I know you all will want to mark your calendars and attend either or both services on Pageant Sunday, December 17th.

On the morning of Sunday, December 10th. the youth will be filling goody bags for the Giving Tree children who we are helping this year with Christmas gifts. Children are encouraged to stay after worship for the beginning of pageant rehearsal if they would like to be a shepherd, sheep or angel.

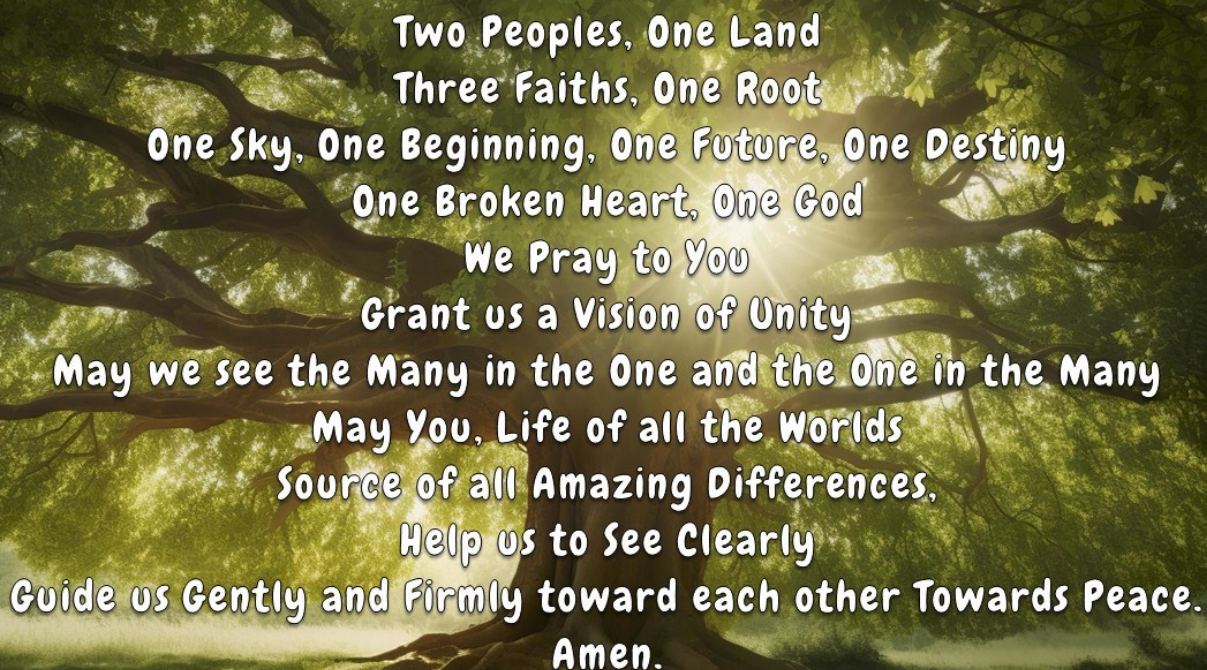
Parents of college students, please share send me their college addresses. We are planning to send out packages in the new year.

Our junior and senior high youth get back to their schedule in January. JHY will meet two times a month on Sundays after worship and SHY will gather once a month on a Sunday. Our senior high youth have had two gatherings this fall doing some hands-on projects around the church while they get reacquainted and get to know adults in the congregation. I'll be looking for more adults who would like to connect with the youth and get to know them, so if you are interested in helping the youth get to know others of their faith community, please reach out to me. We are striving to help them get to know at least 5 adults and help them broaden their circle and their faith community. This helps them stay connected, deepens their faith and supports them in their daily lives.

I invite you to walk slow as you pass by my office and take a look that pictures of our youth. Stop to see what our youth enjoying doing. Parents, I'm looking for more pictures. Don't forget to look for my Facebook posts on our Discussion Group, then log them on your calendar so you can also support them in the community at their events (sports, music, theatre, dance, etc). I'm sure they would love to see you!

Blessed to be on this journey with you,

Laurie Chipman, Christian Education Director



Two Peoples, One Land
Three Faiths, One Root
One Sky, One Beginning, One Future, One Destiny
One Broken Heart, One God
We Pray to You
Grant us a Vision of Unity
May we see the Many in the One and the One in the Many
May You, Life of all the Worlds
Source of all Amazing Differences,
Help us to See Clearly
Guide us Gently and Firmly toward each other Towards Peace.
Amen.

Tracy Weatherhogg

Faith Formation News

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

Faith Formation Calendar

December 3 ~ Communion / Spiritual Friends (PreK through 2nd) - **One Service at 10am**

December 10 ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service & 30-minute pageant rehearsal for little shepherds, angles & sheep

December 17 ~ Pageant Sunday

December 24 ~ All Family Worship - **One Morning Service at 10am**

Faith Formation Offering

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

Current total \$425.75

Remember to use the small white bible story envelopes on the Narthex shelf so that your offering goes to help those in Lahaina. Loose money in the offering plate goes to our general church budget.

Each month we will have Jennifer Kelly with us on a peer group Sunday for her to share updates and ways we can support the children of Lahaina in Maui, Hawaii.

Youth Ministry

Youth time reaffirms the church as being a safe space to build self-confidence, discover identity, and carry it throughout 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

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:

December 3 & 10 ~ Pageant Rehearsal from 11:30-1:30pm

December 17 ~ Pageant Sunday at both services

Save the Dates:

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 10 camp sites and 3 lean-tos have been booked! Mark your calendars and reach out to Laurie and get your name on the list. We already have three families. You won't want to miss this experience of a truly fun time with others here from FCCEJ.

Picture taken at Branbury State Park, August 2023

Missions Committee

Gift to United States Committee for Refugee and Immigrants - Vermont



During this summer's lawn sale, the Missions Committee members held a bake sale with the proceeds designated for USCRI-VT. We added to the proceeds with our budget funds and delivered a \$500 check to their office in Colchester. USCRI-VT has been welcoming newcomers to Vermont since 1980, supporting them with a variety of services. Here is a link to read more about this local organization: <https://refugees.org/uscri-vermont/>

Special Offerings in December

The Pastor's Fund—December 17th:

In these economic uncertain times, there is a unique opportunity to help those in our local area who have financial needs. The Pastor's Fund is used at the discretion of our minister to provide support for heating bills, emergencies, food, etc. for both members and non-members. What a great way to show our caring to our community!

Veterans of the Cross—December 24th:

This Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!



The Giving Tree

As many of you know by now, the Giving Tree is here again for 2023. While all the physical tags have been selected, there are still tags available through Sign Up Genius. We would ask that you wrap or bag each gift, **including gift cards**, which can be easily misplaced, and include a tag on each gift. If you picked up a tag from the tree, you have a ready-made tag. If you choose a gift from Sign-Up Genius, you will need to create a tag. The tag needs to include the gift number – ex; 11A – and the gender & age of the child. This information will allow the family to know which gift goes to which child in their family. Please bring your gift(s) to the church no later than **December 10**, so that we can get them sorted and ready

for families to pick them up.

Thank you so much for giving of yourselves to make Christmas a happier time for so many kids in the Essex Westford School District. Our kindness means more than words can express to these families in our community.

Celebrating our Veterans

Wreaths Across America is a great way to honor our American Veterans. Check out the opportunity to provide wreaths for this years December 16th celebration: www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/41908/Overview/?relatedId=150000&fbclid=IwAR2kBjN1xgqEfW0qiSOM5rpocEFJJsEePz27Lbbxb522djfr9gXGS9J8Xlw



2023 Craft Fest Report

A big **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers who made the craft fest successful this year! Thanks to all the bakers, cooks, greeters, cleanup crew, and donor volunteers. A special thank you to the Craft Fest Committee which includes Ann Gray, Gail Cromie, Sue Conti, Maureen McKenzie, Cathy Lapierre, Elaine Raymond, and Mary Gratton. Another special thank you goes to Jen Kelly who was always willing to help us. Please give them a special thank you if you see them. The 2023 Craft Fest raised \$8,180 and combined this with the funds raised from summer event gives a total of \$9,280.47 for the church. Congratulations!

Happy Holidays, Linda Bogardus



New Planned Giving Program is Working

Look around our church! Everywhere you turn, you can see the legacies of those who came before us. Examples abound! New and updated programs, missions and facilities have been funded by members of FCCEJ past and present – all contributions gladly made to ensure our church survived and thrived not just in their time, but in future years.

The new Planned Giving Program launched in February 2023 is working!!! We are thrilled to announce that we have four Legacy Circle members who have decided to include FCCEJ in their wills or estate plans as a way to provide transformative and sustaining support for FCCEJ's mission – now and forever. Can we make the Legacy Circle bigger? As you consider your own legacy and how to support things that matter most to you even after your lifetime, here are a few planned giving basics:

What is a planned gift? A planned gift is a donation designated for FCCEJ or other organization for a later date, often through formal financial or estate plans. Unlike annual gifts, planned gifts are typically made from accumulated assets. At FCCEJ, planned gifts support the long-term Endowment Fund, leaving a legacy for the future. The larger the endowment, the more money we have for the future.

How do planned gifts keep growing and help our church? Your planned gift will help to grow FCCEJ's Endowment Fund. As the value of the Endowment Fund continues to grow over time, the amount of revenue available for the church to spend increases as well. Endowment funds support special projects in three areas: missions and outreach, education and youth, and capital needs.

How can I leave a legacy? You do not need to be wealthy to leave a legacy through a planned gift. Some common planned gifts include:

- A gift through a will or trust
- Gifts of appreciated stock
- IRA required minimum distribution (RMD)
- IRA or life insurance beneficiaries
- Charitable gift annuity

More details can be found on our website – look under Giving/Planned Giving. You can also find a “notice of intent” form on the website so that you can notify the church about your plans. Many planned gifts have tax benefits. We encourage you to talk to your attorney or financial advisor to discuss planned giving options and what might be right for you. Please reach out to Pastor Mark or any member of the Planned Giving Committee if you have any questions.

Your Planned Giving Committee,

Kathryn Brennan, Dave Johnson, Darryl Koch, Matt & Kaki McGeary, Dan Petherbridge, Judy Pomainville, Rev. Mark Mendes

Marie and David Johnson: A Legacy Circle Story

“Marie and I recently met with a planned giving attorney to review our estate plan and wills. While we had previously established those documents, they need to be updated from time to time. In so doing, there are many questions to ponder. What are our end of life wishes? How do we provide for our children and extended family? What will happen to our belongings? How do we avoid probate? Should we consider organizations and institutions that have been meaningful in our lives?

We moved to Vermont forty years ago. In 1983, we became members of FCCEJ. No institution has been more meaningful in our lives! The church is OUR HOME. Our family, including children Amy and Matthew, have been immersed in the church school, youth groups and music programs. We have taught Sunday school, been advisors for youth groups, served on many committees, sung in the choirs, and provided special music. When she was in high school, Amy was the Junior Choir Director for four years with 35 singers. And now, from time to time, our grandchildren share their musical talents on piano, flute and violin. How lucky for us! One magical memory was when Amy gave the sermon and provided special music, Marie played the organ, and Dave was the Deacon for the day. Our pastor was away that week, so it was Johnson + Johnson + Johnson leading Sunday services. We are committed to our churches outreach to the community through our food shelf, the thrift store, community concert series, giving tree, and being the home for so many community organizations. There are so many memories that have shaped our lives!

God has given us a blessed life. We enjoy volunteering because sharing our time and treasure gives our lives purpose and fulfillment. We feel love and acceptance at FCCEJ. We have benefitted from those who have gone before us in making our church so meaningful in our lives. Now it is our time to help provide for future generations by leaving a gift to FCCEJ via our trust. We are thrilled to be members of the Legacy Circle, and welcome others to widen the Circle.”

Blessings and love to our church family,
Marie and David Johnson

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News!

The Thrift Shop had a busy fall, thanks to many regular and new customers. Donations of gently used, quality items continue to pour in, and our customer traffic has increased. The Shop's displays of inventory are always changing thanks to our many creative volunteers. Check our Facebook page regularly, you never know when you might see something you have been looking for or there might be a pop up sale! Due to the generous donations and customer sales, we have been able to give \$1,000 each to the following community organizations this holiday season: Age Well Meals on Wheels, Steps to End Domestic Violence, JUMP, VSAC (Katie Currier Scholarship), SPECTRUM, Community Justice Center, COTS, Essex CHIPS, Pathways, Outright Vermont, VIEW (Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford) and the Blackfeet Reservation Service Trip. We also contributed \$500 to the church Giving Tree Project by helping provide outdoor winter wear for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. We are currently considering other organizations that we can donate to this holiday season. Also wreaths have been purchased to spruce up our beautiful church!

The Thrift Shop has spent this past year exploring ways to recycle and reuse the goods that we are unable to sell, both to reduce the amount we send to Goodwill and to be more environmentally conscious. Our source for denim that is not sold (jeans) is Outerknown, a recycling/reuse business in St. Albans. They make a variety of items. We are grateful for the everyone's generosity, both in our church and our community.

We are excited to announce that they will be open 11am - 12pm the first Sunday of each month so people attending the monthly joint service can shop or drop off donations. Let's all take advantage of this convenient time to support our wonderful thrift store!

May Joy, Peace, and Love be with you all this holiday season!

Sandy Tallman

Employment Opportunity

Essex CHIPS (Community Health Initiatives and Programs for Students), a youth-centered nonprofit based in Essex Junction, is seeking an energetic assistant for our after-school program serving grades 4-9. The Youth Program Assistant would assist in daily program activities, supervise youth, prepare snack and complete other duties as assigned.

Our schedule is: Monday 2:15pm-5:30pm, Tuesday 3:15pm-6:00pm, Wednesday 1:30pm-5:45pm and Thursday 3:15pm-6:00pm. We will work with your schedule if you are not available every day.

Background check required. Proof of updated COVID-19 vaccination required.

Candidates, please e-mail resume and cover letter to office@essexchips.org.

Summary of Position: This is a part-time non-exempt position, which requires appropriate professional youth work skills, creativity, punctuality, attention to detail, and the ability to communicate, engage and collaborate with Elementary and Middle School students, family members and fellow staff members. Compensation is \$16-\$19/hour. Thank you for your interest!



Dear Church Family,

I want to thank everyone for the heartfelt messages, cards, hugs, and love expressed to myself and my family on the death of my mom, Norma Edwards. I especially want to thank the following people for their participation in the beautiful funeral and wonderful reception:

Myrna Doney, Sylvia Nyhagen, Marie Benway, Carol Daigle, Ginny Coe, Jane Schneider, Marti Hopkins, Judy Allen, John & Donna Burnett, Mary Anne Warren, Jackie Adler, Ed Steele, Laurie Chipman, Janne & Howard Giles, Kim Sontagg, Joanne Irwin, Connie Marshall, Jen Dooley, Bethany Blake, Gary Hartman, Mark Mendes, Emmy Stapleton, Clint Russell, Carolyn Toof.

*Love and hugs,
Cindy Longwell*

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 in DECEMBER

In November, we had three tables and played three rounds, rotating our players each round so that everyone gets to play with or against each other. We had great snacks that folks brought in and of course the Pastor's Pick Jam as a prize for the high score. We celebrate all levels of skill and invite people that have only begun to come and learn from some of the best players around. We also welcome a number of folks who are not members of the church but like to play, so feel free to bring a friend. We normally meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month from 1:30 - 4pm.

BUT IN DECEMBER, we will only meet on the first Friday of the month [December 1st] due to the holidays and busy schedules. Looking forward to seeing you!

Grief Support Opportunities

As a result of our Holiday Grief Support session, participants made 2 suggestions for follow-up.

A session for men will be offered on Thursday, December 7 at 10am in Marvin Lounge. Men's Experience of Loss will focus on just that - men's experience! Loss can come in many forms: job loss, loss of home, and loss thru the death of a loved one.

Beginning January 11th, we will offer a monthly grief support group meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month - again in Marvin Lounge. This group will be open to anyone in our community experiencing loss. Sharon Dettenreider and Mary McHugh will be facilitating.

Please contact Mary with any questions: 920-664-5230 or mmmchugh@hotmail.com.

Yoga @ First

Come practice a compassionate, inquisitive sequence to integrate the mind, body, and soul. In each session, we will focus, breathe, build heat, strengthen, and relax. Join us Tuesday evenings, from 5-6:15 in the Sanctuary. Wear comfortable, non restrictive clothing. Bring a mat or borrow one. Donations (to FCCEJ) welcome, but not required.

Fall Prevention - Tai Chi

Join your faith family for Tai Chi class on Tuesday mornings at 10:15 in the Fellowship Hall. This is a beginner class of slow, controlled motions that aid in strength and balance. There is no charge for the class but donations to FCCEJ are appreciated.

Contact Betty Adams for more information: adamsvt123@gmail.com. Sponsored by Age Well.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

LARRABEE, Judy	12/04	GRENON, Frank	12/15	BOOMHOWER, Linda	12/24
OLUFSEN, Douglas	12/04	HOFFMAN, Brian	12/15	COOLIDGE, Fletch	12/25
GUILD, Anita	12/05	SCHMALZ, Zachary	12/15	STEIN, Terry	12/25
IRWIN, Joanne	12/06	SHEARER, Munroe	12/16	WATT, Deb	12/28
HELMSTUTLER, Tom	12/07	TRACY, Hannah	12/18	DEWEY, Christine	12/29
KINAMAN, Russ	12/08	JOHN, Monica	12/19	PALMER, Elijah	12/29
PORATTI, Alex	12/10	FRANK, Rebecca	12/20	CROMIE, Gail	12/30
WINSLOW, Mary	12/10	FRANK, Sheldon	12/20	IZZO, Anna	12/30
FIRKEY, Pete	12/11	HENNESSEY, Steve	12/20	TALLMAN, Kurt	12/30
FRANK, Tom	12/12	PARKER, Linda Lou	12/20	GOEDKEN, Carley	12/31
FIELD, Kathryn	12/13	DEWEY, David	12/21	PORATTI, Samantha	12/31
HOLLAND, Deb	12/14	EHLER-VOCK, Donna	12/22		

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Phone: 802-878-5745
Email: 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

Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and provides accompaniment

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

Music: Finally @ First Praise Band

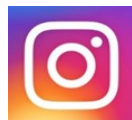
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