

# SPiRiT @ FiRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

*Love. Serve. Grow.*

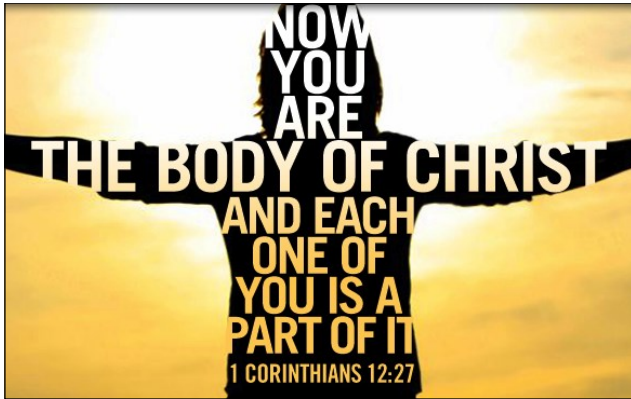
### May 2024: In this issue...

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

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good..... All these gifts are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.*

*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*



On Friday, April 19 and Saturday, April 20, FCCEJ hosted the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting. By Monday morning, two local pastors had emailed me to share how impressed they were with our faith community. Two busy people took the time to lift up and acknowledge a job well done. As your pastor, I was never so proud in your efforts, your ability to be flexible, stay on target, and get the job done well!

The Trustees made sure that the West Wing was painted and ready for use. They also stayed on the ball to ensure that our elevator was in good working order; they even came in to turn on the hot water!

Doug Olufsen was the tech superstar who drew disparate information together into a unified whole and was the cornerstone in ensuring that both the delegates in the sanctuary as well as those participants at home could be present and see the resources needed to vote and understand what was going on at the meeting.

Three of our musical groups [Sanctuary Choir, Men at First, and Finally @ First] all put in extra time the week after Easter to have a wide variety of quality music to support the closing worship service. Many a pastor came up to me a bit jealous at all the options we have for great music at FCCEJ. Special thanks to Bethany, Bill, and Rick for corralling their members to perform.

The three meal teams that oversaw the set-up, serving, and clean-up of every meal were seamless. One restaurant came in with a team and just needed a little support, while the other restaurant just dropped off their food and we had to figure everything out and get it ready quickly. The morning meal was organizing all the food that our folks brought in and serving to what was expected to be a crowd of 30-40 people: 75 showed up! All I observed through all of this work was grace under fire, laughter, camaraderie, dedicated work and a spirit of community that warmed my heart.

The ushers stationed around the building and floating to help people find their way were also astoundingly good. With grace abounding, they were cheerful, helpful, and able to step up and adapt their task to meet needs as they arose. Again, I observed our folks having fun as they were working hard.

We also had a team that prepared the snack tables between meals and so had to take the snacks out of Fellowship Hall before each meal and then re-set them back into Fellowship Hall afterwards so delegates and visitors could snack throughout the day. Again, no complaints, just upbeat devotion to the task and friendliness toward those partaking of the snacks.

*Continued on next page...*

We had our youth working in the nursery, offering a safe, comfortable space for children.

Our official delegates came and represented our church at the official meetings of the conference.

Jen, Laurie, Elizabeth, Bethany, and Kul all helped to make this happen with Jen working with the conference staff the closest to ensure that all the disparate parts came together in the correct order and way.

Carl Wermer helped where he could, first in the nursery, and then the parking lot, and everywhere in between. Several followed his lead and told me to put them to work doing anything that was needed. What was even better, since I was not always to be found, was how many folks saw a problem, figured out how to fix it, and then moved on. So many of you came for the day and simply jumped in to serve. We have the best volunteers of any church I have ever served, and I was grateful and proud of how everyone came together to make it work.

Seeing all of your efforts through the conference weekend reminded me of Paul's letter to the Corinthians when he talks about the church using the body imagery and how every member of the body of Christ has gifts given to them by the Spirit for the upbuilding of the church and how together, everyone makes up the body of Christ. All of you did so with grace and love.

Proud to be your Minister, I am

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark

## **Special Services in May**

### **Dave and Sue Eaton's Memorial Service**

**May 4, 2024**

A number of years ago, two of our active and visionary members moved to Connecticut to be closer to their family. In the subsequent years, they found a new church and were active there, but their heart and lives were here in Vermont and with FCCEJ. So on Saturday, May 4th at 11:30am, we will have a service to celebrate their lives and the many gifts they brought to our church. The family invites anyone interested to come and share stories of their parents and enjoy a time of fellowship and food. There will be a final committal in Jericho after the service and reception. All are welcome.

### **Special Guest Preacher - The Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas**

**May 19, 2024**

As the Mendes family heads to New York over the Pentecost weekend to celebrate the graduation of their son, Nicholas, from college, Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas will be filling in for Rev. Mark in the pulpit. Rev. Arnold Thomas is the father of Rev. Devon Thomas [who preached here during Lent] and has recently retired from the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Jericho. Rev. Arnold Thomas has a long history of interactions with our church and he will bless our pulpit when Rev. Mark is away at his son's graduation.

## **Altar Flowers**

Flowers on the altar are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or celebrate a special day. We include a note in the bulletin about who donated the flowers and who/what they are honoring.

Scan the QR code or use this link to sign up for 2024:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-46881013-fccej>



# **Stewardship is Everything!**

Dear Friends,

Did you know that our church, the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, is part of a larger organization in Vermont? We belong to the Champlain Association, one of eight associations within the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Vermont Conference's mission is to equip churches for Christ's mission and ministry now and in the future.

Every year our church contributes to this wider church. This is called a Per Capita donation (or dues). We give as part of our connection to the Champlain Association and the Vermont Conference United Church of Christ. Per Capita dues cover clergy gatherings and educational support, pastoral search and call, faith formation resources, outdoor ministry camp for youth, training and resources for staff, and much more.

Per Capita dues are assessed on a per member basis according to the membership numbers reported by churches to the Conference as of December 31 of each year. This year our per capita dues are \$15.33 per individual member. We will be asking for this donation on Mother's Day, May 12th. Please give now and if possible double your offering to cover the dues for members who can't give at this time. Of course, any donation later in the year is also welcome. The giving tab on our website ([www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)) makes it easy to share your monetary gift with the church.

The Stewardship Committee appreciates your generosity towards this special offering!

*Kathryn Brennan, Ann Grey, Emily Guziak, Alex John, Rev. Mark Mendes, Dan Petherbridge, Heather Stein, Beth Volker, Beth Warren*

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## **Communications**

Why do you attend FCCEJ? Over the next couple of weeks, the Communications Committee will be asking volunteers to share their thoughts and be recorded for a church welcome video. In this video, we would love to tell everyone about our worship services, music, children and youth programs, community, and mission. We plan to record during fellowship hour on Sunday mornings over the next couple of weeks.

### **Pictures Wanted**

Members would like to know more about all the great activities going on at the church. If you're at an event please snap a few pictures and email them to [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) with some information about the event. Event details are often great material for including in the monthly newsletter!

## **Ushers & Greeters**

We continue to need ushers and greeters to assist at our worship services. This is a great opportunity to see members of our faith community, as well as make visitors feel welcome. Here are the time commitments:

- First of the Month Single Service: 9:40-11:15
- First Service: 8:10-9:15am
- Second Service: 9:55-11:15am

Contact the church office or use this link to the Sign-Up Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60BOA48AAAD2CA2FF2-fccej2#/>

## **Deacons**

May in Vermont is my favorite time of the year. A time of rebirth and renewal. Nature brings the return of flowers, green grass, and leaves on the trees. May is a time to reflect and renew our faith.

May 19th is Pentecost Sunday. The Day of Pentecost is the day when the Holy Spirit falls upon the disciples and empowers them to spread the good news. The Season of Pentecost is the story of the growth of Jesus's movement and the development of the early church. Some of the stories include persecutions, who comprises the church, what are some of the roles of the early leaders of the church, do the early followers have to follow Jewish Law and traditions, and the giving of gifts and their use withing a believer's life.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask any of the Deacons. If we don't have the answers, we will get them for you.

Deacon Rusty Sargent

It's hard to believe that the end of April is almost here and by the time you get this May will be arriving! This is the time in our church year that we recruit for volunteers to help make all our programs for children and youth stay vibrant and alive. If you have volunteered in the past, it's time to renew your paperwork. If you have been a part of FCCEJ and attended for 6 months or more, we'd love to have you step up and volunteer. Faith Formation (Peer Groups & Spiritual Friends) ~ Nursery Support ~ Youth Ministries Team ~ Vacation Bible Camp. There are so many levels of volunteering here at FCCEJ; you can pick the level and area where you are most comfortable. Paperwork is filled out every year and can be found on the Youth Ministries Bulletin Board, or from Elizabeth or myself. It takes many hands to keep our programs for children and youth alive and well. We hope you will take some time to pray and think about being hands and feet in this vital part of our ministry.

In this May newsletter you will find some events that are on the calendar again like the COTS Walk (in person walk through Burlington), Spare Time fun for youth and parents (inviting our 5th graders to join in). Then there is camping! We are actively planning our yearly VB Camp that moved back into the building last year and expanded to offer a full-day option. Registration cost for the full day have been lowered and we are hoping to see more campers and looking for more youth staff applications to roll in. Yes, there will be time spent outside, weather permitting, but its great fun decorating the inside of the church for camp week. We use a good portion of the full church and watch this place come alive with lots of energy and spirit. And then comes the fun of camping as a church family, gathering for meals and enjoying great koinonia fellowship together. This year we booked one weekend at Button Bay following our week of VB Camp in August. I'm looking forward to relaxing with you all and celebrating our love for God and nature, sleeping in each morning, gathering for meals, sit ting around the campfire, eating s'mores and getting to chat and reconnect.

Our end of the programmatic year will be celebrated on June 2nd at our **one service at 9am**, followed by our fun ice cream social sponsored by our Christian Formation (Education) Committee. We will thank all of you who stepped up this year with a gift for helping our programs for children and youth come alive with great fellowship, learning, questioning and the Spirit of God. We hope you'll mark your calendars and plan to be with us as we celebrate another fun year of ministry.

Blessed to be on my faith journey with all of you.

Peace & Joy,

Laurie Chipman

*Christian Education Director*

## FCCEJ Family Camping Weekend

**Friday, 8/ 9 - Sunday, 8/11 ~ Button Bay State Park**

13 sites booked - 10 available.

If you would like to contribute to the cost, you can mark your check "FCCJ Outdoor Ministries".

**Our weekend looks like this:** Arrive Friday afternoon/evening (time that works for you) and set up your site. Join the group for an evening campfire in our common area around our large red canopy. We'll move a couple of close by picnic tables so we can have a couple of meals together (lunch & supper of BYO to the table and a dish or item to share if you wish). Saturday will be a day of fun and activities, on your own and/or with others. Last year some took a bike ride, others were in the pool. We played corn hole, cards and got a little crafty. Glow sticks were a favorite of many. It's a very relaxed weekend with no set

schedule. There will be great koinonia (fellowship) with others here from your First Church family.



## Vacation Bible Camp

August 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mornings 9am-12pm OR All-Day 9am

-4pm (\$100/camper ~ scholarships available)



**Campers** ~ Toddlers with a Parent & PreK up through current 5th graders

**Register Online!** Take a moment and sign up today! Campers and all volunteers can register through this link:

[fcej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/](https://fcej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/)

## Volunteer Youth (6th – 12th) & Adults

*Music ~ Science ~ Crafts ~ Games ~ Drama ~ Reflection & Snacks ~ Puppeteers*

Be a Camper Group Leader ~ Station Leaders or Helper ~ Set up the weekend before Camp ~ Work on a project before camp week.

Youth (current 6th – 12th grade) & adults can be morning group leaders, station leaders, or helpers, floaters, help set up weekend before camp, work on a project at home or at church before camp starts. Adults can also be a support in the afternoon for our youth staff.

Connect with Laurie if you are interested and would like to be involved somehow. We are always happy to chat and answer your questions. Volunteer for the full week, every morning, or just a morning or afternoon.

# Faith Formation News

**\*\*Watch for Family Ministry emails in your inbox\*\***

Easter's renewing energy has been received well in Faith Formation as the children discuss the resurrection of Jesus. They learned about Jesus helping the disciples catch fish, eat with them at the beach, and asking them to care for his sheep. The children are encouraged to think, share, and live out their faith with family and friends.

As we move towards Pentecost, peer groups will discover that no gift is too small in the eyes of God, and to celebrate the Holy Spirit's life-giving movement in the world!

Looking forward to the blooming May flowers and the joy we continue to receive on our journeys of faith.

Faithfully,

Elizabeth Miller, *Children's Ministry Coordinator*

## Faith Formation May Calendar

**May 5** ~ Spiritual Friends (PreK—2nd)

One Service at 10am

**May 12 & 19** ~ Peer Groups (PreK-8th)

**May 26** ~ All Family Worship

**June 2** ~ Celebration of our Program Year & Ice Cream Social following our 9am service

## Faith Formation Offering

**2023-2024—Lahaina Fire Relief**

**Current total \$678.75** (includes \$617.75 sent in February)

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.

## Youth Ministry

**A time to build self-confidence. Unwind. Build Community with those around you.  
Come feel the love that God hands out to all so freely.**

### Youth Picture Board

Do you have a picture of yourself doing what you enjoy? Parents/youth – please forward/drop off to Laurie so you can be added to the bulletin board in the hallway.

Come see who's on the board already. What's coming up on your calendar? Reach out and invite Laurie. She'd love to come support you.

### Youth Ministry Info Board

Located in the office hallway by the stairs. You can find JHY & SHY calendars, Youth Registration forms, Nursery & VB Camp job applications, and Adult Volunteer Safe Conduct forms for anyone volunteering in our programs.

### Youth Calendar:

*JHY will be working on their skit for worship during peer group time (April 28th, May 12th & 19th) due to special events in May.*

### May 5 ~ COTS Walk ~ JHY & SHY & Families

Registration begins at 1pm in Battery Park. Walk starts at 2pm.

RSVP to Laurie. We'll leave after church and have lunch in Burlington or just meet at Battery Park at 1pm. Follow along and register to walk, joining the church team, or donate to the team.

COTSONLINE-ORG/COTS-WALK <https://cotsonline.org/>

1. Click the green 'Register' box beside the COTS WALK info
2. Click on the 'Join a Team' box
3. Type in 'First Congregational Church of Essex Junction' in the team box
4. Click the 'Search' button
5. Click the 'Join' button
6. Fill out the information and reach out to others to sponsor you or the team and help COTS help those in need.

### May 19 ~ Spare Time Fun for Youth & Parents ~ 12-2pm

Inviting all JHY & SHY and their parents to come celebrate the end of the year. Also inviting 5th graders and their parents to join in the fun. RSVP needed by May 12th to Laurie. Hurry and sign up!

### Nursery Staff (*Senior High Youth & College Students*)

We are currently focusing on the 2nd service, 10:15 (10am on first Sunday of the month) and the 8:30am service on special Sundays, like Palm Sunday and Easter.

Interested in working in our Nursery and being on staff? Send an email to Laurie (or call the church) and set up an interview. Pay is \$20 per worship service and the joy of getting to know the young ones.

# Missions Committee

## 2024 COTS Walk—Join Us! - Sunday, May 5

- ◆ 1pm—Check In
- ◆ 2pm—Walk Begins



Founded in 1988, the COTS Walk is one of their oldest and most important fundraisers. Every year around 2,000 walkers of all ages from businesses, schools, religious organizations, and neighborhoods come together to participate. The Walk begins and ends in Battery Park, with music, Ben & Jerry's ice cream, and fun activities.

This family-friendly event guides walkers along a 3.6-mile route through downtown Burlington, visiting some of the shelters and facilities that COTS operates. At this event, COTS seeks to illustrate the path a person experiencing homelessness might take when utilizing COTS services to educate our community about homelessness in our region. Bring your friends, family, co-workers, dogs, and strollers.....ALL ARE WELCOME!

Register at [www.cotsonline.org/cots-walk](http://www.cotsonline.org/cots-walk) and join the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction team!

## Montana Service Trip

The mission of FCCEJ Service Trips is to foster understanding of our national and global community through intergenerational volunteer work. These trips provide opportunities for youth and adults to participate at a domestic or international site to work on projects identified by the host community.

In June, an intergenerational team of seventeen FCCEJ members will be heading to the Blackfeet Nation in Montana to work on service projects identified by the Blackfeet people. In preparation for this immersive experience, the team has been meeting monthly to learn about the culture and to engage in activities designed to build team cohesion. We are partnering with Global Volunteers, our liaison with the Blackfeet Nation, who is making arrangements for our local transportation, lodging and meals.

During the week we are on the reservation, each team member will be paired with a person from the Blackfeet community, with whom they will work collaboratively at the assigned project site. Options might be helping at the food pantry, assisting with the summer camp for kids, or working on a labor project. Other options might be planting trees or helping at the senior citizen's center. We are excited to work with a person from the Blackfeet Nation on a project, giving us the chance to learn from each other.

We are grateful for this chance to serve and are most appreciative of the support from the FCCEJ community.

With Gratitude,

Sharon Dettenrieder for the Montana Service Team

## FCCEJ Receives Ann Atherton Award

In its Spring's newsletter, Dismas House of Vermont reports that it has selected FCCEJ as recipient of the prestigious Ann Atherton Award for exceptional volunteerism. The newsletter states,

“The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction has been generous as Dismas volunteers and donors for over fifteen years. Pastor [Mark] Mendes created the program Mission Possible to become more hands-on in the community. For over five years, Ed Steele has been its lead and after its lockdown of 2020 [caused by the Covid pandemic], was one of the earliest volunteers to return to the East Allen Dismas House. Ed invited Justin Adair, Assistant House Director at East Allen, to one of the Church's services...where Justin found the same warm, engaging spirit sitting in the pews that Ed brings to our table. Since Mission Possible's inception, we are grateful that the Church has faithfully provided residents sustenance, camaraderie, and forgiveness.”

Way to go, FCCEJ!

## Racial Justice Event - Mark Your Calendars!!

**Sunday, June 2nd @ 3pm in the Sanctuary**

In keeping with our focus on community education, the Racial Justice Subcommittee of Missions will be hosting a panel discussion, entitled, The New American Experience, as part of our speaker series. On the panel, thus far, are: Jeetan Khadka, from the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) and Eric Agnero, the Executive Director of the Vermont Institute of Community and International Involvement (VICII). Their stories about their experiences as New Americans will allow us to develop a greater awareness and understanding of their life journeys that we may then use to appreciate the journeys of others who follow a similar path.

This event is free and open to the community!

# WE'RE BUGGING OUT OVER THESE BAGS!

Welcome May with a reusable bag!  
This entire month when you  
purchase a \$2.50 Fight Hunger Bag  
from our selected Hannaford, it will  
send us a \$1 donation.



[hannaford.2givelocal.com](http://hannaford.2givelocal.com)  
Fight Hunger Bag Program

**Our Participating Hannaford:  
21A Essex Way, Essex Junction VT**



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

Happy Spring!

The Thrift Shop began offering Spring and Summer items the last week of March, much to our customers delight! We continue to see an increase in customer traffic and our sales are increasing as well. We constantly explore ways to reuse and recycle items donated that we cannot sell, with a goal of keeping the clothing waste in our community and we reach out to folks who reuse and recycle. Our current source for denim that is not sold (jeans) is Outerknown, a recycling/reuse business in St. Albans.

We appreciate the support our community at large provides and always welcome donations of gently used items in good resalable quality. Currently we need men's clothing, linens, such as bedding, towels, etc., household items and games. We would like to thank the many generous community members who make donations, so we may continue to meet our mission of serving others, both with sale items and financial donations to local organizations. We are currently exploring additional organizations we can donate to, not just during the holidays, but throughout the year. Please spread the "good word" of the shop's mission with your friends and if you are interested in volunteering, contact Elaine Raymond, 879-7350 or Sandy Tallman, 879-0665.

We are open for shopping and receiving donations on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10-1, and Wednesday evenings from 4-7pm. We are also open 11am – 12pm the first Sunday of each month so people attending the monthly 10am service can shop or drop off donations.

## Camp Scholarships Await You!

**Children, Youth,  
Adults & Families**

Connect with Laurie or Rev. Mark if you are planning to attend one of our UCC summer camps - Horton Center (NH), Silver Lake Conference Center (CT) or Pilgrim Lodge (ME). Scholarships can also go toward sending your child for full day VB Camp in August.

Attending a week of camp is a powerful way to connect with God, get to know others, and enrich your own faith. It's like VB Camp x 10! Meet new people, enjoy camp activities/outings, and have a life changing experience that you'll never forget. You'll want to go back every summer! UCC camps have some really cool staff and great views of God's creation.



### Horton Center Camp

*(Our UCC camp outside Gorham, NH  
on the top of Pine Mountain)*

[www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org)

Tivvi Pare, Executive Director

[tpare@nhcucc.org](mailto:tpare@nhcucc.org)

Camp phone number is 603-545-9660

Check out the awesome camps offered this summer!

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

MEILLEUR, Sena	05/01	MAYVILLE, Alec	05/13
PARKER, Collin	05/01	HIGGINS, Rich	05/14
PETTINGILL, James	05/01	JOHN, Alex	05/14
SHARP, Steve	05/01	BLAKE, Dave	05/18
MITTL, Steve	05/02	BEEBE, Wayne	05/19
SCHNEIDER, Jane	05/02	NOEL, Abigail	05/19
FOSS, Donald	05/03	PINDERS, Danielle	05/19
GIANNUZZI, Anna	05/03	CIEPLICKI, Betsy	05/20
NUTTING, Lester	05/03	EHLER-VOCK, Kyle	05/20
TUCKER, Jean	05/03	FRANK, Marlene	05/20
HOY, Jacob	05/04	HOY, David	05/20
GRAY, Don	05/05	RELYEA, Becky	05/24
RUSHFORD, Carolyn	05/06	CARLSON, Maryann	05/25
CUNNINGHAM-FIRKEY, Laura	05/07	MILLER, Elizabeth	05/25
BLAKE, Pam	05/08	RICHER, Mary	05/25
KINNEY, Anna	05/08	WOOD, Susan	05/25
DROST, Rose	05/09	STAPLETON, Orion	05/26
BOTTAMINI, Mike	05/10	WARREN, Mary Anne	05/26
HARRIS, Allie	05/10	MCDONALD, Deanne	05/27
HOY, Jennifer	05/11	MCKENZIE, Maureen	05/29
KEATING, Denise	05/11	WERMER, Leo	05/29
OWENS, Gretchen	05/11	PALMER, Amanda	05/31
PETTINGILL, Anniella	05/11	PETTINGILL, Alyssa	05/31
LINDHOLM, Eric	05/13		



## **SERMON TALKBACK**

Have you ever heard Rev. Mark say something in his sermon that piqued your interest or curiosity? Did you ever hear a sermon where you wanted to argue a bit about what was said or have a deeper conversation around the themes and lessons gleaned from God? Do you ever just want to belong to a group that supports each other and talks about significant issues of life and faith? Did you ever want to go to a group and receive free coffee and goodies? Well, if you answered yes to any of these questions, then feel free to come to Sermon Talkback every Tuesday morning from 8:30 to 10am. We get 15 to 25 people each week in the Marvin Lounge and we have some pretty enlightening conversations. We laugh a lot, and when someone is in need of some extra support, we give it.

## **COFFEE CLATTER**



Do you like to talk? Do you like to drink coffee and enjoy a muffin or scone? Well if you do, then come to Martone's on Friday morning from 8-9am for a time of communing with other folks from the church. There are no pre-arranged subjects or study materials so come and bring up anything you'd like to discuss and be assured, there will be others interested in expressing their opinion!

## **CHRISTIAN BRIDGE**



On the first and third Fridays of every month, we meet in the Marvin Lounge to have some fun playing bridge. There are all types of skill sets playing and we have snacks, drinks [non-alcoholic] and fun!

In May, we will meet on May 3 and May 17 from 1:30 – 4pm. We generally have two to three tables and play two to three rounds. The high score gets a free homemade jam from the minister's stores. We are also blessed to have a number of non-church players who just come to play, laugh and enjoy life. This is a great group to bring a friend.



## **Grief Support Group**

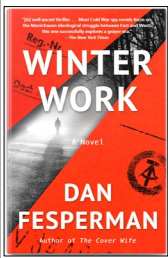
**2nd Thursday of each month ~ 10-11:30am in Marvin Lounge.**

This group is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. The sessions are facilitated by Sharon Dettenrieder, MSN, RN and Mary McHugh, MAPS. Both Sharon and Mary have years of experience in leading Grief Support groups as well as personal experience with loss. Next session is 5/9. Please contact the church office for more information: 802-878-5745 or [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org).

## **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.

## **Lunchtime Book Group**



The Lunchtime Book Group will meet on Monday May 20 at 11:30 in the Marvin Lounge.

We will be discussing *Winter Work* by Dan Fesperman. It is an historical novel but also a spy thriller set in post Cold War East

Germany. It has received rave reviews, mostly five stars! Bring your brown bag lunch and join us for good fellowship and a lively discussion.

## **SAVE THE DATE - PLANNED GIVING SEMINAR**

As a component of the Planned Giving Program we are pleased to have the opportunity to host Holly LeMieux, local estate planning attorney, on May 23, from 6:30 to 8pm in the Marvin Lounge. Holly's area of expertise includes estate planning, wills, and elder law. She will present, have time for questions, and provide take-away materials.

There is no charge to attend this seminar. Please contact the church office to sign up or if you need more information.

**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  
Spiritual Friends for PreK-2nd

**~Other Sundays Throughout the Month~**

**8:30** - In-person and streamed via YouTube  
Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and  
provides accompaniment

**10:15** - In-person—Faith Formation for PreK - 8th  
Music: Finally @ First Praise Band  
Streamed on the 3rd Sunday of each month

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**WHEN I STAND BEFORE GOD**  
*at the end of my life,*  
**I WOULD HOPE**  
*that I would not have*  
**A SINGLE BIT OF TALENT LEFT,**  
**AND COULD SAY,**  
*I USED everything*  
**YOU GAVE ME.**

*Erma Bombeck*