

SPirit @ FIRSt

Monthly Newsletter

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

MARCH 2026: IN THIS ISSUE...

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YOUR PASTOR’S PONDERINGS...

Personally, I try to preach and embody in my pastoral interactions an upbeat, sloppy agape message of hope, joy, peace and love. Perhaps that is why Advent is a season that I enjoy, especially if I can sneak some Christmas Carols in there as I preemptively preach about Jesus coming to town. With the age in which we live being so jammed packed with anxiety and fear, I sometimes double down on the optimism.

However, Lent is my absolutely favorite season, since it allows me both personally and pastorally to lean into some of the difficulties, anguishes, betrayals, and pains of life. Lent is a bit raw with emotion, but it is perhaps the only church season that draws our attention to what is actually happening in our lives. I have relationships that need work. I have hard truths of personality that need work. I have poor habits that are unhealthy. I have interior struggles that need resolution. I have spiritual longings that need disciplined work. Sometimes in the shadows of my consciousness, I feel like a mess and simply need to rest within the loving embrace of God and look to the Spirit for guidance and strength to continue the journey.

Lent is my season.....

Lent affords me the time and setting to work on myself within the context of faith. Reading the gospels adds insight into my problems. Praying more connects me to the Spirit of God and draws me into some much needed silence. Giving up sugar helps my body and mind feel better. Writing letters to friends or re-connecting over the phone deepens and perhaps even heals some of the brokenness of my relationships. Going to church more feeds my soul by connecting with a community of faith. Reading more and watching less television forces my brain to think more. Taking a walk feeds my body and enables much needed introspection. In the early days of my ministry, I encouraged folks to give something up in order to draw closer to Jesus and his teachings. But it is just as effective to add behaviors that will deepen your understanding and move you closer to the Source of Life.

This Lent, I would encourage all of you to come to church more, attend the season’s special services, reflect on your life and faith more, read the gospels, and act out the gospel by helping others in need.

Blessings on your journeys.

Rev. Mark

LENT is about
 BECOMING,
 DOING, and
 CHANGING,
 WHATEVER IT IS
 THAT IS BLOCKING
 THE FULLNESS OF LIFE
 IN US RIGHT NOW.

-- Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

SPECIAL SERVICES IN MARCH

Communion in March will be observed in the traditional way on March 1st
Bread and Juice passed out to the congregation

A Seder Meal

Saturday, March 28



After its positive reception last year, the Deacons and Rev. Mark have decided to offer a Seder Meal again this year to replace our normal Maundy Thursday remembrance. The Seder Meal would have been the Passover Meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples the weekend of his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Passover is the event that finally got Egypt's Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go and its remembrance meal has deep connections to Jesus setting people free 3000 years later. It is the oldest such ritual in our world. And on top of the ritual is an amazing meal lovingly prepared again this year by Betty Busciglio and Jim Glatz.

Tickets are available and free, but there are only so many people we can sit comfortably in Fellowship Hall for such a ritual like this so contact the church office or ask Rev. Mark for your ticket. The Meal will be served at 6pm.

Passion Sunday

March 29

On March 29th, the Liturgical Year splits the focus to highlight both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. Palm Sunday focuses on Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and Passion Sunday focuses on the rest of the week with the trial, betrayals, final teachings and ultimate death. Most folks and churches are drawn to the pomp, fun and triumphalism of Palm Sunday while delegating the Passion for Good Friday where many choose to stay home. In doing so, followers of Jesus miss the most important part of Christ's message. So after we wave our palms during "All, Glory, Laud, and Honor," we will shift our attention to the passion where various readers will read the ageless story. We'll hold our regular Sunday morning services at 8:30 and 10:15.

HOLY WEEK

Ecumenical Good Friday Service

April 3rd at 12 noon

Ten churches and their pastors are heading to Essex Junction for FCCEJ's hosting of a Good Friday Service. People will be coming from UCC Churches in Jeffersonville, St. Albans, Hinesburg, South Hero, and Burlington as well as First Baptist in Burlington. The service is shaping up to be creative, inspiring, and full of divergent views of what is Good About Good Friday as reflected in the seven last words of Jesus. **The service will be at 12 noon and there will NOT be a service later at 7pm that evening.**

Since so many churches are coming together for the service, the Champlain Clergy Association participants thought it would be a great opportunity to share a meal together and get to know some of the members at our sister churches in the area. So, after the service there will be sandwich fixings for all. This would be a great service to bring a friend!

EASTER SUNDAY—APRIL 5TH

Sunrise at Holy Family Gazebo

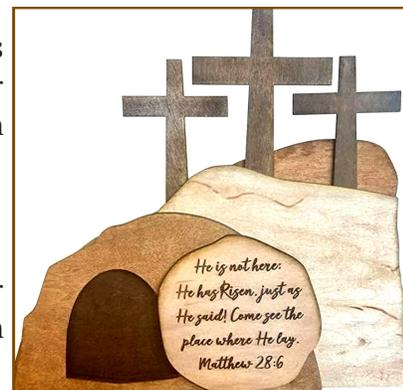
6:30am

There will be an ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service starting at 6:30am. Rev. Mendes and Father Ranges will officiate this service as they have done for many years. After the service, head over to FCCEJ to enjoy our traditional Easter Breakfast offered in Fellowship Hall, served from 7am to 10am.

Easter Services at FCCEJ

8:30 & 10:15am

Although Easter falls on a first Sunday this year, the Deacons have decided to offer TWO SERVICES at 8:30 and 10:15 instead of the traditional combined at 10am. Both services will be All Family Worship and offer the sacrament of Holy Communion.



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee has been meeting and preparing to complete the profile of FCCEJ that will be used to recruit candidates for our next settled pastor. We are facilitating a series of 1-hour long cottage meetings to help collect feedback from the congregation. We want to hear from you! A link to the sign up for the meetings is now located on the opening page of the FCCEJ website in one of the flip buttons, or you can scan the QR code. The meetings will be held at the church or a members home. We hope you can find a time and day which works with your schedule. The committee will update the congregation monthly in the newsletter.



Please feel free to reach out to committee members if you have any questions.

Kaki McGeary, Matt Clark, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Judy Allen, Jen Dooley, Cathy Shearer, Amy McIntyre, Marion Lawlor, Laura Marthaler, Betty Marthaler, Bob Driver

DEACONS

As we enter the sacred season of Lent, we are reminded that this is a time of self-reflection and preparation for the upcoming Easter celebration.

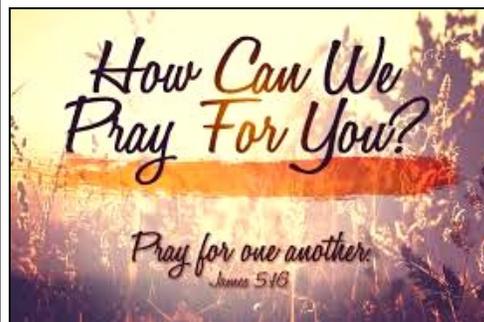
The Deacons Committee encourages our congregation to embrace this season. Lent can be about giving something up —but can also be about adding something new: intentional prayer, or showing grace, generosity, and compassion. It could be reaching out to help support other church members, helping out a neighbor, or letting the more vulnerable members of our community know that we care and support them and they are not forgotten in these tumultuous times.

On our journey toward Easter, may we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus, and prepare our hearts for the hope and joy of the Resurrection. Let this Lenten season be one of spiritual growth, humility, and renewed commitment to serving others.

FCCEJ has a busy schedule during lent with plenty of opportunity for worship and fellowship. As deacons, we welcome the opportunity to join with and support our congregation through this reflective season. Please reach out to any member of the committee if you need anything.

Peace,

Jim Glatz, Deacon



LENTEN PRAYERS

During the 6 weeks of Lent, the staff at FCCEJ has pledged to pray for all active members and constituents in our faith community. Each week we will include a prayer list in the worship bulletin and weekly email. If you have a specific prayer request, please write it on the Friendship Pad, send it to welcom@fccej.org, or call the church office. If not, we will pray as the Spirit moves us. All prayer requests are confidential unless we hear otherwise. By Easter morning, everyone at FCCEJ will have been lifted up in prayer.

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 2026:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-53196874-altar#/>



✝ ELIZABETH'S EPISTLE ✝

Faith Formation

The Season of Lent is a period of 40 days, beginning on Ash Wednesday, and is a period of introspection and reflection on the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. The end of March concludes Lent with Palm Sunday and then Easter Sunday we celebrate Jesus' rising!

May we quiet our minds so our hearts can soak in the love and grace of Jesus.

Volunteers Welcomed

- ★ Volunteers are essential to the heart of children's ministry!
- ★ The recruiting for Faith Formation volunteers is an open invite.
If you have been attending FCCEJ for more than 6 months, you are qualified.
Reach out to Elizabeth at ChildrensMinistry@fcej.org.

March Dates to Remember:

- ★ March 1st ~ Spiritual Friends ~ Genesis 12:1-4a
- ★ March 8th ~ Peer Groups ~ Exodus 17:1-7
- ★ March 15th ~ Peer Groups ~ 1 Samuel 16:1-13 *Pretzel Sunday*
- ★ March 22nd ~ All Family Worship
- ★ March 29th ~ Peer Groups ~ Matthew 21:1-11 *Palm Sunday*

Faith Formation Offering

- ◆ The Heart to Heart Program through the Humane Society of Chittenden County is the 2025-2026 Faith Formation offering recipient.
 - *Please continue to use the white envelopes in the Narthex for the Faith Formation offering, or write "Faith Formation" on the memo of your check.*

Prayer

Loving God, when we cry out with heavy hearts, you listen. When waiting is hard and hoping feels impossible, you make us strong. When we're tired, afraid, or overwhelmed, your love is a safe place to rest. Thanks for always staying near. Amen.

Peace and Light,

Elizabeth - Children's Ministry Coordinator

CHRISTIAN FORMATION COMMITTEE

Please consider joining the Christian Formation Committee this summer for **Three Summer Evenings**, where we will follow the story of Moses through fun, fellowship and faith learning. We are looking at an evening during the third week of each June, July and August (specific dates to be determined) where our entire church family can get together, (re)learn about one of the great people of the Bible, and enjoy an evening of wonderful activities. Each evening will feature a specific part of the story, complete with themed activities. More information will follow as we continue to work on the details of what we feel will be three exciting nights out for our church. This will take the place of Vacation Bible Camp. Attend one, two, or all three!

MISSIONS

Age Well Vermont Workshop

We are pleased to announce that we are once again partnering with Age Well to host a workshop for seniors and their families and caregivers. The event will include information on service and resources that Age Well offers as well as how programs are responding to the changes in federal funding, a Q & A period, and giveaways from Age Well and FCCEJ.

EVENT DETAILS

- Thursday, April 20
- Continental Breakfast at 8:30am
- Workshop Begins at 9am
- Event is free

For more information, please contact the church office.

COTS Walk 2026



Founded in 1988, the COTS Walk is one of their oldest and most important peer-to-peer fundraisers. Every year walkers of all ages from businesses, schools, religious organizations, and neighborhoods come together from all over the region to participate. The Walk begins and ends in Battery Park with music from Jenni & the Jazz Junketeers, as well as 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, coworkers, dogs, and strollers...All are welcome!

This year the COTS Walk theme is *Every Story Deserves a Home*. Every person who walks through the doors of COTS's shelters, housing, and service locations has a unique life story. COTS believes that every story matters, and every person has the power to change the ending. At this year's COTS Walk, we hope you will join us in honoring every story and recognizing that homelessness is a chapter in too many stories in our community.

When: First Sunday in May; Sunday May 3rd, 2026.

Where: Battery Park

Registration: begins at 1pm

<https://cotsonline.org/cots-walk>

Walk time: begins at 2pm

Who Walks?

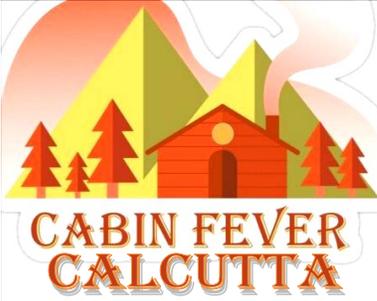
- Walkers of all ages, from businesses, schools, social and religious organizations, and neighborhoods come together from all over the region to participate in the annual COTS Walk.

Why Walk?

- To raise public awareness about homelessness in our community and to raise money.
- To support COTS shelters and services for Vermonters who are homeless or are at risk of losing their homes.

MONTANA SERVICE TRIP HAPPENINGS

9th Annual Cabin Fever Calcutta



Winter won't last forever — and neither will your chance to attend one of the most entertaining nights of the year! Join us for the **9th Annual Cabin Fever Calcutta** on **Saturday, March 14th** at the Catamount Country Club in Williston.

This beloved annual event promises an evening full of laughter, great food, and wonderful company. You'll enjoy reconnecting with friends and family, cheering on the action, and watching our emcee, Jamie Polli, take the stage in his unforgettable sequined jacket. And of course, you'll hear the familiar ring of the cowbell followed by the crowd-favorite call: **"It's a prize ball, Jamie!"**

Whether you're there for the competition, the prizes, or simply the fun atmosphere, it's always a night to remember.

EVENT DETAILS

Ticket Cost: \$150

Each ticket includes:

- Two dinners
- One Calcutta ball (with a chance to win \$1,000)
Insurance will be available for purchase that evening

Additional highlights include:

- Raffles
- Wine Pull
- Team Auction — The Montana Team will be auctioned as a group for local service work

Evening Schedule

- 5:00 – 6:00 pm: Social Hour & Cash Bar
- 6:00 pm: Buffet Dinner
- 6:45 pm: Early Bird Drawing
- 7:00 pm: Calcutta Begins

Be sure to secure your tickets by **Sunday, March 8th**. Proceeds from the Calcutta Fundraiser support the Montana Service Trip. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you there!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR CHILI FUNDRAISER

The Montana Team extends heartfelt appreciation to everyone who supported our recent Chili Fundraiser. Thanks to our amazing chili makers, cornbread bakers, and everyone who purchased a quart (or two!), we raised **\$1,000!**

We are so grateful for the generosity and enthusiasm of our church community.

Your support truly makes a difference as we prepare for our service trip.

REQUEST FOR CUPCAKES



The Missions Committee would love to have some of the fabulous and talented bakers in our church assist with making cupcakes for the Calcutta desert table. We are looking for a dozen of any flavor of cupcakes. If you make any gluten free cupcakes, please mark the container. The cupcakes need to be dropped off at the church kitchen between 9 am and noon on Saturday, March 14th. Scan the QR code for the Sign-Up Genius, or call the church office and Jen will assist you. Thank you!





“CRITTER CORNER”



By Beth Volker

Even before spring arrives, baby animals do! During the months of March through May, while winter is still hanging on here in Vermont, baby squirrels, skunks, and raccoons begin to arrive.



Squirrels have their first litter of 3-5 in March or early April, and their second in August or September. This usually happens inside their dreys ~ those messy clumps of leaves way up in the trees or in tree hollows. They will rarely choose to be close to humans.

Raccoons give birth April-May to a litter size of 3-5, and skunks in late April-June to a litter size of five. Neither skunks nor raccoons have second litters, though if something happens to the first, they may try again.

Most of you in this church are familiar with the song, “*All God’s Critters Got a Place in the Choir.*” I interpret this song to mean that each and every creature that God put on



this earth has as much right to be here as you and I, perhaps more, and deserves the same respect. So, if a mama raccoon decides she’s going to give birth in the rafters of your garage, in your attic, or in the crawl space under your roof, PLEASE don’t evict her! If you trap and relocate mom (which is illegal) she will be in agony because her milk has come in, and the babies will die a horrible death by starvation. Please be patient....the babies are born blind, helpless and totally dependent on mom. They will vacate your premises in 8-10 weeks. Be honored that they chose you to reside with.



Skunks like secluded, dark, dry locations like underground burrows dug by other animals, or spaces under manmade structures such as decks, porches, sheds, or wood piles. Litters range in size from 4-7, usually born in May or early June and they will stay with mom in the den for 6-8 weeks before emerging. Keep in mind that skunks don’t like to spray, because after doing so they are defenseless for 8-14 days while they “refuel.” If you leave them alone and don’t surprise them, you’ll likely be fine.

I’m asking you to be a patient and tolerant neighbor to our wild friends. Remember, we humans have moved into and taken over so much of the spaces where they used to roam freely and undisturbed. They have had to adapt to human intervention and to survive as best they can. I contend that there are not too many of them...there are too many of us!

If you need help with a critter “situation,” I urge you to reach out to the experts for assistance. I strongly recommend: HEART Wildlife Removal in Burlington (JoAnn Nichols, owner) at (802) 651-6863. JoAnn’s cell number is (802) 999-5360. wildlifeteam@heartwildliferemoval.com. Thank you for caring and happy spring!

**God requires that we assist the animals, when they need our help.
Each being (human or creature) has the same right of protection.**

St. Francis of Assisi

STEWARDSHIP

Giving of Stock and Retirement Funds

Vermonters Love a Bargain:

As tax season looms ahead of us, we wanted to send a reminder that you can donate stock to the church as part or all of your annual pledge. Why is this a bargain? Because, there will be no capital gains tax paid if you donate it to a nonprofit like First Congregational Church of Essex Junction.

So, if you've been holding onto a stock because you do not want to pay tax on the money it has gained, you can donate it to the church, knowing they will get the full amount! This can be an individual stock or fund and can be donated from your Retirement Fund or any Investment Account. This can be a way to take minimum distributions as well. And you can deduct the value of the gift from your taxes!

It is a win for you and First Congregational Church of Essex Junction!

Reach out to the Financial Secretary at finances@fccej.org with questions or to make a donation.

Special Offerings

Did you know that there are ten special offerings highlighted throughout the year? Every month (except for July and August) we spotlight one of these offerings. The list of offerings and associated months are listed below. You can also see this list on the website at <https://www.fccej.org/v5/giving/ways-to-donate/>. You can donate to them all, or pick and choose which ones are meaningful to you. While we focus on only one special offering at a time, we are happy to receive your gift for any of these funds at any time of year. Thank you for your support!

- ◆ **January—One Great Hour of Sharing:** supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC within Wider Church Ministries.
- ◆ **February—Service Trip:** supports the biennial trip where FCCEJ members engage in service projects.
- ◆ **March—Outdoor Ministry:** provides funding for camping weekends and other outdoor activities.
- ◆ **April—Pastor's Fund—Easter Offering:** is used at the discretion of our minister to provide support for heating bills, emergencies, food etc. for both members of our church and community.
- ◆ **May—Per Capita:** these dues are paid by the churches of the Vermont Conference
- ◆ **June—Strengthen the Church:** supports congregations across the UCC in many ways.
- ◆ **September—Seminary Sunday:** supports the education of future ministers.
- ◆ **October—Neighbors in Need:** is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.
- ◆ **November—Food Pantry - Thanksgiving Offering:** supports the Heavenly Food Pantry at FCCEJ
- ◆ **December—Christmas Fund:** direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties.

Remember that we are NOT supplying personalized offering envelopes, however we do plan to have giving envelopes available soon. Stay tuned....

DONATE TO FCCEJ

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

- ⇒ **Send a Check or use BillPay.** This is a remote service that issues one-time or recurring check payments by mail. Please contact your banking institution for details. Please note the reason for your donation in the check's memo line (e.g., "missions").
- ⇒ **Send money via PayPal.** We accept electronic donations! Visit paypal.me/fccej. (A PayPal account is not required to donate money.)

PLANNED GIVING

Newly Formed Legacy Circle Holds its First Gathering

On the evening of February 6, the newly formed Legacy Circle held its inaugural gathering at the home of Kaki & Matt McGeary. It was an evening of good food, good company, and a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better and brainstorm ideas on how to encourage others to consider planned giving. There were eighteen in attendance including the Planned Giving committee and members of the Legacy Circle.

The Legacy Circle is a group of church friends and members who have designated a financial gift to FCCEJ in their wills or estate plans. To clarify: Legacy Circle members have stated an “intention” to leave a financial gift to our church. It is entirely possible that intentions may change with long-term care, illness, or other life events facing all of us. When leaving a legacy gift such circumstances are understood and typically defined in the gift documents. You do not need to be wealthy to make a planned gift, you just have to care about our church and its future.

Individuals who are considering a planned gift to FCCEJ may speak to a member of the committee or Rev. Mark.

Planned Giving Committee: *Dave Johnson, Matthew McGeary, Darryll Koch, Terry Stein, Beth Volker, Mark Mendes*

IMPORTANT FCCEJ REMINDERS

FCCEJ Calendar

- All meetings must be scheduled through the church office
- Send an email to welcome@fccej.org with the following information:
 1. Committee Name
 2. Preferred day & time
 3. Preferred room
 4. Is audio/visual (Zoom, video, screen access) needed
 5. Committee chairs should check the calendar weekly to confirm the schedule

Reimbursements

- If you purchase something for FCCEJ, this is the process to receive reimbursement.
 1. Complete a Reimbursement Request Form—hard copies are in the church office, soft copies can be emailed to you. You must include:
 - a. Your name
 - b. Your committee
 - c. The account code
 - d. Receipt/invoice
 2. All Reimbursement Request Forms must be signed by the committee chair or another committee member if the chair is needing reimbursement.
 3. Send the completed, signed form, along with backup documents to welcome@fccej.org or drop off hard copies to the church office.
 4. Reimbursement checks will be mailed unless otherwise requested.

SERMON TALKBACK

Join us every week on Tuesday mornings to discuss Sunday’s message and the various elements of the service from the previous week. The group discusses a wide variety of subjects, eats scones from a masterful pastry chef, enjoys fresh coffee, tea, or water, and simply enjoys being in community together. Everyone is welcome. Tuesdays at 8:30-10am in Marvin Lounge.

COFFEE CLATTER @ MARTONE’S—EVERY FRIDAY MORNING FROM 8-9AM

Each week, there is a group of five to ten people that come together to enjoy coffee, a breakfast goodie, enjoyable company, and conversations about whatever people want to talk about, including politics and religion! We meet at Martone’s from 8-9am and everyone pays their own way. Everyone is welcome to come and tell us what you really think! Everyone is welcome to not only come but to bring a friend.

LUNCHTIME BOOK GROUP

The book group is reading *The Angry Housewives Eating Bons Bons*, by Laura Landik for the March discussion. *Five women in Freesia Court form a book club that becomes a lifelong support system, navigating life's challenges over 40 years with humor, friendship, and bonbons.* We will meet in the Marvin Lounge on Monday, March 16 at 11:30am. Newcomers are always welcome. Bring your lunch if you'd like, and join us!

BRIDGE FOR FUN

If you are an old pro or just beginning to play, we have a Bridge Club that comes together to have some fun on the first and third Friday or every month from 1:30 to 4pm. We get a couple of tables, enjoy some good natured table talk, have snacks and coffee, and if you win the day, you get one of Rev. Mark’s homemade jams! The group is pretty evenly split between church members and non-church members so bring a friend.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

This is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. This is an open group. You, along with any friends, family members, and neighbors are invited to join us. All are welcome! The sessions are facilitated by Sharon Dettenrieder, MSN, RN and Mary McHugh, MAPS. Both have personal experience with loss along with professional education and experience in leading grief support groups. Wherever you are along this road of grief, may you experience God’s healing presence and love. The group meets the 2nd Thursday of each month. Next meeting is Thursday, March 12 at 10am in Marvin Lounge.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

BEERWALD, Rebecca

BERO, Parker

BICKFORD, Bill

BURNETT, Donna

CLARK, Lisa

CUNNINGHAM-FIRKEY, Eva

DOOLEY, Jen

FRISBIE, Bart

GOODHEART, Cathie

HARTMANN-FERLAND, Avery

JOHNSON, Dave

JONES, Bill

LEACH, David

MARTHALER, Betty

MARTHALER, Tony

MOOS, Makaylah

OWENS, Izzy

PALMER, Sean

PETTINGILL, Siobhan

RODDY, Jonathan

SHARP, Joshua

SHEARER, Thomas

STAPLETON, Emmerson

STAPLETON, Renee

STONE, Elizabeth

TRUAX, Faith

VOLKER, Beth

WARREN, Beth

YOUNG FAMILY FREE NIGHT OUT

Too busy with kids and responsibilities to cook a good meal? Want a night to be waited on without any responsibilities? Want to sit and talk to some like minded parents while your kids get rid of some energy running around and playing games safely in the gym?

Well have we got a deal for YOU!

We are embarking on a monthly event for any family with an elementary aged child or younger to come and enjoy a free meal where all you have to do is show up and eat. The meal will be provided by capable hands and be something your kids will eat. The Gym will be available and supervised for the kids to run around, play games and get rid of some of their excess energy! You will not be expected to set up or put the tables and chairs away. Simply come and eat and enjoy the company of other families. No reservation needed. And invite your friends as well! Next dinner is Friday, March 6—chicken nuggets, mac-n-cheese, salad, fruit, and dessert.

NEW MEMBER'S CLASS OFFERED

Do you like the values of love, justice, inclusion and diversity that we lift up as Christ's teachings here at FCCEJ? Do you enjoy the warmth of community that we cherish here? Do you like the ways we feed and clothe people in need? Do you like the many groups and organizations that we partner with in order to create a more perfect union in Vermont, our nation and world? Do you love the music that comes from so many different and talented groups in our church? Or do you just love to come and sit in the sanctuary and soak up God's presence? If so, then maybe its about time you join this great church. Both God and all of us need you to help us spread Jesus' love around liberally to people who need it and to a world in desperate need of some tenderness and light.

You are invited to attend our New Member's Class on Sunday, March 29 after the second service around 11:30am in the Marvin Lounge. Come and learn more about the UCC and FCCEJ in a relaxed setting with Rev. Mark and one of our Deacons. If you need childcare, please contact the church office. Lunch will be provided for all. The class will last about an hour and a half.



COMMUNITY CONCERTS @ FIRST

*Tom Cleary &
Amber deLaurentis*

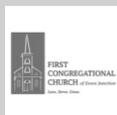
03.22.26

3:00 PM

TICKETS \$20

AGES 12 AND UNDER - FREE

BUY TICKETS



PROCEEDS SUPPORT
AGE WELL & FCCEJ



First Congregational Church of Essex Junction



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

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP:

~First Sunday of Each Month ~ One Service at 10am~

with Holy Communion and Sanctuary Choir ~ Spiritual Friends for PreK-5th

~Other Sundays Throughout the Month~

8:30am - In-person & streamed via YouTube

Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and provides accompaniment

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

VISIT US ONLINE:



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