FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of Essex Junction
Love. Serve. Grow.

Spirit @ First

November, 2026

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Your Pastor's Ponderings

November is when we remember Thanksgiving and get together with friends or family to celebrate the meal shared by the early settlers known as the Separatists and the Indigenous people [Wampanoag Tribe] they met when they sailed into Plymouth Harbor and attempted to survive the winter in 1620.

Before sailing it should be noted that they were illegally worshipping and snubbing the newly established Church of England and King Henry's personal and political stand against the Roman Catholic Church. They worshipped and met secretly, they were sought after for treason, they were imprisoned both in England and later in the Netherlands, they were betrayed and their resources were taken. That's why they snuck out of England to get to Leiden. And when the Separatists left for the new world, they left behind the majority of their compatriots under the spiritual direction of Rev. John Robinson. They were the selected few who would check out the new world and see if it was a possible place where the rest could follow and make a home. That spirit of courage and adventure, of challenging the governing authorities, of desiring to build a body politik with the values taught in the bible where everyone could be free still enlivens and guides our hands as a nation.

Out of the 102 people who sailed from Leiden in the Netherlands across the ocean to Plymouth Massachusetts, only about half were Separatists coming to create a home where they could freely worship. Arriving in November with the harsh New England winters and their weakness from sailing across the ocean, plus disease and malnutrition, only a little more than half survived the first year. It is difficult to find the exact number, but of the Separatists who came for religious freedom only about 35 survived the first winter, maybe a total of 57 people. Our forebears were courageous and strong willed; a people who knew adversity and overcame it.

Besides the Separatists there were planters, people exploring for financial gain and various types of servants. Wanting to gather folks into a civic body, the leaders created the Mayflower Compact to ensure that everyone would work together to survive and live at peace with one another. This document was the first political document made in our country and still stands as a tribute to the importance of sticking together even when different interests are at stake and doing so for the sake of survival, freedom and prosperity [life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!].

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It is also a tribute to that early small band of courageous settlers that they lived in peace with the Wampanoag Tribe for a full fifty years. The Wampanoags benefitted from their relationship with the Pilgrims for it gave the tribe some seemingly powerful allies. In addition, the Wampanoags, through their generosity in the early days and their knowledge of how to live off the land, literally saved the Pilgrims from starvation and complete annihilation. It was a tentative peace at times and yet one that survived and served both groups of people. Even today, those fifty years stand as a tribute for inclusion for the sake of peace in the land.

And of course there is the dinner and the games. There was a feast with plenty. There were games for the children to play. There were competitions between the men. The women shared knowledge about cooking various dishes. All things we continue to do as we gather around our tables with friends, or work at community events to feed people, or watch football, or get outdoors to play in God's beautiful land.

It is singularly stunning to think that such a few number of people have shaped the American mythos. The Separatists were our religious forebears and we should claim the incredibly positive values and ways of being that they planted on these shores 407 years ago.

Blessings,
Rev. Mark

Special Sundays in November

November 1 ~ One Service at 10am
Honoring our Active Service Personnel and Veterans
Rev. Mark Mendes Preaches ~ Holy Communion in Traditional Way
DROP IN Choir: Come at 9:30 and sing with the Sanctuary Choir
Committee Fair: Information about all our committees at Fellowship Hour
Afternoon Concert with Skylark at 3pm

November 8 ~ Two Services: 8:30 & 10:15
Pastor Bob Driver Preaching
Heavenly Harmony & Bethany Blake @ both services
Rev. Mark speaking in Plymouth MA for a Special 200th Anniversary Celebration

November 15 ~ Two Services: 8:30 & 10:15
Rev. Mark Mendes Preaching
Sanctuary Choir & Finally @ First
Receiving New Members

November 22 ~ Two Services: 8:30 & 10:15
Rev. Mark Mendes Preaching
Sanctuary Choir and Finally @ First
Sanctuary Decorated for Christmas After 2nd Service
Lynn Beliveau Funeral Service at 2:30pm in Our Sanctuary

Advent Begins!
November 29 ~ Two Services: 8:30 and 10:15
Rev. Mark Mendes Preaching
Sanctuary Choir & Finally @ First

REMEMBER

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR

Elizabeth's November Epistle

Faith Formation Offering:

The children have selected the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) as the organization they will support with their 2026-2027 Faith Formation Offering.

VINS mission statement: "*Motivating individuals and communities to care for the environment through education, research, and avian wildlife rehabilitation.*"

The Faith Formation contribution will enable VINS to:

- Bring an engaging educational experience to all ages through private experience, field trips, school programs, nature camps, and community outreach
- Rehabilitate and care for hundreds of birds each year
- Promote environmental field research that changes how we interact with our natural world

Please remember to write *Faith Formation Offering* on the memo line of your check, or use the white envelopes in the Narthex. Thank you!

Dates to Remember

- November 1st - Spiritual Friends - 10am Worship Service
  Celebrating Veterans
- November 8th, 15th & 22nd - Peer groups - 10:15am Worship Service
- November 29th - All Family Worship

Volunteers Welcomed and Needed!

- Leading faith formation peer groups during the 10:15 service is an open invite. If you are interested, please reach out to Elizabeth at ChildrensMinstry@fccej.org, or simply join the children's message and proceed to peer groups afterwards. The children appreciate you!

Prayer

Loving God, you dream of a world where everyone has what they need to live a vibrant life—nothing more, nothing less. Give us the courage to ask for help when we need it and the compassion to care for those around us. Amen.

Gratefully,
Elizabeth, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Deacons

With the busy start to the program year now behind us and the holidays in front of us, November is a great time to pause and be thankful. Thankful for the vibrant activity throughout our church, the beautiful music of our many talented musical groups and our Community Concerts, the outreach and impact of our various missions and ministries in on the community, and (maybe even) for the excuse the chilly air gives us to curl up with a good book or a good friend. Perhaps you found one or both at the Craft Fest or the Thrift Shop?! And if you are looking for anothee opportunity to connect, we'd love to have you join us later this month, on November 22nd after second service as we decorate the sanctuary for Advent. As always, if you or someone you know has an idea, a question or a need, please reach out to your Deacons or church staff. We are here for you.

Allison Van Steensburg, Deacon

Stewardship

by Heather Stein, Stewardship Committee Member

As Thanksgiving approaches,
what are YOU grateful for?

The leaves are orange, gold, and maroon and stick season approaches; for many of us, this is the time when we reflect on what we're grateful for, as we near Thanksgiving. Living in this beautiful corner of New England we have many things to be thankful for, including heat, a roof over our heads, and food on the table. This feels particularly true this year as many of us wrestle with higher prices at the grocery store and at the pump, while knowing many of our neighbors have less.

One of the things I am grateful for is the ability to help the community through what our church provides. It can be overwhelming to think about where to give our limited time and treasure, but I know that through the church ministries, every minute and dollar will be put to good use. Think of the food pantry, allowing community members to shop with dignity, or delivering to those who cannot make it to the building. And the Heavenly Cents thrift shop, that provides seasonally appropriate clothing and beautifully curated items for great prices to our neighbors, and also donates all they cannot sell, along with their proceeds, to organizations in need. The bags that we fill after service with hygiene supplies, things to keep warm and snacks provide me with a way to help those who are asking for support when I feel uncomfortable fumbling with a wallet.

So, in this season of giving thanks, please remember our church community and all it provides for us and our neighbors. I know that when I give financially to the church, through my annual financial pledge or other opportunities through the year, it will go to the church family that feeds and supports my soul and that of the people around me. I'm sure that you too are grateful for this church, and I encourage you to pledge what you can, based on that gratitude. Thank you!

Pastoral Search Updates

The Pastoral Search Committee is excited to share that we continue to move forward thoughtfully and prayerfully in our search for the next pastor of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction. Over the past several months, we have reviewed candidate materials, engaged in careful discernment, and worked to identify individuals whose gifts, experience, and sense of call align with the mission and values of our congregation. We are grateful for the prayers and encouragement from the FCCEJ church family as we continue this important work.

Currently we are in the next phase of the process, with the committee conducting first-round interviews with selected candidates. These conversations have and will provide an opportunity to learn more about each candidate's ministry experience, leadership style, and vision for congregational life. Following prayerful evaluation and discussion, we anticipate inviting a smaller group of candidates to participate in second-round interviews later in the fall. Throughout each step, we remain committed to a thorough and confidential process that honors both the candidates and our congregation.

Looking ahead, we expect second interviews and continued discernment to extend into the late fall and early winter months. While the search process requires patience and care, we are encouraged by the progress being made and by the quality of candidates who have expressed interest in serving our church. We ask the congregation to continue keeping the committee, the candidates, and the future ministry of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction in prayer as we seek God's guidance and prepare for the next chapter in the life of our church.

As always, if you have any questions about the process, please reach out to any of the committee members listed below.

The Pastoral Search Committee

Judy Allen, Matt Clark, Jen Dooley-Secretary, Bob Driver-Chaplain, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Marian Lawlor, Kaki McGeary, Betty Marthaler, Laura Marthaler, Cathy Shearer-Chair, Amy Trimble McIntyre

"Critter Corner"

by *Beth Volker*

First of all, I apologize for not doing this column last month, but I have an excellent excuse. My laptop died so I had to order a new one…(YIKES, the PRICES!)…wait for it to arrive, and then have my buddies at the Geek Squad migrate all of my data over. I'm now back in business, so here goes…





It's that time of year again ~ time to put out your bird AND squirrel feeders to help our wild neighbors make it safely and more comfortably through the winter. I usually put out three bird feeders: one contains only black oil sunflower seeds, another a variety called Flyers Choice, which contains a mix of sunflower and other seeds, and another that contains mostly millet seed. I also hang two suet feeders… one in the larger size because I am fortunate enough to have Pileated Woodpeckers in my neighborhood and they are extra large, and one of the normal size for the smaller woodpeckers and other birds who also enjoy it. I don't stick to just one "flavor" either. I mix it up throughout the winter.

Now, on to the squirrels and chipmunks, neither of whom are hibernators. Chipmunks do enter a state called torpor, which is a hibernation-like state…a kind of deep sleep and lowered metabolism. They wake up every few days to feed on the seeds and nuts that they have stowed away in their underground food chambers. They will also sometimes come above ground and appear under your bird feeders to grab a quick snack.

I realize that many people intensely dislike squirrels, but please keep in mind that just like us, they were created by God and have as much right to be here as we do…perhaps more. They don't hibernate, nor do they enter torpor, so the winters are very hard on them. As stewards of God's creatures, we should do what we can to help them survive. They live in what we perceive as messy bundles of leaves seen high up in the trees. These are called dreys and are actually very well constructed with the temperature being warmer inside. They also live in tree cavities. The females give birth to their first litters from February through April when it's not exactly warm outside! They usually have a second litter from late May through August.

I have discovered that if I put several ~ I usually use four ~ large brownie pans of black oil sunflower seeds on the ground under my bird feeders every morning it tends to keep the squirrels out of the feeders. I have also stopped putting baffles on the feeder poles, because nine times out of ten, the squirrels use them as benches to sit on while raiding the feeders!

Water is a whole other issue, which I have not really been able to solve. Many people do have heated bird baths, but I haven't gone that route yet. When the temperature is in the 40s or above, I will put out some water under the feeders, but unfortunately that doesn't happen too often. I'm thinking they must drink the snow.

Please consider joining me in helping the birds, squirrels, and chipmunks survive the coming months. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. Thank you!

FCCEJ Legacy Circle

What is the "Legacy Circle?" Why would anyone care? You are likely a member or friend of First Church for a lot of good reasons, and the Legacy Circle is a way for those good reasons to endure after you are gone. The Legacy Circle is a commitment to leave something of value (most often money) to our church when we pass away. It could be a specific amount, a percentage, or anyway you choose.

Paulette and I have made a commitment in our estate planning to leave some money to our church when we both have passed away, and we made that commitment as a "pay back" for the many ways that First Church has and is enhancing our lives. While we pledge every year to help keep the church functioning, it is obvious that people before us made our place of worship possible. I.e. you and I did not buy the land, build the building, create so many traditions. When we leave this earth, others will be here carrying on the church's work. Just as people before us left our congregation with a beautiful facility and already functioning programs and traditions, it is our pledge to help those who come after us by being a member of the FCCEJ Legacy Circle.

It is not hard. We are merely following in the footsteps of the many people who have gone before us and made this Church a vibrant, welcoming family. We could not done it without their work, so it seems fitting that we should "pass it on" to those after us.

First Church helped us raise our kids, helped them learn about God; gave them a base from which to steer their spiritual life. At the same time, First Church has been a "family" of people striving to grow spiritually, providing warmth and friendship to Paulette and me. Life inherently has its ebbs and flows, its ups and downs. The Church provides a consistency that nourishes us with love, belonging, and strength.

The Legacy Circle is a meaningful way to help others after we cannot do it ourselves. Being a part of the Legacy Circle provides comfort in knowing that we are "helping" even after we are gone—that feels good.

Join the Legacy Circle and be one of our members who are "thinking ahead." For information on our Planned Giving Program and joining the Legacy Circle, contact Rev. Mark or a member of the Planned Giving Team.

Bart & Paulette Frisbie

Thank you so much to our FCCEJ church family and friends that supported Josh through his discernment, and celebrating the final step in becoming an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Your love and care have been a profound blessing along this journey! We want to extend special thanks to everyone that made his Ordination celebration a possibility: Rev. Mark for all of his guidance, Jen for all the work she did supporting the service and planning of the reception, Finally @ First and Bethany and the Sanctuary Choir for providing perfect music for the event, Gary for doing the livestream magic so distant friends could celebrate with us, the members of Josh's LCDC and special guests that participated in the service, the photographers that captured memories, everyone that provided amazing food for the potluck, and a HUGE thank you to Hospitality and helpers that managed the food AND cleanup at the reception. Thanks to all of you that wished Josh well, gave us hugs, and celebrated this culmination of his discernment journey! Truly, without all of you, this wonderful accomplishment wouldn't have been possible. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Love and Blessings,
Andrea & Steve Sharp





Missions Committee Update

- A luncheon sponsored by the Missions committee for Josh's Pallotta House is scheduled for Friday, November 6th at noon. Betty Busciglio will be making a homemade meal of pulled pork, coleslaw, sweet potato fries. We'll be honored to have members of the Vermont Air Guard for lunch. Everyone is invited to attend. If interested, please let the church office know. We'll be carpooling from the church. Thank you, Betty, for helping with this meal!
- Missions Committee will again assist in the activities around the Giving Tree. We'll be asking for help with handing out tree gift tags, organizing gifts, and handing out gifts in November and December. The distribution dates for gifts are December 16 and 17. Please contact the church office if you are interested in helping.
- Missions will be gathering Christmas cards for everyone to sign. The cards will be sent to Phil Bourn for distribution to the Vermont Army Guard members serving in Jordan. If you have any leftover cards, please leave them in the church office before December 4th. We'll be signing them on December 5th.
- Thank you to everyone that assisted in putting together packets on LIFT (Living in Faith Together) Sunday. Packets are in cubbies by the front doors of the church. Please feel free to take one. If you would like to join Suzanne Lawrence in distribution of the packets, please contact the church office. She is always looking for volunteers to help her.
- Many unhoused individuals need rolling suitcases for their belongings. Please make sure the suitcase has working wheels. If anyone has an extra, please consider donating them to the church. You can leave them in the West Wing.

Heavenly Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is seeing a significant uptick in families that are needing our services. We continue to need reusable shopping bags as well as empty one-dozen egg cartons, baked beans, canned fruit, chunky soups, ready-made pasta, and feminine hygiene products - specifically pads (moderate, heavy, and extra absorbent).

We also need to expand our volunteer base. We need people for organizing, set-up, assisting during the distribution times, and to make deliveries in the Essex area. Please contact the church office for more information.

- Food Pantry Days/Hours:
  - Distribution Days:
    - 2nd Monday 5 – 7:30 pm
    - 4th Thursday 3 – 6 pm*

    **November and December are 3rd Thursday due to the Holidays*

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Once again, we had another successful switchover to Fall/Winter, with record sales the first Saturday after Switchover, $1,400! We so appreciate the continued support of our community, both those who donate and those who shop. We appreciate the continued support our community at large provides and always welcome donations of gently used items in good resalable quality. We are currently accepting fall and winter items. We will soon be putting out Christmas decorations for sale. It is that time of year! Your generosity enables us to continue to meet our Mission of serving others, both with sale items and financial donations to local organizations. The Shop hours are Tuesday, 10-1, Thursday 3-6 and Saturday 10-1 and we continue to be open the first Sunday of the month for church goers to bring their donations as well as shop. Please spread the "good word" of the Shop's mission with your friends. If you are interested in volunteering, if only for a few hours a month, contact Sandy Tallman, 802-879-0665.

Craft Fest 2026
Saturday, November 14

There are fun and fabulous ways for everyone to be involved in the annual Craft Fest!
Here are the opportunities:

- **Sweet Shoppe:** Sweet Shoppe is always a popular stop for Craft Fest shoppers, and we'd love your contributions! As you begin planning your holiday baking, please consider making an item to share. We welcome a variety of homemade favorites, such as donuts and whoopie pies, gluten-free treats, fudge, cookies, breads, pies, jams, jellies, and relishes. Your delicious contributions help make the Sweet Shoppe a favorite part of Craft Fest! To sign up or if you have questions, please contact Mary Gratton at mgrat14@comcast.net.
- **Luncheon:** Calling all cooks! The luncheon team would appreciate assistance with the following donations: butternut squash soup, meat chili, vegetarian chili, and mac-n-cheese. Also looking for dishes of apple crisp. All items may be brought to the kitchen from 9am to 6pm on Friday November 13th or Saturday morning before Craft Fest begins at 9am. Crockpots will be available for pick up on Saturday and Sunday. We also need hot dog rolls, shredded cheddar cheese, chips (assorted individual bags), drinks including water, cola, diet cola, lemon lime, orange. **When leaving items in the kitchen, please make sure they are marked Craft Fest.**
- **Accessory Room:** Time to go through your jewelry boxes and do a purge! Donations can include pins, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. We would also love jewelry boxes large and small. There will be a section just for kids so we're looking for kid's special books, stuffed animals (clean & in good condition), hair bands/clips, and fun jewelry – the glittery the better! We also love donations of bags, backpacks, wallet & cardholders. *You may find a life-size elf in this room to assist in your shopping needs and have a treat for kids!*
- **Nearly New:** We are accepting gently used items such as kitchenware, small appliances, dishes, linens, board games, puzzles, children's books, dolls, small gardening equipment, collectibles, books, CD's, mirrors, wall art, picture frames, vases, baskets, candle holders, lamps and holiday items. We are also looking for paper bags and reusable bags. **We are accepting donations from Sunday, November 1 through Friday, November 13**. Please do not bring donations on the day of the event.
- **Silent Auction:** The Auction is well on the way to having a lovely selection of gift baskets but we will always graciously accept donated baskets and gift cards! Please be sure that anything you want to donate to Silent Auction gets to us by November 7th, the week before the Craft Fest, so that we can have our descriptions and values written up. See facing page for a partial list of the Themed Baskets.

NOTE: *Children will have an opportunity to find the church elf and receive special treat when successful.*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We need volunteers to greet shoppers, monitor the Silent Auction, work in the Sweet Shoppe, help in Nearly New, setup on Friday, and clean up on Saturday. Additional cleanup crew is needed for the gym on Monday morning. All volunteers are asked to park in the Doctor's office parking lot. Parking can be tight for shoppers during the morning hours.
Please note: Sign-ups sheets will be in the Fellowship Hall on November 1 and November 8 between and after worship services.
Thank you from the Craft Fest Committee including *Mary Phelps, Mary Gratton, Gail Cromie, Janne Giles, Ann Gray, Maureen McKenzie, Susan Turner, Alyssa Lasher, and Linda Bogardus.*
For further information, contact the church at 802-878-5745 or welcome@fccej.org

2026 Themed Silent Auction Baskets:

1. Autumn Basket
2. Wedding Basket
3. Pottery Basket
4. Sewing Basket
5. Fiesta Basket
6. Pasta Bowl Basket
7. Adult Activity Basket
8. Book Basket
9. Pink Basket
10. Red Basket
11. Peanuts (Snoopy) Basket
12. Mitford Mitten Basket
13. Spa Basket
14. Coffee Basket
15. Mardi Gras Basket
16. Baking Basket
17. Gardening Basket
18. Lighthouses Basket
19. Angel Basket
20. Picnic Set Basket
21. Bluey Basket
22. Easter Basket
22. Cardinal/Bird Basket
23. Easter Basket
24. Children's Activity Basket
25. Cat Lovers Basket
26. Charcuterie Basket
27. Craft Basket (*Thanks to the Breakfast Club ladies*)
28. Baby Basket (*Thanks to Blue Spruce Grange*)
29. Beer Lovers Basket
30. UVM basketball tickets Basket (*Thanks to UVM Athletic Dept.*)
31. Rev. Mark's Sermon (*must be used by June 1st, 2027*)
32. Vermont Items & Wine baskets (*Thanks to Sue Conti*)



GIVING TREE TOY DRIVE

In conjunction with the tags that will be on the Giving Tree, we are hoping to give an extra toy to each of the children participating in the program. We are asking for donations of new, unwrapped toys/puzzles/crafts/children's books at the Craft Fest to support the families. Everyone who makes a toy donation will be entered into a separate drawing for a basket filled with holiday cheer.

2026 Crafters and Products

- **Jessa Abbey** –handmade crocheted stuffed animals
- **Blue Spruce Grange** – Christmas ornaments, holiday gift baskets, adult clothing protectors, napkin holders, wooden deer and turkeys, wall hangings, baby blankets
- **Ginny Coe** – knit items, (hats, scrubbies, dolls, animals, scarves)
- **Megan Couture** – laser engravings (coasters, cutting boards, key chains), signs, bookmarks, kids puzzles and décor
- **Dave Cozzens** – wood inlays of Camel's Hump using a mix of beautiful native wood (framed and stand alone), miniature nativity sets
- **Carmella Cyr** – handmade mini-Boro Sashiko wall hangings, Boro patches, crocheted hats, mini journals, mini gnome ornaments
- **Jen Ellis** –handmade mittens from repurposed wool sweaters
- **Pam Farnham** - fused glass ornaments, jewelry and sun catchers - all original designs and handmade
- **Genevieve and Henry King** – hand crafted jewelry and 3D printed custom creations
- **Terri Livak** – original watercolor paintings in many sizes and price ranges
- **Mark and Karen Mendes** – women empowerment products (bags, hand-felt scarves, puppets and other sundry items) handmade in Nepal which helps street kids with a place to call home, get educated, and live safely with food, medical care and love
- **Sandy Plant** – hand knit hats, mittens, and scarves for all sizes & ages in all colors & types of yarn
- **Jane Sandberg** – original watercolors, some unmatted, a few framed; individual cards, packs and boxes of cards and gift bags
- **Becky Trombley** – home-sewn zipper pouches, snap wallets, eyeglass cases, potholders, storybook pillow, tote bags, and bowl cozies
- **Paula Wight** - sock gnomes and holiday shelf sitters made from reclaimed wood

Greetings from Pastor Bob

As I have settled into my new position as Commissioned Assistant Minister at FCCEJ, I extend heartfelt thankfulness for all the support I have received from our staff and congregation during this time. A question I was asked many times after covering Rev. Mark's vacation during the summer was, "How was it covering and managing things"? Let me first share that I am very much a "throw me in the deep end" kind of person. With that said, it was an amazing experience on a personal level and especially on a faith level. The support I received was just what Jesus teaches about love and support for one another. Because of this, I have been able to embrace my position! As the holiday and Advent seasons approach, I am excited to experience this season as Pastor Bob. (*On a side note for those of you who have met Jen's dog, Radar: He no longer barks at me, AND comes to my office unsupervised for treats. I'm in!*)

Once again my sincere gratitude to all of you for your support.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Bob

Fall Clean-Up Day

The Trustees are planning a second Fall Cleanup Day on Saturday, November 7 at 9am. Please join us if you can to help rake leaves and complete other small chores. We are always in need of trucks and/or utility trailers with sides for disposal of yard waste and power blowers and tarps to speed up the leaf raking process. Please bring your own tools if you have them. Contact Rob Gibson at (802) 734-3026 (call/text) or rgibsonvt@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Requests from Your Hospitality Committee

The FCCEJ Hospitality Committee consists of an amazing group of volunteers. They make sure we have coffee and snacks during Fellowship Time after Sunday worship, provide cookies and snacks for memorial services, maintain and organize the main kitchen, and so much more!

Lately, there have been several items removed from the main kitchen, unfortunately when they've been needed for events. If you need to borrow something from FCCEJ, it's important to please check with the church office and make sure there isn't another group or event that will need the item.

On the flip side, if you have an event that uses the main kitchen, please make sure the trash is emptied, dishes are scraped, and then run through the sanitizer. If there is leftover food, please communicate to Sue and the church office what's to be done - donated, used for Sunday, up for grabs by another committee? Also, PLEASE do not purchase any condiments without checking to see what is already in the kitchen.

If you have any questions, please contact the office or Sue Conti, Hospitality Chair. Thank you!

Sermon Talkback

Everyone knows that Rev. Mark preaches some sermons that are a bit provocative and even edgy. And he uses the bible to come up with some pretty crazy theological insights that are sometimes doctrinally challenging. At the very least, he preaches some sermons that raise a lot of questions and almost demand a little unpacking and discussion. Well, if you like that stuff and you want to attend a group that loves and supports each other, come to our Sermon Talkback group every Tuesday from 8:30 – 10am in the Marvin Lounge. There's always fresh coffee, tea selections, and usually a pastry or two. Come and listen. Come and express an opinion. Come and challenge Rev. Mark's assertions. Come and taste a bit of the Holy Spirit as we talk about scripture, the bible, the church and life in these crazy days.

Lunchtime Book Group

The November book is "*Don't Forget To Write*" by Sara Goodman Confino.
In 1960, a young woman discovers a freedom she never knew existed in this exhilarating, funny, and emotional historical fiction novel.
December's selection is "*The Secret Life of Sunflowers*" by Marta Molnar.
This is a gripping, inspiring historical novel based on the true story of Johanna Bonger, Vincent van Gogh's sister-in-law, set in dual timelines.
The Lunchtime Book Group meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 11:30 in Marvin Lounge. All are welcome - feel free to bring a lunch or just come for the discussion.

Friday Morning Coffee & Conversation

If you like waking up early and starting the day with some good conversations and friends, you are welcome to join the Friday Morning Conversation Group at Martone's every Friday morning from 8–9am. Everyone buys their own drink and goodie, if desired, and we just talk about anything that comes up: gardening, travels, aches and pains, church life, good tv shows or movies, children, pets, projects, family life, and sometimes even God. It is informal and organic in nature and we laugh quite a bit. Everyone is welcome whether they are a member of the church or not.

Bridge Group

People of all skill levels are invited to come and have some fun playing bridge. We have some old pros in the group as well as some novices playing and learning. There is a lot of table talk and no condemnation or judgement. We have snacks and the winner gets a jar of Rev. Mark's homemade jam.
PLEASE NOTE: In November, the group is only meeting on the 3rd Friday - November 20.
Come, and bring a friend - everyone is welcome. 1:30 to 4pm in Marvin Lounge.

Grief Support

Grief Support Group meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month. This is a safe place to share, question, and learn about the grief journey. Next meeting is November 12 in the Marvin Lounge from 10-11:30am.
Facilitated by Mary McHugh and Sharon Dettenrieder.



ALLEN, Judy
BUCHSPICS, Lew
CARNEY, Tim
DEWEY, Sam
FAUX, Ron
FRANKENBURG, Peter
GILES, Howard
GROVE, Mary-Ellen
HARRIS, Anne
ISHAM, Easton
LAPIERRE, Cathy
MATT, Sarah
MOOS, Jessica
NEDDE, William
OWENS, Edward
PORATTI, Beth
SHEARER, Jamie
SMITH, Frank
STEIN, Am
TALLMAN, Sandy
TURNER, Sally
WARK, Wendy

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

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
Music: Finally @ First Praise Band ~ Streamed on the 3rd Sunday of each month

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