



The Spirit at First June 2017

Your Pastor Ponders.....

Springtime blesses us with color, smells and a burst of life that rejuvenates our dreary winter souls. Darkness is replaced with an early morning wake-up call and bright afternoon sun as we linger in our gardens and relax on our decks to soak in the universe's power source. These changes bring joy to our hearts and recharges our batteries in ways that nothing else can. Nothing can compare to being on the top of Camel's Hump lunching on fruit and cheese as the sounds of life swirl in the wind around you. Pure refreshment can only be absorbed by diving deep into Lake Champlain, feeling the waters turn from cool to cold as you plunge ever deeper into the blue unknown. How our taste buds dance a joyful jig as fresh fruits and vegetables from our garden grace our dinner plates. Springtime and summertime activities brighten our days, lessen our loads and lift our spirits. They feed our soul like nothing else.....

These words remind me though of our most recent New Member's Class. In our New Member's Classes, each person shares their spiritual journeys and how they ended up deciding to join our church. More often than not, people decide to join our ranks after church shopping – after checking out various churches in the area. They are often drawn to our church for our progressive theology or our extravagant welcome or our active engagement in making the world a better place or our music program or our children and youth ministries. During our most recent class, members mentioned some of those reasons but the one refrain that echoed as the primary reason for at least half of the class was the positive, joyous, sincerely friendly atmosphere that pervaded our worship and interactions on a Sunday morning. One of our members on Tuesday morning echoed this sentiment by saying she felt fed and uplifted every time she attended our service. She continued that it was the music, the camaraderie, the expressed support of each other, the simple joy and happiness of belonging to this community and worshipping God together.

Personally, there are Sundays when I am not in a very good mood and do not feel like going to church and I can honestly say without exception, I always feel better afterwards. It is hard to pin down exactly when my mood changes but I get home feeling fed and nurtured in powerful ways.

My guess is this experience happens to you as well. Simply feeling better about life and yourself after going to church. It might have been the sermon or anthem or hymn or children's message or a hug from someone who cares or the baptism or the sense of belonging or the postlude or the mysterious connection to the divine; any of these things might have touched your heart and brightened your day, lessen your loads of lifted your spirits. Coming to church feeds our souls like nothing else.....

See you in church.....

Rev. Mark

SPECIAL SUNDAYS & OFFERINGS

Summer Worship Service Starting on June 4th ~ One Service @ 9am

Due to Confirmation Sunday on June 4th,
Communion will be shared on **June 18th by Intinction**

June 4th ~ Confirmation & Ice Cream Sunday

We are incredibly thrilled to have had a tremendous group of young adults travel through confirmation and be ready to commit to Christ's way by being confirmed on June 4, 2017. During their decision retreat at the Evans camp on Lake Carmi, they created a worship service to reflect who they are, what they believe and how they will live out their faith. Everyone will want to come and learn from this group about the faith and be re-inspired about the future of the church and Christ's community! Come and participate in this ageless coming of age ritual at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday June 4th. Our confirmands this year will be

Eva Cunningham-Firkey	Sam Dooley	Nicole Frank
Ethan Goedken	Nick Mendes	Emma Parker
Munroe Shearer	Cameron Starkey	Clay Messier
	Jonathan Achinger	

June 11th ~ Scout Sunday

FCCEJ hosted the first Boy Scout Troop in Essex and ever since that time many decades ago, we have continued to host various and multiple scout groups: Boy, Girl, Cub and Daisy's. To honor this long commitment AND to celebrate the continued presence of the scouts in our midst, we will be hosting a Scout Jamboree right here on our grounds on June 9-10. They will be camping and cooking right on our grounds and then that night, they will get together with Reverend Mark to plan the SCOUT SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE. On Sunday, we will invite all the scouts and their families to the celebratory worship service. All scouts from the community both past and present are invited to come and celebrate! After the service, the scouts will host the coffee hour and make us some special sweet tasting fellowship hour goodie! Come and celebrate this long and vibrant history of FCCEJ!

June 18th ~ Jamaica Bound Commissioning Service

We are blessed to have an international aspect of our Mission program via our Mission Trip to Jamaica. Every other year we send a delegation of adults and youth to go partner with folks in Jamaica to make their lives healthier and our lives richer. From July 11 – 20, our delegation will travel to St Thomas Parish [one of the poorest on the island] to help create a garden for a local school to help feed the families who attend the school and have a source of income to help defray some of the educational expenses. We will be putting up a fence and then actually planting some of the trees and crops. It will be hard, hot work but rewarding in how it feeds our spirits. We will also be bringing school and medical supplies so that we can supplement the school and the local health clinic with greatly needed necessities. On June 18th, we will dedicate our team, bless them with the laying on of hands and send them on their way with best wishes. Come and meet the team and become a part of this vital aspect of our ministry here at FCCEJ!

ASSOCIATE MINISTER THOUGHTS

We are saying farewell to the month of May and as we do so we prepare for another summer here at First Church, Essex. Reflecting back on the month I feel a great joy for the many snow birds who have returned to us from their time down south and also the members in our midst who have returned after recovering from injury or illness. It is a wonderful joy to have our friends return to us because our friends are part of what makes us whole.

Our church is not just a community of likeminded religious folk. It is a community of friends and I would never want to see this community become anything less. Friendship is one of the many loves God gave us and that bond of friendship that exists here at First Church, Essex is a powerful force. You can feel it on Sundays as we greet one another in the sanctuary or Fellowship Hall and you can feel it when we leave after service on Sunday. It is that welcoming atmosphere that draws people to this community and the assertion that no matter who you are, you are welcome among our body of friends. That body is Christ's body and the nature of Christ to face injustice and to lift others up in love and to speak from his heart are present in us as long as we are united in love. That love and that friendship are what this church has to share with Essex Junction and I know that as we go into the summer we will find many more ways to make God proud of us.

This May will mark the end of our bible study reboot. We went through two sessions in a short time, "Rocking the Credo" and "God in the World." This was a well-attended group with a regular showing of six to eight people. We discussed the ways in which we can build our own personal theology through a reading of the bible and then we talked about how we can apply that theology to our own lives and the world around us. If you want the condensed message I have gotten from these very enjoyable sessions I would say it is, "live love, share love". It is easy to say but we have discovered that it is not so easy to do.

We also wrapped up youth group for the 2016-2017 season. While we ended with our paintball outing in Colchester on the 21st we still have our Six Flags overnight which will be happening at the end of June. We have some wonderful, intelligent, funny and energized young people at our church and I pray that they are able to grow in their faith as they themselves grow older. It has been a privilege to be able to help direct the youth program with Erica over the last year and I thank this congregation for giving me that experience.

The friendships we built here are the type of relations that built up the Church. It is the type of love that Jesus taught us and the type of love that defeated even death. I pray that as we go forward we will be able to show everyone the power of our love.

Devon Lee Thomas: Bridge Associate Pastor



Laurie's Lens

I know there are several of you who have been in prayer about what your path for the coming year of volunteering will look like, some of you are already feeling the call to be active with our Faith Formation programs here at First Church. If you know already what you would like to do or have questions, please be in touch. I would love to hear from you! This will help me and the Christian Education committee a lot as we make plans and recruit to fill all our volunteer slots to help our programs run smoothly for the 2017-18 year. We strive to have enough volunteers on a Sunday morning, two volunteers with each group. When this happens, I am able to move from class to class to help answer questions, share with each group and connect with as many children, youth and parents as I can on a Sunday morning. Our youth programs also need at least two adults with them every time they meet as do all our programs that that happen outside of Sunday mornings. Many of these helper roles require no planning on the part of the volunteer, however you are asked to participate fully in the program. Our classroom leader roles do require a little preparation, but let me add that these leader roles do not require the amount of planning time that they once did. I send a weekly email out to all leaders/helpers with the lesson plan and layout of the coming Sunday and I prepare the items needed for class time, you just choose which activity you feel most comfortable with and read the story and become familiar with it for Sunday morning. Times have changed. Gone are the days when the classroom leaders were known as 'teachers' and you felt like you needed to know all the answers. We here at First Church continue to change and grow with the times and allow everyone to feel comfortable, ask questions and learn and grow from each other. Our style of faith formation ministry has added intergenerational, multi-age and peer groups so that the Spirit has many opportunities to work in and around us helping us all to grow in our faith. Statistics are showing that for the youth of today to stay active and connected to their church on up through high school, graduation, through college and beyond, they need to be connected with at least 5 adults in a congregation (non-relatives). Therefore the number of adults needed, those who are willing to form a relationship with our youth, chat with, be in program with, reach out to and take the time to get to know our children and youth is large. We need our youth will feel comfortable reaching back to these adults in conversation on a Sunday mornings and at other times throughout their week.

Help me thank all our volunteers for 2016-17 who gave of their time and energy for children and youth! Kelley Charland, Barbara Williams, Sue Conti, Aimee Koch, Erna Deutsch, Kim & Kevin Hamilton, Jenny Bourn, Trista Acebo, Barb Smith, Cathy LaPierre, Marlene Frank, Jessica Moos, Lisa Clark, Kaki McGeary, Carl Wermer, Pete Schmaltz, Shannon McCullen, Josh Sharp, Andrea Sharp, Judy Allen, Donna Burnett, Linda Lou Parker, Elaine Raymond, Jane Schneider and Gail Babinger. Also a special thanks to our stewards for the Narthex, Nursery and Resource Closet; Beth Poratti, Kelley Charland & Mary Jane Allen.

I hope you will join us on June 4th at our 9am service as our confirmands lead our worship service. I am so proud of all of them and was grateful to be with them on their confirmation retreat and hear them share their faith statements and see how far they have come on their faith journeys. It will truly be a meaningful and Spirit filled worship. Please plan to stay for our CE sponsored fellowship time after worship with ice cream sundaes. Many thanks to Hannafords for their donation of the ice cream.

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

Laurie, Christian Education Director

DEACON'S CORNER

It has been a joyful month here at First Church. We have continued to celebrate a number of special services this month. May 14th was our tandem Jazz Sunday and Mother's Day. We are now happily winding down our church year and will be going into our summer schedule starting June 4th where I will be pulling Deacon Duty for the second month in a row. Sundays will move to having just one service at 9:00, so make sure that you update your schedules in advance. While there are plenty of things to do as the weather warms, it can be refreshing and reinvigorating to come to service every now and then through the summer!

Hopefully many folks were able to see our 150th FCCEJ Anniversary float in the Memorial Day parade! Our volunteers worked hard to make a float that really represents the true spirit of FCCEJ.

On a personal note I would like to announce that I managed to survive paintball with the youth bearing only a nasty bruise on my clavicle. A great time was had by all and I am very grateful to be able to be a Deacon in this church and look forward to serving the congregation for another month.

Regards,

Joshua Sharp

STEWARDSHIP

There's Still Time!

While Per Capita Sunday was officially held on May 14th, you can still contribute to the fund! Use your special offering envelope or write "Per Capita" on your check and drop it in the offering plate or mail it to the Church. We hope you will help us support the Vermont & Champlain Conferences of the United Church of Christ by contributing to the campaign. Our Per Capita dues are \$13.50 per member, and to date, we have raised \$3,901 of the \$6,102 we will be paying the Conference. We hope you will consider rounding up your Per Capita check to \$20 per member to help cover our responsibility to pay for members who may not make a Per Capita contribution this year. Thank you very much!

Please note this list of the 'Special Offerings' for those who do not have envelopes as a reminder:

June 4, Strengthen the Church; **Sept 10**, Seminary Sunday;
Oct 1, Neighbors in Need; **Nov 19**, Food Pantry; **Dec 17**, Christmas Fund

Coming up.....

Hannaford Gift Card Sales – 1st and 3rd Sundays after both services.

5% of the value of the card comes back to the Church.

Volunteers Needed! Just a few minutes of your time.... Would you help the Stewardship Committee sell Hannaford Gift Cards? Volunteers are needed to help sell cards on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. If interested, contact Kathy Finnie at kfinnievt@gmail.com and we'll find a date that works for you!

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

June 1st (Thursday evening) ~ Year End Youth Party @ Pastor Mark's

Calling all 7th – 12th grade youth! Pastor Mark is hosting our year end party at his house right here in the Junction (9 King's Court). Come at 5:30pm, bring your parents, a potluck dish to share and we'll have hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill. There will be games, food and great fellowship!
We need a head count for the grill, so please RSVP.



June 4st ~ Pentecost & Confirmation Sunday & Ice Cream Social **One Service at 9am begins**

Join us on this special Sunday to help us celebrate Pentecost and our confirmands! Ice cream and many toppings will be available for our fellowship time after our 9am worship service. A very special thanks to Hannafords for donating the ice cream!

Music Time During Faith Formation

Joyful Noise will be singing the Introit on June 4th and then music time will resume on September 18th

Cherubs ~ Our Preschool & Kindergarteners gather in the Youth Lounge, sometimes our junior and senior high youth join them as their mentors to sing a song during the first few minutes before moving on to their class. Kim Hamilton is their music leader.



Joyful Noise ~ Our 1st through 6th graders gather in the Marvin Lounge for their music time of songs with motions before moving onto class time. Jessica Moos is their music leader.

Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 6th Grade

May 28th ~ Multi-Age Activity Day

June 4th ~ Pentecost & Confirmation Sunday followed by Ice Cream Social

June 11th – September 3th ~ Summer Faith Formation

Self- led Activity Bin in Fellowship Hall available most weeks

Kids bring a parent to FH and watch the service while you spend time being creative.

September 10th ~ Rally Day & Fall Faith Formation Program Begins



Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2017

You will be hearing more about the *Humane Society of Chittenden County* who relies completely on outside donations to stay open and help give pets a home.

Your 2017 Total is now up to \$659.04

Remember to bring your Sunday School offering each week and use an envelope in the pews for your money so that you know it will be put towards the Sunday School offering and not be confused with regular offering for the church.

\$1 a week can go a long way!

'Take Out Church' Boxes



These 'pizza' size boxes can travel around with you wherever you go and the items inside can help the whole family stay connected to God and help everyone continue to grow in their faith. 'Flat Jesus' is inside! Color and cut it out, take him with you and take some pictures of you and 'Flat Jesus' and post them on our Facebook page as a reminder to us all the Jesus is with us wherever we go. Enjoy the M&M and Skittle prayers, Beach Ball Thanksgiving reflection, a CD of music, Serve Your Neighbor game, Graces to say or sing before a meal and scripture pages to color. See Laurie to collect yours or if you are needing additional resources for your 'Take Out Church' box!



Faith Formation Family Dish Share

On hold until September. Watch for the update coming in August. These potluck suppers are for all who come to First Church, for we are all a part of this wonderful faith community family with God.

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

*Our 5th & 6th graders meet ONCE a month from 11:30-1:30pm
Mission Focus ~ Meal ~ Fellowship
Mark your calendars!*

September 17th ~ 11:30am – 12:15pm ~ JYG Call Out

Parents meet in the Youth Lounge on 2nd floor
5th & 6th graders stay gathered in your classroom on 3rd floor

October 1st ~ Junior Youth Group ~ 11:30-1:30pm

Youth Group will meet ONCE a month at this same time.



SAVE THE DATES

UCC Outdoor Ministry Camps



Summer is one day closer, and now you can register for your best week of the summer! Horton Center registration is now open, take a look at the schedule, as there is a session for everyone. With thanks to our Outdoor Mission Group and volunteer Deans, we are offering favorite sessions such as Grandparent & Grandchild, Family & Friends Weekend, Middler Camp, and others. Women's Weekend will be offered with an extra day due to popular demand. Our new offerings include a Family 4th of July half week, Leader in Training, Archery Camp, and Senior High Hike Week. We can't wait to branch out and connect Christ with you this summer at Horton Center!

www.hortoncenter.org

Attend Horton Center camp with Laurie Chipman in Gorham, NH. *Laurie is counseling this week!*

July 9th – 15th for 7th – 9th graders

Vermont Outdoor Ministry Week



Enjoy a fun week at Rock Point Camp in Burlington, VT!

Swimming, hiking, canoeing, service project in Burlington, food, games and much more!

July 30th – August 4th for youth going into 5th - 8th grade

Laura Labrie (College Street UCC) and Dave McGowan (Waterbury UCC) will be our Deans and lead this week of camp! Laurie Chipman will be stopping by and checking in throughout the week.

To register for this camp go to Horton Center website. www.hortoncenter.org

Scholarship Funds are available! See Laurie or Pastor Mark

VT UCC OM Team is recruiting volunteer counselors (18 yrs & older), a waterfront lifeguard and a registered nurse for this camp! Questions? See Laurie!

Laurie will be counseling at Horton Center for Middler week ~ July 9th -15th



Vacation Bible Camp 2017

August 7-11, Monday – Friday from 9am to 11:45am

Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God!

VB Camp is a week of energy and excitement of seeing God's Love in Action!

All are encouraged to join up and be a part of this fun week!

Register TODAY!



Groups: You & Me (toddler & parent/grandparent) Preschool (three & fours - potty trained)
Kindergarten & First Grade; Second & Third Grade; Fourth & Fifth Grade

Station Leaders are getting ready: *Bible Drama*~Barb Smith; *Crafts*~Jenny Bourn/Sara Kellogg;
Discovery~Trista Acebo; *Games*~Jessica Moos; *Music*~Laura C-F *Snack*:Judy Allen & Ginny Coe

Recruiting for Group Leaders: Youth (sixth grade or older), Young Adults/College, Adults

VB Camp Wish List

- Paper towel rolls (55 total)
- Small glass jars with lids (pimento/baby food/etc..55 total)
- Battery tea lights (35 total)
- Liquid water colors or food coloring
- Small paper plates (100)
- 5 large raw baking potato
- Medicine droppers or pipettes (at least five)
- Baby carrots (5lbs)
- Ranch dressing (3/24oz bottles)
- Pineapple chunks (6/14oz cans)
- Strawberries (4 quarts)
- Pretzel sticks (2/20oz packages)
- Grapes (3 lbs)
- Raisins/Craisins (1/16oz)
- Cheese cubes (mild, 6/16oz)
- Pretzel pieces (gluten free)– any shape (1/32 oz package)
- Apples (40)
- Fruit by the foot (6 packages/12 ct)
- Vanilla Yogurt (2 large containers)
- Ice cream cones-waffle/plain (50)
- Pirate Booty Popcorn (2 large bags)
- Veggie Sticks (2 large bags)
- Banana Bread – no nuts (6 loaves)
- Clear squat 9oz. plastic cups (300)



September 10th ~ Rally Day

Back to Two Worship Services, 8:30 & 10:15am

FELLOWSHIP & LEARNING

JOY (Just Older Youth)



A group for the over 55 crowd (both men & women) meets the first Thursday of each month at 12 noon in the Marvin Lounge. Bring your lunch and we will eat together and then have a program or do something fun. If you have any questions about the group or need a ride please call the office. Please join us with your lunch **Thursday, June 1st** at noon for an interesting discussion with UVM history Professor Jacqueline Carr.



Essex Eats Out Community Dinners Continue...

1st Friday of Every Month ~ June 2nd

Come - Help - Eat www.essexeatsout.org

Noontime Book Group

The Noontime Book Group will meet in the Marvin Lounge on **June 15th** at 12:00pm. Bring a bag lunch and join us on June 15th at noon in the Marvin Lounge for what promises to be a very enlightening discussion.



Coffee Clatter



Every Friday at 8:05 a.m., Rev Mendes and Devon welcome everyone to come and talk about any subject you would like. We talk politics, camping, travel, church life, community issues....any and everything that comes up. Last week we had a lengthy discussion about what percentage of time the clergy should spend being prophetic or pastoral or as the church's administrator. We meet for one hour, join us for some friendship, fun and support.

The Community of Bridge

Love to play bridge? Well, there are a lot of folks at First Church who do and they get together every month to play for a few hours: every 3rd Friday from 1:30 – 4:00. In June that is **Friday, June 16th**. There are always some delectable snacks, free coffee and good conversation. All skill levels play and are welcome as we laugh and enjoy each other's company. Join us! The winner takes home one of Rev. Mark's delicious jams.....yum.



Mondays ~ Yoga @ First will be on Hiatus for the Summer

Jonah & his family will be traveling this summer so Yoga will be on hiatus from June 19th through August 21st, so the last class before the break will be June 12th and they will start again on August 28th. Until then, class is Monday evenings, from 5:30-6:45. Wear comfortable, nonrestrictive clothing. Bring a mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Donations to FCCEJ are always welcomed but there is no fee.



Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group will meet in Marvin Lounge at 9:30 am on the third Saturday of each month unless otherwise advertised. All women of the church are invited to join us for interesting programs and wonderful fellowship. **Saturday, June 17th** at 9:30 we'll meet at Ginny Coe's home, 25 Rosewood Lane. In honor of Father's Day this month we will share stories of the important male figures, past and present, that we have had in our lives.



Ladies Crafting Night Out

Do you knit, crochet or do any other crafty projects that you would like to do in fellowship with others? Join us in the Marvin Lounge the 4th Monday of each month at 7pm, **June 26th** this month, for a time of common crafting. All are welcome!

Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkbacks, 8:30 – 10am

Each Tuesday morning 15-20+ people meet over coffee and goodies to discuss what went on that week in worship. We expand upon the sermon and explore the things that preaching just cannot get at in twenty minutes. We explore any and every subject that might properly come forward -although we try to leave politics out of it! We laugh, challenge, eat, share our stories and support one another in our life journeys. It is a good group that you would be very welcome to attend.



Wednesday Night Searchers, 7-9pm in Marvin Lounge

Through May 31st – UCC Curriculum on “White Privilege: Let’s Talk”. After we are finished with this discussion we will move on to our summer fun of watching various movies followed by a lively discussion on the topic. If you have any ideas for movies to watch, let us know!

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Missions Moment

The Missions Committee has been working hard again this year. We have given money to several charities in the past couple of months. The list includes: House with a Heart (formerly Ghar Sita Mutu), JUMP's Spring Campaign for Gas Cards project, Lucy's House for the Prevention of Homeless Pets, Meals on Wheels and Essex CHIPS' Healthy Snack Program for one month this summer. We will continue to give out our money as the year progresses. We have received two very nice thank you notes since our first round of donations were given. Below we have included excerpts from both notes:

From JUMP: On behalf of the Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP), I would like to thank you for your donation of \$500.00 to provide GAS CARDS to community neighbors who need them..... We appreciate your support of JUMP efforts to help clients increase self-sufficiency and regain dignity as well as raise awareness to the greater community about our work.....”There is hope, that hope is you.”

Thank you! Yours in community, Wanda Hines, Director

From Lucy’s House for the Prevention of Homeless Pets: On behalf of the Board of Directors of Lucy’s House for the Prevention of Homeless Pets, I would like to thank First Congregational Church of Essex Junction for your support with your donation of \$250.00 in 2017.....We could not do what we do without the community support that your church has demonstrated to our organization over this past year..... It is with a great deal of gratitude that we recognize your important contributions in helping us support both animal and human families stay together. It is with this support that First Congregational Church of Essex Junction is helping us to reach more people and develop positive outcomes for both humans and animals as they struggle with financial challenges.
Sincerely, Jan Ellis-Clements, Executive Director, Lucy’s House for the Prevention of Homeless Pets

Stay tuned for another update later in the year as we continue our important work.

2017 Jamaica Mission

The Jamaica Mission team is getting excited about our trip July 11-20th! We are continuing to coordinate with the Rotary Clubs of Essex Junction and Morant Bay, Jamaica to launch the garden project at White Horses Infant and Primary School in St. Thomas Parish, Jamaica. As you can see in the “before” picture below, there is much to be done! We anticipate that the garden will be pegged, plowed and the fencing purchased this month prior to our arrival in July.

The team is currently collecting the following items to deliver to the school:

- Children’s toothbrushes
- Travel size toothpaste tubes
- Pencils
- 4x4 Bandages
- Medical tape

Your gifts will be greatly appreciated!! Look for the large green bucket in the fellowship hall to deposit your donations. Thank-you!

The Garden – “Before” Picture



Mission Possible!



Reach out... Make a difference... Connect with others... Learn something new

“Mission Possible!” is the joint committee (Missions and Christian Education) that plans opportunities for people to put their faith in action. Our goal is to provide hands-on volunteer experiences for all ages, to bring members of our congregation together for mission outreach, and to connect service to learning – about different populations and community needs, and about the many nonprofit organizations that are there to help. For more information about Mission Possible! and how to be part of the planning team or to volunteer, please contact Andrea Sharp at andrea.sharp@gmail.com.

Dismas House

Please consider serving dinner at the Winooski Dismas House. Our volunteers provide dinner for 10-15 residents and staff there, enjoying great food and fellowship. FCCEJ has signed up for the fourth Wednesday in each month on an ongoing basis; **we are looking for volunteers for July 26th**. Please contact Dan Fortier (danny.fortier@gmail.com) or Peter Schmalz (pnschmalz@comcast.net) if interested. There is also a sign-up sheet in the hallway entering Fellowship Hall. The



Dismas House organization describes its purpose as follows: “We continue our mission of reconciling prisoners with society and society with prisoners. With your continued support, we are working locally to serve former prisoners in their difficult transition from prison to the community, assuring harmony in their lives and greater public safety.” We need four (4) people to volunteer for each date (space is limited so that the residents and guests have a meaningful dinner experience. Our FCCEJ group will decide the menu to feed 16-20 people (which includes the FCCEJ cooks), and then purchase and prepare the food (typically includes the main course as well as vegetables or salad – dessert is optional). The Dismas House provides beverages, condiments, set-up and clean-up. There is no age limit on who can volunteer, and you can donate part of the meal even if you are not able to attend. Many people from our community have volunteered and it is a fun, rewarding mission!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Heavenly Food Pantry Needs Donations

We are in need of regular size jars of jelly and/or jam, cans of tuna fish, boxes of cereal and containers of fruit juice to restock our Food Pantry shelves. The February Food Pantries will be on Monday evening, **June 12th**, 5:30-7:30 and Thursday afternoon, **June 22nd**, 2-6pm. We are all set for EGG CARTONS so please hold onto them for now.

2017-18 Faith Formation Volunteers

Many ways to support First Church kids and youth...Contact Laurie!

Can you say YES to these statements?

- I have been attending and have been a part of FCCEJ for at least 6 months
- I would like our children and youth at church to continue to grow in their faith
- I know it's OK to not have all the answers, but a willingness to learn and help the children and youth learn and grow in their faith
- I feel that FCCEJ Faith Formation programs are a vital part of this church and I am willing to support it with my time and talents

If so ... Please consider one of these opportunities and support the First Church kids and youth!

- Nursery – join our staff person and be a friendly face to the parents and the littlest ones among us during first service or second. We strive for a two to one ratio in the Nursery.
- Spiritual Friends – join Laurie on the First Sundays of the month on the 2nd floor and we'll have great conversations with the kids. Read a story, have snack, Godly Play time with playdough mats, Faith Talk circle conversations, etc. A little bit of everything happens on this day and everyone returns to worship for communion.
- Faith Formation Class Leaders & Helpers – be a leader or helper in one of our classes from preschool up through senior high youth. Weekly emails go out keeping you connected and sending you plans for the classes on Sunday mornings. All items are gathered for you.
- Multi-Age Activity helpers – preschool up through senior high are together for a time of fellowship across the ages for on these days...for group building activities ... parachute time, games, mission opportunities and enjoying being with each other.
- Youth Group helpers – come be present with a youth! Still a youth at heart...join a group and or bring a meal. Every time youth gather we are always looking for adults to help.

Don't Forget the Red Tent

The Red Tent Project has become even more important as we enter a period where funds for women's health and marginalized immigrant groups may be significantly cut back. Donating woman's hygiene products to JUMP, which serves some of our most vulnerable neighbors, is one positive way we can show that we will continue to support those who will be facing increasingly difficult times. Look for the Red Tent in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings during the next few weeks as we renew our commitment to help in this way. Women's hygiene products may be placed in it on Sunday morning or at any time during the week in the Marvin Lounge.

. Let's make the Red Tent overflow to show our continued love and support for all women.



Acolytes

NEW schedule was just put up...it needs your names! Sign up and be an Acolyte who carries the taper and brings the light of Christ into the Sanctuary at the beginning of worship to remind us that God is with us. Acolytes also will carry the light out at the end of worship to remind us that God continues to be with us wherever we go. This is a great way for you to participate in worship. You can acolyte solo or with another friend or parent. See the calendar on the bulletin board as you walk up to worship and sign up for a future day also.



Ring the Bell

NEW schedule is up and ready for kids/families to ring the church bell 15 minutes before worship begins, at either 8:15am or 10am for May and starting June 4th @ 8:45am. Check the sign up calendar on the bulletin board in the downstairs hallway by the Acolyte signup sheet. Instructions are on the signup sheet.



Our Nursery

Our paid staff of Allie Harris or Kathryn Locke will welcome your little ones on Sunday mornings to our Nursery. Volunteers and parents are welcomed and encouraged to sign up on the schedule on the table outside the Nursery to help us with our child ratio (2 children to 1 adult) and keep us on track with our Safe Conduct Guidelines. If you would like to be added to the email volunteer list, please let Laurie know. Our Nursery is one of the first places that our little ones and their parents feel the love of God and learn that the church is a safe place to be.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Special Offering for the Month of June: June 4th: Strengthen The Church



June 3rd ~ The Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is Celebrating ~ Join Us!

The shop is newly renovated and is located at 37 Main Street next to the First Congregational Church. The shop will be open on Saturday, May 27, from 9AM until noon for folks attending the Memorial Day parade. On June 3, we will also be hosting our Grand Reopening from 9AM until noon. There will be refreshments and an opportunity to win a raffle. Please stop by say hello and to see the bright, spacious changes in the shop. We are gladly accepting gently used spring/summer clothing donations at this time.

150th Anniversary Celebrations ~ NOTE New Dates

The 150th anniversary year-end celebration has changed from what was originally announced. We have been hearing from many members that they wanted to attend the dinner celebration – too many for the Garden Barn at the Lang Farm to hold. So, our year-end celebration has expanded to two events – John Dorhauer, President of the United Church of Christ, will still be here to preach on Sunday, Nov. 5 with receptions after each service. And, our dinner celebration has been moved to the Champlain Valley Fair on Friday, October 20. They have room to accommodate all who wish to attend. Catering details are still being worked out so stay tuned for cost and information on purchase of tickets.

Celebrating
150
YEARS



June Birthdays

1st Phyllis Hogel, Alberta Reed, Ann Marie Sullivan, Kristen Weischedel; 2nd Curtis Guild; 3rd Erna Deutsch, Louise Kolvoord; 4th Max Smith; 5th Paige Bero, Steve Wood; 6th Wayne Hathaway; 7th Brenda Crocket, Bev Davis; 8th Janet Astore, Matthew Giannuzzi; 9th Mindy Bickford, Finn Hamilton, Colleen Messier; 10th Connor Calhoun; 12th Sean McCullen, Ann Wells; 13th Jeffery Smith; 14th June Nadeau; 15th Randy Forguites, Sarah Metcalf, Ellen Polanshek; 17th Brandon Kinney, Leslie O'Neil, Jonathan Stapleton; 18th Dennis Conti, Cynthia Kelley; 19th Christine Catterton, Stephanie Field, Kara Robinson; 21st Linda Bogardus, Carol Mauger, Rory Mauger; 22nd Henry Gabert, Lorelai Mauger, Hans Mertens; 23rd Kaki McGear; 24th Andrea Cilley; 25th Cindy Chadurjian; 26th Kathryn Brennan; 27th Abigail Wood; 28th Lori Giannuzzi, Linda Jackson, Suzanne Reardon; 29th Peter Schmalz; 30th Dillon Tiersch

Thank You's



Dear Church Family, I find it hard to believe but today marks the one month anniversary of Ronnie's passing. I have been working my way through the myriad of paperwork I need to complete, but today I thought it would be a good day to look at the towering pile of sympathy cards and notes so many of you sent me. I treasure each and every one of these beautiful sentiments and your thoughtful, loving words to me. Memories were running down my cheeks but I

felt close to him as I read each one again. Chuck, Jeff and I are still in awe at the number of you who came to honor him. I wanted it to be a true celebration of his life, and because of Mark I was able to show all of you what a kind, loving and truly good man he was. You have all been a blessing to me during this difficult time and I am truly blessed to have you in my life. Mary Richer

To my church family- Thank you very much for the lovely rose I received on my birthday ~ Lyn Beliveau

I would like to thank my church family and the two "Easter Bunny Friends" for the lovely Easter Basket. Sincerely, Jackie Knapp

Dear First Congregational Church, Thank you so much for your generous support of COTS! We are so grateful for meals for the guests at our daystation! Thank You!!! It makes a huge difference to have these types of donations for the folks we serve. Warmest regards, Sian Leach, Community Outreach, COTS

Dear Church Family, After spending two wonderful weeks in Florida, I thank you very much for the beautiful yellow rose that I received on my birthday. Sincerely, Jean Tucker

Thank you for my Easter Basket filled with Easter surprises and also for my yellow rose for my birthday in March. Doris Farnsworth

Still Calling All First Church Quilters ~
With Any And All Quilting Skills Or Even No Quilting Skills

Two squares have been received – all the way from Arizona. Thank you, Jan Hopper. And, there are rumors of others to come but additional squares are still needed. So put on your thinking caps and design a square – individually, jointly with others, or with a church group or committee. In case you missed the instructions the first time around or have misplaced them, they are being reprinted below:

As part of the 150 anniversary celebration, the committee is planning a quilted wall hanging made from squares designed by church members. The squares should tell a story of something the church does, event in which the designer was involved, or what the church means to the designer. It is hoped that the Youth Groups, Faith Formation Classes, JOY group, and other groups will collaborate in designing a square. Individuals are also encouraged to make a square. Construction of the wall hanging (or wall hangings – it would be wonderful if enough squares were collected to do two – one for each side of the sanctuary) will be a three-step process:

1. Designing and making of the squares by groups and individuals (see below for criteria)
2. Church members with portable sewing machines will gather at the church for an old-time sewing bee to sew the squares together. Can't sew – we will need people with irons and with scissors to trim the thread ends
3. Once the wall hanging is sewn together, it will be mounted on a quilting frame (yes, we actually have a member who has an old quilting frame) where it will be “tied” like it would have been in 1867. The frame with the wall hanging will be somewhere in the church for a week or two – everyone from the youngest child to the oldest adult will have the chance to place a tie.
- 4.

CRITERIA FOR SQUARES

1. Use cotton fabric. Try to avoid fabric colors (like dark reds) that fade quickly.
2. Unfinished squares should be 10 ½ inches
3. Design on squares can be sewn together, appliqued, or done with crewel or cross-stitch embroidery
4. Name or initials of designer should be on front of square
5. Deadline for submitting is July 1.

Questions, call or email Ann Gray, 878-4088 or grayann8@aol.com

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