

SPiRiT @ FiRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

June 2024: In this issue...

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Your Pastor's Ponderings.....

On Memorial Day 2024, FCCEJ was invited to participate in the Essex Annual Memorial Day Parade. Everyone likes a parade so we had a beautifully decorated float [thanks, Duke Ehler!] with the names of every person from Essex who lost their lives in the service of our country. We had fun decorating the float and my truck; thirty of us had fun driving the route and waving and smiling at people along the route. We even had fun undecorating the float and getting everything back to normal. It was a good day and one where I was asked to give the opening prayer at the Five Corners immediately prior to the parade: an honor I've had for many of the years serving as your pastor.

A week later, we were asked to participate in the Second Annual Pride Festival at Maple Street Park on June 1st from 1-5 p.m. We were asked to provide games and activities for the kids at the event.

And we did so with joy and pride to be a part of a movement so in line with who we are as followers of Jesus Christ and the extravagant love that he brought into the world! We had our LGBTQ+ banners flying, frisbees going everywhere, face painting and colored hair redefining the look of many a kid, bean bags arching their way to their target, and corn hole offering fun for all ages. We also witnessed to a way of understanding Scripture and Christ's message that does his words and actions justice in a day and age when more often than not folks put judgement and anger and division into Christ's mouth.

This coming fall, we have been asked to participate in a City of Essex Junction Event that highlights local businesses and encourages them to share their message, gifts and services to the wider community in the hopes of enticing folks to consider moving to our fair village. It is more than appropriate, considering that we have been present in the same location since before the Village existed and because our message of love and inclusion fits the Vermont mystique to a T.

LITTLE CHILDREN, LET US
LOVE NOT IN WORD AND
SPEECH, BUT IN ACTION
AND TRUTH.

- 1 JOHN 3:18

In all of these invitations, we should take pride in not only being included, but also invited to participate. Our faith community has a reputation of acceptance, inclusion, and healthy engagement with the wider community, and all of these years of efforts are paying off. Is it any wonder that we have had more people join the church this year than in many years past?! We are a good and healthy family of faith that seeks to deepen our wisdom in Christ's way of life and strengthen the ties that bind us together in the wider Essex/Vermont community.

Thank you all for the ways in which you have contributed to this reality and for looking to the future with hope. I look forward to resting a bit this summer and getting back to our shared work this coming fall. Summer blessings on you all. I am

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark

SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN JUNE

Celebration Sunday—June 2, 2024

We have had one heck of a busy year in 2024 and celebrated several of our great ministries on Sunday, June 2nd ! First, we will shared Holy Communion. Second, we celebrated all the people who have helped with our Faith Formation and Youth Programs. Third, we enjoyed the musical talents of our Joyful Noise Choir singing an anthem. Fourth, we will listened to the scripture through drama as our older kids brought an old stand by parable to us in a creative way. Fifth, we congratulated our Graduates with a special litany and slideshow. And Finally, we ate ice cream!!

Racial Justice Event

The Racial Justice Group invites you to join us on Sunday, June 9 at 3pm in the Sanctuary for “Inclusion, Diversity and New Americans”. We have invited three New American panelists; Eric Agnero, a leader of Vermont Institute of Community and International Involvement; Jeetan Khadka, owner of the Nepali Kitchen, and Oluchukwu Ebele, a woman currently working as a para-educator and studying to be a nurse’s aid, to share their experiences and answer questions you may have. Please save the date and we look forward to seeing you. For more details, please reach out to Betsy Weischedel at eweischedel@gmail.com.

Juneteenth Celebration & Father’s Day Sunday—June 16, 2024

Juneteenth remembers and commemorates the date when enslaved folks in the deep south were finally freed from the cruel brutality of slavery. The Civil War had ended two years previous but folks in the deep south had not lived up to their leaders agreement and the law of the land. Troops went south to enforce the freedom and did so in Galveston Texas in 1865. On June 16th, our Sanctuary Choir, under the direction of Bethany Blake, will come out of their summer slumber to sing some special songs of freedom. We will celebrate the movement forward and challenge ourselves with the ways we still need to change to make for a united and just society with our brothers and sisters of color.

We will also bless our Service Trip Team and send them on their way to the Blackfeet Reservation as they seek to help the other group of folks with which our country did great harm: the Native Population. On June 30th, the Service Trip Team will return to church to share their experiences with us all, another Sunday of inspiration you will not want to miss!

Communications

Why do you attend FCCEJ? The Communications Committee is looking for folks to share experiences and reasons for being part of this faith family. We are creating a video to add to the website so that people coming to the website will get a better sense of the great things our church has to offer! If you’re willing to add your voice, please look for once of us before or after services.

During the summer months, the live stream team will be taking a break. Thankfully, the Deacons have agreed to run a basic live stream broadcast so that there will still be a chance for those who are traveling or otherwise unable to attend services can still view them on our You Tube channel.

If you're at a church event please snap a few pictures and email them to welcomes@fccej.org. These are often great to include in social media and the newsletter!

Deacons

Greetings from your Deacons! Wow, the warm summer weather arrived quickly this year! With the warm weather, it brings some changes to worship schedules for the summer. Starting June 2nd and going through Labor Day Weekend, we will begin our summer worship schedule of one service at 9am (even on Communion Sundays). Please plan to join us for the earlier services and then go enjoy this lovely weather. While we will miss Rev. Mark as he vacations, we are really looking forward to our guest preachers this summer! There is a lot planned at FCCEJ – come and join us!

-Judy McCullen, Deacon

Sincere Thanks

Dear FCCEJ Community, We wanted to thank everyone for your collective prayers for our relative, who we have been including on the FCCEJ prayer list in the weekly bulletin. She had been missing for over a year, and feared to be suffering from drug addiction and living homeless in Portland, Oregon. Miraculously, my cousins located her at the end of April. It is hard to know where the road will lead from here, but we are all extremely relieved to know she is alive. We will need to keep praying for her, but are so grateful for everyone's support.

Pete Schmalz & Chris Catterton

In Gratitude...

Hi!

After all the support and love I received from you all during this past year, I felt I had to give you an update.

My new lungs are doing great at the one-year mark!

This was definitely the hardest thing I have ever experienced physically, and emotionally – I sure know I am human and not Wonder Woman!

In April, I had my one-year bronchoscopy where they took biopsies of my lungs and visually inspected them. The doctors were happy with what they saw, and the biopsies came back showing no signs of rejection! From here on out I should not need another bronchoscopy unless something goes awry. I will continue to go down to see the transplant team in West Roxbury for monitoring on a regular basis, but the time between appointments keeps growing.

My lungs are now working great, but my stamina is still not as good as I had hoped it would be. But I continue to work on that. The hardest thing to manage around my transplant right now is the effects of all the medication I am on to stem any rejection.

It's been wonderful to participate in life without the limitations of an oxygen compressor! Good to know they exist for when they are needed – but I'm thrilled that I don't need one anymore!

The medications make me more susceptible to kidney and liver issues, and the immune suppressants make me more likely to develop cancer. So, I continue to need constant monitoring of my blood levels and more frequent cancer screening of all kinds. The meds also wreak havoc with my stomach, so food isn't as enjoyable as it once was. That is all a small price to pay! Given that the meds make me more susceptible to developing cancer, I've also decided to try to eliminate as much stress as possible from my life. So, all those things I used to do or be able to do – I am carefully considering each one and how they affect my stress level before I add them back into my life! It's made me stick to my priorities and learn to be a bit more selfish with my time and attention.

Just before Christmas the donor family reached out to all of us who got the precious gifts of their loved one's organs. My lung donor was a 50-year-old woman from Indiana. They told us a little about her and her life and asked that we update their family on how we were doing.

I am so very happy to still be here and to be able to experience all the joys of the last year! And I'm expecting to stick around to partake in even more in the coming years.

We are back at the lake again after taking last summer off completely (of course). And this spring has been the most thrilling ever to see everything in bloom and watch the earth come alive. I've started volunteering a few times a month at our thriving Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop, and that is fun and something I can do to be helpful. I've also taken a class to learn how to play mahjongg and now try to play once or twice a week. It's fun too! I'm in 3 book clubs and they keep me pretty busy reading. All that, trying to get exercise in, keeping up with the kids, and planning for and attending follow up medical appointments fills my days at a much more relaxed pace. I've been able to connect with many of you, but many I haven't connected with yet. I feel like Rumpelstiltskin – there are some parts of last year I just don't remember!

One thing I definitely remember is that I felt so supported every step along the way. Rob would read me comments from Caring Bridge, and they'd make me smile and realize I had a reason to keep pushing even when just opening my eyes seemed like a huge chore.

The number of friends and family who stepped up to support us was shocking, frankly. Some sent cards, some watched our pets and our house, some cooked meals for us, some visited, called, texted, weeded our gardens, took me for walks, some prayed, some brought me books, others baked cookies or pies, but through it all I could feel that you each cared. It was amazing to feel all your support and love. There's no way I can say thank you enough!

This experience has brought the Evans family much closer together and made us value each other and every opportunity to be together. We've also come to realize how wonderful our church family is. You really came through for us when we needed the support. No holds barred – you showed up! I felt like you all had your arms around us through the tough stuff. The FCCEJ community really showed us they are an extension of our family and we've come to love and value you all so much more over this last year. I don't know how to thank you all, but this is a start!

Maureen Evans

The first Sunday in June is always a favorite day of mine. Seeing everyone who stepped up and volunteered throughout the year to help our children and youth programs be all they can be is truly awesome. As in previous years, you'll get to select your gift of my handmade potholders and dish cloths as a reminder of how much we appreciate all your hands have done this year to keep our programs vibrant. It truly takes a village. All of you are amazing! Whether your hands have worked on something behind the scenes, or you have gathered with the children and/or youth in person during Faith Formation, youth gatherings, nursery, or pageant. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do here at FCCEJ.

We are currently in our recruiting months and if you have volunteered in the past, you know that we ask that you fill out paperwork for background checks (done annually) and review our Safe Conduct Guidelines. In early September, we'll ask you to attend a Safe Conduct training. All volunteers with our children & youth must be active in our church family for at least 6 months. Maybe you have, or will soon, reach your 6 months. There are many levels of volunteering in this healthy and vibrant community. There is an opportunity to find something that speaks to you. Connect with me or a member of our Children Formation (Education) Committee to chat and help you find the fit that works for you. Feel free to seek us out. CFC members: Terri Livak, Derek Lyman, Judy Roy, Jessica Moos, Kevin McCullen, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Lorinda Elliott, and Mary Ann Phelps.

Summer is fast approaching! Have you registered your children or youth for VB Camp in August yet? It only take a moment on our website. Fliers with QR codes are on the church doors, signs out in front of the church, and mailings are going out. Follow us on Facebook and share our links. Youth Summer Service Days are coming in July. Check your calendars and reach out to sign up. Early registrations help us with planning our programs. More information on both of these in the following pages, so keep reading. You can even sign up for a camp site for you and/or your whole family at Button Bay in August—see below.

I look forward to seeing you around town and at church.

Blessings & Peace,

Laurie Chipman, *Christian Education Director*

Vacation Bible Camp

August 5th – 9th, 2024

Mornings 9am-12pm OR All-Day 9am-4pm (\$100/camper ~ scholarships available)

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

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

fcej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/



Volunteers: Youth (6th – 12th) & Adults

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

Adults are morning group leaders for campers, station leaders, station helpers, floaters, support afternoon youth staff, help decorate and set up the weekend before camp, work on a project at home or at church prior to camp weeks. Volunteers: Lauren Starkey, July Allen, Maryanne Warren, Doug Olufsen, Eric Lindholm

Would you like to join this great group? Reach out to Laurie or another volunteer. We'll be happy to chat and answer your questions. Volunteer for the full week (mornings, afternoons, all day) or just the morning or afternoon that works for you.

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

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

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

Faith Formation News

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

The summer months are a great time for rest and renewal, along with an opportunity to catch up on some reading. I would like to highlight the library tower in Fellowship Hall as a place to visit throughout the summer. The tower contains a variety of books that are nicely organized into various sections ranging from devotionals, teen and young adult to parenting books. There is a sign out log on top of the tower and you can read at your leisure.

Here is a mealtime prayer from Let's Say Grace, by Robert M Hamma:

"As we begin this season of summer, make us aware of the many chances in the days ahead to be signs of your love. We thank you for this meal, and for the opportunity it gives us to serve and care for each other."

May we all enjoy the adventure summer brings as we share laughs and make memories with family and friends as the sun smiles down upon us!

Faithfully,

Elizabeth Miller, *Children's Ministry Coordinator*

Faith Formation Offering 2023-2024—Lahaina Fire Relief

Current total \$738.75 (includes \$617.75 sent in February)

Last Sunday to give is June 2. Please use the small white bible story envelopes on the Narthex shelf so that your offering goes to help those in Lahaina. Lose money in the offering plate goes to our general church budget.

Youth Ministry

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

Youth Picture Board

We are always looking to add pictures to refresh this board. Send Laurie a picture via email or drop one off. The board is right outside the CE office. We're adding a few more soon of our youth in their school band uniforms. Stop by and take a look!

Youth Ministry Info Board

Youth Registration forms (one form per family), SHY job applications for Nursery & VB Camp and Adult Volunteer Safe Conduct paperwork for all those volunteering with children and youth.

Youth Calendar:

Youth Summer Service Days: Please sign up by June 14th (ASAP)!

- ◆ July 17 & 18 and July 24 & 25 (Wednesdays & Thursdays)
- ◆ You can sign up for full or half days ~ all four or just one ~ whichever works.
- ◆ Must have a youth registration form on file before participating in YSSDs.

The Youth Ministry Team will finalize the service opportunities once signups are done. Our current list of opportunities is so far looking like this: hands on service work at VT Food Bank, make a meal for Spectrum, visit our seniors and play board games, make part/all of a Dismas House meal, help at King Street, plus more. There will be something for JHY and SHY.

VB Camp August 5-9th – volunteer for mornings or apply with Laurie to work the afternoons.

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

We have two staff on duty in the Nursery during our 9am summer services (June 2 to September 1).

Nursery workers are paid \$20 per worship service. Staff arrive at 8:45am and stay through 10:15am. Staff receive a text reminder on Thursdays from Laurie that goes out to the full group. Staff sign up for dates on our online Google Excel sheet. (Nursery Adult Supports sign up here too.) Reach out to Laurie for an application and an interview.

College students who would like to work in the summer are asked to reach out to Laurie and she will add you onto the text group for summer. Laurie took 3 Nursery staff to lunch on May 26 and looks forward to doing this again soon!

Missions Committee

2024 COTS Walk

We are thrilled to share COTS raised \$203,612.54 for the 35th Annual COTS Walk! We are immensely grateful for your incredible support and generosity. Thank you for making a difference in our community.

Thank you to all our amazing walkers, donors, sponsors, volunteers, and staff for coming together and making this year's event a success. Rain or shine, COTS rocked it with an incredible turnout: 99 dedicated volunteers and over 1,000 enthusiastic Walkers. Your support ensures that our shelters, programs, and services continue to thrive and make a difference in our community. COTS Walk donations are a main source of funding for their shelters, programs, and services.



Chili Grab-n-Go Fundraiser

The Missions Committee will be hosting a Chili Grab and Go dinner on Friday September 20th. The committee will be asking church members to make meat or vegetarian chili along with corn bread. A sign-up table will be available after church services and sign-up genesis will be setup in September.

The dinner will benefit the Age Well Meals on Wheels program. The following is information on this program:

Meals on Wheels ensures that older Vermonters can remain in their own homes and avoid far more costly healthcare alternatives, such as unnecessary trips to the emergency room, hospitalizations, and nursing home placements. For many aging Vermonters, trusted Age Well volunteers or staff members who show up every day with a meal and a warm smile is the only person they see or speak with all day. This special delivery is the reason to get up in the morning, something to look forward to, and a reminder to take good care of themselves. Adequate nutrition is a necessity for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase energy levels, mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, immune system strength, recuperation speed, and the ability to manage chronic health problems. Our meal programs ensure that aging Vermonters have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking. From a recent Participant Survey, 88% report they eat healthier food because of Meals on Wheels.

Please contact Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net for more information or to sign up.

Montana Service Trip

On June 22nd, an intergenerational team of seventeen FCCEJ members will travel to the Blackfeet Nation in Montana to work on service projects identified by the Blackfeet people. After a year of planning and fund-raising, we are excited to make this journey.

We are partnering with Global Volunteers, our liaison with the Blackfeet Nation, who is making arrangements for our local transportation, lodging and meals. Three open-style dormitory rooms, converted from classrooms, will be set up for our lodging at the local community college.

During the day, we will be assigned to various work projects, such as stocking shelves at the local food pantry, preparing meals to be delivered to members of the community, light labor projects such as landscaping, painting or minor repairs, or working with youth at summer school or camp. We are excited to work with people from the Blackfeet Nation, giving us the chance to learn from each other.

We are so fortunate to be there for the Celebration of the Buffalo Herd, a special festival, which our program director will incorporate into our weekly schedule. In the native tongue, this celebration is called "Inni". In addition, she will be inviting speakers to share information about the Blackfeet culture.

On June 9, the Service Team will be blessed during worship. Members of the team are: Ashley, Lisa, and Matt Clark; Bill Coddington; Dave, Christine, Sam, and Mae Dewey; Sharon Dettenrieder; Cathy Lapierre; Mark Mendes; Gretchen and Izzy Owens; Heather, Terry, Addie, and Tristan Stein.

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

With Gratitude,

Sharon Dettenrieder for the Montana Service Team

Craft Fest Annual Lawn Sale

Mark your calendars for Saturday August 17th for the annual church lawn sale. The sale will be from 9am to 1pm rain or shine. All shopping will begin at 9am and not before. We'll be accepting kitchen items, books, children's toys, holiday items, puzzles, baskets, bath items, paintings, frames, jewelry, and furniture. Linens and clothes may be donated to the Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop.

Items can be dropped off the morning of the sale, starting at 7am at the church. Please note if you bring any furniture and it doesn't sell, you will be responsible for picking it up. The committee doesn't have the resources to bring to other thrift stores.

The lawn sale will include a bake sale sponsored by the Missions Committee. All proceeds from the bake sale will go to JUMP. Founded in 1988, the Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP) addresses the growing epidemic of poverty. To date, support for JUMP has grown to include broad interfaith assistance from 27 faith communities in the local area, key funding from hundreds of individuals, and vital sponsorship and dollars from both businesses and foundations. Unwavering, JUMP operates a key downtown Drop-In Center in donated space at the First Congregational Church of Burlington, where staff and volunteers provide compassionate care, practical assistance and informed referrals to thousands of Vermont children and adults. Eligible families and individuals receive voucher assistance for transportation, food, laundry, utilities, household goods, and healthcare every three months.

The Heavenly Food Pantry will be having a tent to collect items of need. A list of needed items will be included in the July/August newsletter.

If you are unable to drop items off on August 17th, please contact Sue Conti at sueconti@comcast.net. For further information, please feel free to contact Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net.

FCCEJ RECEIVES ANN ATHERTON AWARD



Ed Steele, front, received the Anne Atherton Award for community service, on behalf of the First Congregational Church, on May 4 at the Vermont Dismas Annual Community Celebration at Elley Long Music Center. Also attending and representing FCCEJ were (l to r); Beth Volker, Beth Warren, Gordon Starkey, Betsy Weischedel, Lauren Starkey, and Carl and Alison Wermer.

The Anne Atherton Award is based on exceptional volunteerism. For over 15 years, the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction has generously supplied the East Allen Dismas House with volunteers and donations. Dismas of Vermont, which provides transitional housing and support services for formerly incarcerated prisoners, relies on volunteers. Ed Steele has coordinated the donation of evening meals for over five years.

Camp Scholarships Await You!

Children, Youth,
Adults & Families

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

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

FCCEJ Family Camping Weekend

Friday, 8/ 9 - Sunday, 8/11 ~ Button Bay State Park
13 sites booked - 10 available.

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

Our weekend looks like this: Arrive Friday afternoon/evening (time that works for you) and set up your site. Join the group for an evening campfire in our common area around our large red canopy. We'll move a couple of close by picnic tables so we can have a couple of meals together (lunch & supper of BYO to the table and a dish or item to share if you wish). Saturday will be a day of fun and activities, on your own and/or with others. Last year some took a bike ride, others were in the pool. We played corn hole, cards and got a little crafty. Glow sticks were a favorite



of many. It's a very relaxed weekend with no set schedule. There will be great koinonia (fellowship) with others here from your FCCEJ family.



Horton Center Camp

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

www.hortoncenter.org

Tivvi Pare, Executive Director

tpare@nhcucc.org

Camp phone number is 603-545-9660

Check out the awesome camps offered this summer!

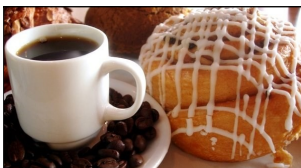
JUNE BIRTHDAYS

SULLIVAN, Ann Marie (69)	06/01	FAUX, Joan (85)	06/18
BOYD, Susan (74)	06/03	CATTERTON, Christine (61)	06/19
DEUTSCH, Erna (61)	06/03	FIELD, Stephanie (55)	06/19
KOLVOORD, Louise (94)	06/03	STEELE, Edward (92)	06/19
BERO, Paige (11)	06/05	BOGARDUS, Linda (67)	06/21
WOOD, Steven (73)	06/05	GABERT, Henry (79)	06/22
BLAKE, Kira (3)	06/06	MCGEARY, Kaki (53)	06/23
DAVIS, Bev (77)	06/07	SMITH, Meghan (44)	06/23
DAWSON, Brenda (64)	06/07	CHADURJIAN, Cindy (65)	06/25
ASTORE, Janet (68)	06/08	SARGENT, Paula (75)	06/25
BICKFORD, Mindy (63)	06/09	BRENNAN, Kathryn (62)	06/26
HAMILTON, Finn (14)	06/09	GIANNUZZI, Lori (62)	06/28
WELLS, Ann (90)	06/12	JACKSON, Linda (87)	06/28
KINNEY, Brandon (11)	06/17	NOEL, Whitney (38)	06/28
O'NEIL, Leslie (68)	06/17	REARDON, Suzanne (72)	06/28
STAPLETON, Jonathan (52)	06/17	SCHMALZ, Peter (57)	06/29
CONTI, Dennis (70)	06/18		

SERMON TALKBACK

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

COFFEE CLATTER



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

CHRISTIAN BRIDGE

The Bridge Group is on hiatus during the summer.

We will resume on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month from 1:30 – 4pm in September. All are welcome, no matter the skill level.

New Member's Class Offered

June 9, 2024

For those of you interested in finding out more about FCCEJ, there will be a New Member's Class offered on June 9th after the worship service in the Marvin Lounge, around 10:20am. If you have found our worship to be engaging, our Christian love authentic, our social outreach in line with what you believe to be Christ's message to embody, and our community friendly and welcoming, then we would love to have you consider making FCCEJ your church home. Or simply come and find out more about who we are, how we are organized and what our denomination is like. There will be good snacks and if you need child care, please call the church office at 801 878-5745.

Yoga @ First

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

Lunchtime Book Group

This month we will meet on Monday June 17 at 11:30 in the Marvin Lounge. We will discuss The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd. It is a meticulously researched novel set in first century Galilee. Ana is an intelligent and rebellious young woman from a wealthy family. She is expected to marry an older widower until an encounter with eighteen year old Jesus changes her life forever.

Please join us and bring a brown bag lunch for good fellowship and what promises to be an interesting discussion.

Grief Support Group

**2nd Thursday of Each Month
10-11:30am in Marvin Lounge**

This group is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. The sessions are facilitated by Sharon Dettenrieder, MSN, RN and Mary McHugh, MAPS. Both Sharon and Mary have years of experience in leading Grief Support groups as well as personal experience with loss. Next session is 6/13. Please contact the church office for more information: 802-878-5745 or welcome@fcej.org.

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-2nd

~Other Sundays Throughout the Month~

8:30 - In-person and streamed via YouTube

Music: Bethany Blake directs our Sanctuary Choir and provides accompaniment

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

Music: Finally @ First Praise Band

Streamed on the 3rd Sunday of each month

Visit us online:



FCCEJ.ORG



[FCCEJ](https://www.youtube.com/FCCEJ)



[FCCEJ_802](https://www.instagram.com/FCCEJ_802)



[FIRSTCONGREGATIONALEJ](https://www.facebook.com/FIRSTCONGREGATIONALEJ)

YOU ARE LOVED.

YOU ARE SEEN.

YOU ARE SAFE HERE.

YOU ARE NEEDED.

YOU ARE UNIQUE.

YOU ARE ENOUGH.

YOU ARE YOU.

YOU ARE VALID.

YOU ARE HEARD.

YOU MATTER.