

*The First Congregational Church
of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ*



*A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All
in the Spirit of Christ*

“We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We agree to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As in the past, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.”

One Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
www.fccej.org

Phone: 802-878-5745

Fax: 802-872-8236

E-mail: welcome@fccej.org

Twitter: [1stChurchEJ](https://twitter.com/1stChurchEJ)

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



Open and Affirming means that we welcome everyone to First Church including our GLBTQ brothers and sisters.

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
November 27, 2016
First Sunday of Advent - Second Service

A Welcoming Church,

Accepting and Serving All,

In the Spirit of Christ.

Order of Worship

Prelude

Prelude on a Welsh Tune
A Psalm of Praise
Berceuse

Paxton
Hutson
Delbruck

An Extravagant Welcome

No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this place.

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

Our Ministers will welcome everyone to church, highlight significant events in our shared life, then the Deacon on Duty will welcome everyone and invite people to sign the Friendship Books.

Musical Introit

Prepare Ye

Schwartz

Call to Worship

Leader: What is the scope of God's love?

People: God's love goes on for infinity and does not discriminate between gender or ethnicity, culture or religion.

Leader: What is the depth of God's love?

People: God's love goes to the depth of our souls and there is nothing God would not sacrifice to lead God's children to peace.

Leader: Where is God's love?

People: In our sisters and brothers, who God calls us to love and cherish. In the world God created for us and which provides for us.

Leader: How can we love God?

People: When we love God's people and creations we love our God.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation & Unison Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

*Opening Hymn

City of God [song sheet]

Schutte

Lighting the First Candle of Advent

Children's Message

After the Children's Message, preschool through 12th grade are encouraged to join us for Multi-age Activity time. Parents/Grandparents are welcome to accompany their children, help get them settled and stay or return to worship. All will return during the final hymn..

**Jesus loves the little children, all God's children of the world.
Whether young or old or new, Jesus loves us through and through
Teaching us to love all creatures in the world.
God has made us all a rainbow, Colors dancing 'round and 'round.
In our hair and skin and eyes, big and little, every size,
God has made us all a rainbow dancing 'round.**

Pastoral Prayer

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

Prayer Response *Rise Up*

**I'll rise up, I'll rise like the day. I'll rise up, I'll rise unafraid.
I'll rise up, and I'll do it a thousand times again.
And I'll rise up, high like the waves. I'll rise up, In spite of the ache.
I'll rise up, and I'll do it a thousand times again.
I'll rise up, I'll rise up, I'll rise up. I'll rise.**

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

Days of Elijah

McClurkin

***The Doxology # 778**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.**

Hymn

Be Still My Soul

#488

Scripture Reading

The Hebrew Bible

Genesis 38: 1-26 [page 27]

Sermon

When the Widow Says; "I Have a Right to God's Love!"

Devon Thomas

Anthem

Mary Was The First One

Gaither Vocal Band

***Hymn**

My Heart Sings Out With Joyful Praise

#106

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Go Now In Peace

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love**

***Postlude**

Postlude in C

Rick

**Please stand if you are able.*

*The flowers on the altar are given by Marion Ferris,
John Ferris & Nancy Ferris Engle in memory of Robert Ferris.*

Worship Participants

Deacon: Erica Garvey

Greeters: Olivia Dusharm

Ushers: Arlene Bickford & Carolyn Toof

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lisa	Nancy Allen	Fletch Coolidge
David Tibbetts	Annette	Tim Frazier
Emily Carroll & family	Peggy	Jaime Real
Andy Tager	Richard	Michael
Louise Kolvoord	Roger Kalar	Leigh Davidson
Suzanne	Jenna	Ruth Legendre
Emily Schueren & family	Sharon Kennedy	Dave
Campbell Miller	Pete Schmalz	Cathleen & Lilianna
Donna	Carol	Ed Constantine

Please let us know if you would like a name added to our Prayer Ministry, you can write it on the Friendship Pad, call or email the office or send us a note, welcome@fcej.org

Worship at First Church

Welcome to worship services at First Church! In all our services we strive to build closer relationships to a loving God, with each other, and with the world. We draw inspiration from Scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus. We hope you will find a spiritual home in one of our two different worship services.

Our Early Service at 8:30 a.m.

Our early service is a bit more traditional. It tends to be quieter and features classic hymns, the Sanctuary Choir, and organ music. Sunday School is not in session during this service. We are working to provide paid Nursery Care but currently have a self-serve nursery area where the service is projected.

Our Later Service @ 10:15 am

Our later service is a bit more contemporary. This worship features our Finally at First praise band, and more contemporary songs of worship. We offer a Sunday School program that commences after the Children's Message until 11:30am.

Nursery Room is available.

Communion

Our church has an "open" communion table which means that everyone is welcome to come and celebrate Christ's meal of love. We use grape juice and gluten free bread for the elements. We welcome children at the table as well but also recognize that each family is free to determine how to interpret the communion tradition.

* * * **TODAY** * * *

2017 First Church Budget Process Beginning

Church Council and Finance Committee will begin developing the 2017 First Church budget in December. If you are interested in the process please contact anyone on Council (see last page of this bulletin for a list) or on the Finance Committee. Also please return your pledge ASAP so we have accurate information to work with. Thank you.

Green Table-Jamaica Bound 2017 Fundraising

The Jamaica Mission Team will be selling Stock in their trip after both services from now until Christmas. If you would like to support this mission trip, stock is \$25/share and entitles the holder of the stock to a luncheon with delicious Jamaican food as well as a report of our experience. Look for the green Jamaica table in Fellowship Hall.



STARTING TODAY! Christmas Pageant Rehearsals

Calling all Jr. High & Sr. High youth!

‘Love Divine, All Loves Excelling’

Speaking parts – Non-speaking parts – Help with set/costumes/props

Adult helpers needed!

Mark your calendars and come join Laurie (pageant director), Erica & Devon.

Sign up to bring snacks is in office hallway.



TODAY, November 27th – 5 to 7pm – read through and hand out parts!

December 4th – 5 to 7pm – full rehearsal

December 11th – 11:30 – 2:00pm (preschool – 6th graders invited to stay & practice their part for the first 30 minutes)

Saturday, December 17th – TBA - dress rehearsal

December 18th – arrive at 7:45am for the Christmas Pageant presentation at both our worship services

Christmas Poinsettias

Order your poinsettias for Christmas services in memory or honor of a loved one or special event. They are \$12.95 and come in red, white, pink or marbled varieties. Let Jen know your preferences and your dedication will be remembered in the Christmas bulletins



* * * **THIS WEEK** * * *

Mondays ~ Yoga @ First !

New to yoga? Returning? Come sit with Jonah and practice a gentle sequence to integrate the mind, body, and soul. In each session, we focus, breathe, build heat, strengthen, and relax. We have switched to Monday evenings, from 5:30-6:30. Wear comfortable, nonrestrictive clothing. Bring a mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Donations to FCCEJ welcomed, but not required.



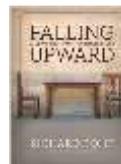
Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback

Join us on Tuesdays from 8:30-10am for coffee, home baked goods and a lively discussion of the sermon (and other topics!) that was delivered the previous Sunday. Come for the conversation, the goodies, the camaraderie, or all of the above! Join us!



Wednesday Night Searchers

Now – Dec 14th: “Falling Upward: the Two Halves of Life”
For six weeks we will discuss Richard Rohr's book, Falling Upward: the Two Halves of Life. They are available in the office.



* * * **SIGN-UPS** * * *



Ring the Church Bell

Sunday mornings at 8:15 & 10:00 am (15 minutes before worship). Families are welcome to sign up on the bulletin board to ring the bell.

Acolytes

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054fa4a82fa5fc1-acolytes>
Sign up on line or on the bulletin board downstairs to acolyte at worship service on Sunday morning. Acolytes (3rd grade and older) bring the light of Christ into the Sanctuary at the beginning of worship and carry it out at the end of worship to remind us that God is with us wherever we are. This is a great way to participate in worship with a friend or solo.



*** * * Children, Youth & Family Announcements * * ***



Faith Formation Sunday Mornings

Preschool thru 12th grade during Worship

November 27th ~ Multi-Age Activity Day

In our Faith Formation groups today

Thankfulness ~ Labyrinth ~ Yoga Breathing ~ Mindfulness

December 4th ~ Communion Sunday ~ Spiritual Friends,
Youth Usher/Greet

2016 Faith Formation Sunday School Offering

King Street Center ~ Total is now up to \$ 723.64

Remember to bring your Sunday School offering each week and don't forget to use one of the envelopes in the pews so that it will be put towards the Sunday School offering. \$1 a week can add up quickly!



Christmas Pageant Rehearsals Schedule

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**Mark your calendars and come join Laurie (pageant director), Erica & Devon.
Sign up to bring snacks is in office hallway.**



Christmas Pageant

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Visit the Library in Fellowship Hall and sign out a book!

Located just outside the Nursery room. Children's books are inside and on display. Adult Searchers books are located on top of the library cart.



*** * * Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate * * ***

Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Hours

10 am - 3 pm Tuesday & Wednesdays, 4 - 8 pm Thursdays

Come on in and find us on Facebook!

**Clean Out Your Closets & Bring Us Your
Fall/Winter Donations!**

We are also looking for new volunteers!



Red Tent Feminine Product Drive

Please don't forget our ongoing commitment to JUMP by putting your feminine product purchases in the Red Tent in Fellowship Hall on Sundays or in the Marvin Lounge during the week!

Next Food Pantry is Thursday, December 15th

We are in need of boxes of cereal, tuna fish, fruit juice and regular size jars of jelly to restock our cabinets.



Giving Tree



The Giving Tree is here! Perhaps you noticed the Christmas tree that is set up in the narthex. It holds tags for approximately 50 children in Essex Junction and Essex Town. The tags identify a gift for a child and for each child there are three tags. Two of the tags ask for gifts of clothing that the child needs and the third tag asks for a book, game, toy or gift card for the child. Please consider taking a tag or two to bring a smile and some

Christmas cheer to a local youngster. If you do take a tag, be sure to sign your name on the sheet by the tree identifying the tag number(s) that you have taken. Wrapped gifts with the tags securely attached need to be returned to the church no later than Dec. 12. We will be distributing the gifts on Dec. 16. Families that we help have expressed how much they appreciate the gifts we give their children and the joy that abounds on Christmas Day.

Take A Picture of Your Family!

Send us a current picture of you and your family for our Church Directory, holiday time is a great time to get the family together and have that pic taken! Email it to welcome@fccej.org



THIS WEEK: November 27th - December 3rd

- TODAY:** 8:30am & 10:15am Worship Services / Sanctuary
8am-12pm Labyrinth in Marvin Lounge
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 7:00pm Pageant Practice / Sanctuary
- MONDAY:** 9:15 - 11:30 am Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
1:30 - 4:00 pm Food Pantry Stocking / FH & Gym
5:30 - 6:30 pm Yoga / Fellowship Hall
5:30 - 6:30 pm Group Victory / 3rd Floor-5/6 Class
7:00 - 9:00 pm Ladies Night Out / Marvin Lounge
- TUESDAY:** 8:30 - 10:00 am Sermon Talk Back / Marvin Lounge
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 7:00 pm AP Search Committee / Marvin Lounge
- WEDNESDAY:** 9:15 - 11:30 am Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:30 - 7:00 pm Finally @ First / Sanctuary
5:45 - 7:00 pm At Table / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 7:30 pm Currier Bells / Gym
7:00 - 9:00 pm Wednesday Night Searchers / Marvin Lounge
7:00 - 8:00 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall
- THURSDAY:** 8:30 - 11:30 am Essex Art League / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
12:00 - 2:00 pm JOY / Marvin Lounge
6:30 - 7:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
7:00 - 8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
7:30 - 9:00 pm Confirmation Class / Marvin Lounge
- FRIDAY:** 9:00 - 10:30 am Summit Kindergarten Field Trip / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 8:00 pm Essex Eats Out / Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
6:30 - 10:30 pm Scrapbooking Journey / Marvin Lounge
- SATURDAY:** 9:00am - 12:00pm Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / All Building
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

Church Administrator: *Jen Dooley* [welcome@fccej.org]

Music Director: *Catherine McMaster* [cmcmaster@fccej.org]

Christian Education Director: *Laurie Chipman* [lchipman@fccej.org]

Bridge Part-time Associate Pastor: *Devon Thomas* [dthomas@fccej.org]

Youth Team *Devon Thomas & Erica Garvey* [egarvey@fccej.com]

Senior Pastor: Rev. *Mark Mendes* [mmendes@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: *Kim Hamilton* [khamilton@ccsuvt.org]

Currier Bell Choir Director: *Carolyn Harris* [899-6759]

Finally @ First Director: *Rick Dooley* [rickdooley5@gmail.com]

Heavenly Harmony Director: *Catherine McMaster* [ourvinn@hotmail.com]

Junior Choir Director: see Catherine if interested

Men At First Director: *Bill Bickford, Jr.* [bill.bickford@aol.com]

Sanctuary Choir Director: *Catherine McMaster* [cmcmaster@fccej.org]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: *Brenda Crocket* [881-5253]

Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations: *Tom James* [879-1247]

Treasurer: *Ann Gray* [878-4088]

Asst. Treasurer: *Dan Petherbridge* [879-0261]

Financial Secretary: *Pat Seaver* [879-4445]

Clerk: *Andrea Sharp* [879-0580]

Christian Education: *Jenny Bourn* [802-309-7441] & *Marlene Frank* [872-9126]

Deacons: *Mark Chadurjian* [310-2399] and *Rick Dooley* [578-0229]

Hospitality: *Judy McCullen* [878-9794]

Missions: *Susan Kremer* [233-9932] & *Sandy Tallman* [879-0665]

Music: *Judy Larrabee* [236-0604]

Nominating: *Carl Wermer* [879-7650]

Stewardship: *Alison Wermer* [879-7650]

Trustees: *Kevin Meilleur* [238-4041]

Ushering: *Michael Sullivan* [879-6044]

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop [879-6552]

Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: *Valerie Gabert* [879-0109]

Called To Care Contact: *Beth Volker* [879-4708]

Nepali Christian Community Contact: *Dan Raut* [310-4371]

Craft Fest Committee Contact: *Linda Bogardus* [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net]

mission
M O M E N T S
U N I T E D C H U R C H O F C H R I S T

November 27, 2016
First Sunday in Advent
Matthew 24:36-44

Live With Hope

Life is short: it withers like grass and the flower fades (I Peter 1:24) or, as Matthew reminds us, we never know when the Son of God might return. All of us are called to attention, to be mindful of our lives and to live every moment as if God will call us home today. This is the message for the church on this first day Advent. Yet Advent is the season of waiting, expecting, hoping. How do we look forward and be reminded of our mortality at the same time?

The answer to that question might be that the future depends so much on what we do in this very moment. The quality of our life, the truth of our faith, does depend on the investment we make in the only thing we can really do anything about and that is the moment that we breathe into right now. Oh, we can live in expectation and do our deeds enacting hope, but unless we love in this instant, how do we know we will love in the next hour? We cannot control what has happened in the past or what may happen in the future; we can only live in the minute we live in. As

Christians we do that with faith.

The first Sunday in Advent means that in most of our churches we will be lighting the Advent wreath's first candle—the candle of “hope.” Hope is also the name of a UCC church in Alexandria, Virginia, which offers these words of welcome on its website:

More than anything, we hope you can be real when you visit us. No need to pretend—no need to be “churchy.” If you’re happy, sad, worried, bursting to celebrate, or at the edge—God can hold it in worship. That’s hope.

This Advent, may we all be real and present to each moment in our lives. Live into your future by loving your present. Live with hope.