

*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
United Church of Christ
January 1, 2017
Second Sunday of Christmas**

A Welcoming Church,

Accepting and Serving All,

In the Spirit of Christ.

Order of Worship

Prelude

*O Little Town of Bethlehem
Sages From Afar
New Year's Prelude*

Redner
Blake
Wells

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

Musical Introit solo Beth Volker

When Christ was Born

Fabre

Call to Worship

Leader: We are all born into this world and were created in the image of God. We all live under the same sky, breathe the same air and walk on the same earth, does that not make us brothers and sisters?

Lectern Side: And still, there are many things that separate us. Where we live, where we work, whether we attended school, our gender, what we look like, what we can do and who we love still serve to keep us from one another.

Pulpit Side: And still there are many ideals that separate us. Our nationality, political affiliation, ethnic heritage, family history, and religious traditions still serve to keep us from one another.

Leader: And yet Jesus came for all people and all nations: to offer them love and life, to affirm that at our core we are all God's children. So, are we not all brothers and sisters?

***Opening Hymn**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#131

A Time of Confession

Call to Confession

Leader: Let us end the Christmas season with the vigor of the Holy Spirit, knowing that there is much more to do before we realize God's Kingdom, but also affirming that we are God's children in this time.

People: God loves and trusts us. Let us return that love and trust by giving thanks to our God.

Leader: So, let us come together with honesty and humility, affirming that we fall short in the eyes of God, but knowing that God's love will never fade and will always be present to lift us up.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Lord of Love and God of Grace, be with your children as we seek to find our way to you. Forgive us as we fumble and fall short of the gifts given. Help us live up to your aspirations so that we can be a part of creating your realm of peace. Forgive us when we forget our brothers and sisters in suffering, forgive us when we fail to act to ease their pain, be it due to neglect, fear or disinterest. Help us to orient our minds to you and see the world through your eyes. Glorious God, be with us so that we may speak out against social injustice and oppression; be with us so that we can advocate for the truth of your love. Help us to be a boon to those who are struggling and let us be a loving family to each other and to the world.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Jesus pointed us down the path to God's Grace. Do not fear if you find yourselves lost because the path to God is never leveled and paved.

People: We are all trailblazers to God's Glory; as long as we keep Jesus' message of love in our hearts know that this world will slowly be made whole.

Leader: Know that our God loves you and proudly puts divine trust in you. Live a life filled with love.

Children's Message

After the Children's Message, children in preschool up through 4th grade are welcome to join us on the second floor with our First Sunday Spiritual Friends. Parents/Grandparents and older siblings are welcome to accompany the kids, help them get settled and stay with the group or return to worship. Everyone will be returning to worship for Communion.

**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.**

Anthem

A Star Rising in the East

Choplin

Pastoral Prayer and Unison Lord's Prayer [trespasses]

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

**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.**

Congregational Response #122 *Come, O Long Expected Jesus*

**Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.
Born all people to deliver, born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever, come, be known to us again.**

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

One Holy Night in Bethlehem

Horman

***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.**

New Testament Scripture Readings

Hebrews 2:10-18 [page 170]

Matthew 2:13-23 [page 2]

***Hymn**

What Child is This

#148

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

We will be taking communion by intinction which invites everyone who is able to come forward and receive the bread and cup. As you come forward, take the bread and dip it into the cup and partake immediately, then return to your seats.

Special note: Our bread and crackers are all gluten free and all the juice is non-alcoholic grape juice. All are welcome at Christ's table.

***Hymn**

All Beautiful the March of Days

#434

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be!

With God our Creator, family all are we,

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.

With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

***Postlude**

Joyful Tidings

Wells

*Please stand if you are able.

Worship Participants

Deacon: Myrna Doney / Rick Dooley

2nd Service Greeters: Youth

2nd Service Ushers: Youth

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lisa	Bruce Parker	Keenan Weischedel
David Tibbetts	Annette	Tim Frazier
Emily Carroll & family	Peggy	Jaime Real
Carlene Lawrence	Carol	Michael
Louise Kolvoord	Roger Kalar	Leigh Davidson
Ralph Abling	Suzanne	Ruth Legendre
Emily Schueren & family	Sharon Kennedy	Don Foss
Campbell Miller	George Jackson	Cathleen & Lilianna
Donna	Ernie Drost	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@fccej.org

* * * **TODAY** * * *



Please take your poinsettias home with you today or bring them to someone that you know would enjoy the cheer!



Hannaford Cards & Reloads are on Sale in Fellowship Hall TODAY!



Pledge Envelopes Pick Up

Please pick up your pledge envelopes for 2017 in the office if you asked for them.

2017 Flower Chart is Up in the Fellowship Hall Hallway

Please feel free to sign up for your special dates to remember loved ones or honor events in your family's life. Please remember to put a check next to your name if you would like to keep your flowers, otherwise we will distribute them to brighten someone's day!



Early Bird Calcutta Tickets Available

The third annual Cabin Fever Calcutta tickets are now available for those who want to reserve their ball number from last year. Those who purchase Early Bird Tickets will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 cash prize. Your \$125 ticket supports the Jamaica Mission Trip and includes dinner for two as well as one Calcutta ball number. Checks are to be made payable to FCCEJ with "Jamaica" on the memo line. We hope you will join us on March 11th!

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

Annual Reports for 2016 are now Due

If you are the chair of a committee or are designated by a committee or a group to do your annual report, please email it to Jen as soon as possible, welcome@fccej.org



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

Giving Tree

Thank each of you who put a smile on a child's face! This year we provided gifts to 63 children from Essex Town & Junction, ages three months to 17. When parents are first contacted about gifts for their children or when they pick the gifts up before Christmas, they often express how difficult it is for them to find the words to adequately thank the members of our congregation for the generosity shown to their children. It is a reason for us to celebrate the spirit of giving!



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 are welcomed.



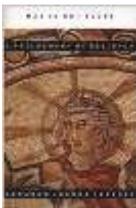
Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback

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

We will resume meeting this Wednesday, January 4th, when we will have our Dinner and Movie Night Out and then moving on to our next book, "Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion" by Abraham Joshua Heschel from January 11th – February 15th. We have the books available in the office if you would like to pick one up and get an early jump on the reading. Come and bring a friend.



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.

* * * **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.



2017 Faith Formation Sunday School Offering

2016 Total ~ King Street Center ~ Final Total is \$ 894.64

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!

We will be voting on our 2017 offering in February!



* * * **SAVE THE DATES** * * *



January 8th, 11:30 am ~ New Member Class Offered

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome in this place and welcome to become a member.

On Sunday January 8th there will be a New Member Class offered for anyone who would like to discover more about our church and/or join. If you will need child care, please let the church office know so that we can make arrangements, 878-5745.

Praise-a-Palooza: Soup and Songs of Praise

FCCEJ and Finally @ First are thrilled to again be hosting this fun evening for all ages, mark your calendars for Saturday night, February 18th from 5:30-7:30 for a soup dinner and great music welcoming area groups and our own Finally @ First!



3rd Annual Cabin Fever Calcutta

Save the date of March 11th! Early bird tickets are available now!

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

Baking for The Vermont Respite House in January

Once again, Mission Possible is baking treats for the Vermont Respite House in January. The Vermont Respite House is a facility that provides supportive end of life care for residents in a home-away-from-home setting at its new location 3113

Roosevelt Highway, Rte. 7 in Colchester. We would like to deliver 6 dozen treats on Sunday January 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th. People prefer to bake at home and deliver them to the Respite House or bring them to church for me to deliver. There is a poster on the bulletin board in the hallway between the front door and the Fellowship Hall with slots to sign up for a week to provide treats. For further information, please contact Gail Babinger at gail@babinger.net. Thank you.



Food Pantry dates in January are

MONDAY, January 9th & Thursday, January 26th

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

We could also use your empty egg cartons again!

THIS WEEK: January 1st—7th

- TODAY:** **8:30am & 10:15am Worship Services / Sanctuary**
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
3:00 - 4:30 pm Jr High Youth Group / Youth Lounge
5:00 - 7:00 pm Sr High Youth Group / Youth Lounge
- 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 - 6:45 pm Yoga with Jonah / Fellowship Hall
5:30 - 6:30 pm Group Victory / 3rd Floor-5/6 Class
- 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 / Marvin Lounge
6:00 - 7:00 pm Finance Committee / Marvin Lounge
7:00 - 9:00 pm Church Council Meeting / 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
6:30 - 7:30 pm Currier Bells / Gym
7:00 - 9:00 pm Wednesday Night Searchers / offsite
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 / Marvin Lounge
12:00 - 2:00 pm JOY / Marvin Lounge
4:00 - 8:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
5:00 - 6:30 pm Jamaica Bound Calcutta Committee / 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:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 8:00 pm Essex Eats Out Community Dinner / FH & Kitchen
- SATURDAY:** **9:00am - 12:00pm Nepali Community 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

January 1, 2017
New Year's Day
Matthew 25:31-46

Truly I Tell You

If you do something to anyone, even the “least” of these, he said, then you have done it to me. Perhaps no statement by Jesus names more clearly how we are all interconnected. Sharing food, or not sharing food, welcoming someone or not welcoming someone is tantamount to feeding and welcoming Jesus Christ. Everyone, then, is a potential source for salvation. We can turn toward them and him, or we can turn away. Everyday, everyone we come across is Jesus. The thing about interconnectedness is that the good of one is indeed good for all. Feeding one hungry person feeds all of us. The United Church of Christ offers a curriculum titled, “Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table” (ucc.org/just-eating). It uses scripture, prayer and stories from around the globe to explore our relationship with food. Its title is a play on the word, “Just.” Is eating a simple act? Is it something we do “just” for ourselves, or is there a way of eating that manifests JUST-ice? Remembering that Jesus became food for us, eating is also an act that connects us to the world. On the plate before us is food that comes to us from the work of the natural world—soil and the water and the winds and the sun, nurtured by the earth. It comes to us planted and harvested by many anonymous hands. There is a great cloud of witnesses in every bite we take—witnessing both our fullness and our generosity. Perhaps these are things to consider at our church suppers. Where does our food come from? Is it local? Who is invited to share it with us? How is it grown? How is it raised? Is it good for us? Is it good for the world? Is it good for those who grew it? Is there a Christian way of eating? Remember, it was Jesus who made food an issue and an emblem for the deepest expression of faith. Feeding others feeds Him. We are not only what we eat, but who we feed.