

*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.”

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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
December 4, 2016
Second Sunday of Advent**

A Welcoming Church,

Accepting and Serving All,

In the Spirit of Christ.

Order of Worship

Prelude

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
Heavenly Life
The Shepherd's Cradle Song*

Thygerson
Southbridge
Macklin

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.

An Associate Pastor Search Committee Assignment

Musical Introit by MAF

Call to Worship

Leader: In this place, we believe in God.

People: Through all of the twists and turns of life, we struggle and celebrate the knowledge that there is a power and presence from which to draw comfort and strength.

Leader: Jesus's birth made this clear so long ago. Let us remember...

Opening Hymn

Comfort, Comfort O My People

101

Lighting the Advent Candle: Bethlehem's Candle

A Time of Confession

Call to Confession

Leader: Come, let us enter the season of Advent with sincerity. Come, let us find the place where God rests in our soul and stir up the divine that we might awaken the eternal child of love within our hearts.

People: God's love welcomes us with forgiveness, mercy and trust.

Leader: Come, let us renew our relationship with Jesus as we seek healing, restoration and peace through the ritual of being honest before our Maker.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Prince of Peace, we often get stressed out during the time of your birth due to bills, family and busyness----help us to live into the peace you bring into the world. Wonderful Counsellor, we often find ourselves short tempered and cranky during the time of your birth due to old dysfunctional behaviors, hurting people and psychic wounds-----help us to work toward wholeness. Mighty God, we often find ourselves frightened by the geopolitical issues of our day-----help us to calm ourselves in the simple assurance of your presence. Come, Holy Jesus and teach us how to follow in the ways of your love.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Jesus changed the paradigm of power in the world and offers all of us a way forward full of hope, peace, joy and love. Come, journey into Christ's future of service, meaning and joy beyond measure.

People: Jesus assures us that God loves us despite our shortcomings and gross negligence. Let us ask the divine to embrace us as a child and send us on our way renewed in strength, wisdom and purpose.

Leader: Our God is so proud of you. Live life fully. Be good.

Children's Message

After the Children's Message, first service, our self-serve Nursery is open if you need it. Parents/ Grandparents are welcome to accompany their children, there is a speaker in the room so you can hear the worship service and it is streamed into the Fellowship Hall as well. Second service, preschool-4th grade may join Miss Laurie in the Fellowship Hall for Spiritual Friends. Everyone will return 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 by MAF

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord’s Prayer**

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

Call His Name Jesus

Choplin

***The Doxology #159 As With Gladness Folk of Old**

As with gladness folk of old, did the guiding star behold;

As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;

So, most gracious Lord, may we ever more your splendor see.

As they offered gifts most rare, at the manger plain and bare,

So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin’s alloy,

All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

New Testament Scripture Readings

Matthew 1:1-6 [page 1]

3:1-12 [page 2]

Communion Meditation

“The Wife of Uriah”

Rev. Mendes

Hymn

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

#347

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

The bread will be passed out to the congregation; please wait for the minister to invite you to eat it so that we can all eat it together. This symbolizes our unity in Christ. Drink the cup as the Spirit moves each person to do so, as a sign of the unique gifts we bring to our ministry. Our faith is both an individual and corporate reality.

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

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

#129

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 me walk with my fellow 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

Rejoice

Denton

*Please stand if you are able.

The flowers on the altar are given by Elaine & Tom Helmstutler in honor of our amazing Sermon Talk Back buddies and for Mark & Devon for their awesome moderating.

Worship Participants

Deacon: Anne Harris

Greeters: Dennis & Sue Conti, Pete & Eva Cunningham-Firkey

Ushers: Tim Carney & Cathie Goodheart, Gorden & Lauren Starkey

TODAY, Discussion of Feasibility Study for Capital Campaign

Everyone is invited to stay after both services today to discuss the results of the recent Feasibility Study. About 10% of the congregation was interviewed and from that our team from Full Harvest Fundraisers formulated their feasibility study which was handed out on November 20th. Peter & Susan will be available to discuss the results today and what the results mean for First Church as we move ahead with a Capital Campaign. Everyone is welcome to attend.

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lisa	Bruce Parker	Keenan Weischedel
David Tibbetts	Annette	Tim Frazier
Emily Carroll & family	Peggy	Jaime Real
Andy Tager	Richard	Michael
Louise Kolvoord	Roger Kalar	Leigh Davidson
Suzanne	Jen McClintock	Ruth Legendre
Emily Schueren & family	Sharon Kennedy	Don Foss
Campbell Miller	George Jackson	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@fccej.org

* * * **TODAY** * * *



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!

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.



Christmas Pageant

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, 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. Snacks in between! Pageant Party after second service until 1pm.

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

AP Search Committee Questions for Next Week

After completing the questionnaire/surveymonkey for this week, please think about these next questions for next week: *What adult education programs in the church do you like and why? What small groups within the church do you like and why? What Christian Education/ Faith Formation programs do you like in the church and why? How important are the youth at First Church and why?*

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



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.



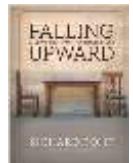
Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback

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

December 4th ~ Holy Communion Sunday ~ Spiritual Friends
Preschool – 4th grade, older children & youth remain in worship

December 11th ~ Faith Formation Class time – Advent Journey

Join us in the Sanctuary directly after class time from 11:30am – 12 noon
Our Christmas pageant needs more Angels, Sheep, Shepherds, Magi and others
5th & 6th graders are encouraged to stay until 1pm and practice their parts.

December 18th ~ All in worship for the Christmas Pageant

December 25th ~ Intergenerational 3pm worship

2016 Faith Formation Sunday School Offering

King Street Center ~ Total is now up to \$ 727.64

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!



All our First Church Youth Programs are parent supported!

1 to 3 parents/volunteers are needed at every youth group gathering!

Bulletin boards with Youth Group information can be found in the lower office hallway. Sign up to volunteer and/or bring a meal.

All youth, parents and volunteers ~ see a staff person to update and fill out paper work. Please mark your calendars for our upcoming events!

Save the dates and join in the fun!

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

December 4th ~ 11:30-1:30pm ~ Mission Focus ~ Decorating & Filling goodie bags for our Giving Tree Family Children

This Youth Group meets ONCE a month at this same time.

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.

We could also use your empty egg cartons again!

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree Tags have all been claimed! Great Work First Church!!!

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@fcej.org

THIS WEEK: December 4th - 10th

- TODAY:** 8:30am & 10:15am Worship Services / Sanctuary
11:30-1:30pm Junior Youth Group / Third Floor
11:30 - 12:30pm Music Committee / Choir Loft
11:30 - 1:00pm Discernment Committee / Youth Lounge
11:45 - 1:15pm Jamaica Bound Team Meeting / Marvin Lounge
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
3:00 - 4:00pm CPEC Dance party / Gym
5:00 - 7:00pm Pageant Practice / Sanctuary/ Youth Lounge / Gym
- 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
6:30 - 9:30 pm Joe's Big Band / Fellowship Hall
- 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
2:00 - 4:00 pm Sanctuary Piano Tuning / Sanctuary
6:00 - 7:00 pm Finance Committee / Marvin Lounge
7:00 - 9:00 pm Church Council / 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
6:00 - 7:00 pm Nominating Committee / Marvin Lounge
6:30 - 8:00 pm VTOM Team / Youth Lounge
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:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
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
6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
7:30 - 9:00 pm Confirmation Class / Marvin Lounge
- FRIDAY:** **Newsletter Articles Due for January Spirit At First**
9:00 - 10:30 am Summit Kindergarten Field Trip / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall

5:00 - 8:30 pm Train Hop Activities / Fellowship Hall

7:30 - 10:30 pm Grange / Marvin Lounge

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]

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

December 4, 2016
Second Sunday in Advent
Vision of Peace
Isaiah 11:1-10

*Could it be? Yes, it could. Something's coming, something good,
If I can wait! Something's coming, I don't know what it is,
But it is gonna be great.*

In the first act of the musical West Side Story ,the impossibly hopeful and youthful protagonist, Tony, sings the song called “Something’s Coming.” You may recognize the lyrics, written by Stephen Sondheim. Advent shares much of what this song is about : expectation, excitement and a sense that around the corner there is something good. More than the happy times on Christmas morning, or even the stories of shepherds and wise men, the good that Isaiah points to is a realized peace envisioned in natural enemies lying next to each other. Isaiah writes about lions and wolves lying with lambs and babies playing safely with poisonous snakes. The “something coming” in today’s scripture is just what Isaiah describes, a vision emblematic of humanity’s true future and more real than our violent warring culture might predict.

The expectation and hope of this season is what everyone wants all year round. We want to feel good about our lives and the people around us. We all remark about how people look different this time of year. It’s like everyone all at once sees the truth of what Isaiah saw – that there will come a day when enemies will be friends and babies will be safe and humanity will rest from all the evil it has produced. On that day, the peaceable kingdom will be real. Perhaps, this Advent season, we might cultivate a longing for peace that would result in our working for it. The United Church of Christ long ago declared itself a Just Peace Church. If you want to do more than just long for peace go to ucc.org and search for “Just Peace.” You’ll find resources and a way to imagine “something good” into reality, and make a difference in our world.