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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Essex Junction, VT 05452
www.fccej.org

Phone: 802-878-5745
Fax: 802-872-8236
E-mail: welcome@fccej.org
Website: www.fccej.org
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
March 26, 2017
First Service ~ The Fourth Sunday in Lent

A Welcoming Community,
Accepting and Serving All,
In the Spirit of Christ.

Order of Worship

Prelude
Resting in Jesus Logan
We Shall Gather At the River Lowry
Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire Smith

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 then highlight some significant events in our shared life, then the Deacon on Duty will welcome everyone and invite people to raise celebrations to the congregation or introduce yourself or a friend as a guest. We encourage everyone, both guests and members to sign the Friendship Books.

Musical Introit *O, How He Loves You and Me* Kaiser

Opening Sacred Reading and Lighting Lent's Candle of Faithful Journey

To help center us on the presence of God, the Deacon will read the morning's sacred reading, light a candle of Faithful Journey, provide a brief time of silence, and then strike the singing drum.

"Faith is a dynamic and ever-changing process, not some fixed body of truth that exists outside our world and our understanding. God's truth may be fixed and unchanging, but our comprehension of that truth will always be partial and flawed at best."

Gene Robinson: Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire

Opening Hymn** ***I've Got a Feeling **#458**

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")**

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.

Children's Message

After the Children's Message, Both Services, our Nursery is open with our staff person. Second Service, After the Children's Message, children & youth are welcome to go to their music time and Faith Formation class. Parents/Grandparents are welcome to accompany their children, help get them settled and stay in class or return to worship. Children in Preschool up through 2nd grade class will need to be signed out by an authorized person at 11:30am .

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 *O Lord, My God, My Refuge* Bach

Pastoral Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them to God.
Leader: Let us give thanks to God Most High.
People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Leader: Let us pray……

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other
A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer
Sung Congregational Response # 451 [verse 1]

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nothing surpasses the love you impart
You my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light

Scripture Lessons
Old Testament……...Jeremiah 20:7-9 [page 559]
New Testament…….John 3:1-8 [page 71]

Sermon *Got a Fire in My Bones!* Devon Thomas

Hymn** ***Come, O Fount of Every Blessing **#459**

Offering Our Gifts to God
Invitation, Offering, Prayer of Dedication
Offertory Anthem *Lenten Anthem* Larson
Doxology #451 [verse 3]** ***Be Thou My Vision

Riches I heed not, nor life's empty praise,
Thou, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Hymn** ***Holy, Holy, Holy **#277**

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: *Wir Glauben All An Einen Gott* Ashford

*Please stand if you are able.

The flowers on the altar are given by Alison Wermer,
David & Susan Knox in loving memory of Robert Knox.

Worship Participants

Deacon: Michael Bottamini
Greeters: Marion Ferris & Sylvia Nyhagen
Ushers: Kevin Dorn & Kathy Finnie

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Rachel Jarvis	Bruce Parker	Keenan Weischedel
David Tibbetts	Annette	Dee
Emily Carroll & family	Dick Leavitt	Jaime Real
Carlene Lawrence	Carol	Don Mable
Tim Frazier	Roger Kalar	Ed Constantine
Ralph Abeling	Donna	Ruth Legendre
Emily Schueren & family	Sharon Kennedy	Steven Tessier
Campbell Miller	George Jackson	Cathleen & Lilianna
Mike Heston	Mark Holden	Shirley Boucher

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 * * ***

Easter Flowers!

It's that time again, here are the flower offerings this year from Maplehurst Florist. Please put it in the offering, mail to the office or email Jen at welcome@fccej.org to order and let her know who you would like to remember/honor in the Easter Bulletins. Also, please remember to take your plants with you after Easter to enjoy, plant or give to someone who would enjoy the cheer! Please order by April 10th.

Palm Buds - $3.95

Single Easter Lily - $15.00
Double Easter Lily (2 bulbs) - $30.00
Large Easter Lily (3 bulbs) - $35.00

Hydrangea or Large Azalea - $25.00

Tulips, Hyacinths, or Daffodils 7" Container - $15.00 , 8" Container - $20.00

6" Riegor Begonia or 8" Bulb Garden - $20.00

* * * 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 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 have just started our new book, "Soul Feast" by Marjorie Thompson on Wednesday, March 8th. We have the books available in the office if you would like to pick one up and get into the reading. Come and bring a friend.

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

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2017

Your 2017 Total is now up to $344.96

Humane Society of Chittenden County

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

$1 a week can go a long way!

Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 6th grade

March 26th ~ Lenten Class Time Rotation

April 2nd ~ Communion Sunday ~ Spiritual Friends

April 9th ~ Palm Sunday & Lenten Class Time Rotation 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 staff 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.

August 7th - 11th ~ Vacation Bible Camp 2017

Hero Central: Discover Youth Strength in God!
Monday – Friday from 9am to 11:45am; Reg. forms on Table in FH
VB Camp is a week of energy and excitement of seeing God's Love in Action! All are encouraged to join up and be a part of this fun week!
Station Leaders: Crafts ~ Jenny Bourn; Snack ~ Judy Allen & Ginny Coe; Games ~ Jessica Moos; Music ~ Laura Cunningham-Firkey; Bible Drama ~ Barb Smith**;** Discovery Leader ~ Trista Acebo
Group leaders & Helpers: Youth (sixth grade or older), Young Adults & Adults

VT Outdoor Ministry Camp Week

Go swimming, play disc golf, camp fires, and more during a fun week at Rock Point Camp in Burlington, VT!
July 30th –August 4th for youth going into 5th - 8th grade Laura Labrie (College Street UCC) and Dave McGowan (Waterbury UCC) will be our Deans leading this week of camp! Visit Horton Center website to register for this camp. www.hortoncenter.org
VT UCC OM Team is recruiting volunteer counselors, a lifeguard and a nurse for this week camp!

UCC Outdoor Ministry @ Horton Center Camp, NH

www.hortoncenter.org

Join Laurie Chipman @ Horton Center~ July 9th – 15th for 7th -9th grade Do you like to rock climb? Go caving? Sleep out under the stars? Go hiking? Laurie is counseling! More fun camps like: Grandparent & Grandchild, Family & Friends Weekend, Middler Camp, and others. Women's Weekend will be offered with an extra day due to popular demand. Our new offerings include a Family 4th of July half week, Leader in Training, Archery Camp, and Senior High Hike Week. We can't wait to branch out and connect through Christ with you this summer at Horton Center!

* * * Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate * * *

Next Food Pantry dates are Monday, April 10th, 5:30 - 7:30 and Thursday, April 27th, 2-6pm

We are in need of boxes of cereal, tuna fish, fruit juice and regular size jars of jelly to restock our cabinets.
We are ALL SET for egg cartons right now!

Don't Forget the Red Tent!

The Red Tent Project has become even more important as we enter a period where funds for women's health and marginalized immigrant groups may be significantly cut back. Donating woman's hygiene products to JUMP is a positive way we can show that we will continue to support those who will be facing increasingly difficult times. Look for the Red Tent in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings.

Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Hours

10 am - 3 pm Tuesday & Wednesdays, 4 - 8 pm Thursdays
Come on in and find us on Facebook! BAG SALE THIS WEEK!
We are not accepting any donations until we change over to Spring.
We are looking for people to volunteer for the 4-6pm Thursday shift and also one volunteer for the 6-8pm Thursday every other week shift! Come join the Fun!

Volunteer Trip to the Vermont Food Bank

Please volunteer for our food sort-a-thon at the Vermont Food Bank on Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm in Barre, Vermont. This year, we have signed up for 19 slots (ages 14 and older), which is our biggest volunteer goal ever. Please invite some of your friends and neighbors to make this a community activity. Lots of people are looking for a way to contribute and they may be happy to have you ask them for help! This fun volunteer activity is a sort-a-thon where we fill boxes with food for senior citizens. We carpool from First Church at 6:45 AM and return by about 1:00 pm. The Food Bank provides coffee and snacks during the break. Sign up by emailing Cynthia Kelley cynthiak222@gmail.com . (Note: the email address in the newsletter was incorrect, so please email me again if you already signed up!) Let's make this the best Vermont Food Bank volunteer trip ever with new friends from the community!

Six Week Bible Study Series ~ ROCKING THE CREDO!!!

Next meeting is Wed, March 29th at 12pm and every other week after. This series is meant to give people the opportunity to build up their own theology, so, perhaps you think of yourself as a Trinitarian, or perhaps you call yourself a Unitarian, but you don't really know why. Maybe you think that the creation story is the most important part of the bible, or perhaps you don't think that Christians need to know the "Old Testament" at all. This bible study is meant to challenge you and give you all the introductory information you need to as to why those beliefs may be important to you and in the Christian tradition.

Lenten Services & Spirituality

Special Worship Services:

April 2, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m. Special Healing Service

April 13, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday

April 14, 2017 @ 3:00 p.m. Good Friday Prayer Vigil begins

Starting on Good Friday, April 14th at 3 p.m. and going until Easter Sunday, April 16th, at 7:00 a.m. in one hour slots, people can sign up to be in the church sanctuary by themselves or as a family or even as a couple of friends. People pray, read scripture, sing hymns, sit and think, enjoy the silence. We offer a prayer list for people to pray for and or scripture texts to read. At each hour, the next person bangs on the front doo

April 14, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service

THIS WEEK: March 26th - April 1st

TODAY: **8:30 & 10:15am Worship Services / Sanctuary**
11:30 - 12:30 pm Jamaica Bound Team / Youth Lounge
11:30 - 12:30 pm LCDC Committee / Marvin Lounge
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall

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 / Gym
5:30 - 6:30 pm Group Victory / 3rd Floor
6:30 - 9:30 pm Joe's Big Band / Fellowship Hall
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
7:00 - 9:00 pm Music Search Committee / Third Floor
7:00 - 9:00 pm Stewardship / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00 pm Trustees / Marvin Lounge

WEDNESDAY**:** 9:15 - 11:30 am Tai Chi / Gym
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
12:00 - 1:00 pm Rocking the Credo Bible Study / Marvin Lounge
5:30 - 7:00 pm Finally @ First / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 7:30 pm Currier Bells / Sanctuary
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
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
7:00 pm– 9:00 am Boy Scout Sleepover / Whole Church
SATURDAY: **9:00am - 12:00 pm 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* [ourvinn@hotmail.com]
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]
Joyful Noise: Jessica Moos [jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com]
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: Carl Wermer [879-7650]
Treasurer & Historian: Ann Gray [878-4088]
Asst. Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [879-0261]
Financial Secretary: Pat Seaver [879-4445]
Clerk: Alison Wermer [879-7650]
Christian Education: Jenny Bourn [802-309-7441]
Communications: Kevin Dorn [878-3696]
Deacons: Rick Dooley [578-0229] Mike Bottamini [879-0763]
Hospitality: Jackie Parks [324-9206]
Missions: Sandy Tallman [879-0665]
Music: Judy Larrabee [236-0604]
Nominating: Carl Wermer [879-7650]
Stewardship: Kathy Finnie [878-3696]
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 MOMENTS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, March 26, 2017
Fourth Sunday in Lent
John 9:1-41

One Great Hour of Sharing

You arrive home in the evening, tired from a long day, and on the news comes a bulletin about an earthquake, or refugee crisis, or typhoon, or famine that has struck people far away. You watch it on the television, or your computer screen. You've seen it all before—the dirty children, the helpless mothers, the smoke and mounds of rubble, people screaming, men gesturing. You say to yourself, "There's so much misery in the world." Then, you change the channel. After all, what can you do? You have work the next day, and your life to live. In your wallet might be twenty or forty dollars. How far could that go to help thousands of people? Besides, there are plenty of helping organizations out there to respond.

One Great Hour of Sharing is more than a helping organization. It's part of the mission of the Christian church. More than the just the United Church of Christ, we join with eight other Christian denominations in this work. Together, with those partners, we raise approximately 12 million dollars a year. Of each dollar given, 91 cents is used directly for mission, five cents for printing materials and four cents for administrative costs. With some of the money we support seven missionaries and two interns who are our feet on the ground and arms open wide helping in the midst of disasters, as well as providing health care and long-term initiatives in education and agricultural development.

You can do something other than look in your wallet and feel powerless. We have a way to reach into that news story and make a difference. Think of your response as if you are the father in today's scripture story of the Prodigal Son. You can watch but you don't have to stand still; you can run toward the one who needs you and give so our representative is there when it matters. Give because when we join our gifts with others we can make a difference in the world. Share in this ministry because it's a way we can share the love of Christ with others.

Imagine yourself on the receiving end of that great hug and kiss of a father to a son. Imagine yourself separated from your family by some disaster and there are only strangers all around you. Then picture this: picture someone handing you something warm to drink, a blanket and a way to get home again. Give generously so we can all be there to offer hope to those suffering and to bring home the lost.