

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



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

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, United Church of Christ, is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, because we are all created by a loving God. We seek to live Christ's call for compassion, justice, healing and wholeness in life. Therefore, we welcome into our community persons of every race, gender, age, sexual orientation, faith background, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, mental and physical ability, economic and social position, gender identity and expression, level of education and family structure. We invite all to share in the life, leadership, ordained ministry, lay ministry, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, fellowship, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love.

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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ
June 28, 2018
Vermont Interfaith PRIDE Service

A Welcoming Community
Accepting and Serving All
In The Spirit of Christ

Order of Worship

Gathering Music

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

The First Congregational Church is proud to welcome everyone here in the name of the Living Presence of God who adores and cherishes all earth's children. Come, let us join our thirst for love and justice as we seek community with each other and the divine.

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

Call to Worship

One: In the name of the Creator who made us,
Many: We celebrate the goodness of our lives.

One: From the East and the West, the North and the South,
Many: We gather in the presence of the Holy One.

One: Bringing our joy and sorrow, with comfort and with trepidation,
Many: We come together in this place

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!
Many: We thank God for the gift of bisexual people, who teach us that love is boundless.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!
Many: We thank God for the gift of transgender people, who teach us the beauty of change and courage.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!

Many: We thank God for the gift of heterosexual people – our cherished allies who teach us to seek community beyond the ordinary and expected.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!

Many: We thank God for the gift of lesbians, who teach us to love that which is like ourselves and to celebrate the goodness within.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!

Many: We thank God for the gift of gay men, who teach us to look for love beyond the expected and to love beyond every day.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!

Many: We thank God for the gift of people who do not fit in a box, who teach us to live beyond the constraints society has placed upon us.

One: To those who love us and those who fear and despise us,

Many: We proclaim the power of God working in our lives.

One: Once we were not a people

Many: Now we are a people of God.

One: Sing praises to our God, who has done wondrous things!

Many: Thanks be to God! (Geoffrey Duncan, *Courage to Love*)

***Opening Song**

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Arlen

**Somewhere over the rainbow way up high
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby
Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true**

**Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far
Behind me
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me**

**Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow.
Why then, oh, why can't I?**

**If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow.
Why, oh, why can't I?**

History: Stonewall

What Happened at Stonewall

Stonewall's Impact: A Time to Share

We invite participants, if they choose to, to come forward to share how the legacy of Stonewall has impacted them.

"Stonewall the first gay pride was a riot the hands of the clock had raised past midnight, and our hands were raised up, striking twelve not in submission in defiance flashing lights turned party into panic, laughter into screams, joy into fear people who we thought were our friends turned out to be our enemies as one by one, police officers revealed themselves as patrons people like us but hard as they try, they did not break us together we stood, a similar energy shared among us all together we stood, fearful but fearless together we stood, a rage brewing as our fellow queers were taken from us together we stood, as the dam had burst and years of abuse began to flow in the form of protest together we stood, we became a wall"
Carola, Courtney. Have Some Pride: a collection of LGBT+ poetry (Kindle Locations 1487-1500). Kindle Edition.

Present: Be Who You Are

Musical Anthem by Finally at First

Born This Way

Gaga

A Prayer for Tolerance by Rabbi Naomi Levy

Teach us, God, to treasure differences that distinguish one person from another.
Fill us with strength to overcome senseless fear and hatred.

**Open our hearts to the radiance that shines forth from every human soul.
Inspire us to shed our apathy; remind us that it is our obligation to be
responsible for one another.**

Open our ears to the cries of all who are in need of assistance. Give us the
courage to combat prejudice and intolerance wherever they exist.

**Teach us to see each other through Your eyes, God. In Your eyes all people
are equally loved, equally precious.**

Bless us all, God, with compassion, with kindness, and with peace. Amen

A Rainbow of Diversity

You are invited to come forward, take a piece of paper, and draw your hand or draw something that represents you. We'll take a picture of all the drawings together.

Anthem

I Am What I Am

Munroe Shearer

Future: Strength for the Resistance

Love Happens Here by LGBT Poet Laurate Trudy Howson

Love happens here.
In family, L.G.B.T. Plus
In our relationships far and near.
It's the heart of us and we.

Love can be enough,
In sunshine or in showers.
When the going gets tough,
It's Love that empowers.

Love is our Diversity,
It's the best that we can be.
It's the Talent and Creativity,
Within our Community.

Love is you and me.
We show it in a smile,
In our Endeavor and Tenacity,
In our 'Fabulosa' Style.
Yes, Love happens here.

Reflection.....Rev. Josh Simon

***Closing Song**

In the Midst of New Dimensions

#391

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways, who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

Chorus: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle soars, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair, who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?

Chorus: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle soars, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes, grant that we, your global village, might envision wider dreams.

Chorus: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle soars, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

We are joy and we are loving, all persuasions, old and young, each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.

Chorus: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle soars, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

Blessing

May you leave from this place renewed, from this place affirmed, from this place feeling loved; from this place boldly proclaiming who you are. Leave this place prepared to resist hatred with love, leave this place knowing love wins, leave this place ready to fight. Amen.

*Postlude

*Please stand if you are able



