

***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.

**One Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452**

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United Church of Christ
November 11, 2018

A Welcoming Community,

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In the Spirit of Christ

Order of Worship

Prelude

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

Introit

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

Redman

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, let us enter into God's presence and dedicate our lives to building Christ's peaceable kingdom here on earth.

People: We dedicate ourselves to God and Jesus' way of love.

Leader: Come, let us worship our God and celebrate this community.

Prayer of Invocation [composed and led by the Deacon on Duty]

***Opening Hymn**

Instruments of Your Peace [song sheet]

Dearman

Children's Message

During both services, Jennifer, our staff person, is in the Nursery where there is a speaker to hear the service and it is streamed into Fellowship Hall. After the Children's Message second service, Preschool - 8th grade will follow Laurie for Faith Formation, music & peer groups. High School youth are welcome to join as peer helpers. When peer groups end at 11:30am, children in Preschool - 2nd grade will need to be signed out by an authorized person.

**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.
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.**

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.**

Musical Response

Open Our Eyes

Manibusan

**Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus
To reach out and touch him; And say that we love him**

**Open our ears, Lord; And help us to listen
Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus**

***Hymn**

O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

Bates

**O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed God's grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea.**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat, across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control, Thy liberty in law.
O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, And every gain divine.**

**O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed God's grace on thee,
And crown thy good with sisterhood, From sea to shining sea.**

Scripture Readings

Old Testament	Prophetic	The Story of Ruth [page 187-189] Nehemiah 8:8, 13:1-3, 23-27 [page 340, 345]
New Testament	Gospel	Matthew 25:31-46 [page 22]

Musical Anthem

Live Like That

Frey

Sermon

Clarifying God's Message Versus Humanity's

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem *Lifesong*

Hall

***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**

We Shall Overcome

#570

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, holding you in love.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love**

***Postlude**

***Please stand if you are able.**

*The flowers on the altar are given by Alison & Carl Wermer
in honor of their children's birthdays.*

Deacon: Carolyn Rushford

Ushers: 1st Service: Maureen & Rob Evans; 2nd Service: Dave & Sam Dewey

Greeters: 1st Service: Steve & Sue Wood; 2nd Service: Dave & Mae Dewey, Christine Czarny

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lilly & Donny
Gabrielle
Carol Janwich
Bruce Giannuzzi
Mike Heston

Mark Carter
Judy Janwich
Richard Ansell
Mark McKenzie & Family
Mike K

Holton Family
Eric & Shannon
Joe Phenix
Jenna
Frank Polanshek

Please let the office 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** * * *

TODAY ~ Rite Aid Flu Shot Clinic **Between 1st & 2nd Service**

Come between services and get your flu shot here at FCCEJ!



Today, 2019 Jamaica Team **Stock Sales Fundraiser**

Our first fundraiser, "Stock" sales, has begun!

Team members are now selling shares of stock to family, friends, and supporters. Each share costs \$25.00. There is a table on Sunday mornings between services and after the second service where you can learn about the Jamaica Mission Program and purchase stocks. This is a great way for members of the congregation to invest in this intergenerational, international service program. Talk with a team member or stop by the table and see us.

TODAY! Please Join Us For Fellowship Time After Worship!

Your Hospitality Hosts are working hard to encourage a time of fellowship after each worship service. Please see signup sheets on the tables by the food if you would like to help out by baking/cooking/bringing something to share one week. We would like to give a shout out to the Quality Bake Shop who has been donating each week some 'day old's' and to Rose Drost who has been diligently picking them up! Thank you! Please show QBS some love the next time you go in by thanking them and giving them your business!



Sign up For Nativity Set for Advent Event on November 18th

See more info in 'Save The Date' section



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



2019 Stewardship Campaign
Help us keep the train on track!

Thank you to those who have returned their pledge cards to the 2019 Stewardship Campaign! If you haven't already, please return your card asap and mark either "yes" or "no", indicating whether or not you are able to make a pledge for 2019. You may also email your confidential pledge to Financial Secretary Pat Seaver at vttri2@aol.com. We need to hear from everyone, whether or not you plan to pledge or are keeping the same pledge amount as last year. 80% of our income comes from YOU, and we depend heavily on these funds for our operations, our programs and the many people they serve.



Yoga & Meditation @ First !

Jonah is now offering **ONE** class on **Tuesdays** at 5:30-6:45pm in the Fellowship Hall. All levels from beginner to experienced welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Classes are free but donations are gratefully accepted for FCCEJ. A half hour meditation session is also offered following Yoga @ 7pm.



Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback

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



Wednesday Night Searchers, 7pm, Marvin Lounge

This week we will be finishing up the last chapter of Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics by Reinhold Niebuhr.

Coffee Clatter Fridays 8am

Pastors Mark & Josh are still meeting people for discussion and breakfast on Fridays @ Martone's. Join them for fellowship & great discussion!



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



Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 8th grade

November 11th & 18th ~ Music & Peer Group time

November 25th ~ Hands-On Mission Sunday

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2018

Total for 2018 \$664.42

*Your 2018 Offering Choice is **Jamaica School Children***

Scholarship money for school uniforms and books for children.

Remember to bring your offering each week, \$1 a week can go a long

way! Please use the envelopes in the pew holders so your \$ goes to the right place.



High School Youth @ FCCEJ

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

5th - 8th graders meet TWICE a month

Faith & Mission Focus with Fellowship/Games



Still In Need of Faith Formation Volunteers

There are many ways to support First Church kids and youth:

Nursery – join our staff person and be a friendly face during first service or second.

Spiritual Friends – First Sundays of the month on the 2nd floor have great conversations, read a story, have snack, Godly playdoh time & return for communion.

Peer Group Leaders & Helpers – support a group from preschool - 8th grade.

Hands On Mission Helpers – all ages together for a time of fellowship on these days with a mission focus and group building activities.

Youth Group Helpers – Every time youth gather we are always looking for adult help.

Contact Laurie or Josh for more information and to volunteer!

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

Dismas House Meal Volunteers All Set for 2018!

Members of the Church have volunteered to provide dinners for residents of Dismas House Winooski for the fourth Wednesdays in both November and December. A big "Thanks" to all who have supported the Church's Dismas

House mission. If you want more information about the program, please contact Ed

Steele, the current facilitator of the program. (802) 871-5897 or

edwardmsteele@msn.com.



* * * Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate * * *

Bottle/Can Drive

Thank you for all your donations! Please make sure that you only put in the cans & bottles that are **redeemable**, not just **recyclable** - thank you!



Next Food Pantry days are Monday, November 12th, 5:30 - 7:30pm and Thursday, November 15th, 2-6pm



We are in need of mac n' cheese and sample size toothpaste tubes. They are perfect to give out with a toothbrush. Please ask your dentist the next time you have your teeth cleaned if they could donate a case!



Got Donations? Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Regular Hours: 10am-3pm Tues & Wed, 4-8pm Thurs

Open Saturdays Nov 3rd, 10th & 17th 9 am to 1 pm

Fall & Winter Merchandise is ON THE RACKS!

Donations gratefully accepted!



Got Coats?



TODAY ~ Last Day for Winter Coat Drive 2018

Box is in the Administrative Wing, we are accepting new and gently used winter coats, snowpants, hats, scarves & mittens. Please return TODAY as we will be distributing them on the Thursday, November 15th Food Pantry.

Graphic Designer Needed!

The Communication Committee is looking for a volunteer to create a new church logo to represent the congregation to the wider community. We want to have the new logo ready to present at the Annual Meeting. Talk to Pastor Josh for details!



Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed

Fall & Winter dates are all up on the Sign Up Genius-please volunteer!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>



VT Foodbank Volunteer Trip

December 1st, 8am-12pm, group activity bagging meals @ the Barre location See Nov. Newsletter or contact cynthiak222@gmail.com for more details

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

November 18th ~ Advent Decoration / Workshop & Pot Luck

You are invited to decorate your OTHER HOME.....the church.

After second service we will have a pot luck lunch and then decorate the sanctuary. There will also be an Advent Project where young ones [of all ages!] and their parents make the characters in the manger. Upstairs we will be hanging the big wreaths and garland in the Sanctuary. We will put up the Christmas tree and make sure the bows are perfectly puffy! We have an awful lot of fun both downstairs and up so come with your whole family and enjoy the day, make a manger for your home and get OUR HOME ready for the Christmas season.



Christmas Pageant

November 25th, Dec 2nd, 9th, 15th ~ Christmas Pageant Rehearsals

For all youth, 9th-12th grade, 5-7pm

December 1st ~ New Worship Service!

Once a month on the first Saturday of the month, 4:30 pm
Interactive and Communion included.



**December 13th ~ Second Thursday of the Month ~
Bereavement Support Group**

Many if not all of us have been touched by the loss of someone we hold near and dear. That loss stays with us and shapes us our entire lives and reminds us of the love we had for that person. Sharon Dettenrieder has led Bereavement Support Groups for decades and will be working with our ordained staff to create a support group where people can share their grief journey and draw support from others who are travelling down the same road. Meetings in the Marvin Lounge , 7-8:30 p.m. Dec 13th for the rest of 2018. Everyone, church and community members are welcome, bring a friend!

December 16th ~ Christmas Pageant ~ Both Services



Christmas Pageant

THIS WEEK: November 11th - 17th

- SUNDAY:** 8:30 am Worship Service / Sanctuary
9:30 am LCDC Meeting / Third Floor
9:15 - 10:30 am Rite Aid Flu Shot Clinic / Fellowship Hall
10:15 am Worship Service / Sanctuary
11:30 - 12:30 pm Music Committee Meeting / Choir Loft
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
1:00 - 6:00 pm Holy Family Food Drive Sorting / Gym
- MONDAY:** 9:30 - 10:30 am Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
4:00 - 8:00 pm Food Pantry (open 5:30-7:30pm) / FH & Kitchen
5:30 - 6:30 pm Group Victory / Youth Lounge
6:00 - 7:30 pm Boy Scout Alumni Assoc. / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:30 pm Venture Crew / 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
5:30 - 6:45 pm Yoga w/Jonah / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor
7:00 - 9:00 pm Deacons / Marvin Lounge
7:00 - 7:30 pm Meditation w/Jonah / Nursery
- WEDNESDAY:** 9:30 - 10:30 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 / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 7:30 pm Pack 630 Lion Den / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:30 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00 pm Wednesday Night Searchers / Youth Lounge
- THURSDAY:** 9:00am– 6:30pm Food Pantry & Winter Coat Distribution (open 2:00 - 6:00 pm) / FH/Kitchen/Gym
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Marvin Lounge
3:00 - 4:00 pm Easterseals Clinician Meeting / Third Floor
4:00 - 8:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
6:15 - 7:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
7:00 - 8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
1:30 - 4:00 pm Bridge Club / Marvin Lounge
- SATURDAY:** 9:00am - 12:00 pm Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH
9:30 - 11:30 am Women's Spirituality / Marvin Lounge
9:00 - 1:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
3:00 - 7:00 pm Gorniak/VanSteensburg Birthday Party / Fellowship Hall

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

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

Music & Choir Director: *Carol Spradling* [cspradling@fccej.org]

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

Associate Pastor: *Rev. Josh Simon* [jsimon@fccej.org]

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

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: Jenny Bourn [jennybourn4@gmail.com]

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

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

Joyful Noise: Jessica Moos [jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com]

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

Sanctuary Choir/Heavenly Harmony Director: Carol Spradling [cspradling@fccej.org]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: Carl Wermer [879-7650]

Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations: Maureen Evans [879-7517]

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 [777-9446]

Deacons: Betsy Weischedel [922-2094], Peter Schmalz [202-297-3625]

Hospitality: Mary Jane Allen [557-1335], Jim Glatz [503-5076]

Missions: Sandy Tallman [879-0665]

Music: Judy Larrabee [236-0604]

Nominating: Barb Smith [878-6866]

Stewardship: Kathy Finnie [734-9688]

Trustees: Kevin Meilleur [238-4041]

Ushering:

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop [879-6552] Sue Wood suewood@myfairpoint.net or
Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net

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]



November 11, 2018

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Risk and Restoration

The refugees, Ruth and Naomi, manage through a series of assimilations, tricks and an advantageous marriage, to bring a baby into the world. A baby named Obed. A baby who would be in a line along a series of begets and begots that would culminate in David, King of Israel. This baby, born of a so called “mixed marriage” (Ruth is a foreign born woman), will be cared for as much by his grandmother as by his mother. He is, after all, a baby born to a woman who had lost everything—sons and all. How will he be cared for? How do we care for the things that matter to us? And to our world? How much more precious is Obed because he is born to a woman who knows death intimately?

Do we have to have lost something so we can appreciate its return? Will we ever understand the importance of stewardship with respect to creation? Will we only learn how to care should the earth lose its resilience and ability to feed us? How do we love what we have? Protect it and keep it so that it will nurture our future? How do we do that before we fear its loss? How can we clear the path to a blessed tomorrow?

“Blessed Tomorrow” is a coalition of faith partners, including the United Church of Christ. Through this partnership, we offer resources gathered to protect this earth – our shared home, our future. For the UCC, fused with our Three Great Loves campaign, the love of everything begins with this creation. Its protection is a moral duty calling us to action. This is action born in an awareness of our responsibility to keep this beloved blue ball we call “earth” healthy enough to sustain and nurture everyone.

For Naomi and Ruth, Obed is a dear and fragile thing born in the aftermath of sorrow, held dear by that awareness. Our earth is as fragile and leans on all of us to protect it. We may not feel like environmentally savvy people, or climate warriors of any stripe but there are things we can do in this stewardship season to be stewards of the earth. If you go to blessedtomorrow.org you will find resources for churches and individuals. At that website, you might be empowered by seeing the cloud of witnesses and willing actors giving themselves to this great love – The Love of Creation.

If you or your church have a project or an activity that reflects any of our three loves – children, neighbor, creation – please go to three great loves at UCC pages and download the tool kit, 3greatloves.uccpages.org.