

***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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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
United Church of Christ  
December 2, 2018  
*First Sunday of Advent*

*A Welcoming Community,*

*Accepting and Serving All*

*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

*All The Earth Is Waiting*

Taule

Lighting the Advent Candle: HOPE

Leader: Today, we begin anew our journey with Jesus. We remember a time long ago when the people waited in darkness for the word of God to come on the lips of God's Sacred Messenger.

**People: The darkness of the world oppressed everyone: poverty, hunger, violence, corruption, avarice, addiction, prejudice, political unrest and despotic control.....these were all forces that drew people away from God.**

Leader: Prophets said a messenger from God was coming to draw people back to the Divine and teach everyone how to live in peace with justice.

**People: The prophet's message brought hope into the lives of the oppressed. That Sacred Hope brought a ray of light into a dark world and kept the people longing for God's Peaceable Kingdom.**

Leader: Today, we light this advent candle and remember the hope Jesus still brings into our troubled world. We need it and long for a better day.

**An Advent Song**

**Light the Advent candle, one: now the waiting has begun;  
We have started on our way, time to think of Christmas day.  
Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in the cold winter night;  
candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.**

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

**\*Opening Hymn**

***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel***

**#116 [vs 1,2,5]**

Children's Message

*During worship our staff person, Jennifer, is in the Nursery for children under 3 years. There is audio in there and the service is streamed to Fellowship Hall. After the Children's Message, preschool and kindergarteners are invited for a time of Faith Formation on the 2nd floor with our Spiritual Friends and all will return for Communion. Adults are welcome to accompany the kids, help them get settled and stay or return to worship.*

**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

*O Come Divine Messiah*

Scripture Readings

Old Testament

Prophetic

Jeremiah 33:14-16

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New Testament

Gospel

Luke 21:25-38

[page 65]

Anthem

*Will We Know Him*

Besig

Communion Meditation

*The Third Way*

Rev. Mendes

## Welcoming Our New Members

John & Susan Boyd, Joan Faux, Francis Gravel & Gary Hartmann, Emily Guziak

**People: We welcome you with joy in the communion life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ at First Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

*During the First Service, the communion elements will be passed out to the congregation while, during the Second Service, people will be asked to come forward to receive the elements. As you come forward, wait at the end of the pew to give a little privacy to the people receiving the elements. People are welcome to come forward as individuals, as friends, or as a family. If you do not want to come forward and would like to receive the elements in the pew, please let a Deacon know so that they can bring the elements to you.*

*The bread is gluten free and the juice is non-alcoholic; and everyone who wants to share in Christ's community meal is welcome to come forward.*

## Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

*Come Emmanuel*

Besig

**\*The Doxology #119**

**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, burning bright;  
So most gracious Lord may we, ever more be led to thee.  
As they offered gifts most rare, at the manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy;  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ to you, from whom they spring.**

**\*Hymn**

***Good Christian Friends, Rejoice***

**#129**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now give heed to what we say; Jesus Christ is born today;  
Ox and ass before him bow, God is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now you know of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!  
God has opened heaven's door, and we are blessed forevermore.  
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now you need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!**

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

\*Please stand if you are able.

*The flowers on the altar are given by Nancy Ferris-Engle  
in loving memory of Robert & Marion Ferris.*

Deacon: Peter Schmalz

Ushers: 1st Service: Dennis & Sue Conti; 2nd Service:

Greeters: 1st Service: ; 2nd Service:

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lilly & Donny

Gabrielle

Carol Janwich

Bruce Giannuzzi

Mike K

Barbara Howe

Judy Janwich

Richard Ansell

Mark McKenzie & Family

Frank Polanshek

Holton Family

Eric & Shannon

Joe Phenix

Jenna

*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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)*

\* \* \* **TODAY** \* \* \*



**Hannaford Cards and Reloads on Sale TODAY!**

**2019 Altar Flower Chart Is UP!**

Remember a loved one or a special event in your life by dedicating the altar flowers on Sunday. Maplehurst Florist creates two vases for \$34. Please take them after the services or we can try to find someone to enjoy them when Mark & Josh visit during the week. The chart is in the Fellowship Hall hallway to the Sanctuary.





## **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 and after services to 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. If you need more information, talk with a team member or stop by the table and see us.

### **Christmas Poinsettias**

Order your poinsettias for Christmas services in memory or honor of a loved one or special event. They will be the same as last year, \$12.95 and come in red, white, pink and a marbled variety. Please place your order by Sunday 12/16, your dedication will be remembered in the Christmas bulletins. Please remember to take them home as well and enjoy them after the Christmas Eve services.



\* \* \* **THIS WEEK** \* \* \*



### **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**

Meeting at 7pm in the Marvin Lounge

### **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**

***December 2<sup>nd</sup>*** ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Spiritual Friends, PreK-K

First Sunday of Advent ~ Intergenerational Worship

***December 9<sup>th</sup>*** ~ Music & Peer Group time

***December 16<sup>th</sup>*** ~ Pageant Sunday ~ All in worship

***December 23<sup>rd</sup>*** ~ 10am worship ~ intergenerational for all ages

***December 30<sup>th</sup>*** ~ 2 services ~ intergenerational for all ages

**Christmas Pageant Rehearsal for PreK-4th Grade**

December 9th 11:30-12:00 Join the older youth in telling the Christmas Story. Pick a part (angel, shepherd, magi, sheep) and learn your entrances and who to follow. Pageant is Dec. 16th



**Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2018**

*Total for 2018 \$697.17*

*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**

*Help usher & greet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month during 10:15am service*

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals

Dec 2nd, 5-7pm; 9th, 11:30-2; 15th, TBA ~ For all youth, 5th-12th grade



**Junior Youth @ FCCEJ**

*Mark your calendars!*

***TODAY, December 2<sup>nd</sup>*** ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ regular youth time

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> floor have great conversations, read a story, have snack, Godly playdoh time & return for communion.

***Peer Group Leaders & Helpers*** – support a group from preschool - 8<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com).

**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, December 10th, 5:30 - 7:30pm and Thursday, December 20th, 2-6pm**

We are in need of fruit juice, 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 Dec 15<sup>th</sup> & Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 1 pm

Donations needed: holiday sweaters, women & men's winter jackets, women's winter boots, women's shirts, winter gloves & hats

Donations gratefully accepted anytime in our bin!



**Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed**

Winter dates are all up on the Sign Up Genius-please volunteer!  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>

**Giving Tree Gifts Due on December 12<sup>th</sup>!**

We will be distributing the gifts on Dec. 19. If you took a tag or two please return them by 12/12. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350.





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

**Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Pageant Rehearsals**

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



**December 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Giving Tree Gifts Due**

We will be distributing the gifts on Dec. 19. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Elaine Raymond at 879-7350.

**December 13<sup>th</sup> ~ 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 13<sup>th</sup> for the rest of 2018. Everyone, church and community members are welcome, bring a friend!



**December 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Pageant ~ Both Services**

**December 23<sup>rd</sup> ~ ONE Service, Lessons & Carols, 10AM**



**December 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Eve Services**

5pm Family Service

9pm Lessons & Carols

11pm Carols & Communion

**January 5<sup>th</sup> ~ New Worship Service!**

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



**THIS WEEK: December 2nd - 8th**

- SUNDAY:**    **8:30 am** Worship Service / Sanctuary  
                 **10:15 am** Worship Service / Sanctuary  
                 **11:30 - 1:30 pm** Junior Youth Group / ML & Third Floor  
                 1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
                 **3:00 - 5:00 pm** Devon's Ordination & Reception / Sanctuary & FH  
                 **5:00 - 7:00 pm** Pageant Rehearsal / Sanctuary & Youth Lounge  
                 6:00 - 8:00 pm Cub Scout Leader Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- MONDAY:**    9:30 - 10:30 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 Group Victory / Youth Lounge  
                 6:30 - 9:30 pm Joe's Big Band / Fellowship Hall  
                 **6:30 - 8:30 pm** Thrift Store Meeting / 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  
                 **5:30 - 7:00 pm** Finance Committee / Marvin Lounge  
                 6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor  
                 **7:00 - 9:00 pm** Church Council / 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 / Sanctuary  
                 **6:00 - 7:30 pm** Currier Bell Choir / Sanctuary  
                 6:00 - 7:00 pm Boy Scouts-PLC / Youth Lounge  
                 **7:00 - 9:00 pm** Wednesday Night Searchers / Youth Lounge  
                 7:00 - 8:30 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall  
                 **7:00 - 8:30 pm** Jamaica Bound 2019 Team Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- THURSDAY:** 8:30 - 11:30 am Essex Art League / Fellowship Hall  
                 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
                 **12:00 - 2:00 pm** JOY / Marvin Lounge  
                 **2:00 - 4:00 pm** Affordable Housing Meeting-Josh / Marvin Lounge  
                 3:00 - 4:00 pm Easterseals Clinician Meeting / Third Floor  
                 6:00 - 8:00 pm Cub Scout Pack 630 Meeting (Pelaia) / Fellowship Hall  
                 **6:15 - 7:00 pm** Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary  
                 **7:00 - 8:30 pm** Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
- FRIDAY:**    12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
                 **5:00 - 8:00 pm** Essex Eats Out / Fellowship Hall & Kitchen

SATURDAY: 9:00am - 12:00 pm Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH  
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
2:30 - 8:30 pm Bergeron Piano Recital / Sanctuary

### **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](mailto:suewood@myfairpoint.net) or  
Linda Bogardus at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto: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](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net)]



December 2, 2018

First Sunday of Advent

Luke 21:25-36

### Sign Of Things To Come

Portents of the end of everything doesn't sound much like a Christmas story, does it?

This year the lectionary starts Advent off with a bang by not so much predicting an apocalypse but making sure we understand what the signs of its appearance will be. Luke's Gospel tells us that the skies will burst and the countries of the world, all the nations, will be in anguish. People will be anxious and despairing. Everything will be shaken to its core. The next sign, the one that would be hard to miss, according to Luke's Gospel and the book of Daniel, will be Jesus riding on a cloud and shining with all his glory. You would especially pay attention if you saw this because, according to this Gospel, it would signal the entrance of a new world.

In Jesus' day, living in his world meant being part of the Roman Empire; an empire with extreme income inequality, and oppressive forces pushing down both on the poor and the foreign born. The new world this passage envisions, is one where the poor will not be hungry, equality and compassion will rule and everything hopeful will be revealed in every corner of every street everywhere. Another way of imaging this can be stated this beautiful way: "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." (Arundhati Roy)

The apocalypse, then, signals not only an end but also a beginning. According to the book of Revelation it will herald a time when the world will change dramatically...for the good, for the just, for the end of sorrow, for the defeat of greed and the end to all those things that keep people from seeing each other as they are. The new world will truly be a Just World for All!

The birth we anticipate, the baby in the manger, is a glimpse of that new world...the hope of all. It is the great purpose of the church to be a place where we can hear the breathing of that new world. The world outside our congregations might feel hopeless. It may feel like evil powers are in control disregarding human beings, creating an order that feeds on greed and corruption and the extremes of inequality. But the church as the body of Christ houses hope itself. It's here, where we worship, that love is made visible, especially those three loves that the UCC holds dear: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, Love of Creation. This Advent be mindful of how making love visible recharges our communities with possibility and infuses our world with resilience in times of trouble. This is the great work of the church – to make Christ visible, always.