

***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 30, 2018
First Sunday After Christmas

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

O Come All Ye Faithful

Webbe

A Call to Worship

Leader: The heart of creation is the divine spark in everything. Living creatures of myriad design, awe inspiring natural beauty, the power of flame and water, the breadth and depth of the ever-expanding cosmos; everything comes from our God.

People: For humanity that means that we are stewards of the universe, charged with caring for each other, our natural world and the universe.

Leader: Old and young, rich and poor, all colors and abilities are precious in God's sight. Each person has the spark of divinity within them. Come, let us sing of God's power and glory found absolutely everywhere!

***Opening Hymn**

Go Tell It On the Mountain

#154

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

Children's Message

During worship Abigail Evans, is in the Nursery for children under 3 years. There is audio in there and the service is streamed to Fellowship Hall.. There are items in the Narthex for children.

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

Amen

Spiritual

Anthem

What A Glorious Night

Frey & McDonald

Scripture Readings

Old Testament

Prophetic

I Samuel 3:1-21

[page 192]

New Testament

Gospel

Luke 2:41-52

[page 45]

***Hymn**

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

#325

Sermon

Kids and the Spirit of God

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

Joseph's Song

Card

***The Doxology # 119**

As with Gladness, Folk of Old

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.

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.

Deacon: Peter Gray

Ushers: 1st Service: Ann Gray & Sue Conti; 2nd Service: Terri Livak

Greeters: 1st Service: Tim Carney & Cathie Goodheart; 2nd Service:

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Lilly & Donny

Gabrielle

Carol Janwich

Bruce Giannuzzi

Mike K

Elizabeth Turner

Barbara Howe

Judy Janwich

Richard Ansell

Mark McKenzie & Family

Frank Polanshek

Kathy & Rob

Holton Family

Eric & Shannon

Joe Phenix

Jenna

Carolyn

Mary Weltzin

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@fcej.org

*** * * TODAY * * ***

Please Take Your Poinsettia Home With You TODAY! Thank You So Much for Sharing Them With Us! Names Are On Sticks In The Pots.



If You Asked For Pledge Envelopes, Please Pick Them Up TODAY in the Fellowship Hall



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.

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

Yoga & Meditation @ First !



Jonah is now offering 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.



No Meeting This Week ~ 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!



Resumes this Week ~ Wednesday Night Searchers



Each week, a group of folks get together to explore the faith. We do so through books, movies, discussions with members from other religious traditions, TED Talks and anything else we want to do. We will begin meeting after the Christmas break on January 2nd, where we will discuss a handful of insightful articles collected by Rev. Mendes AND pass out our next focus of Study: Simply Jesus by N.T. Wright. Whether you love Jesus and call him Lord and Savior or struggle with his divinity, you will be welcome to come and discuss those issues with a supportive and loving group of people. Books are available in Jen's office or on a Sunday morning.

Meeting This Week ~ 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 30th ~ 2 services ~ intergenerational for all ages

*January 6th ~ 1st Sunday Spiritual Friends with PreK & Kindergarteners
Communion Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship*

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2018

Total for 2018 \$759.67

*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 1st Sunday of the month during 10:15am service

Sunday, January 6th ~ 5-7pm Relax, Watch Movie, Eat

Sunday, January 20th ~ 11:30am-1:30pm Martin Luther King Jr weekend service project.

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

January 6th ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ provide a meal

6th ~ 10:15am Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture

20th ~ 3pm – 4:30pm ~ provide a snack

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.

Bottle/Can Drive

Thank you for all your donations! The NEW container is on the Church Street side under the overhang. Thank you to the Boy Scouts for constructing it! **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, January 14th, 5:30 - 7:30pm and Thursday, January 14th, 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 Jan 5th & 19th 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>



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

**Annual
Report**



Please Turn In Your Annual Reports For Your Committee-ASAP

Email to welcome@fcej.org

January 5th ~ New Worship Service!

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



January 8th ~ Finance/Council Meetings [moved from the 1st]

January 10th ~ Second Thursday of the Month ~ Bereavement Support Group



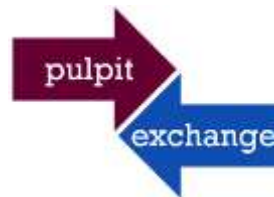
Many if not all of us have been touched by the loss of someone we hold near and dear. Sharon Dettenrieder has led Bereavement Support Groups for decades and will be working with our ordained staff to create a support group where people can share their grief journey and draw support from others who are 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!

January 13th ~ Karen Mendes Pulpit Exchange

As many of you know, Rev. Mark's wife Karen is an ordained American Baptist minister and serves the 1st Baptist Church of Burlington. The Deacons have voted to invite the "other" Rev.

Mendes to the pulpit in an exchange. Karen has preached a number of times at FCCEJ to much acclaim. While Rev. Karen Mendes is preaching here, Rev. Mark will be preaching at 1st Baptist Church Burlington @ 9:45am



January 25th ~ Young Adult Gathering

Young adult gathering is Friday, January 25th, 7-9pm.
Hannah Tracy and John Wermer are hosting at their place, 14 Sugartree Lane, F6, Essex Junction

January 27th ~ Annual Meeting (11:30 am) / Ask the Pastor Sunday (10am)

The heart of our congregational tradition is meeting once a year for our Annual Meeting. Those gathered at the meeting on January 27th at 11:30am become the governing body of our church. What they vote upon stands as policy with neither a committee nor staff member being able to rescind or disregard their vote. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get to the meeting, we will only have ONE SERVICE on January 27th @ 10:00am and in light of our congregational ways and tradition, Mark & Josh will answer any questions the congregation has during the sermon time. Attending the service and meeting is perhaps the best way of understanding who we are as a community of faith.

Everyone is welcome at both.



March 17th ~ Pretzel Sunday

April 21st ~ Easter



August 5-9th, 2019 ~ Vacation Bible Camp 2019

To Mars and Beyond: Explore Where God's Power Can Take You!

Monday – Friday from 9am – 11:45am

*Recruiting for: Music ~ Snack ~ Discovery ~ Games ~
Bible Drama Leaders*

**2019 VT UCC Outdoor Ministry Camp
@ The Lake on July 28th ~ August 2nd**

This year's Deans (plan and direct the week) are:
Pastor Susan McKnight, Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters
Any interest in being a part of this great camp in 2019?
Counselors ~ Lifeguards



College students....this is a great thing to add to your resume!

See Laurie for more information lchipman@fceej.org.

THIS WEEK: December 30th - January 5th

- SUNDAY:** **8:30 am Worship Service / Sanctuary**
10:15 am Worship Service / Sanctuary
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
- MONDAY:** ***OFFICE CLOSED***
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
- TUESDAY:** ***OFFICE CLOSED***
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:30 - 6:45 pm Yoga w/Jonah / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00 pm COUNCIL MEETING MOVED TO 1/8/19
7:00 - 7:30 pm Meditation w/Jonah / Nursery
- WEDNESDAY:** 9:30 - 10:30 am Tai Chi / Gym
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 Boy Scouts-PLC / Youth Lounge
6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:30 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00 pm Wednesday Night Searchers / Youth Lounge
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 - 2:00 pm JOY / Marvin Lounge
12:00 - 1:30 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
3:00 - 4:00 pm Easterseals Clinician Meeting / Third Floor
4:00 - 8:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open
5:30 - 7:00 pm Finance Meeting / Marvin Lounge
6:00 - 8:00 pm Cub Scout Pack 630 Meeting (Pelaia) / Fellowship Hall
6:15 - 7:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:30 pm HRC Meeting / Youth Lounge
7:00 - 8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 8:00 pm Essex Eats Out Dinner / Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
- SATURDAY:** **9:00 - 1:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open**
9:00 - 11:00 am Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
4:30 - 5:30 pm Worship Service (Communion) / 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]

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 30, 2018

First Sunday after Christmas

Luke 2:41-52

Who is This Child?

Have you ever looked up for a moment out on the street, in the park, at the mall and not seen your children? Have you ever become separated from a child and felt a hole open in your heart? Can you imagine how Mary and Joseph felt that day in Jerusalem a city with thousands of people crushing in for the holidays? The streets would have been narrow and crowded. Mary and Joseph would have been alone and out of their comfort zone in a place not their home. Put yourself in their shoes. Their only son is missing. They had been through so much turmoil in the first year of their son's life.

His birth was outdoors, in a stable among straw because as luck would have had it they landed in a strange place too late in the day for a bed with a roof. They were homeless. Later the life of the baby was threatened by the Governor. What else could they do but jump on a donkey and flee the country? So, they fled to Egypt for asylum where their baby would be safe. How different the world might be if Egypt had deported them back into Herod's evil hands? Deported baby Jesus into the bloody slaughter of the innocents? But they had survived all that, and the young family returned. Now, however, the boy had disappeared into the crowded market streets of urban Jerusalem. What could have happened to him?

In the last late spring and early summer, we all learned of the terrible things happening in our name and on our borders. Young children, even toddlers, were forcibly removed from their parents who were seeking asylum in the United States. Parents who had come to our country, just like Mary and Joseph had gone to Egypt, seeking safety from violence and protection for their children were having their children taken from them.

How does the church explain the pain of such policies to a world that doesn't always want to see how and where suffering occurs and how it can be perpetrated in our name by those who are our servants? A United Church of Christ in Sacramento, California found a way to do just that. The Parkside Community Church United Church of Christ took the figures from its Christmas nativity and set them up in the front of their church to mirror what was happening to asylum seekers on our borders. They put Mary and Joseph in a chain link cage and put baby Jesus in another similar cage with a sign that said, "Asylum seeking in America Today." How powerful a message, linking the Christmas story with the moral and political events of our day.