

*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.”

*One Church Street
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](https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofEssexJunctionUCC)



*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
December 16, 2018
A SERVICE OF HEALING

Be thoughtful, be silent, be reverent, for this is the house of the Lord. During the Prelude, speak to the Lord; during the service, let the Lord speak to you; after the service, speak to one another.

The Order of Worship

Centering Music: Advent and Christmas themed instrumentals

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

Leader: In the midst of this season when we celebrate the hope of Christ's coming, we come together to share our grief.

People: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

Leader: In the midst of this season when we celebrate the peace that Christ brings, we come together to acknowledge our pain.

People: All who receive Christ are given the power to become children of God.

Leader: In the midst of this season when we celebrate the joy of Christ's coming, we come together to name our fears.

People: What has come into being through Christ is life, and that life is the light of all people.

Leader: In the midst of this season when we celebrate the love that Christ brings, we come together to be upheld in our struggles.

People: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it.

Leader: Let us worship Emmanuel, God with us, in the midst of all the celebration and sorrow of this season.

Unison Prayer of Invocation

God, we rejoice when you come to us, for you bring love and peace; you guide with grace and truth. Now in this season we rejoice in your coming in Jesus Christ. Come, bless us with your steady and healing presence. May the power of the Holy Spirit lift our hearts and join our souls together. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

First Candle—Grief: Reflective Words

Silent Meditation John 11:32-35

Unison Song: O Come, O Wisdom from on high and order all things far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show and help us in that way to go.

Second Candle—Pains: Reflective Words

Silent Meditation Matthew 11:28-29

Unison Song: O Come, O Come, O Adonai, who came to all on Sinai high, and from its peak a single law proclaimed in majesty and awe.

Third Candle—Fears: Reflective Words

Silent Meditation Isaiah 41:8-10

Unison Song: O Come, O Day spring, come and cheer our spirits by your adventure here; love stir within the womb of night, and death's own shadows put to flight.

Fourth Candle—Struggle: Reflective Words

Silent Meditation Revelation 21:1-6

Unison Song: O Come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; make envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Lighting the Christ Candle: Reflective Words

Silent Meditation Selections from John 1

Unison Song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Pastoral Prayer

Unison Lord's Prayer

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.

A Time for Healing

An Invitation for Personal Healing

At this time the worship leader will ask all those who are in need of healing to come forward as directed by the Deacons and kneel at the kneeling benches or sit in the provided chair for a personal prayer of power and healing and an anointing with oil if desired. Then you may return to your seat. While people are receiving their prayers for healing we'll play various Taizé music.

Closing Song

Comfort Ye My People

Pastoral and Communal Benediction

Pastor: We close our service today, knowing that the pain from grief is not gone, knowing that the sorrows of an unjust world have not resolved, knowing that the pains of life are not dissolved, knowing that the fears we hold may still tighten us. And yet, tonight's service is a reminder that God is still present with us and has sent us a community of love and grace to comfort us.

Community: Let us go forth from this place knowing God's love is with us and that we are more united as a community of love and grace. May the love of God, the light of Christ, and the power and communion of the Holy Spirit bless us and be a blessing to all, Amen.

Postlude