

***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.”**

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**The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**  
**A United Church of Christ**  
**Christmas Eve 2018**  
*A Service of Sacred Stories & Singing*

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end."

Isaiah 9:6-7

The Order of Worship

Prelude

Welcome, Greeting and Announcements

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

Opening Introit

Call to Worship

Leader: Tonight, we come together to say that we believe in something more than ourselves.....we believe in God.....we believe in a mysterious presence that appears in our world.....we believe in a force beyond us that stands for goodness, kindness and love. We believe Jesus embodies divinity like no other.

**Lectern Side: Some of us experience the Lord by fighting for justice.**

**Pulpit Side: Some of us meet Our Shepherd by living a good life.**

**Lectern Side: Some of us sense Christ through prayer and meditation.**

**Pulpit Side: Some of us grasp the Creator in understanding the universe.**

**Lectern Side: Some of us feel the Divine Presence in the beauty of nature.**

**Pulpit Side: Some of us find God in raising and loving our families.**

**Everyone: Jesus invites everyone to experience God in their own unique way and use their gifts to make the world a better place. Jesus unites all of us with common vision and purpose.**

Leader: Come, let us worship and celebrate Jesus changing the world forever.

**\*Opening Carol**

**O Come, All Ye Faithful**

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation.  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above.  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest.  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

The Coming of a Messiah Foretold.....The Prophet Simeon
---

A Congregational Lighting of the Christ Candle..... “One Small Voice”

*Margaret Mendes will begin this song by herself with Zoe and Makaylah Moos joining.*

*Then it will spread to children who know the song,*

*Then the entire congregation is invited to sing it together.*

**With just one small voice, singing out a song  
With just one small voice, singing sweet and strong  
One by one they'll grow and together sing along  
And then all the world will be singing**

Leader: Jesus' one small voice echoes through the centuries.

Christ's message of peace, hope, joy and love still resounds today.

*---light candles---*

**Everyone: We will continue to spread Christ's song. Amen and Alleluia!**

**It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;  
Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King.  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold;  
When peace shall over all the earth, its ancient splendors fling,  
And the whole world sends back the song which now the angels sing.**

Christmas Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer** (trespasses)

Leader: Lord Jesus.....

**People: Hear our 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 and 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.**

**Congregational Musical Response #122**

**Come, O Long Expected Jesus**

**Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;  
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.  
Born all people to deliver, born a child and yet a king!  
Born to reign in us forever, come, be known to us again.**

The Birth of Jesus.....Hannah, the Innkeeper's Wife
---

The Sacrament of Baptism

Whitney Katherine Despina Noel  
Blakely Alexander Noel

*It is a joy to baptize Blakely Noel and his mom Whitney tonight. The proud father and husband is Matthew Noel. On this special night of newborns, let us give the entire Noel family a warm and hearty welcome.*

**What Child Is This?**

**What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here, the silent Word is pleading.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

Special Christmas Offering

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Christmas Music.....*Carol of the Bells: Zoe Moos, Isa Owens & Cornelia Abakah*

**\*Singing Our Praise to Our God: A Christmas Doxology #159**

**As With Gladness Folk of Old**

**As they offered gifts most rare, at the manger plain and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King.**

The Visitors and Witnesses.....The Angel
--

**Joy to the World**

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the Earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
The glories of God's righteousness and wonders of God's love,  
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders of God's love.**

**Spreading the Light of Christ**

*From the Christ Candle, Simeon the Prophet, the Angel and Hannah will light their candles and then proceed to pass Christ's light to each family within the congregation. We ask each family to be careful with your candles and especially ask parents to watch their children. There are also battery operated candles in the Narthex for the smallest ones. On the way out, please extinguish your candles and place them in the receptacles provided. Thank you.*

*First, played on the violin without singing by Emmerson & Orion Stapleton and Abigail Evans*

*Second, everyone will sing all three verses*

*Third, Emmerson, Orion & Abigail will play once more with just the violin.*

**Silent Night, Holy Night**

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon virgin, mother and child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia.  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

Pastoral Benediction

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL  
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

*Special Thanks to Ed Guild for playing the organ tonight. He has been playing the organ for the early service on Christmas Eve for many, many years! Thanks also to Emmerson & Orion Stapleton and Abigail Evans for their beautiful violin music!*

*The Poinsettias on the Altar are Given by:*

*Betty & Bill Adams in loving memory of friends*

*Myrna Doney in loving memory of her mother, Fern and Mr Bob*

*The Dooley Family in memory of Dorothy & Joseph Pine and Harry Dooley*

*Marsha Duell in loving memory of Rufus Duell*

*Norma Edwards in memory of family*

*Erica Garvey & Jon Roddy in memory of loved ones*

*Cathie Goodheart & Tim Carney in memory of loved ones*

*Joanne Irwin in memory of loved ones*

*Shannon McCullen in loving memory of Ed & Peg Hurst*

*The Noel Family in loving memory of parents, Mary & Larry Noel*

*Carolyn Rushford in memory of loved ones*

*The Sanctuary Choir & Heavenly Harmony in honor of Carol Spradling*

*The Shearer Family in loving memory of family and friends*

*The Starkey Family in loving memory of Mr & Mrs Gorden Starkey Sr.*

*Carolyn Toof in loving memory of Dick Toof & Renee Boucher*

*Carl & Alison Wermer in loving memory of family*

*FCCEJ remembers its beloved members who have passed in 2018*

*Frances Christensen, Joyce Daniels, George Dunbar Jr., Norman Faunce, Marion Ferris,  
William Harris, Diana Higgins, Carol Mauger, Gerald Lee Nadeau & Alice Williams*

## MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

Church Administrator: Jen Dooley [welcome@fcej.org]  
Music & Choir Director: Carol Spradling [cspradling@fcej.org]  
Christian Education Director: Laurie Chipman [lchipman@fcej.org]  
Associate Pastor: Rev. Josh Simon [jsimon@fcej.org]  
Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fcej.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@fcej.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)]

*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 & love.*