

*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
Christmas Eve 2018
A Service of Lessons and Carols

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

Prelude	<i>Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming</i>	Men at First
	<i>On This Day, Earth Shall Ring</i>	Men at First
	<i>What Child Is This?</i>	Abigail Evans, violin
	<i>Sweet Little Jesus Boy</i>	Heavenly Harmony
	<i>Goin' To Bethlehem</i>	Sanctuary Choir
	<i>Will We Know Him?</i>	Sanctuary Choir
	<i>Mary Did You Know?</i>	Sanctuary Choir

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

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

Call to Worship

Leader: Tonight, we remember the old story of how Jesus was born. Tonight, angels and shepherds, kings and magi, Mary and Joseph re-enter our lives to teach us about God.

People: I love the angels appearing to Mary and Joseph, the star coursing through the sky, the wise men fooling Herod and the Innkeeper making room in his barn.

Leader: I love Saint Nicholas giving away gold, Christmas trees of light, carolers bracing the cold and going to church with our families.

People: Two thousand years after its first telling, the story of Christ's birth still enlivens our lives and teaches us about God's way. Come, let us re-enter the amazing old story and let God's love wash over us again and again...

Leader: Come, let us worship the Living God.

***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.
Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

The Prophecy Foretold: Isaiah 9: 1-7.....Starkey Siblings; Emma, Graham & Cameron

***Carol**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer, our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, thou Wisdom from on high and order all things far and neigh,
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, Desire of nations bind, all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The Annunciation: Luke 1:26-38.....Elizabeth Crocket

Anthem by Heavenly Harmony

Breadth of Heaven

The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2:1-7.....Jamie Shearer

Children's Message

Children of all ages are welcome to come down and sit on the steps of the church with Rev. Mark for a Christmas message. As they return to their seats, let us all sing

**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.**

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

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: Let us pray.....

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 by the Sanctuary Choir

Gloria

The Holy Child and His Visitors: Luke 2:8-20.....Colleen and Clay Messier

***Carol**

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.**

**And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and 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.**

The Wisemen Come: Matthew 2:1-11.....Ethan Goedken

***Carol**

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"**

**Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.

**Mild he lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.**

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

A Christmas Offering

Invitation

Offertory Anthem by the Sanctuary Choir..... *Noel Festival*

***Offering Our Praise to Our God # 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.**

Final Reading of Light and Life: John 1:1-14.....Lanie and Ethan Benton

Anthem by Men at First

Whisper, Whisper

Spreading the Light of Christ

Revs. Mendes and Simon will light the Christ Candle and then pass Christ's light to the whole congregation. We ask everyone to be careful with your candles and especially ask parents to watch their children. There are also battery operated candles in the Narthex. On the way out, please extinguish your candles and place them in the receptacles provided. Thank you.

***A Final Carol**

Night of Silence/Silent Night

*Once the candles are lit, the Sanctuary Choir and Abigail Evans
will sing/play Daniel Kantor's, Night of Silence',
We will then sing the verses of Silent Night,
Then Abigail will play by herself as we enjoy the light, music and community.*

**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

**Please stand if you are able*

***Thanks to Abigail for her beautiful violin music!*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!**

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 Gordon 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 Mauer, Gerald Lee Nadeau & Alice Williams*

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

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

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.