

***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.

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Essex Junction, VT 05452**

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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ
January 6, 2018
First Sunday After Epiphany

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

Rise Up, Shepherds!

A Call to Worship

Leader: We are all born into this world and were created in the image of God. We all live under the same sky, breathe the same air and walk on the same earth, does that not make us brothers and sisters?

Lectern Side: And still, there are many things that separate us. Where we live, where we work, whether we attended school, our gender, what we look like, what we can do and who we love still serve to keep us from one another.

Pulpit Side: And still there are many ideals that separate us. Our nationality, political affiliation, ethnic heritage, family history, and religious traditions still serve to keep us from one another.

Leader: And yet Jesus came for all people and all nations: to offer them love and life, to affirm that at our core we are all God's children. So, are we not all brothers and sisters?

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

A Time of Confession

A Call to Confession

Leader: It is an ancient tradition of the church to seek forgiveness and try to amend all broken relationships before receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion.

People: On this first Sunday of the new year, let us confess as a community of faith and as individuals our shortcomings, hoping that Christ's continued entrance into our lives might create healthier and more joyful people.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Fairest Lord Jesus, we are grateful that you came to us from humble beginnings for we all fall short of our potential. Wonderful Counselor, we are humbled that you lived among us for a life time and understand us as only a fellow companion could. As we begin this new year, forgive us for our past shortcomings and ways we failed to show kindness and compassion. As we look to the future, help us to use our past mistakes to improve our way of being in your world.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Jesus says to come for his yoke is easy and his burden is light. Come and welcome God's light into your heart for all your shortcomings are forgiven. Come and feel the peace that comes from abundant love. Go and live more abundantly.

People: I will try to live a healthier, more peaceful and forgiving life in 2019, so help me God.

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**

Prayer Requests Offered within the Community

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response *Love Came Down At Christmas* #165

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.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem *The Peace Carol* Beers***Doxology #778**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.**

New Testament Scripture Readings

Epistle Ephesians 3:1-12 [page 149]

Gospel Matthew 2:1-12 [page 1]

Communion Meditation *Tired of the Christmas Story Yet???* Rev. Mendes***Hymn of Preparation** *All Beautiful the March of Days* #434

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

The 1st service will have the bread and cup passed out to them and the 2nd service will have everyone that is able to come forward to receive the elements. As you come forward, take the bread and dip it into the cup and partake immediately, then return to your seats. If you are uncomfortable or unable to come forward, please share that with a Deacon and they will bring the elements to you.

Special note: *Our bread and crackers are all gluten free and all the juice is non-alcoholic grape juice. **All are welcome at Christ's table.***

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, holding you in love.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love

*Postlude

*Please stand if you are able.

Deacon: 1st: Clint Russell; 2nd: Lauren Starkey

Ushers: 1st Service: Mary Anne Warren & Betsy Weischedel; 2nd Service:

Greeters: 1st Service: Mary Jane Allen; 2nd Service: Kevin, Kim & Finn Hamilton

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Elizabeth Turner
Gabrielle
Carol Janwich
Bruce Giannuzzi
Mike K

Linda Dudley
Judy Janwich
Richard Ansell
Mark McKenzie & Family
Frank Polanshek
Mary Weltzin

Holton Family
Eric & Shannon
Joe Phenix
Jenna
Carolyn

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** * * *

Hannaford Cards and Reloads are on Sale TODAY!



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

* * * **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.



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

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.

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

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

January 13th ~ Music & Peer Group time

January 20th ~ Hands On Mission Sunday ~ Celebrating your 2018 Offering

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 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 1st & 2nd.

Spiritual Friends – First Sundays of the month - great conversations, read a story, have snack, playdoh time & return for communion.

Peer Group Leaders & Helpers – support a group from preK - 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

FCCEJ has volunteered to provide dinners for residents of Dismas House Winooski for the fourth Wednesdays of each month. A big "Thanks" to all who have supported the Church's Dismas House mission in 2018. Signups

for 2019 are on the bulletin board going out of Fellowship Hall. 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 19th & Feb 2nd 9 am to 1 pm

Donations needed: women & men's winter jackets, 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 * * ***

Please Turn In Your Annual Reports For Your Committee-ASAP

Email to welcome@fcej.org



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

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

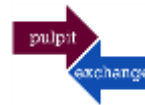


Many if not all of us have been touched by the loss of someone we hold near and dear. Sharon Dettenrieder has led Bereavement Support Groups for decades and will be working with our ordained staff to create a support group where people can share their grief journey and draw support from others who are 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 & 20th ~ 2019 Budget Information Sessions

After 1st Service (Marvin Lounge) & After 2nd Service (Sanctuary) Members of the Finance Committee will be on hand to answer your questions.

Karen Mendes Pulpit Exchange-MOVED to February



Available until January 15th ~ Early Bird Calcutta Tickets

The fifth annual Cabin Fever Calcutta tickets are now available. Anyone who purchases an Early Bird Ticket will be automatically entered into the Early Bird Drawing for a \$100 cash prize, which will occur at the Calcutta. Your \$125 ticket supports the Jamaica Service Trip and includes dinner for two as well as one Calcutta ball number. Please make checks payable to FCCEJ with "Jamaica" on the memo line. Team members at the Jamaica table in Fellowship Hall will be happy to assist you. We hope you will join us on March 9th for an evening of fun and fellowship.

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, EJ



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.



February 2nd ~ New Worship Service!

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

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

THIS WEEK: January 6th - 12th

- SUNDAY:** **8:30 am** Worship Service / Sanctuary
10:15 am Worship Service / Sanctuary
11:30 - 12:30 pm Music Committee / Choir Loft
11:30 - 1:30 pm Junior Youth Group / YL & FH
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
5:00 - 7:00 pm High School Youth Group / Marvin Lounge
6:00 - 8:00 pm Cub Scout Leader Meeting / Youth 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
5:30 - 7:30 pm Girl Scout Troop / Third Floor
7:00 - 8:00 pm Hospitality Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- TUESDAY:** **8:30 - 10:00 am** Sermon Talk Back / Marvin Lounge
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 Meeting / Marvin Lounge
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
5:30 - 6:30 pm Audit Meeting / Jen's Office
7:00 - 8:30 pm Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall
7:00 - 9:00 pm Wednesday Night Searchers / Marvin Lounge
- THURSDAY:** **8:00 - 9:00 am** Jamaica Bound Calcutta Committee / 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 Communications Meeting / Marvin Lounge
6:30 - 8:30 pm Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor
7:00 - 9:00 pm EEO Meeting / Youth Lounge
6:45 - 8:15 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary
7:00 - 8:30 pm Bereavement Support Group / Marvin Lounge
8:15 - 9:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
6:30 - 10:30 pm Scrapbooking Journey / Marvin Lounge
7:30 - 10:30 pm Grange / Fellowship Hall & Kitchen

SATURDAY: 9:00 - 11:00 am Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall

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
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

January 6, 2019

Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12

Where is the Child?

Herod has no good intentions for baby Jesus. He was not looking to buy him a blue bassinet or a tiny little catcher's mitt. No, Herod had a more diabolic plan. The Magi who had traveled all that way to find the baby under the tail of that great extraordinary star knew better. They knew he was an evil man with an evil intent. So, when the time came, as Matthew's Gospel tells us, those Magi went home by another way. Thus, they saved the baby Jesus. The Magi were wealthy and were a part of Herod's world of privilege. But they could escape Herod's reach, and chose another way in order to protect the child.

Clergy in the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ have chosen another way with respect to immigrant children housed in their state. They have joined with other faith leaders, lawmakers and attorneys to introduce legislation that would require state licensed facilities that house immigrant children on behalf of our federal government to report to the public regularly. Those reports would require an accounting of how many children each facility is housing. Currently, the facilities say that they are not required to report anything about what is happening to these immigrant children. These are the children that have been forcibly removed from their parents, many of whose parents came here seeking asylum in the United States.

This coalition is hoping that other states and conferences will follow their example. The legislation is called "The Separated Children Accountability Response Act (SCAR). The gist of the Act would be to require state-contracted facilities to report every 15 days on numbers of children and on efforts to reunite children with their parents. This Legislation was introduced last summer at Judson Memorial Church (UCC affiliated) in New York City.

In Africa, among the mighty Masai warriors, the traditional greeting is to ask, "How are the children?" Even warriors without children ask that question of each other, and the traditional response is, "All the children are well." Thus, if there is time and attention and care for the children then life is good. We should all ask each other that question in order that all of us in all our churches might use the well-being of children as the test of how well we are doing as a society. The Magi knew that. The authors of this legislation know that. How are the children?