

***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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**E-mail: [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)**

**Website: [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)**

**Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC**



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
United Church of Christ  
March 31, 2019  
*Fourth Sunday of Lent*

*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.*

Passing the Peace

*Passing the Peace of Christ is an ancient ritual of the church grounded in Christ's resurrection appearance to the disciples in the upper room when he breathed upon them and offered them peace. After the minister passes the peace of Christ, then everyone is encouraged to greet the people around you with Christ's peace. During this winter season where many have been sick, feel free to put your hands together in prayer and offer peace to your neighbor without shaking their hands. This will keep us all healthy and better able to come to church! We begin this ancient ritual with the following words....*

**Pastor:** The Peace of Christ be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

Introit

*Hooked On A Feeling*

Skifs/Swede

Call to Worship

**Leader:** There are times when we claim the abundance God has given us and travel to unknown parts to sow our wild oats and experience life differently.

**Pulpit Side:** Leaving God behind sets us up for failure.

**Lectern Side:** Leaving God behind makes us isolated.

**Pulpit Side:** Leaving God behind keeps us out of the party.

**Lectern Side:** Leaving God behind stunts our growth as a person.

Leader: God waits for us to come home with open arms without judgement and with gifts of nurture and care. Welcome home everyone. Come, let's worship.

## Opening Hymn

## *Standin' In The Need of Prayer [Spiritual]*

#519

### Deacon's Prayer of Invocation and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

**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.**

### 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 second service, Preschool - eighth grade are welcome to follow Laurie for Faith Formation with music & peer group on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. High School youth are welcome to join in as peer helpers. Adults can accompany children, get them settled, stay or return to worship. When peer groups end at 11:30am, children in Preschool - 2nd grade will need to be signed out by an authorized person.*

**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.**

## Anthem

## *The River*

Feliz

### Pastoral Prayer

*Each week during Lent, we will begin our time of prayer by focusing on one type of prayer and practicing it with the people in your pew or those closest to you, making sure that everyone in the church is connected. This will just take a small fraction of time and in the process we will learn some of the various ways Christians have prayed through the centuries.*

*Today, we will be focus on Contemplative Prayer. Contemplative prayer immerses us in the silence of God and is used by people who want to deepen their intimacy with the divine. Its goal is union with God.*

*In contemplative prayer, talk recedes into the background, and feelings come to the fore. John Wesley said, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." We relinquish all competing loyalties and our one focus is the good, which is God. The first step is to let go of all other distractions in our mind and have a continuous openness and receptivity to the spirit of God. The second step is to simply listen attentively for God with our whole being. The third step is spiritual ecstasy which is when God acts to make the union a reality.*

*Let us spend a couple of minutes in contemplative prayer, cleansing the multifarious voices from our minds and listening for God. Afterwards, speak to the folks in your pew about the experience.*

Prayer Requests Offered within the Community

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

**Congregational Musical Response #451 [verse 1]**

**Be Thou My Vision**

**Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Nothing surpasses the love you impart  
You my best thought, by day or by night  
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light**

**\*Hymn of Preparation**

*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

**#506**

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Psalter Psalm 16 Call and Congregational Response



New Testament Gospel Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 [page 59]

Sermon *The Loving Father, the Prodigal Son & the Older Brother*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

*Spirit In The Sky*

Greenbaum

**\*Doxology #451 [verse 3]**

**Be Thou My Vision**

**Riches I heed not, nor life's empty praise,  
Thou, my inheritance, now and always;  
You and you only are first in my heart,  
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.**

**\*Closing Hymn**

*Let Justice Flow Like Streams*

**#588**

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.

Deacons: Amy Trimble/Myrna Doney

1st Service Greeters/Ushers: Marsha Duell, Mary Coburn, Cathy & Tom Shearer

2nd Service Greeters/Ushers: Linda Jackson, Julie Leach, Gorden & Lauren Starkey

*The flowers on the altar are given by Sylvia Nyhagen in loving memory of Ed Nyhagen.*

**First Church's Prayer Ministry**

Mary Weltzin

John A

Carol Janwich

Rob Fredricksen

Mike K

Tib T

Linda Dudley

Judy Janwich

Richard Ansell

Mark McKenzie & Family

Frank Polanshek

Judy

Karla

Eric & Shannon

Joe Phenix

Meredith

Carolyn

family of Katherine Scott

*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@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)*

**\* \* \* TODAY \* \* \***

**Sanctuary Paint Color Options.... Take the Color Option**

**Survey on Sunday, April 14 (Palm Sunday)**

Color concept boards and paint samples are being hung in the sanctuary so that everyone can have a chance to see the different ideas being explored. The color options were recommended by color expert Betsey Dempsey, owner of Color Concepts in Shelburne. Betsey spent time in our sanctuary and came up with two palette recommendations. Both palettes include historic neutral colors that are welcoming, peaceful, bright and timeless. Please weigh in by taking the Color Option Survey and identify your favorite choice on Sunday, April 14 (Palm Sunday).



## **Blue Table, FH ~ Signups for Easter Breakfast [Donation & Volunteers]**



### **Easter Flowers**



It's that time again, here are the 2019 flower offerings from Maplehurst Florist. Please put your order in the offering, mail to the office or email Jen at [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) to order and let her know who you would like to remember/honor in the Easter Bulletins. Also, please remember to take your plants with you after Easter to enjoy, plant or give to someone who would enjoy the cheer! Please order by April 14th. Palm Buds - \$3.95

Single Easter Lily - \$15.00, Double Easter Lily (2 bulbs) - \$30.00

Large Easter Lily (3 bulbs) - \$35.00; Hydrangea or Large Azalea - \$25.00

Tulips, Hyacinths, or Daffodils 7" Container - \$15.00 , 8" Container - \$20.00

6" Rieger Begonia or 8" Bulb Garden - \$20.00

\* \* \* **THIS WEEK** \* \* \*



### **Yoga @ First This Week**

Jonah offers 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. Classes are free & donations are gratefully accepted for FCCEJ.

### **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!



### **Wednesdays, April 3<sup>rd</sup> - April 17<sup>th</sup> ~ Lenten Morning Services, 7am**

What better way of starting the day than by worshipping our Creator and centering yourself on the Spirit of the Living God. Pastors Mark & Josh want to provide everyone an opportunity to come to church to pray, take communion, sit in silence and hear hopeful words from Jesus' preaching during the season of Lent. The service will be about 30 minutes so that everyone can still get to work on time. Come and start your morning at church and see how it transforms your entire day.

### **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 are currently reading, Love Your



Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America from the Culture of Contempt by Arthur C. Brooks. Love Your Enemies offers a clear strategy on how to engage with those who you disagree. And most of all, it is a roadmap to arrive at the happiness that comes when we choose to love one another, despite our differences. We'll discuss the first two chapters. Books will be available in the office or from Josh/Mark.

### **Coffee Clatter Fridays 8am**

This may seem like a foolish question, but if you like to talk and drink coffee, then come down to Martone's every Friday morning from 8-9 for an open conversation. Rev. Mark and/or Josh are there every week and we talk about everything from camping to politics, from deep theological questions to silly jokes, from village life to great vacation spots, from business deals to the best restaurants in town. We laugh, get serious and support each other. Everyone is invited!



### **\* \* \* Children, Youth & Family Announcements \* \* \***

#### **Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar**

**Preschool – 8th grade**

**Today, March 31st ~ Music & Peer Group Time**

**April 7th ~ 1st Sunday Spiritual Friends, PreK & K, Communion**



#### **Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2019**

*Total for 2019 \$105.65*

***Spectrum Youth & Family Services***

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**

*Sign up to help usher & greet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month during 10:15am service*

We're bringing back Holy Spirit Cafe on Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup> during second service. Holy Spirit Café is an opportunity for high school students to talk about issues of faith with young adults, many of whom were active in our youth ministry.

**April 14<sup>th</sup>, 5-7pm** Arcade Games & Food @ Spare Time in Colchester



#### **Junior Youth @ FCCEJ**

5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders gather TWICE a month Faith & Mission Focus with Fellowship/Games Parents please stop by and sign up to help provide a meal or snack.

Thank you! Mark your calendars!

**April 7<sup>th</sup> ~ 11:30am – 1:30pm ~ JYG ~ provide a meal**

\* \* \* **Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate** \* \* \*

**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!



**2019 Altar Flowers**

We still have six dates open for 2019, 6/23, 7/7, 7/21, 8/25, 10/20 & 11/17. The chart for altar flowers is up in the hallway leading out of Fellowship Hall. The donation is \$34/Sunday and you can write your name and also who or what event you would like remembered/honored. Contact Jen with any questions [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)

**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 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 (802) 871-5897 or [edwardmsteele@msn.com](mailto:edwardmsteele@msn.com).



**Next Food Pantry days are Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm and Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2-6pm**



We are in need of fruit juice, tomato soup, spaghetti sauce 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 April 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 9 am to 1 pm



**Usher/Greeter Volunteers Needed**

Spring dates are all up on the Sign Up Genius-please volunteer!  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>



## **Vacation Bible Camp ~ Black Table, FH for Info & Signups**

TO MARS and BEYOND

Exploring Where God's Power Can Take You!

August 5-9<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:45am

Recruiting NOW for station leaders: Discovery/Science, Games, & Music and for Youth Helpers and Adult Group Leaders.



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



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### **April 4th ~ Affordable Housing, 2pm**

In Chittenden County, low-income and middle-income residents struggle to find affordable housing. An ecumenical group of Christians from Essex, Jericho, and Underhill have been prayerfully studying affordable housing and what actions we can take in our communities. We are recruiting more folks to help shape our advocacy and to build our group. If you are interested in helping shape the advocacy of this group, please contact Pastor Josh. Next meeting is at the United Methodist Church in Jericho (71 Vermont Route 15, Jericho).

### **April 7<sup>th</sup> ~ Devon Thomas' Installation Service, 3pm**

At the Waterville Union Church, 37 Church St, Waterville



### **April 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Faith on Tap, 6-8pm** @ McGillicuddy's Five Corners.

Discussion Topic: Should We Keep the Electoral College? The Electoral College has elevated four out of five presidential candidates to the nation's highest office who had not won the popular vote.

### **April 18<sup>th</sup> ~ Maundy Thursday, 6pm**

### **April 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Friday, 7pm**

### **April 21<sup>st</sup> ~ Easter, 6am(Holy Family), 8:30 & 10:15(@FCCEJ)**



### **April 28th ~ Joe's Big Band Concert, 3pm**

### **May 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Life Line Screening**



Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings will be here at FCCEJ.

Register online TODAY at [www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle](http://www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle) and receive your "Community Circle" discount and your Preferred Appointment!

### **June 2nd ~ Jazz Sunday/Ice Cream Social/One Service, 9am**



**Green Table, FH ~ Be a Counselor! Share your love of  
God & the Outdoors!**

Counsel youth on the shores of Lake Champlain for @

THE LAKE July 28<sup>th</sup> ~ Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> for Campers going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

Join Laurie at Horton Center in NH and counsel youth for GOD's CO-STARS, July 14<sup>th</sup> ~  
20<sup>th</sup> for campers going into 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. See Laurie for more details on both.

**THIS WEEK: March 31st - April 6th**

- SUNDAY:** 8:30 am Worship Service / Sanctuary  
10:15 am Worship Service / Sanctuary  
1:00 - 2:00 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall
- MONDAY:** \*Construction Begins on Vestibule\*  
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  
6:30 - 7:30 pm Thrift Shop Meeting / Marvin Lounge
- TUESDAY:** 8:30 - 10:00 am Sermon Talk Back / Marvin Lounge  
10:00 - 3:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open  
12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
5:30 - 6:45 pm Yoga w/Jonah  
5:30 - 7:00 pm Finance Committee / Marvin Lounge  
7:00 - 9:00 pm Church Council / Marvin Lounge
- WEDNESDAY:** 7:00 - 7:30 am Lenten Morning Worship / Sanctuary  
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  
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 - 1:30 pm Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
12:00 - 2:00 pm JOY / Marvin Lounge  
3:00 - 4:00 pm Easterseals Clinician Meeting / Third Floor  
4:00 - 8:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open  
6:00 - 8:00 pm Cub Scout Pack 630—Pelaia / Fellowship Hall  
6:45 - 8:15 pm Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary  
8:15 - 9:00 pm Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall  
5:00 - 8:00 pm Essex Eats Out Community Dinner / FH & Kitchen  
6:30pm - overnight Scout Overnight / All Church

SATURDAY: 9:00 - 11:00 am Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / Sanctuary & FH  
**9:00 - 1:00 pm Heavenly Cents Thrift Store Open**  
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: Andrea Sharp [879-0580] or Judy McCullen [878-9794]  
Deacons: Betsy Weischedel [922-2094], Peter Schmalz [202-297-3625]  
Hospitality: Jim Glatz [503-5076]  
Missions: Joanne Irwin [878-2528], Ed Steele [871-5897]  
Music: Denise Keating [345-8900]  
Nominating: Barb Smith [878-6866]  
Stewardship: Jessica Moos [399-8068]  
Trustees: Kevin Meilleur [238-4041]  
Ushering: Jessica Moos [399-8068]

#### **Recognized Groups at First Church**

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop [879-6552] Sue Wood [suewood@myfairpoint.net](mailto: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**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

March 31, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Embracing Love

Jesus' story about a precious son lost and recovered was a response to self-righteous religious authorities who questioned the company he was keeping, but it's also appropriate for Lenten reflection on our own lives. Where do we find ourselves in this story? Why do we so often identify with the older brother? Are we, like that older brother, perhaps stuck in scarcity thinking, when we'd be much happier, much freer, trusting that there is more than enough for all, and great cause for celebration?

One Great Hour of Sharing

You arrive home in the evening, tired from a long day, and on the news comes a bulletin about an earthquake, or refugee crisis, or typhoon, or famine that has struck. You watch it on the television, or your computer screen and say to yourself, "There's so much misery in the world." Then, you change the channel. After all, what can you do? You have work the next day, and your life to live. In your wallet might be twenty or forty dollars. How far could that go to help thousands of people? You can do something other than look in your wallet and feel powerless. We have a way to reach into that news story and make a difference. You can watch but you don't have to stand still; you can run toward the one who needs you and give to One Great Hour of Sharing.

One Great Hour of Sharing is more than a helping organization. It's part of the mission of the Christian church. More than just the United Church of Christ, we join with eight other Christian denominations in this work. Together, with those partners, we raise approximately 12 million dollars a year. Of each dollar given, more than 90 cents is used directly for mission services on the ground in areas of need.

Imagine yourself separated from your family by a disaster and there are only strangers all around you. Then picture someone handing you something warm to drink, a blanket and a way to get home again. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing because when we join our gifts with others we can make a difference in the world. Share in this ministry because it's a way we can share the love of Christ with others.

Give generously so we can all be there to offer hope to those suffering and to restore home the lost.