

***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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Website: www.fcej.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
December 22, 2019

Carol Sing

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.

Lighting the Advent Candle: LOVE

Advent Candle Reader: The first week of Advent we lit the candle of Hope. We hope because Jesus teaches us that life can be better. *[Light]*

Advent Candle Reader: The Second week of Advent we lit the candle of Peace. Jesus brought the world peace by uniting us with God and teaching us how to live with each other.

Advent Candle Reader: Last week we lit the candle of joy. Jesus brings joy to the world by sharing the good news, being our friend and showing us the beauty of life. *[Light pink]*

Advent Candle Lighter Reader: We have saved the best word for the last week of Advent for this Sunday we focus on love. From the beginning of creation through the patriarchs, prophets, priests and kings...all have emphasized the primary importance and power of love. And so today, we light the candle of love because God loves us, and we are called to love each other. *[Light]*

People: Creator and creating God, thank you for using us to spread your universe of love. Help us experience your love in all that we do.

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

Opening Carol

O Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

**Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set all people free
From the fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee**

**Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation enter every longing heart**

**Born all people to deliver, born a child, you came to reign;
Born to rule on earth forever, come be known to us again.**

**By your own eternal spirit, come to claim us as your own,
By your own sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.**

The Sacrament of Baptism.....Adeline Juliet Szymanski

Be sure to welcome back to our church Marissa Szymanski and her precious daughter Adeline Juliet Szymanski. Her Godparents are Serena and Chris Baker.

Children's Message

Our Nursery has a speaker for you to listen to the service and is open for children under 3 years. The service is also streamed to Fellowship Hall.

**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.**

**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.**

Carols of Angels

Angels We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see, Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn king.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

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!”**

Pastoral Prayer and Unison Lord’s Prayer

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

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

Tender and Quiet Carols

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, shepherd 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**

Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming

**Lo, how a rose e're blooming, from tender stem has sprung,
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as saints of old have sung.
It came a flower bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah had foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.**

New Testament Scripture Reading Matthew 1:18-25 [page 1]

Currier Bell Choir Anthem

Manger Carols

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay

**Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there**

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem by the Currier bell Choir

***The Doxology # 119**

As with Gladness, Folk of Old

**As with gladness, folk of old, did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, burning bright;
So most gracious Lord may we, ever more be led to thee.**

**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.**

***Closing Carol**

Go Tell it on the Mountain

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

**The Shepherds feared and trembled, when lo above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus, that hailed our Savior's birth
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

**Down in a lowly manger, the humble Christ was born,
God sent us salvation, that blessed Christmas morn
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

**Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be!
With God our Creator, family all are we,
Let me walk with my fellow in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

*Postlude

* = Please stand if you are able

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Marion Schneider

Tom Gibbs

Jeff Noel

Richard Ansell

Dylan Gibbons

John Burnett

Robert & Claire Deal

George Jackson
(Linda Jackson's husband)

Lester Nutting

Rose Johnson (Doug Ovitt's
mother)

Barb Blanchett

Carlene Lawrence

Please, let the office know if you would like a name added to our Prayer Ministry. You may write it on the Friendship Pad; call the office @ 878 5745; or email at welcome@fcej.org. Additionally, prayer requests will be edited regularly. If you find an unintended error or omission, then please, contact the Church office.

***** DEADLINE APPROACHING *** FLOWER CHART**

The 2020 Flower Chart is posted on the *Mission: Possible* board in the hallway between the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Your contribution allows you to dedicate a beautiful bouquet in memory of a special person or important life event while bolstering the Church's Flower Fund.

We still need your requests for services in January, 2020.

Please, write your request on the chart by **December 31st.**





Christmas Poinsettias

Karen & Mark Mendes
In honor of
Margaret & George Mendes
~
Josh Simon
In honor of
His mother Kelly Simon's birthday
~
Laurie & Brian Chipman
In honor of all grandparents
~
Cathy Shearer
In honor of the holiday
~
Andrea & Steve Sharp
In loving memory of their parents
Lee & Joan Dawley
and Bob & Helen Sharp

Tim Carney & Cathie Goodheart
In memory of Marty Hayes

~
Alison & Carl Wermer
In memory of Bob Knox and
Kerstin Smitterberg

Lauren & Gorden Starkey
In memory of their parents

~
Mary Johnson
In memory of Judy Johnson

~
Myrna Doney
In memory of family

~
Connie Marshall
In memory of loved ones

Today's Ushers & Greeters

Greeters: Sue & Steve Wood; Mark Chadurjian

Ushers: Allison Van Steensburg; Carolyn Toof



Interested in ushering/greeting?

Register by visiting this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e4facae2daafe3-ushergreeter>

Coat Hangers/Racks



We have several areas you can hang your coat! **Entering on Church Street?** Stop by Pastor Mark's office and use this coat closet. You probably have noticed our main coat rack off in the Foyer as you enter from the main parking lot. If you pass this one by there is one by the glass doors as you enter the front door of the church. After you walk up the stairs to the Sanctuary there is still another coat closet down the side hall to your right, just before walking into worship.

Prayer Shawls

Feeling Chilly? We have a large stock of warm, hand-made prayer shawls to keep you cozy this year, and they are free to keep! Ask our Ushers/Greeters for help.



Support JUMP!

Part of our church's mission to JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project) is to provide **deodorant**. Our Red Tent Project has been very successful, but we need your donations! Please, find the red tent in the church's Marvin Lounge or Fellowship Hall

Love Baskets made from recycled t-shirts by our Church's children & youth are available in our Marvin Lounge. Bring them to friends & family who are ill or otherwise unable to attend church.

BELLS ARE RINGING... AGAIN!

After a hiatus, our team of handbell ringers will begin practicing every Wednesday night @ 6:30pm in our Sanctuary and playing at services throughout the year. No experience or musical training is necessary and all are welcome! If you are interested, email Organist Carol Spradling (cspradling@fccej.org) for details.

Tax-Incentivized Donations

If you are over age 70 ½ and have Traditional IRA assets, you can satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) requirements by making a Qualified Charitable Distribution to First Church! By directing some (or all) of your IRA distribution to the church, you can support the congregation and our missions in a tax-advantaged way. The distribution amount is not included in your adjusted gross income, which can help you potentially avoid increased taxes on SSI, higher premiums on Medicare, and the loss of deductions/exemptions. If you use the standard deduction on your taxes, this allows you still to get a tax benefit on your gift to the church. If you haven't taken your RMD for 2019 or want to get a jump-start on your 2020 planning please reach out to Pat Seaver (878-4445, ytri2@aol.com) to find out more information. Another great way to support the amazing work being done at FCCEJ is by making a gift of appreciated stock. If you happen to own stocks that have grown in value and you would like to avoid the capital gains taxes on selling those stocks, you can gift them instead! Satisfy or increase your annual pledge by gifting these shares of stock directly to the church. You save on taxes and the church can use those funds to further our ministry.



Donate to Our Church



Our Church is a thriving community with great activity and expanding programs. We've seen growth in our youth ministry. This year we had 16 youth participate in the Christmas Pageant, over 50 children and youth learn about God's love for them at our Vacation Bible Camp, have seen our Junior Youth program increase to 24 overall youth, and we have 9 youth in confirmation. Last year, we helped send 16 young people and adults to Jamaica to be the hands of Christ. Our Sermon Talk back group had 27 people coming last week and continues to draw over 20 people each week. The Joy Group filled the Marvin Lounge as they listened to Bob Vincent and Ann Gray talk church history. Friday morning Coffee Clatter get upwards of ten people many weeks. Our many musical groups continue to produce magnificent music and inspire us all on a weekly basis. We sponsored more kids through our Christmas Giving Tree program than ever before and continue to be a leader in the community in feeding people. **And in 2020, through the Capital Campaign projects, we're going to have a new ceiling and fresh coat of paint to revitalize our beautiful Sanctuary.**

Because so many of our programs are successful, committees asked for more financial resources to help sustain our many vibrant ministries. We need extra help making sure our budget is balanced and our ministries maintained. **Please consider revising your 2020 pledge by \$2-7 per week to help sustain our vibrant ministries and our ability to spread the love of God in tangible ways.** As many of you know, I've had two surgeries this year and multiple medical bills. I originally was going to lower my pledge. After Mark last week talked about how much a difference an additional \$2-7 per week to my pledge would mean to the ministry of our church and the lives of our members and visitors, I increased my pledge by \$2 per week.

If you are able to do so, please contact Pat Seaver at Vtri2@aol.com or find the pledge forms at church to increase your pledge. If you're like me and do most of your finances online, you can donate via PayPal at <http://www.fccej.org/v5/donate-now/> or scan this QR Code (right) using your phone.



Capital Campaign Update

By Kaki McGeary



Sanctuary Restoration Project Update!

Worship Services will be held in Fellowship Hall while the sanctuary is closed for restoration (starting Sunday Dec. 29 through Palm Sunday).

As we shared before, our plaster ceiling must be totally removed and replaced. This work will require temporary scaffolding and we will not be able to use the sanctuary during this time. The entire project should take about 2 months, assuming no major hiccups. The ceiling work will be done first and then it must cure for several weeks, during which time the walls will be patched. Once that is done, painting can begin. Our staff and several volunteers have developed plans to make this temporary move as seamless and comfortable as possible. We ask for prayers that we move through this time of transition with flexibility and grace. We look forward to seeing you all in our new space on Sunday mornings starting right after Christmas!

Lighting Update—We are working with the electrician to install parking lot, sign and steeple lights as soon as possible. Federal grant funds will pay for the parking lot fixtures.

Pledge Payments—Your continued pledge payments are vital to our efforts! We have budgeted for bridge loan financing. While we have not needed it yet, our cash balance is getting low and we will likely need to secure a bridge loan for the Sanctuary Restoration. As always, early pledge payments are welcome to minimize interest expenses.



Special Note: For your convenience, charts containing completion date projections for the Capital Campaign's various projects are posted on bulletin boards throughout the church.

FAITH FORMATION (PreK-8th Grade)

*Interested in Volunteering to help our children & youth?
Contact Laurie Chipman, CED: 878-5745 ext. 103; or lchipman@fccej.org.*

Faith Formation Conversations

PreK – 8th have been talking about the birth of Jesus.

Enjoy our Intergenerational worship Sundays on December 22nd & 29th and singing Christmas carols. There are Christmas coloring books, crayons, model magic & beanies to help you through the service.

On January 2nd, our PreK - 2nd graders will be talking about the Magi & the gifts they brought to Jesus. Join us as we celebrate Epiphany and have a birthday party for Jesus.

Sunday Morning Calendar

- *December 22nd* ~ Intergenerational Worship & sing Carols
- *December 29th* ~ Intergenerational Worship
- *January 5th* ~ 1st Sundays

Intergenerational Worship & Spiritual Friends. PreK – 2nd grade who are looking for more movement can join the Spiritual Friends for a story time and activity. All will return for communion.

January 12th ~ Peer Group Time

- *January 19th* ~ Hands On Mission on 2nd floor
- *January 26th* ~ Peer Group Time for Prek – 2nd



Save the D@tes!

December 22nd ~ One service @ 10am

January 26th ~ One service @ 10am

Faith Formation Music Time

Cherubs ~ Preschool ~ 2nd grade

Joyful Noise ~ 3rd ~ 8th grade

Music time takes place on peer group Sundays. Children and youth then move to peer groups until 11:30am. On these days we encourage parents to move from worship to coffee hour and then up to collect the children. All PreK through 2nd grade need to be signed out by an authorized person. Older children will be excused at 11:30am. Parents can update their list of authorized persons by emailing Laurie.

High School Youth are encouraged to help during faith formation on Sunday mornings. Connect with Laurie for more information. Be a helper on Spiritual Friends, Peer Group or Hands-On Mission Sundays.



Faith Formation Offering Spectrum Youth & Family Services

2019 Total — \$666.82 (as of 12/8)

Remember to bring your offering each week, \$1 a week can go a long way! Please use the envelopes in the pews so your \$ goes to the right place.



YOUTH MINISTRY (5th-12th Grade)

FCCEJ Confirmation Class

Thursdays @ 7:30-9pm

Confirmation is an intentional time in a person's life, usually a young person, to learn more about Christianity, the Bible, faith, etc. During this time, they start to intentionally form what they believe and how they want to engage society. The confirmands attend other faith tradition's worship services, participate in community service projects, and participate in some capacity at church whether it's through helping with faith formation, reading in worship, etc. It ends with confirmation Sunday when confirmands who want to join the church publicly do so. Anyone in 8th grade or above is welcome to join the Confirmation class. It is a one-year program. Confirmation class will take place most Thursdays, 7:30-9pm, between now and May 31st on Confirmation Sunday.

Junior Youth Calendar

5th - 8th graders

Faith & Mission Focus with Fellowship/Games

Meal donations and snacks for youth times are appreciated!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054fa4a82fa5fc1-fccej>

Mark your calendars & join the FUN! Have a wonderful holiday with family & friends.

January 5th ~ JY time ~ 11:30am to 1:30pm

Sunday morning ~ Help Greet/Usher/Read Scripture during 10:15am worship

January 17th-18th ~ JY Overnight ~ 6pm

High School Youth Lock-in

Friday, January 24th @ 6pm—Saturday, January 25th @ 9am

All students are welcome to come for as long as they can stay. We'll eat food, play games, watch a movie, and have lights out around midnight/1 am, and have breakfast in the morning. It's always a blast to be "locked in" the church. Invite your friends, the more the *merrier!*

@ the Lake UCC Camp at Rock Point:

For those going into 5th – 8th grade in the fall of 2020

Sunday, July 26 at 2pm to Friday, July 31st at 4pm

Mark your calendars and sign up to go to the really fun week of camp!

Previous campers ~ Erik Frivoll & Izzy Owens

Vermont Outdoor Ministry Team is not recruiting counselors, life-guards, CIT's and a nurse. Interested? See Laurie. Leadership arrives on July 25th at 4pm and departs by 5pm on the 31st.

National Youth Event

July 20-26, 2020

Calling all youth ages 12-20 by July. Travel with Pastor Josh & Laurie to Purdue University. Four (4) days of worship, music & service project. We need at least 5 youth to make trip happen. Sign up by December 1st with Pastor Josh or Laurie. We are thrilled to go to NYE for this once in four-year extravaganza! Dee Jay Doc Harris and the Refresh Collective will be there. The Guardians of Taos will speak about nonviolence and protecting our sacred water. You can still sign up to attend.

Visit <http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/> for details. Cost is \$250 per youth. Fundraising Event in early 2020.



Deadline to sign up for this fun trip is January 5th. Deposit due February 1st.

THIS WEEK

Yoga @ First

Mondays, 5:30pm-6:45pm

Jonah Moos, FCCEJ member, is offering a free yoga class in our Gymnasium! Jonah collects donations on behalf of our Church. All levels from beginner to experienced are absolutely welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's.

Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday, December 24th

5pm: Family Service

9pm: Lessons & Carols

11pm: Communion & Carols

Sermon Talkback Tuesdays

Tuesdays, 8:30-10am

Gather with us in the Marvin Lounge for coffee, baked goods, and a lively discussion of the sermon delivered on Sunday, and much more! Join us for the conversation, the goodies, the camaraderie, or all of the above!

FCCEJ Offices

Closed for Holidays

Wednesday, December 25th



Coffee Clatter Fridays

Fridays @ 8-9am

This may seem like a foolish question, but if you like to talk and drink coffee, then come down to Martone's for open conversation. Rev. Mark and/or Josh are there every week and 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!**

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

37 Main Street in Essex Junction

Doing business at Heavenly Cents, whether making donations or purchasing goods, strengthens our connections with each other and is good for your wallet, the environment and our community. The Thrift shop accepts new and gently used clothing, jewelry, table linens, bedding and household items. Clothing and linens should be clean, free of stains and tears and household items should be safe, in good working condition and contain all pieces and parts.

Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm; Thursdays 4pm-8pm; 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month, 9am-1pm. The shop will be closed December 23rd to January 7th for the Holiday Season.

Phone: 879-6552.

News: We are pleased to be giving back to the community with \$1200.00 donations to each of the following organizations: Essex Senior Center, Essex Community Justice Center, Katie Currier Scholarship Fund, Steps to End Domestic Violence, COTS (Committee on Temporary Shelter), Age Well Meals on Wheels and JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project).

Questions? Contact Elaine Raymond @ 879-7350 or ebraymond@gmail.com.

Church Undecorating

Friday, December 27th @ 10am

**** VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ****

On December 27th, we will have a work party to clear everything out of the sanctuary to prepare the space for scaffolding going up so that workers can replace the ceiling's plaster and others can paint the entire space. On December 30th, the scaffolding will be installed and then the plastering begins on January 6th, which once completed will lead into the painting.

SAVE THE D@TE!

Worship in the Fellowship Hall During Sanctuary Renovation

****Begins Sunday, December 29th****

Worship will be in Fellowship hall From Dec. 29th until our Sanctuary Renovation is complete, hopefully before Easter. Wouldn't that be a great celebration: the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the resurrection of our sanctuary! There has been quite a bit of energy and planning for all the various details to make the transition smooth and worship meaningful so plan on coming and participating in this grand adventure. Sunday Services will remain at 8:30 and 10:15 a.m. with the Saturday service remaining on the First Saturday of the month at 4:30 p.m. but the location of the Saturday Service will be the Marvin Lounge.

Saturday Worship

Saturday, January 4th @ 4:30pm

**** Moved to Marvin Lounge!****

Our alternative Saturday afternoon worship service continues. Our Saturday services are. on the first Saturday of each month. They will continue while the sanctuary is being worked on and the services have moved down into Fellowship Hall. Because of logistical reasons, we will hold the service in the **MARVIN LOUNGE**. Everything else will be the same, just the location.

Hannaford Cards

Sunday, January 5th

Reload your Hannaford Cards (up to \$500!) OR purchase new ones in \$25, \$50, \$100, and \$200 increments. **FCCEJ receives \$5 for every \$100 worth of cards it sells.**

Women's Spirituality Group

Saturday, January 18th @ 9:30am

All women of the church are invited to be a part of this vibrant group. Our programs will address personal growth, community outreach and having fun. Please consider joining us in the Marvin Lounge. Our very own Elaine Helmstutler will be our Artist in Residence. In her words, "Think you can't draw? You're wrong! Come to **WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY** to learn the basics of seeing and drawing."

FCCEJ Offices Closed for Holidays

Wednesday, January 1st



JOY (Just Older Youth)

Thursday, January 2nd @ Noon

If you are 55+ please consider joining this active church group. JOY meets at noon on the first Thursday of the month. We strive to present programs that foster learning, fun, or service.

Essex Eats Out

Friday, January 3rd @ 5:30-6:30pm

A free, community-wide dinner open to all (with a special invitation to the needy & lonely) every Friday night throughout the Essex area. FCCEJ hosts Essex Eats Out on the 1st Friday of each month. Donations (to help subsidize the cost of these meals) are solicited but not required. Visit [essexeatsout.org](http://www.fccej.org/v5/category/essex-eats-out/) for more details. Additionally, you may visit our website for menus of meals hosted at FCCEJ:

<http://www.fccej.org/v5/category/essex-eats-out/>

Heavenly Food Pantry

Monday, January 13th @ 5:30-7:30pm

The Pantry would appreciate these donations: *spaghetti sauce, cereal, and chicken noodle soup, and one-dozen egg cartons*. Also, we have several volunteering opportunities! See our church's newsletter for more details; or contact Val Gabert directly @ val.gabert@gmail.com.

Bridge Club

Friday, January 17th @ 1:30pm

Casual potluck-style game of Bridge. Join Pastor Mendes in our Marvin Lounge for a rousing game and a chance to win some of his world-famous jam!



FREE Christmas Day Meals

Please join us on Wednesday, **December 25, 2019**
Elks Lodge, 925 North Avenue in Burlington
NOON-3:00pm

FREE & open to the public, all ages welcome
If you are 50 or older and need transportation,
please call Megan Humphrey at 864-7528.
Otherwise, please just come and join us. Bring a friend!



OR

To reserve a FREE dinner (ham dinner or vegetarian lasagna)
delivered on Christmas Day to anyone **50 years or older**
in **Chittenden County**, please call Age Well
at 865-0360 from December 2-19.

After December 19, please call Megan Humphrey at 864-7528 or email handsvt@gmail.com.

For more info or to donate, please go to www.handsvt.org.

*In partnership with Age Well, Burlington School Food Project,
Michelle Charron, Elks Club, HANDS, Penny Cluse Caf , Temple Sinai,
and so many generous people and businesses...thank you!*



HANDS

Helping and Nurturing Diverse Seniors
www.handsvt.org



REQUEST TO CHURCHES



The Disaster Response Committee of the Vermont Conference was created to be a part of the recovery process following disasters. A significant role for local churches is that of creating lists of volunteers from among members. The volunteers would be called upon to provide clean up to homes and land; to make meals for families without electricity. Perhaps also, to babysit children while parents deal with re-organizing their lives and homes.

Recently, following the torrential rain and high winds, a number of homes in Franklin and Lamoille County were damaged and/or basements flooded. The Williston UCC basement was also flooded. The response by the State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has been to seek assistance from the Religious Community. It has been slow in coming because we do not have that volunteer base in place. Any who would like to be on a volunteer list are welcome. Please send Rick Cochran, the coordinator an e-mail at vtvoadpresident@gmail.com or to vtcarrs@gmail.com. Or call Adrienne at 391-7777

Meanwhile, one of our association churches is in need. Can you folks help? Paul Eyer needs us.

We Committee members, Barbara Purinton, Peter Plagge and myself are happy to assist churches in creating the lists and also in recruiting new members for our committee.

We are also developing a working relationship with the Episcopal Diocese Disaster Response Committee.

Adrienne Carr
802 391 7777
802 863 6184

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fccej.org]

Associate Pastor: Rev. Josh Simon [jsimon@fccej.org]

Music Director: Carol Spradling [cspradling@fccej.org]

Christian Education Director: Laurie Chipman [lchipman@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Doug Ovitt [welcome@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: Jenny Bourn [jennybourn4@gmail.com]
& Laura Marthaler [Laura.marthaler@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 Sue Wood [879-6552] suewood@myfairpoint.net

Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: Valerie Gabert [879-0109]

mission
M O M E N T S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 22, 2019
Fourth Sunday of Advent
God with Us
Matthew 1:18-25
Christmas Fund Offering

Joseph is certainly one of the unsung heroes of the Bible. Engaged to be married to Mary, he learns that she is carrying a child. Joseph knows that he is not the biological father of this child. The usual punishment for such so-called “crimes,” in Joseph’s time and culture vary, but all would have ended in death for the young mother. Instead, Joseph conceives a plan to send Mary away quietly. But then he has a dream. And, instead of the expectations of his culture, he decides to follow his dream, which he recognizes as the voice of God. He marries his pregnant girlfriend.

Joseph’s dream compels him to follow God on an unlikely path, one that is far from the expectations of his time and culture. He had been told how to get ahead, how to succeed, and he went another direction. Many of our clergy and church workers have done the same. Looking at what success means to the world, they have chosen instead a path of service and sacrifice.

We help impoverished retired and clergy, as well as those in difficult circumstances with the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund.

The Christmas Fund, as it is known, is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementa-tion of Small Annuities, Sup-plementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks.

*You can find out more about the Christmas Fund and how it is used here:
<https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home/how-the-funds-are-used>.*

**4th Sunday of Advent
Prayer for Love**

O come, O come Emmanuel!

In a world in which
others turn their backs,
You call us to love.

Save us from hatred, and from its
more virulent cousin, indifference.
Remind us that you are Love, and
that you call us first of all to love.

Show us all the ways that
we can be your love in the world
today and all days. Amen.

Burlington Ecumenical Gospel Choir

We are excited to be reviving this choir and encourage you all to help us spread the word to members new and old! Rehearsals for the Burlington Ecumenical Gospel Choir will be held at New Alpha Missionary Baptist Church (38 So. Winooski Ave, Burlington, 05401) on the following dates and times:

- *January 11 from 1-3pm*
- *February 1 from 1-3pm*
- *February 28 from 6-7:30pm (tentative)*
- *February 29 from 1-3pm*
- *March 6 from 6-7:30pm (tentative)*
- *March 7 (call times and sound checks to be announced)*

Signup at this link: shorturl.at/erGMT

Monday, December 23

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:30pm - 4:00pm Food Pantry Stocking (Fellowship Hall & Gym) ☺
- 5:30pm - 9:00pm Eagle Scout BOR (3rd Floor)
- 5:30pm - 6:45pm Yoga @ First (2nd Floor Programming Room) ☺
- 5:30pm - 6:30pm Group Victory (Marvin Lounge) ☺

Wednesday, December 25

- HOLIDAY -- FCCEJ Offices Closed ☺
- ☾ 12:30am Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)
- 9:00am - 2:00pm Nepali Community Worship (Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall)
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 2:00pm - 4:00pm Crafty Time Out (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm Finally@First (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 6:30pm - 8:15pm Handbell Choir (Sanctuary) ☺
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm Boy Scouts (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Friday, December 27

- 10:00am - 12:00pm Church Undecorate (Church-Wide)
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall) ☺

FCCEJ WEEKLY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 24

- 8:30am - 10:00am Sermon Talk Back (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 5:00pm - 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Stewardship (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Trustees (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 7:15pm - 8:30pm Choir - Call Time (Marvin Lounge)
- 8:30pm - 9:00pm Choral Prelude (Sanctuary)
- 9:00pm - 10:30pm Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)
- 11:00pm Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary) →

Thursday, December 26

- 12:00pm - 1:30pm Brown Bag (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 3:00pm - 4:00pm Easterseals (3rd Floor Youth Lounge) ☺
- 5:30pm - 9:00pm Eagle Scout BOR (3rd Floor)
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm Music@First (Sanctuary) ☺
- 7:30pm - 9:00pm Confirmation (Marvin Lounge) ☺
- 8:15pm - 9:15pm Music @ First (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 8:30pm - 9:30pm Men @ First (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Saturday, December 28

- 9:00am - 11:00am Nepali Community Worship (Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall) ☺

Sunday, December 29

- 8:30am - 9:45am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 10:15am - 11:30am Worship Service (Fellowship Hall) ☺
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm Brown Bag (Fellowship Hall) ☺