

***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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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Christmas Eve 2019
5 p.m. Service

A Service of Sacred Stories & Singing

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end."
Isaiah 9:6-7

Prelude

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 Christmas story!

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

People: I love the Christmas story!

Leader: I love Saint Nickolas giving away gold, Christmas trees of light, roving singers of carols and worshipping God with our families. Come on, let's re-enter the amazing old story and let God's love wash over us again and again...

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, 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.**

Lighting the Christ Candle.....The Moos Family

Advent Candle Reader: Tonight, we remember the Advent journey. For the last four weeks we have lifted-up Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. These are gifts from God that bring meaning, purpose and passion into our lives.

Advent Candle Reader: We light these candles tonight to proclaim that all of us in this church will strive to live into these divine ideals for humanity.

[light four candles]

Advent Candle Lighter: Tonight, with humility, awe and appreciation, we remember Jesus of Nazareth. God's son embodied the attributes of hope, peace, joy and love and showed us how to live into our faith in God.

Advent Candle Lighter: We light the Christ Candle tonight to proclaim that Jesus is our King, our Friend, our Companion, our Teacher and our God.

[light Christ Candle]

People: We will seek to live with hope, peace, joy and love in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen and Alleluia!!!

The Coming of a Messiah Foretold.....The Prophet Micah

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

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

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

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

Leader: Lord Jesus.....

People: Hear our prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses and we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Congregational Musical Response # 122

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

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

**Born all people to deliver, born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever, come, be known to us again.**

The Birth of Jesus.....The Innkeeper

The Sacrament of Baptism

Makaylah Renee Moos
Zoe Elizabeth Moos

It is a joy to baptize Makaylah and Zoe tonight. The proud parents are Jessica Basmadjian and Jonah Moos. The God-parents for both girls are Thomas and Melanie Lanese. On this special night, let us give the entire Moos family a warm and hearty welcome.

What Child Is This?

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

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

Special Christmas Offering

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Christmas Music

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

As With Gladness Folk of Old

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

The Visitors and Witnesses.....Zebulun the Bethlehemite

Joy to the World

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

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

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

Spreading the Light of Christ

From the Christ Candle, the Innkeeper, Micah the Prophet and Zebulun the Bethlehemite will light their candles and then proceed to pass Christ's light to each family within the congregation. We ask each family to be careful with your candle and especially ask parents to watch their children. On the way out, please extinguish your candles and place them in the receptacles provided. Thank you.

*First, violins without singing by Emmerson & Orion Stapleton
& Cooper and Kinlee Spaulding*

Second, everyone will sing all three verses

Third, Emmerson, Orion, Cooper & Kinlee will play with just violins.

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.

Pastoral Benediction

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT !

** Special Thanks to Ed Guild for playing the piano tonight. He has been playing the organ for the early service on Christmas Eve for many, many yearsthanks Ed!*

*** Thanks also to Emmerson and Orion Stapleton & Cooper and Kinlee Spaulding for their beautiful violin music.*



FCCEJ remembers its beloved members lost in 2019:

*Charles Thomas West
Harold Henry Bergeron
Alberta Marthe Rand Reed
Nancy Witherell Hunt
James W. Gray II
Mary Elizabeth "Beth" Terry*



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*

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]