

***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***

Phone: 802-878-5745

Fax: 802-872-8236

E-mail: welcome@fccej.org

Website: www.fccej.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
A United Church of Christ
Christmas Eve 2019
9 p.m. Service

A Service of Lessons and Carols

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

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

Concert Prelude

Music Director, Carol Spradling

Sing Out the News

Men At First

Look Up, Children

Men At First

Men at First Director, Bill Bickford

Candlelight Carol

Heavenly Harmony

O Thou Tellest Good Tidings to Zion

Terri Livak

Keep Your Lamps

Sanctuary Choir

Who Would Send a Baby

Sanctuary Choir

Goin' Up To Bethlehem

Heavenly Harmony

Honor and Glory

Mindy Bickford, Soloist

Sanctuary Choir

Marie Johnson, Organist

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: Many years ago, God entered the world in a unique way. The Divine Presence sent Jesus to teach the world about life and love. Two thousand years later, we enter the story in many of the same ways.....

**Men: Mary pondered the birth of her son, looking to the future with hope.
Tonight, parents see the hope of the world in our children.**

**Women: Herod in fear lashed out in violence while Rachel wept.
The world still experiences pain, insecurities, injustices and death.**

Choirs: The angels sang their hearts out. We sing with joy tonight.

**Balcony: The shepherds gathered at the manger to worship the child.
We come to worship the spirit of Christ that still lives.**

Lectern Side: The Magi spent years searching. Many of us still search.

Pulpit Side: Shepherds, Magi and prophets worshipped the Living God made known in Jesus Christ. We worship the same God tonight.

Leader: We all enter Christ's birth story in our own way and for our own reasons. Tonight, may God offer you the perfect gift just as Christ was offered to humanity so many years ago. Come, let us sing for joy.

Opening Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above.
Glory to God, all glory in the highest.
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

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

Lighting the Christ Candle.....The Starkey 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 Prophecy Foretold: Isaiah 9:1-7.....Charlie McGeary

Carol **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer, our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of nations bind, all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

The Annunciation: Luke 1:26-38.....Makaylah Moos

Christmas Quintet *Mary Did you Know* arr. by Pentatonix
Judy Larrabee, Denise Keating, Carol Spradling, Jim Coates, Doug Olufsen

The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2:1-7.....Courtney Frank

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

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

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

Pastor: Let us pray.....

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

Musical Response by Abigail Evans *The Swan* Camille Saint-Saens

Carol **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

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

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

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

The Holy Child and His Visitors: Luke 2:8-20.....Robert Evans

Christmas Anthem by the Heavenly Harmony..... Goin' Up to Bethlehem

The Wisemen Come: Matthew 2:1-11.....Kevin Guild

Carol

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

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

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

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!
Christ, by highest heaven adored:
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the favoured one.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, th'incarnate Deity:
Pleased, with us, with all to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!**

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

A Christmas Offering

Invitation

Offertory Anthem by the Men at First: Good News [Althouse]

***Offering Our Praise to Our God [# 119]**

As with Gladness, Folk of Old

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

Final Reading of Light and Life: John 1:1-14..... Coby Miller & Riley Blackman

Christmas Anthem by the Sanctuary Choir.....O Holy Night

Christmas Meditation

Jesus Is The Way: Every Which

Rev. Mendes

Spreading the Light of Christ

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

A Final Carol.....Silent 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.**

Once the candles are lit, Abbie Evans will play Silent Night by herself
Then we will all sing the verses of Silent Night,
Then Abigail will play by herself as we enjoy the light, music & community

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!



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 and
grandparents*

*~
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*