



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

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.

**1 Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452**

Phone: 802-878-5745 **Fax:** 802-872-8236 **E-mail:** welcome@fccej.org

Website: www.fccej.org



WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP



Visit this link to view our official calendar of events: <http://fcej.org/v5/calendar>

...and our Facebook events page: <http://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/events/>

We offer regular worship and fellowship opportunities, too! These include:

- ⊕ **Worship, Sundays at 10am; Monthly Communion, 1st Sundays @** <http://youtube.com/c/fcej>
- ⊕ **Christmas Eve Services: 5pm & 9pm @** <http://youtube.com/c/fcej>
- ⊕ **Pageant Sunday: December 20th at 10am @** <http://youtube.com/c/fcej>
- ⊕ **Fellowship Hour, after Worship @** <http://zoom.us/j/980588369>
- ⊕ **Faith Formation, Monthly on 2nd Sunday at 9am @** Church Grounds
- ⊕ **Daily Devotionals, Weekdays 8am & 8pm @** <http://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- ⊕ **Sermon Talk Back, Tuesday at 8:30am @** <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter, Thursdays at 8am @** <http://zoom.us/j/97659276694>
- ⊕ **Noontime Book Group, 3rd Monday at 11:30am @** <http://zoom.us/j/626841083>

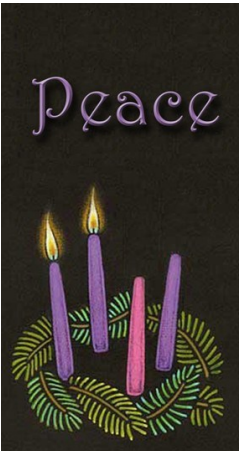
DONATE TO OUR CHURCH

Please, mail payments to:
attn: Financial Secretary
FCCEJ
1 Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

Your donation could support our music, youth programming (e.g. Vacation Bible Camp), missions (e.g. Jamaica Missions), adult enrichment (e.g. Sermon Talkback, JOY), Thrift Shop, Food Pantry, and more! We are also a United Church of Christ “5 for 5” participant in these fundraisers: Per Capita (\$14.10/member is our goal), One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need

and The Christmas Fund. We appreciate this fundraising now more than ever! Here are some ways that you may help our ministry:

- ⊕ **Shop at Amazon.com** using Amazon Smile. We receive 0.5% of your purchases! Visit smile.amazon.com/ch/03-0212216
- ⊕ **Use PayPal!** We accept electronic donations through PayPal. Visit our donation page: paypal.me/fcej. A PayPal account is not required to donate money!
- ⊕ **Send a Check or use BillPay!** Your bank might offer Billpay, a remote service that issues one-time or recurring check payments by mail. Please, contact your banking institution for more details. All checks should be made payable to “FCCEJ.” Be sure to note the reason for your donation in the check’s memo line (e.g. “food pantry”).



Journey to Bethlehem! Worship Series...

Visit this link to pledge to our church:

bit.ly/2UQcXz9



Order of Worship

December 13th, 2020: Live Streaming

Introductory Music

Begins at 9:45 a.m.

Announcements will be shown on screen

As worship begins:

Light a candle at home,

Sit in a comfortable spot,

Center yourself w/ breathing.

Service Input Preparation: Text NOW to make the service run more smoothly.

1 **Thankfulness:** Text Rev. Josh your Prayer Requests [920 858-6601]

2 **Prayer Requests:** Text Rev. Mark one thought of gratitude [802 922-1773]

Prelude

Welcome

*“No matter who you are
or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome in this place.”*

Welcoming God’s Light into Worship

An Opening Reading on Gratitude [w/ congregation sharing – text in]

A Few Key Announcements

Pastoral visits: simply call us up

Morning/Evening Devotions [webpage]

Faith Formation from 9 – 9:30 a.m. online

Music: Carol, F@F and Sanctuary Choir

Hybrid services postponed with the surge of covid cases

The Governor Phil Scott’s & Vt Dept of Health Advice

The VTCUCC Strongly worded recommendation

The Decision of the Executive Committee

----hybrid will come and we are making plans, waiting

The Giving Tree.....THANK YOU.... They have been distributed.

Mission Committee’s \$ 1000 Matching Gift....THANK YOU

Matched....a generous congregation

Marvin Lounge Work has begun

Insulate, new walls, bookcases, conference table

Carpet, paint, artwork

Church Decorations / Sanctuary visits Dec 21-24

Families come and wave by Nativity

Drive by the parsonage to see its Christmas lights

(Continued on next page...)

As always great to have Jonah Moos, Gary Hartman, Ed Guild,
Francis Gravel and Rev. Josh Simon orchestrating the technology today.

Meeting & Greetings Along the Road.....Bill & Grace Jones

Prayer of Invocation by Deacon.....Gary Hartmann

Opening Hymn Adeste/O Come All Ye Faithful perf. by Sanctuary Choir

**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;**

Refrain: **O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**God of God, Light of Light eternal,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created, [Refrain]**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!" [Refrain]**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; [Refrain]**

Meetings & Greetings Along the Road.....Bob & Mary Coburn

Lighting the First Advent Candle of Joy.....The Bourn Family

Children's Message.....Rev. Mark Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God.....Rev. Mark Mendes

Invitation
Doxology

**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.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer.....Rev. Mark Mendes

Text the prayers you want the minister to include during the prelude: Rev. Mark @ 802 922 1773

Sacred Readings: Luke 1:26-56

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,

(Continued on next page...)

in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.’

And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

Sermon

“The Source of Christian Joy”

Rev. Josh Simon

Closing Hymn

O Little Town

perf. by Carol Spradling

**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 wond'ring 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 giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!**

Benediction and blowing out of the candles

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.

Announcements and Zoom Fellowship Hour —Meeting ID # 980 588 369 OR bit.ly/31dXQ76

PRAYER MINISTRY

Please, email your prayer requests to welcome@fcej.org or call 1 (802) 878-5745 ext. 100.

Richard Ansell

Ilya (Cathie Goodheart's friend)

Malcolm Forbes (Cathy Shearer's dad)

Roger & Sandy Daly

Grandma Culley (Dorothy Kress's grandma)

Stacy Gaudette Hall (Doug Ovitt's cousin)

Kristin (Nancy & Wayne Hall's daughter)

Damaris (New resident of Essex Junction)

Nancy Hinsdale (Mindy Bickford's mom)

George Jackson

All persons affected by the Coronavirus

Have something important to share? Please, email your announcement to Doug Ovitt, Church Administrator: welcome@fcej.org. If you want an announcement televised during worship, then please, send a photographic representation of your announcement in either **.jpg or .png file format** to Rev. Josh Simon @ jSimon@fcej.org.



**The altar flowers are given by
Maureen McKenzie
In memory of Roger VanDen Dorpel**

2021 Altar Flower Chart is online! Visit this link to reserve a date: bit.ly/33JWlxj

Flowers may be retrieved by their respective buyers. To arrange for a pickup, please contact our staff:

welcome@fcej.org or 1 (802) 878-5745

Find us online! Click the icon or link:



youtube.com/c/fcej



[facebook.com/
firstcongregationalej](https://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej)



instagram.com/fcej_802



FCCEJ.ORG

NEWSLETTERS

SIGNUP HERE: <https://bit.ly/3dwsHji> —Our weekly update newsletter contains important weekly announcements about Food Pantry, Thrift Shop, Capital Campaign Updates, and more! Here is a link to this week's issue:

<https://mailchi.mp/fcej/2020-weekly-update-5847320>

Our "SPIRIT@FIRST" monthly newsletter is available by snail-mail and email. Hard copies are available at church, too. Visit this link to read through our archives:

<http://fcej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Church Staff

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

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

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

Music Director: Carol Spradling [cspradling@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: Maureen Evans [233-6127]

Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations: Cathy Shearer [878-6023]

Treasurer & Historian: Ann Gray [878-4088]

Asst. Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [879-0261]

Asst. Financial Secretary: Rob Sinkewicz [878-4470]

Asst. Financial Secretary: Pam Blake [872-8204]

Asst. Financial Secretary: Linda Bogardus [872-8972]

Clerk: Christine Sinkewicz [878-4470]

Christian Education: Lisa Clark [872-5849]

Communications: Andrea Sharp [879-0580], Judy McCullen [878-9794]

Deacons: Judy Larrabee-Pomainville [802-236-0604]

Hospitality: Jim Glatz [503-5076]

Missions: Joanne Irwin [878-2528], Ed Steele [871-5897]

Music: Denise Keating [345-8900]

Nominating: Barb Smith [310-2491]

Stewardship: Jessica Moos [399-8068], Shannon McCullen [922-8792]

Trustees: Kaki McGeary [879-2062]

Ushering: Justin King [238-6273], Jessica Moos [399-8068]

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop Sue Wood [878-3068] OR woodsusanjane@gmail.com

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