



***DRAFT***

# 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**

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



## Our Christmas poinsettias are given by...

- ♥ FCCEJ in memory of  
Bill Adams, Russell Schneider, Marion Schneider,  
Leo Martel, Barbara Blanchett, Pat Seaver,  
and all those affected by the Coronavirus
- ♥ Cathie & Tim Goodheart in memory of their parents, brother Johnnie,  
Uncle Bill and Marty Hayes
- ♥ Rev. Josh Simon in honor of our beloved church
- ♥ Erica Garvey & Jon Roddy in loving memory of David Roddy and  
Gregory Garvey
- ♥ Shane Higgins, Chad Higgins, Mindy Higgins-Bero, Zach Higgins, and  
Richard Higgins in loving memory of Diana Higgins
- ♥ Rev. Mark Mendes in honor of Margaret & George Mendes
- ♥ Andrea & Steve Sharp In memory of Lee & Joan Dawley and Robert &  
Helen Sharp
- ♥ Joanne Irwin in loving memory of Alan Irwin
- ♥ Alison & Carl Wermer in memory of Dorothy & Robert Knox and  
Kirsten Wermer
- ♥ Carol Spradling in honor of Ann Marie Spradling (pink); in honor of  
James Coates and Frances Coates (red); in honor of Richard and Marie  
Ansell (marble); and in honor Pat Seaver (white)
- ♥ Laurie Chipman in honor of all grandparents, past and present
- ♥ Sue Roediger & Doug Hinshaw in loving memory of Pat Seaver

## *A Special Message about our Christmas Offerings*

It is with great joy that we come to the end of 2020: a rough year for the country, Vermont, and many of those we know and love. We are grieving the 300,000 plus and counting Americans [100 Vermonters] who have died from the Coronavirus and for so many who feel isolated, depressed, or fatigued. All our lives have been disrupted and we will remember these days for the rest of our lives.

But I come to you with joy because First Church has weathered the COVID storm with grace and strengthened the ties that bind us together as people of faith. With the health and safety of our members in mind, we have continued to stream our services but to an increased number of followers. Administratively, we have met through Zoom and conducted the business of the church with aplomb. Our many and varied social groups have continued to converse and support each other electronically even with new ideas coming to fruition to meet the ever-deepening isolation of some of our members. We have continued to be a beacon to food insecure folks and maintain our community outreach. And through it all, our members have kept up their giving which of course directly pays for all the many programs, staff, building upkeep and ministries.

We have weathered this storm with joy because despite it all, First Church has expanded her scope, mission, and outreach during these crises. It is a tribute to your faith and dedication and all of us on the staff and in leadership roles are grateful for your positive spirit.

Let me offer you one more opportunity to support and strengthen your church as we come to the close of a difficult year. In the Spirit of Christmas, I would like you to consider making an end of the year financial gift to the church. Last year, the governmental PPP Loan kept us in solid financial shape but next year we will not have the PPP loan to count on and our budget will be significantly tighter. With your help, we can end the year financially strong and weather next year's transition back to a more normal life with some grace.

Due to not being in church when we collected the Per Capita collection, we are also way behind in that particular offering, an offering where we pay \$ 14.50 for every member of the church to the Vermont Conference of the UCC. Ideally, everyone chips in their share but that did not happen this year so again, I am offering you the opportunity to partner with the wider church in helping us meet that obligation.

Everyone on the staff and leadership of the church wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May God bless all of you and First Church as we look to the future with a confidence and joy.



***Christmas Blessings  
from Your Church  
Staff and Leaders!***

**Visit our official YouTube page to watch our Xmas Eve Services!** <https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej>



Donations can be made online @ [paypal.me/fccej](https://www.paypal.com/fccej) or mailed to:

**Attn: Financial Secretary  
FCCEJ  
1 Church Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452**

**5:00 P.M. Family Friendly Service:** As always, Rev. Mark, Rev. Josh, and Laurie Chipman will be in costume and in character as they bring the age-old story of Christ's birth to life. The three of them will be bringing you their message from various locations throughout the globe and then all come together to spread the light of Christ. There will be some great music with a special performance of Silent Night by the Stapleton Trio. Have your candles ready.

**9:00 P.M. Service of Lessons and Carols:** Our traditional service where we hear the story of Christ's birth read by various members of the church and listen to tremendous music from our various choirs will continue this year as well. Get your candles ready to light as you enjoy this ageless rendition of one of the most amazing and world-changing narratives ever.

**The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**  
***A United Church of Christ***  
**Christmas Eve 2020**  
**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*

**THE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Prelude

Welcome, Greeting and Announcements.....Deacon Alison Wermer

Good Evening Everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on your spiritual journey you are welcome to join the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction for our Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service. We wish we could have all of you jammed into our sanctuary with all the excitement and energy for which the occasion calls, but we are choosing to keep our members safe and instead stream the service for all to see.

So even though we are not in the sanctuary, we will still be celebrating Christ's birth tonight knowing that even though we are separate, we are together in spirit. So come let us gather to remember the age old story that changed the world, a story of angels and shepherds, wise men and rulers and of course a young couple and a newborn child.

As you may not have heard, Rev. Mark, Rev. Josh and Laurie are all home sick tonight so we will be listening to the ageless sacred story from some distinguished guests from the past. They will tell us the story of a Messiah's birth from their own unique perspective.

So sit back and relax in your homes and get ready to listen to this great old tale. Let us first begin with the great old Carol, O Come All Ye faithful, performed by Carol Spradling and the Sanctuary Choir. You are welcome to sing along at home. After the carol, Derek and Rachel Lyman-Humphreys along with their children Isaac and Abigail will light the Christ Candle. Then Rick and Finally at First will sing their anthem, Light of the World.

Merry Christmas everyone from your Deacons.

Opening Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

perf. by Carol Spradling, *Organ*  
& the Sanctuary Choir

[*Sanctuary Choir sings in Latin first*]  
**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.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning**

**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.**

Lighting the Christ Candle.....Rachel Humphrey & Derek Lyman  
Isaac & Abigail

Christmas Anthem

Light of the World  
*Lauren Daigle © 2014 Centric Songs*  
*Used by Permission. CCLI license # 11051841*

perf. by Finally @ First

The Coming of a Messiah Foretold.....The Prophetess Elizabeth

A Christmas a cappella Quintet

Mary Did You Know  
*Buddy Greene, Mark Lowry*  
©1991, 1993 Rufus Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)  
*Curb Word Music (Admin. by WC Music Corp.)*  
*Used by Permission. CCLI License #839225*

arr. by Pentatonix  
perf. by Carol Spradling  
Jim Coates  
Judy Pomainville  
Doug Olufsen  
Denise Keating

The Birth of Jesus.....Joseph

Christmas Prayer 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 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.**

**What child is this who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherd's 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  
So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh. Come peasant, king to own Him  
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him  
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby  
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary**

The Visitors and Witnesses.....Simon the Shepherd from Cyrene

Special Christmas Offering

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

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

Joy to the World

perf. by Carol Spradling, *Organ*  
& the Sanctuary Choir

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Christ 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 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, Elizabeth the Prophetess, Joseph – Jesus' dad, and Simon the shepherd from Cyrene will light their candles and invite the listening audience to light Christ's candles in your own homes. As we sit with our lighted candles remembering the Christ Child, let us sing Silent Night accompanied by the Stapleton Trio.*

*The Stapleton Trio consists of Emmerson & Orion Stapleton on the violins  
and Walker Stapleton on the piano.*

Silent Night, Holy Night  
*By Daniel Kantor. © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc.*

Sanctuary Choir  
Finally @ First  
Abigail Evans, *Violin*

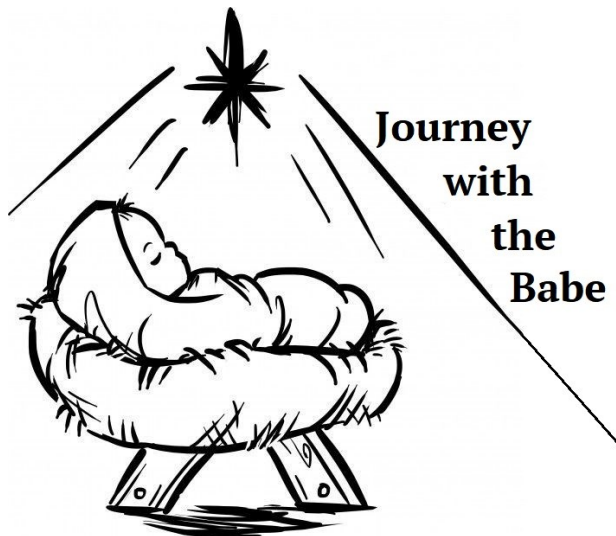
**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon virgin, mother and child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, 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 !**

**\*\* Thanks also to Emmerson and Orion and Walker Stapleton for their beautiful violin  
and piano music.**





# MINISTRY DIRECTORY

## Church Staff

**Senior Pastor:** Rev. Mark Mendes [[mmendes@fccej.org](mailto:mmendes@fccej.org)]

**Associate Pastor:** Rev. Josh Simon [[jsimon@fccej.org](mailto:jsimon@fccej.org)]

**Christian Education Director:** Laurie Chipman [[lchipman@fccej.org](mailto:lchipman@fccej.org)]

**Music Director:** Carol Spradling [[cspradling@fccej.org](mailto:cspradling@fccej.org)]

**Church Administrator:** Doug Ovitt [[welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)]

## Music Ministry

**Cherub Music:** Jenny Bourn [[jennybourn4@gmail.com](mailto:jennybourn4@gmail.com)] & Laura Marthaler [[Laura.marthaler@gmail.com](mailto:Laura.marthaler@gmail.com)]

**Currier Bell Choir Director:** Carolyn Harris [899-6759]

**Finally @ First Director:** Rick Dooley [[rickdooley5@gmail.com](mailto:rickdooley5@gmail.com)]

**Joyful Noise:** Jessica Moos [[jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com](mailto:jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com)]

**Men At First Director:** Bill Bickford, Jr. [[bill.bickford@aol.com](mailto:bill.bickford@aol.com)]

**Sanctuary Choir/Heavenly Harmony Director:** Carol Spradling [[cspradling@fccej.org](mailto: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](mailto:woodsusanjane@gmail.com)

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