



# 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)

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

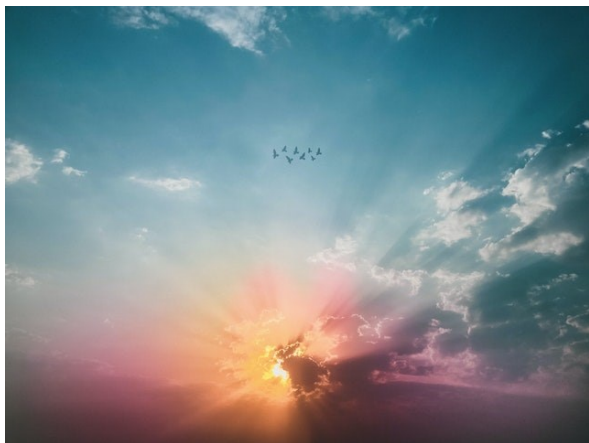


## WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP



Visit this link to view our official calendar of events: <http://fccej.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, 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays @** <http://youtube.com/c/fccej>
- ⊕ **Fellowship Hour, after Worship @** <http://zoom.us/j/980588369>
- ⊕ **Faith Formation, Sundays @ 9am via Zoom [Link in Weekly Newsletter] (2nd Sundays on Church Grounds)**
- ⊕ **Daily Devotionals, Weekdays 8am @** <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>



### HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICE SCHEDULE

**Palm Sunday:** Sunday, March 28th @ 10am via YouTube

**Maundy Thursday:** Thursday, April 1st @ 6pm via Zoom. <https://bit.ly/3bLwHx9>\*

**Good Friday:** Friday, April 2nd @ 7pm via YouTube.

**Easter:** Sunday, April 4th @ 6:30am (Sunrise) via Facebook; and 10am via YouTube. (This service will be prerecorded.)

*\*No password is required and the pastors themselves will digitally usher you into this special event.*

### NEWSLETTERS

Signup Online! <https://bit.ly/3dwsHji>

Our weekly newsletter contains important announcements!

View current and past issues here:

<http://bit.ly/3rlslSv>

Our "SPIRIT@FIRST" monthly newsletter is available by snail-mail and email. Hard copies are available at church, too.

Visit our archive:

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



**We have a robust digital ministry! Find us online:**



FACEBOOK

[bit.ly/39039ht](http://bit.ly/39039ht)



INSTAGRAM

[bit.ly/3rlfgZf](http://bit.ly/3rlfgZf)



INTERNET

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



YOUTUBE

[bit.ly/3oPpBv9](http://bit.ly/3oPpBv9)

Order of Worship  
March 21st, 2021: Live Streaming  
The Fifth Sunday of Lent  
Jesus' Journey of Transformation  
The Order of Worship

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. Mark one thought of gratitude [(802) 922-1773]

2 Prayer Requests: Text Rev. Josh your Prayer Requests [(920) 858-6601]

Welcome..... Rev. Mark Mendes, *Senior Pastor*

*“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

Hybrid Service Begins April 11th

Pastoral visits: simply call us up

Morning Devotions [webpage]

Faith Formation from 9 – 9:30 a.m. on line

Pick up bags of Materials @ admin door

Music: Carol Spradling: Music Director,

Sanctuary Choir: Our Traditional Choral Group

Finally at First: Our Praise Band

Lenten Schedule

Wednesday Night Offerings at 7:00 p.m.

Picking Up Your Palms 9-12 noon next week

Holy Week Services and Activities

Maundy Thursday: April 1st @ 6:00 p.m.

Zoom ID # 822 8263 1516

Good Friday: April 2nd @ 7:00 p.m. [more info coming]

Sanctuary Prayer Time:

(Key announcements  
continue on next page...)

Monday March 29th - Saturday April 3rd  
From 10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in ½ hour slots  
And Twenty Minute stays

Faith Formation Village Scavenger Hunt  
7 homes with lesson and symbols given out  
All walkable from church, All handouts are outside

Sunrise Service on Facebook Live at 6:30 a.m. Rev. Mark

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

Musical Introit

**Call to Worship [Please join in from your homes and in church]**

Leader: Jesus came to the world to set us free from the constraints and constructs that keep us from communing with our Creator and God.

**People: Jesus sets us free.**

Leader: Governments, religions, philosophies, education and culture all have the potential of enslaving us and keeping us from knowing the Divine Spirit.

**People: Jesus sets us free.**

Leader: Through honesty of being, a passion for justice and a command to love, Jesus frees us all to live with meaning and joy in a beloved community.

**People: Jesus sets us free.**

Leader: Come, let us break the metaphorical chains that bind us and learn to live new lives of freedom.

Meeting & Greetings Along the Road..... Marion Wrightington

Prayer of Invocation.....Pete Schmalz, *Deacon*

Opening Hymn There Is a Balm in Gilead (553) by Finally @ First

Participants in the Sanctuary are asked not to sing the hymns.  
A soft hum and singing in your mind's eye is allowed

*(lyrics on next page...)*

*Refrain:*

**There is a balm in Gilead  
to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead  
to heal the sin-sick soul.**

**Sometimes I feel discouraged,  
and think my work's in vain,  
But then the Holy Spirit  
revives my soul again. [Refrain]**

**If you cannot preach like Peter,  
if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus,  
who died to save us all. [Refrain]**

Meetings & Greetings Along the Road..... Russell & Alma Wilson

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

Offering Our Gifts to God..... Rev. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor*

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. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor*

*Text your prayers to Rev. Josh @ (920) 858-6601*

**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.**

Lighting the Lenten Candle..... The Stein Family  
Terry, Heather Addie and Tristan

Sacred Readings: Acts 16:16-40 "Paul in Prison"

One day, on our way to the place of prayer, a slave girl ran into us. She was a psychic and, with her fortunetelling, made a lot of money for the people who owned her. She started following Paul around, calling everyone's attention to us by yell-

*(continued on next page...)*

ing out, "These men are working for the Most High God. They're laying out the road of salvation for you!" She did this for a number of days until Paul, finally fed up with her, turned and commanded the spirit that possessed her, "Out! In the name of Jesus Christ, get out of her!" And it was gone, just like that.

When her owners saw that their lucrative little business was suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, roughed them up and dragged them into the market square. Then the police arrested them and pulled them into a court with the accusation, "These men are disturbing the peace - dangerous Jewish agitators subverting our Roman law and order."

By this time the crowd had turned into a restless mob out for blood. After beating them black and blue, they threw them into jail, telling the jailkeeper to put them under heavy guard so there would be no chance of escape. He did just that - threw them into the maximum security cell in the jail and clamped leg irons on them.

Along about midnight, Paul and Silas were at prayer and singing a robust hymn to God. The other prisoners couldn't believe their ears. Then, without warning, a huge earthquake! The jailhouse tottered, every door flew open, all the prisoners were loose.

Startled from sleep, the jailer saw all the doors swinging loose on their hinges. Assuming that all the prisoners had escaped, he pulled out his sword and was about to do himself in, figuring he was as good as dead anyway, when Paul stopped him: "Don't do that! We're all still here! Nobody's run away!"

The jailer got a torch and ran inside. Badly shaken, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas.

He led them out of the jail and asked, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved, to really live?" They said, "Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you'll live as you were meant to live - and everyone in your house included!"

They went on to spell out in detail the story of the Master - the entire family got in on this part.

They never did get to bed that night. The jailer made them feel at home, dressed their wounds, and then - he couldn't wait till morning! - was baptized, he and everyone in his family. There in his home, he had food set out for a festive meal. It was a night to remember: He and his entire family had put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration.

At daybreak, the court judges sent officers with the instructions, "Release these men." The jailer gave Paul the message, "The judges sent word that you're free to go on your way. Congratulations! Go in peace!"

But Paul wouldn't budge. He told the officers, "They beat us up in public and threw us in jail, Roman citizens in good standing! And now they want to get us out of the way on the sly without anyone knowing? Nothing doing! If they want us out of here, let them come themselves and lead us out in broad daylight." When the officers reported this, the judges

panicked. They had no idea that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. They hurried over and apologized, personally escorted them from the jail, and then asked them if they wouldn't please leave the city.

Walking out of the jail, Paul and Silas went straight to Lydia's house, saw their friends again, encouraged them in the faith, and only then went on their way.

Anthem	<u>Amazing Grace, My Chains are Gone</u> Chris Tomlin © 2006 sixsteps Music Used with Permission CCLI License # 11051841	by Finally @ First
Sermon	“Imprisoned”	Rev. Mark Mendes
Closing Hymn	<u>This Little Light of Mine (524)</u>	by Sanctuary Choir

Participants in the Sanctuary are asked not to sing the hymns.  
A soft hum and singing in your mind's eye is allowed.

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**All through the night, I'm gonna let it shine;  
all through the night, I'm gonna let it shine.  
All through the night, I'm gonna let it shine;  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

Benediction and blowing out our candles

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.**

Please, join us for Fellowship Hour — Meeting ID# 980588369 [OR bit.ly/31dXQ76](https://bit.ly/31dXQ76)

# God of Light, Hear Our Prayer

Richard Ansell (Carol Spradling's father)

Bruce Giannuzzi

Ilya (Cathie Goodheart's friend)

Russ & Alma Wilson

The Poratti Family

The O'Neil Family

Bruce Giannuzzi

Gary Knapp (Jackie Knapp's Son)

Nancy (Carolyn Toof's friend)

Steve Mitchell

Jed Cilley & Family

The Shearer Family

David (David Irwin's friend)

The Forbes Family

Paul Hyde & Family

Bonita (Judy McCullen's friend)

Nancy Hayes

Marsha Duell

Jane MacFarland (Sue Wood's cousin)

The Bartlett Family

Judy (Cathie Goodheart's cousin)

Bill Barrett (Nancy Hayes son-in-law)

Peat Taylor

Betty Moody & Family

All persons affected by the Coronavirus

**The altar flowers are given by  
Erin, Mark, and Jonathan Ferrara  
In loving memory of our grandparents Lee & Mick Mills,  
Clarence Thaut, Joe & Doris Ferrara, and Walt & Irene Donay**

## ALTAR FLOWERS REQUESTS

Visit this link to reserve yours:

[bit.ly/33JWlxj](http://bit.ly/33JWlxj)

If you wish to retrieve your flowers, need prayers for yourself or a loved one, or require a call from a pastor, contact [welcome@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.org) or call 1(802) 878-5745.



# MINISTRY DIRECTORY

## 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

Director, **Sanctuary Choir & Heavenly Harmony:** Carol Spradling [cspradling@fccej.org]

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

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

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

## Officers

**President:** Maureen Evans [233-6127]

**Vice President:** Cathy Shearer [878-6023]

**Financial Secretary:** Rob Sinkewicz [878-4470]

**Treasurer:** Dan Petherbridge [879-0261]

**Clerk:** Christine Sinkewicz [878-4470]

**Historian:** Ann Gray [878-4088]

**Auditors:** Betsy Weischedel [922-2094] & Steve Wood [878-3068]

## Committee Chairs

**Christian Education:** Lisa Clark [872-5849]

**Communications:** Francis Gravel [802-318-6235]

**Deacons:** Judy Pomainville [236-0604]

**Finance & Pastoral Relations:** Cathy Shearer [878-6023]

**Hospitality:** Jim Glatz [503-5076]

**Human Resources:** Maureen Evans [233-6127]

**Missions:** Paula Sargent [879-3598]

**Music:** Denise Keating [345-8900]

**Nominating:** Dick Harris [644-6488]

**Stewardship:** Kathryn Brennan [878-9509]

**Trustees:** Kaki McGeary [879-2062]

**Ushering:** Marlene Frank [872-9126]

## Recognized Groups

**Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop:** Sue Wood [878-3068] [woodsusanjane@gmail.com](mailto:woodsusanjane@gmail.com)

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