



# 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; Communion, 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays @** <http://youtube.com/c/fccej>  
*(Preregistration no longer required! Pews are available on a “first come, first served” basis.)*
- ⊕ **Fellowship Hour, after Worship @** <http://zoom.us/j/980588369>
- ⊕ **Faith Formation, Sundays @ 9-10am, weekly on church grounds;**
  - 9am until May 30th; meets once/final time on Sun., June 6th @ 10am
  - Meets on grounds except during inclement weather; then via Zoom; linked in weekly newsletter
- ⊕ **Daily Devotionals, Weekdays 8am @** <http://facebook.com/firstcongregationalej/>
- ⊕ **Sermon Talk Back, Tuesday at 8:30am @** <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ⊕ **Life Story/Memoir Club, 3rd Wednesdays @ 1pm via Zoom.**
  - For details, contact Pete Schmalz [pnschmalz@comcast.net](mailto:pnschmalz@comcast.net) or P#879-3352
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter, Thursdays at 8am @** <http://zoom.us/j/97659276694>
- ⊕ **Noontime Book Group, 3rd Mondays at 11:30am @** <http://zoom.us/j/626841083>

## Our Journey of the Spirit continues.....



### 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. If you wish to contribute content, it is due by the 3rd Friday of each month (except in November and December when it is due on the 2nd Friday.) Visit our archive:

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

## BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.  
Forgive often. Reject racism.  
**Fight for the powerless.**  
Share earthly and spiritual resources.  
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
May 30, 2021: Live Streaming  
Journey of the Spirit

Order of Worship

*Live Stream begins at 9:45 a.m. with announcements and introductory music  
beginning approx. five minutes before 10am.*

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 [(802) 922-1773] one thought of gratitude
- 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: Every other pew, soft singing, just come

Morning Devotions: Rev. Mark [webpage]

Faith Formation for Families with Children & Youth

All are welcome to join us!

– this coming Sunday, June 6th is our last one & we will begin at 10am, ice cream truck coming at 11am.

Come see folks face to face and reconnect with those you’ve been missing.

- \* All are invited to join wearing masks & practicing social distancing
- \* Laurie will continue to send out Faith@Home emails monthly

Music: Carol Spradling: Music Director,

Sanctuary Choir: Our Traditional Choral Group

Finally at First: Our Praise Band

And the esteemed talents of Denise Keating and Marie Johnson

As always great to have Jonah Moos, Ed Guild,

Gary Hartmann and Francis Gravel operating the live stream tech.

## Musical Introit

### Call to Worship

Leader: God created this beautiful universe.

**People: And we like using it for our own benefit.**

Leader: Yahweh brought the slaves out of Egypt to freedom.

**People: And they murmured and wanted to return to slavery.**

Leader: The Lord gave the people commandments in which to live.

**People: And we break them and come up with our own.**

Leader: The prophets taught us about God's justice.

**People: And we ignored and killed them and twisted their words.**

Leader: Jesus came and taught us the meaning of extravagant love.

**People: And we limited God's love,  
judged others to be outside of God's love  
and often refuse to even love ourselves.**

Leader: Its amazing God still continues to call out for us to follow.

Come, let us again enter into this sacred relationship  
with our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

### Opening Hymn

#### Gather Us In

by Finally @ First

Marty Haugen © 1982 GIA Publications  
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*People are invited to sing softly while keeping their masks on.*

**Here in this place new light is streaming  
Now is the darkness vanished away  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings  
Brought here to you in the light of this day  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken  
Gather us in, the blind and the lame  
Call to us now and we shall awaken  
We shall arise at the sound of our name**

**We are the young, our lives are a mystery  
We are the old who yearn for your face  
We have been sung throughout all of history  
Called to be light to the whole human race  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly  
Give us the courage to enter the song**

*continued on next page...*

**Not in the dark of buildings confining  
Not in some heaven light years away  
But here in this place the new light is shining  
Now is the kingdom, now is the day  
Gather us in and hold us forever  
Gather us in and make us your own  
Gather us in, all peoples together  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones**

Prayer of Invocation.....Peter Schmalz, *Deacon* [in person]

Meetings & Greetings Along the Road.....Beth and Todd Warren

Children's Message.....Rev. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor*

Pastoral Prayer **and Lord's Prayer**.....Rev. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor*

*E-mail prayers to Rev. Josh @ 920 858-6601  
Please, note that there are two slight changes.*

**Loving God, 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 do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.**

Prayer Response

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

by **Finally @ First**

Ken Medema © 1973 Hope Publishing Company  
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Sacred Readings

Luke 4:1-14 The Temptation of Jesus..... Read by Laurie Chipman, *C.E. Director*

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone." '

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." '

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Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you”,  
and

“On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” ’

Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

### *The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry*

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.

Exodus 32:1-24: The Golden Calf..... Read by Rev. Mark Mendes, *Senior Pastor*

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, ‘Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ Aaron said to them, ‘Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.’ So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.’ They rose early the next day, and offered burnt-offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

The Lord said to Moses, ‘Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” ’ The Lord said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.’

But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, ‘O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, “It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, “I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” ’ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, tablets that were written on both sides, written on the front and on the back. The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, ‘There is a noise of war in the camp.’ But he said, ‘It is not the sound made by victors, or the sound made by losers; it is the sound of revellers that I hear.’ As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf that they had made, burned it with fire, ground it to powder, scattered it on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

Moses said to Aaron, ‘What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?’ And Aaron said, ‘Do not let the anger of my lord burn hot; you know the people, that they are bent on evil. They said to me, “Make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” So I said to them, “Whoever has gold, take it off”; so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!’

Anthem Help Me Find It by Finally @ First  
by Sidewalk Prophets © 2011 So Essential Tunes  
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Sermon “Explaining Temptation?” 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

Closing Hymn America the Beautiful (O Beautiful for Spacious Skies) by Finally @ First

*People are invited to sing softly while keeping their masks on.*

**O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain!  
America! America! God shed God’s grace on thee  
And crown thy good with love’s embrace, from sea to shining sea.**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat, across the wilderness!  
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law.**

**O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!  
America! America! May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.**

**O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!  
America! America! God shed God's grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with love's embrace, from sea to shining sea.**

Pastoral Benediction..... Rev. Mark Mendes, *Senior Pastor*

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 us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.  
With every step 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.**





# Fellowship

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

## OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

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

Richard Ansell (Carol Spradling's father)  
Ilya (Cathie Goodheart's friend)  
Bruce Giannuzzi  
David (David Irwin's friend)  
Nancy Hayes  
Russ & Alma Wilson  
Gary Knapp (Jackie Knapp's Son)  
Steve Mitchell  
Jane MacFarland (Sue Wood's cousin)

Judy (Cathie Goodheart's cousin)  
Bill Barrett (Nancy Hayes son-in-law)  
Peat Taylor  
Betty Moody & Family  
Rusty Sargent  
Jessica Moos & Family  
Andrea & Tom Sramek (Maureen McKenzie's  
niece and husband)  
Patty Garvey  
Dave Johnson  
Joe and Ann Wells  
Carolyn Toof's Niece  
Carol Spradling  
Friends & Family of Barb Auch (Donna  
Burnett's friend)  
The Family of Luisa Chernyshov  
The Family of Stephen Hayes  
John Mauger  
...and all persons affected by COVID19



The flowers on the altar are given by  
**Heather & Terry Stein**  
In honor of Family.

## ALTAR FLOWERS REQUESTS

Visit this link to reserve yours: [bit.ly/33JWlxj](https://bit.ly/33JWlxj)

If you wish to retrieve your flowers, please email [welcome@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.org) or call 1(802) 878-5745.

# MISSION MOMENTS

May 30, 2021  
**Trinity Sunday**  
**(First Sunday after Pentecost)**  
John 3:1-17  
“Mysterious Encounter”

In today’s Gospel story, the man Nicodemus has an encounter with Jesus that changes his life. As Christ’s disciples, we never know what small interaction might be life-changing for those we meet.

Andy DeBraber, generosity officer of the United Church of Christ, tells this true story.

At a gathering of United Church of Christ members who support the National Setting financially, the question was asked, "Why do you support the UCC?"

At first there was silence, but then a man in his 70s from rural Ohio stood up. His wife elbowed him, he explained, so he had been nudged to tell his story.

As a child, he had learned to give to the church and be generous from his father. His father would give him a dime each Sunday to put in the offering plate. Then one Sunday, he turned to his father at the offering for his weekly dime to put in the plate.

His father refused. You see, he had just started delivering newspapers. His father told him that from now on, the boy had to put his own dimes in the plate. Learned early, his practice of giving continued into adulthood.

But why does he now give so generously to all settings of the UCC, 62 years after that long-ago lesson?

"I was a homophobe and racist," he said. "And if it weren't for the UCC, I still would be."

Just like Nicodemus, the man in this story was changed, and changed again. First by his father who taught him the value of giving and then by those who helped him see a way of love and openness. How might your witness bring change to the world?



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

God is still speaking,

# 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 Larrabee [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]

# Sermon Notes