



# 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



**Sunday Worship @ 10am**  
**Communion on 1st Sundays**  
**Teleworship: [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)**



**Sermon Talk Back**  
**Tuesdays @ 8:30am**  
**via Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>**



**Coffee Clatter**  
**Thursdays @ 8am**  
**via Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/97659276694>**



**Daily Devotionals**  
**Weekdays @ 8am**  
**[facebook.com/firstcongregationalej](https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalej)**



**Life Story/Memoir Club**  
**3rd Wednesdays @ 1pm**  
**Contact Pete Schmalz for Zoom Link**  
**[pnschmalz@comcast.net](mailto:pnschmalz@comcast.net)**



**Noontime Book Group**  
**3rd Mondays @ 11:30am**  
**On-site! (Marvin Lounge)**

*Our Journey of the Spirit continues.....*



FACEBOOK

[bit.ly/39O39ht](https://bit.ly/39O39ht)



INSTAGRAM

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



INTERNET



YOUTUBE

[fccej.org](https://fccej.org)

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

## NEWSLETTERS

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

Our weekly newsletter contains important announcements! View current and past issues here: <https://bit.ly/3rlsISv>

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  
June 27, 2021: Live Streaming  
Journey of the Spirit

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

Order of Worship

As worship begins:

Light a candle at home,

Sit in a comfortable spot,

Center yourself w/ breathing.

Prelude

Prelude & Fugue in F Major

J.S. Bach, Public Domain

Marie Johnson, *Organ*

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

A Few Key Announcements

Hybrid Service: Every other pew, soft singing, just come

Faith Formation: materials in Narthex for pickup @ services

Doug Ovitt, Administrator, on vacation next week.

Music: Carol Spradling: Music Dir. on medical leave of absence,

Filling in Marie Johnson and Denise Keating

Sanctuary Choir: Our Traditional Choral Group

Finally at First: Our Praise Band

As always great to have Jonah Moos, Ed Guild, Gary Hartmann and Francis Gravel  
operating the live stream tech.

Musical Introit

Where the Spirit of the Lord is

Stephen Adams © 1973 Pilot Point Music

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Denise Keating, *Piano*

## Call to Worship [led by Amy McIntyre]

Leader: Welcome to our community of faith. We believe that God's Divine Spirit is within all of you: guiding your thoughts, aligning your values, discerning eternal truths, challenging you to love and calling you into community. Thanks for ushering God's Spirit into this place this morning.

**People: When two or three of us are gathered, God's presence is there. When we help the less fortunate: Christ's presence is there. When the gathered community comes together in prayer asking for answers, the Spirit provides an answer.**

Leader: Come, let us call the Spirit of the Living God to be with us today. Come, let us worship and praise our Lord. Come, let us sing with joy.

Opening Hymn

Called as Partners in Christ's Service (NCH #495)

Marie Johnson, *Organ*

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

**Called as partners in Christ's service  
Called to ministries of grace  
We respond with deep commitment  
Fresh new lines of faith to trace  
May we learn the art of sharing  
Side by side and friend with friend  
Equal partners in our caring  
To fulfil God's chosen end**

**Christ's example Christ's inspiring  
Christ's clear call to work and worth  
Let us follow never faltering  
Reconciling folk on earth  
Men and women richer poorer  
All God's people young and old  
Blending human skills together  
Gracious gifts from God unfold**

**Thus new patterns for Christ's mission  
In a small or global sense  
Help us bear each other's burdens  
Breaking down each wall or fence  
Words of comfort words of vision  
Words of challenge said with care  
Bring new power and strength for action  
Make us colleagues free and fair**

*continued on next page...*

**So God grant us for tomorrow  
Ways to order human life  
That surround each person's sorrow  
With a calm that conquers strife  
Make us partners in our living  
Our compassion to increase  
Messengers of faith thus giving  
Hope and confidence and peace**

Prayer of Invocation.....Amy McIntyre, *Deacon* [in person]

Children's Message.....Rev. Josh Simon, *Associate Pastor* [in person!]

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer..... Rev. Ron Faux, *Minister of Visitation*

Text prayers to Rev. Mark @ 802 922-1773  
*Please, note 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.**

Musical Prayer Response

Sacred Readings

Acts 15:1-35: The Council at Jerusalem.....Rev. Mark Mendes, *Senior Pastor*

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.'

The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, 'My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disci-

*...continued on next page...*

ples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.’ The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, ‘My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

“After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;  
from its ruins I will rebuild it,  
and I will set it up,  
so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—  
even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.

Thus says the Lord,  
who has been making these things known from long ago.”

Therefore, I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.’

### The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers

Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, with the following letter:

‘The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.’

So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When its members read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the believers to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

Numbers 11:16-25: The Seventy Elders.....Laurie Chipman, *CE Director*

So the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you. I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them; and they shall bear the burden of the people along with you so that you will not bear it all by yourself. And say to the people: Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wailed in the hearing of the LORD, saying, “If only we had meat to eat! Surely it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore, the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat not only one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you—because you have rejected the LORD who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”’ But Moses said, ‘The people I am with number six hundred thousand on foot; and you say, “I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month”! Are there enough flocks and herds to slaughter for them? Are there enough fish in the sea to catch for them?’ The LORD said to Moses, ‘Is the LORD’s power limited? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.’

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

Anthem

Change my Heart Oh God  
Eddie Espinosa © 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing  
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Denise Keating, *Piano*

Sermon

“Ongoing Revelation”

Rev. Mark Mendes

*Sermon Questions?* Text Rev. Mark @ 802 922-1773

Offering Our Gifts to God.....Rev. Ron Faux

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

Sung Congregational Benediction

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.**

Postlude

Carillon Toccata

Marie Johnson, *Organ*

Douglas E. Wagner © 1983 Lorenz Publishing Co.  
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## 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@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) or call 1(802) 878-5745.

*Richard Ansell (Carol Spradling's father)*

*Bruce Giannuzzi*

*David (David Irwin's friend)*

*Nancy Hayes*

*Russ & Alma Wilson*

*Gary Knapp (Jackie Knapp's Son)*

*Steve Mitchell*

*Bill Barrett (Nancy Hayes son-in-law)*

*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*

*Robert Howe*

*Matt McGeary & Family*

*The Family of Mary Gellatly*

*Warren Vanslette (Doug Ovitt's brother)*

*Jordan*

*Jonah Moos' Father*

*...and all persons affected by COVID19*

**The flowers on the altar are given by**

**Jill White**

**In memory of her parents**

**Lee & Phyllis White**

## ALTAR FLOWERS REQUESTS

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

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



# MISSION MOMENTS

June 27, 2021  
**Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**  
Mark 5:21-43  
Healing Powers  
*Open and Affirming Sunday*

Louis James Irving Mitchell, longtime transgender activist, faith leader, social justice advocate, and community builder, was assigned female at birth, and named and raised as a girl. He says he knew as young as three years old that “she” was not who he was. Louis, also known as LJ, was raised by his mother and grandmother in Los Angeles, CA. An intelligent young adult, he excelled at school but wrestled with addiction and purposelessness.

After finding recovery in 1983, one of LJ’s first jobs was with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, where he worked with runaway and throwaway youth, trained as a peer counselor, and managed the youth shelter. Passionate about community service and social justice, Louis has been a persuasive advocate for the rights of the LGBTQ community, African-American and other people of color communities, as well as the homeless, HIV/AIDS-affected, and recovering and inmate communities.

His commitment to serve the least, the last, the lost, and the left-out has had a profound impact on countless lives. In the early 1990s, as some of his friends began to transition to male, he realized his true identity and began the process of transitioning to his true self.

Educated at Andover Newton Theological School, Louis is a pioneer, co-founding the advocacy and support organizations Transfaith and Recovering the Promise. His gifts for ministry and advocacy were recognized and upheld by the community when he was ordained as the executive director of Transfaith in the United Church of Christ in 2018.

On this Open and Affirming Sunday, we honor Louis and celebrate the United Church of Christ’s nearly half century of honoring and affirming the gifts of LGBTQ+ clergy. It is with gratitude that we acknowledge Louis J. Mitchell’s gifts and graces for ministry, and all that he has done to enrich and empower our denomination.

*The Open and Affirming Coalition advocates for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in the United Church of Christ and beyond and equips UCC congregations to become effective witnesses to Christ’s extravagant welcome. Find out more at [openandaffirming.org](http://openandaffirming.org).*



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]

**Minister of Visitation:** Rev. Ron Faux [revronfaux@gmail.com]

**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**

**...EVEN MORE**  
**SERMON NOTES!**