



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 **E-mail:** welcome@fccej.org **Website:** www.fccej.org



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Sunday, November 28, 2021
First Service: 10:15 a.m.
First Sunday of Advent

The Order of Worship

Our First Service with organ and traditional choir is streamed and begins at 8:30am with access on our webpage @ www.fccej.org. You can watch that service any time thereafter. Our Second Service with our praise band is live in the sanctuary at 10:15am and it is not streamed.

Our Faith Formation Program for all children occurs during the second worship service.

Currently, masks are required for all attendees.

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In the Spirit of Christ*

An Extravagant Welcome

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.**

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

Our Ministers will welcome everyone to church and then highlight some significant events and or announcements in our shared life.

Musical Introit

Anticipation

Carly Simon
Finally @ First

Call to Worship / Lighting the Candle of HOPEDeacon Carolyn Rushford

Leader: Century after century, humanity's chosen leaders misused their position and power for their own benefit, putting their greed before the needs of the people. This made God mad!

People: Everyone but a very few suffered. Their clamoring voices mixed with anguished tears in prayers drew God's attention. God responded to their pleas with a vision of a Servant King that would change the very structures upon which the injustice perennially lingered. People hoped the future would be better.

Leader: King David united the nation, defeated their enemies and brought peace to the land. As the youngest son from an unknown family with a mixed-race lineage and questionable background, he opened God's message to all types of people. God was happy.

People: We still hope for a united nation where we can forgive our enemies and live in peace. We still want to share God's message of love to everyone. We still hope for a Davidic styled politician who will lead us to a brighter future.

**Candlelighters: We light this candle in hopes of a brighter day.
 God is Good - All the Time
 All the Time - God is Good.**

Prayer of Invocation & Unison Lord’s Prayer Deacon Carolyn Rushford

***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.**

Scripture Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16 Read by Carolyn Rushford

The Righteous Branch and the Covenant with David

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’

Children’s Message.....Rev. Josh Simon

**Opening Hymn City of God
 (Song Sheet)**

Pastoral PrayerRev. Josh Simon

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer
 Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other
 Text prayers to Rev. Mark @ [802-922-1773]

Musical Prayer Response O Come, O Come, Emmanuel John Neal

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
 And ransom captive Israel,
 That mourns in lonely exile here,
 Until the Son of God appear.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 Timothy's Encouraging Report

But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Anthem

Mary, Did You Know

Mark Lowry
Finally @ First

Sermon

God Still Wants You to Have Hope

Rev. Mark Mendes



Celebrating Our Giving to God at First Church

*Thank you to those at home who are joining us
and financially supporting our ministry.*

*Thank you to folks in the sanctuary who are present
and offering their gifts in the basket provided.*

*Thank you to everyone who has sent in their pledge card for 2022
and for everyone planning to send it in shortly.*

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
 let earth its praises bring;
 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.

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction Rev. Mark Mendes

***Sung Community Benediction**

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.
 God now in peace, in faith and in love.

*Please stand if you are able

A Few Key Announcements:

- ◆ Sunday Worship - Two Services - 8:30am* and 10:15am

*First service streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)

We are pleased to offer in-person worship with COVID precautions in place. This includes masking and social distancing regardless of vaccination status.

Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month. The elements will be sealed and passed out to the congregation.

- ◆ Music: Marie Johnson and Denise Keating are leading Sanctuary Choir
Rick Dooley leads our Praise Band *Finally @ First* at second service at 10:15am.
- ◆ Sincere thanks to Jonah Moos, Ed Guild, Gary Hartmann, Francis Gravel, Linda Lou Parker and Harsh Shah operating the live stream tech!

Faith Formation & Youth

- ◆ Families begin in the Sanctuary, then following the Children's message at second service all are welcome to follow Laurie to Fellowship Hall where we have 2 air purifiers running. (Transition to our peer rooms will not happen until the majority of our 5-12 year olds are vaccinated.) We spend time getting to know each other, talking about a bible story and do an activity or two. PreK through 8th grade, high school youth are welcome to be helpers.
- ◆ Next Youth Gatherings ~ The Gathering meets weekly every Sunday, 6:30-7 pm. This Sunday we're working on the Christmas pageant. Performing not your thing? No worries - there are positions with costumes, props, tech - something for everyone!

The Giving Tree is here! We are once again collection gifts for children in Essex Junction, Essex Town and Westford. You have the option of picking up a tag from the Giving Tree in the Narthex or going online and signing up via Sign Up Genius. Each tag identifies a gift for a child and for each child there are three tags. Two of the tags ask for gifts of clothing that the child needs and the third tag asks for a book, game, toy or gift card for the child. Please consider taking a tag or two to bring a smile and some Christmas cheer to a local youngster. If you do take a tag(s), be sure to sign your name on the sheet by the tree identifying the tag number(s) that you have taken. Wrapped or bagged gifts, with the tags securely attached, need to be returned to the church no later than **Friday, December 10**. We will be distributing the gifts on December 17. Families that we help have expressed how much they appreciate the gifts we give their children and the joy that abounds on Christmas Day. **Please remember to label your gifts.** To use the online option, visit our website at [www.fccej.org/Serving Others/Get Involved](http://www.fccej.org/Serving_Others/Get_Involved) - click the Sign Up Genius link on the right of the page.

If you choose a gift(s) using Sign-up Genius, please mark your wrapped or bagged gift with the number associated with your gift - Ex. 5C - so we will know who the gift belongs to. You are welcome to be as creative as you like when marking the gift. Thank you for your support of this important connection to our community!

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 or call 1(802) 878-5745.

Josh Ludwig
Bruce Giannuzzi
David (David Irwin's friend)
Nancy Hayes
Bill Barrett (Nancy Hayes son-in-law)
Patty Garvey
Dave Johnson
Joe and Ann Wells

Maureen MacKenzie
Catherine McMaster's sister : Margaret Sprague
Robert Howe
The Family of Mary Gellatly
Jordan
Sean McKenzie
Jaime Real
Claire Glatz
Emily Broude
Carlene Lawrence's Family
Duke Ehler and the Family of Emily Ehler
College Students (and their parents!)

...and all persons affected by COVID19

*The flowers on the altar
are given by
Nancy Engle & John Ferris
in loving memory of Robert Ferris*

ALTAR FLOWERS REQUESTS

All altar flowers request slots for 2021 are fulfilled!

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

CONNECTIONS:

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

Our "Weekly Update" eConnection:
<http://bit.ly/3rlsSv>

Our monthly "SPIRIT@FIRST" eNewsletter*
<http://fcej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>

*available in a printed, snail-mailed format

ONGOING PROGRAMS!

- ☉ **Coffee Clatter**, every Friday @ 8am, Martone's
- ☉ **Bridge Group**, 3rd Fridays @ 1:30pm Marvin Lounge



Sunday Worship @ 8:30 & 10:15
Communion on 1st Sundays
Teleworship: [youtube.com/c/fcej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fcej)



Sermon Talk Back (Hybrid Format!)
Tuesdays @ 8:30am, Marvin Lounge
...and Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>



Wednesday Night Searchers 7pm in the Marvin Lounge—on hiatus till January



Noontime Book Group
3rd Mondays @ 11:30am, Marvin Lounge
Zoom component is on hiatus



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39O39ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fcej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

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]

Church Administrator: Jen Kelly [welcome@fccej.org]

Music

Currier Bell Choir: Alison Wermer [clwerme@msn.com; P# 802-879-7650]

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

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

Officers

President: Cathy Shearer [802-878-6023]

Vice President: Brenda Dawson [802-881-5253]

Financial Secretary: Rob Sinkewicz [802-878-4470]

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [802-879-0261]

Clerk: Christine Sinkewicz [802-878-4470]

Historian: Ann Gray [802-878-4088]

Auditors: Betsy Weischedel [802-922-2094] & Steve Wood [802-878-3068]

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Lisa Clark [802-872-5849]

Communications: Francis Gravel [802-318-6235]

Deacons: Judy Pomainville [802-236-0604]

Finance & Pastoral Relations: Cathy Shearer [802-878-6023]

Hospitality: Jen Dooley [802-578-0230]

Human Resources: Brenda Dawson [802-881-5253]

Missions: Paula Sargent [802-879-3598]

Music: Denise Keating [802-345-8900]

Nominating: Dick Harris [802-644-6488]

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan [802-878-9509]

Trustees: Kaki McGeary [802-879-2062]

Ushering: Marlene Frank [802-872-9126]

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sue Wood [802-878-3068] woodsusanjane@gmail.com

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert [802-879-0109]