



# 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) **Website:** [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
Sunday, December 12, 2021  
Second Service: 10:15 a.m.  
**Third Sunday of Advent - Joy**

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](http://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.***

*A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All  
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

Chorus of Evidence

Finally @ First

Call to Worship / Lighting the Candle of JOY ..... Deacon Judy Larrabee Pomainville  
*Modified from Touch of Holiness, ed. Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi. Copyright ©1990 Pilgrim Press.*

Leader: Advent is a time of wonder—the wonder of the holy one of God this third Sunday of Advent we light this candle joy, and we wonder,

**People: “How can we rejoice when the powerful remain seated on their thrones, the lowly have not been lifted up, the hungry are empty, the rich are filled with good thing?”**

Leader: We light this candle for joy, and we wonder,

**People: “Christ is our joy!”**

Leader: We light this candle for joy.

**People: and we await the coming of the holy one of God whose reign shall never end.**

**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 Lauren Starkey**

**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

Luke 1:26-56

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

**\*Hymn**

**Come O Long Expected Jesus**

**#122**

**Come, O long-expected Jesus,  
born to set all people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
grant us your true liberty.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope to all the earth impart;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
enter every longing heart.**

**Born all people to deliver,  
born a child, you came to reign!  
Born to rule on earth forever,  
come, be known to us again.**

**By your own eternal Spirit,  
come to claim us as your own;  
By your all sufficient merit,  
let us share your cross and crown.**

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 Come Let Us Go Up to Zion

Finally @ First  
CCLI #451218

Anthem

Finally @ First

Sermon

Finding Some Peace

Rev. Josh Simon

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.*

Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, God of love;  
 Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.  
 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away;  
 Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays,  
 Stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise.  
 Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea.  
 Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.

You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed,  
 Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!  
 Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you;  
 Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;  
 Boundless love is reigning o'er us, reconciling race and clan.  
 Ever singing, move we forward, faithful in the midst of strife,  
 Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction ..... Rev. Mark Mendes

**\*Sung Community 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 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

- ◆ Today, 12/12 ~ regular faith formation during 2nd service ~ walk through pageant time for children participation
- ◆ 12/19 ~ everyone in worship for the pageant
- ◆ 12/26 ~ **one service at 9am** with everyone in worship ~ children's activities in the Narthex
- ◆ 1/2 ~ regular Faith Formation during 2nd service

## **Young Apostles**

- ◆ TODAY, December 12<sup>th</sup> we will gather at 4pm to put together the Giving Tree goodie bags for all the 53 children. Join us!
- ◆ Next YA will be on January 9<sup>th</sup>

## **Youth Gathering**

- ◆ Today, 12/12 ~ regular pageant rehearsal from 6:30-8pm
- ◆ Saturday, 12/18 ~ Dress rehearsal from 2-4pm
- ◆ 12/19 ~ Pageant Sunday ~ arrive at 7:45am
- ◆ 12/26 ~ no gathering ~ enjoy your vacation!
- ◆ 1/2 ~ Youth Gathering from 6:30-8pm ~ Holiday Party & making cookies for a local organization

## **Christmas Happenings at FCCEJ**

**Next Sunday, December 19**—Pageant Sunday at both services

### **Christmas Eve Services:**

Family Service at 5pm—in-person, outside around the nativity scene

Lessons & Carols at 9pm—streaming only

Contemplation & Communion at 11pm—in-person in the Sanctuary

# **Sunday, December 26—ONE SERVICE AT 9AM**

# 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.

Craig & Deb Watt  
Betty Adams  
Malcolm Levanway  
Paul Hyde  
Deanna Hayes  
Marge Shepard  
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  
Deb Ehler Holland  
in memory of Mike Ehler*

## ALTAR FLOWERS REQUESTS

All altar flowers request slots for 2021 are fulfilled!

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

### CONNECTIONS:

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

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

Our monthly "SPIRIT@FIRST" eNewsletter\*  
<http://fccej.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/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)



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



INSTAGRAM

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



INTERNET

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



YOUTUBE

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

# MINISTRY DIRECTORY

## Staff

**Senior Pastor:** Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fcej.org]

**Associate Pastor:** Rev. Josh Simon [jsimon@fcej.org]

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

**Christian Education Director:** Laurie Chipman [lchipman@fcej.org]

**Church Administrator:** Jen Kelly [welcome@fcej.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](mailto:woodsusanjane@gmail.com)

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