



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, December 12, 2021
First Service: 8:30 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. 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*

Prelude

Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)

Grant/Eaton

Denise Keating, piano

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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

Advent Song

Mary Lu Walker

Sanctuary Choir

CD Baby Alpha Music

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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?”

Continued on next page...

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.

***Opening Hymn**

Now Bless the God of Israel

#110

Now bless the God of Israel, who comes in love and power,
who raises from the royal house deliverance in this hour.
Through holy prophets God has sworn to free us from alarm,
to save us from the heavy hand of all who wish us harm.

Remembering the covenant, God rescues us from fear,
that we might serve in holiness and peace from year to year;
And you, my child, shall go before to preach, to prophesy,
that all may know the tender love, the grace of God most high.

In tender mercy, God will send the dayspring from on high.
our rising sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh,
God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.
Sing praise to the Holy One! O worship and adore!

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.

Children’s Message.....Rev. Mark Mendes

Welcoming New Members:

Jackie Lee Hadler, Marty Hopkins, Betty Busciglio

Deacon to the congregation: Jesus calls us to spread God’s extravagant love to all peoples and nations, offering everyone the gift of grace. Do you who witness this rite of membership, promise your support to these new members so that they might live a life where Christ’s joy and meaning is manifested? If so, please say we promise.

People: We promise.

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mark Mendes

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 Oh Little Town of Bethlehem

Kelly Willard

Denise Keating, piano & vocals

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.

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.*

*Hymn

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

#119

My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.

God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.

My God has done great things for me: yes, holy is God’s name.

All people will declare me blessed, and blessings they shall claim.

From age to age, to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,

dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.

Love casts the mighty from their thrones, promotes the insecure,

leaves hungry spirits satisfied, the rich seem suddenly poor.

Praise God, whose living covenant supports those in distress,

remembering past promises with present faithfulness.

Benediction

Pastoral BenedictionRev. 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.

*Postlude

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

*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
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

- ◆ 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 12th 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 9th

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 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 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



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.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]