



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
Christmas Eve 2021

A Service of Celebration, Carols & Communion ~ 11pm

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9:6-7

Prelude What a Glorious Night Frey and McDonald

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

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

Introit Light of the World Daigle

Call to Worship

Leader: On this quiet night you are welcome to come and sit a while.

People: My life has been so busy; the world so full of anxiety and tension. Tonight, I will just let God's divine spirit into my heart....[take 3 deep breaths]

Leader: On this sacred night, come and commune with the mystery of God's presence among us. So long ago, Jesus, came to share the journey with us. Now, we open ourselves to the same spirit...[take 3 deep breaths]

People: My life is so focused on my own needs and wants. Tonight, I will think about God's needs as Jesus lies vulnerable and helpless in the manger.....

[take 3 deep breaths]

Leader: Come, let us commune with God and give glory to Jesus and seek to connect with the very Spirit of God. Come, let us center ourselves on the divine in our midst.

Opening Carol O Come, All Ye Faithful Wade

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the King of angels.

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation.

O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above.

Glorify to God, all glory in the highest.

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,

Jesus, to thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Lighting the Christ Candle The Field Family

Reader 1: Tonight, we remember the Advent journey. For the last four weeks we have lifted-up Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. These are gifts from God that bring meaning, purpose and passion into our lives.

Reader 2: We light these candles tonight to proclaim that all of us in this church will strive to live into these divine ideals for humanity. [light four candles]

Reader 3: Tonight, with humility, awe and appreciation, we remember Jesus of Nazareth. God’s son embodied the attributes of hope, peace, joy and love and showed us how to live into our faith in God.

Reader 4: We light the Christ Candle tonight to proclaim that Jesus is our King, our Friend, our Companion, our Teacher and our God. [*light Christ Candle*]

People: We will seek to live with hope, peace, joy and love in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen and Alleluia!!!

Opening Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-9

Read by Makaylah & Zoe Moos

The Prophecy of Jesus Christ

A Time of Confession

The Call to Confession

Leader: Even on this night of love and light, we come with distractions, worries and stressors in our lives. We come, with our hearts and minds elsewhere.

People: Lord, draw my attention toward you. Allow your light to pierce my darkness. Listen, as I bare my soul. Hear us as we take responsibility.

Leader: Come, let us breathe deeply of God’s Spirit and lay our burden aside as we claim the joy of new birth.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Creator God, you are the source of power in our universe; today we call upon you to exercise that power with humility by forgiving us when we fall short of who we were born to be. Forgive us when we ignore the plight of travelers looking for a place to stay. Forgive us when we disregard the position of the poor. Forgive us when we participate in the corporate use of brutal force. Forgive us when our actions cause others hardship. Help us to be better people and live into the birth story in ways that give glory to your world. We pray this with humility, and in the name of Jesus Christ who’s birth we celebrate.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Jesus experiences the best and worst parts of human behavior.AND he still loves us. Over and over and over again, God welcomes us home. God loves without limit and always forgives us.

People: Thank you, Jesus. Amen and Alleluia!

A Christmas Carol

Joy to the World

Handle

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
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.**

Scripture

Luke 1:46-55

Read by Jessica Moos

Mary's Song the Magnificat

Christmas Prayer and Unison Lord's Prayer (trespasses)

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: Let us pray.....

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.

Carol

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner's reconciled!"**

**Joyful, all the nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn king.**

**Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time, forbid him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.**

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate deity,
Pleased with all on earth do dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn king.

Hail the heaven born prince of peace; hail the sun of righteousness!

**Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays his glories by, Born that folk no more may die,
Born to raise the kids of earth, Born to give them second birth.**

Hark! The herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king.

Scripture

Luke 2:8-20
The Birth of Jesus Christ

Read by Jonah Moos

Anthem

Hallelujah

Leonard Cohen, Adapted
Finally at First

Communion MeditationRev. Mendes

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Tonight, we will celebrate Holy Communion in a way that keeps everyone safe. The Deacons will pass a small plate with gluten free crackers and white grape juice sealed with plastic wrap to every pew. Each pew should unwrap the plate and each person should dip their cracker into the small cup of juice and partake. The bread is gluten free from West Meadow Bakery and the grape juice is non-alcoholic. Absolutely everyone is welcome at Christ's table!

Spreading the Light of Christ

The Ministers will light the Christ Candle and then proceed to pass Christ's light to the whole congregation. We ask everyone to be careful.

A Christmas Carol

Silent Night, Holy Night

Gruber

*Emerson Stapleton will play the first stanza of the carol alone on the violin
Then the congregation will sing the verses.
Then Emerson will play one final verse alone.*

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.

Round yon virgin, mother and child.

Holy infant so tender and kind,

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherd quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia.

Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.

Radiant beams from thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace.

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Pastoral Benediction

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

* *Special thanks to Finally @ First for providing music for tonight's service!*

** *Thanks also to Emerson & Orion Stapleton for offering beautiful violin music for the service.*

*** *A reminder to all officers and committee chairs that your Annual Reports are due by
December 31st. Please e-mail them to Jen at the church office: welcome@fccej.org.*

Christmas Poinsettia Dedications

- Betty Busciglio** *In Memory of loved ones*
- Cathie Goodheart & Tim Carney**..... *In Memory of our loved ones*
- Sanctuary Choir** *In Honor of Denise Keating and Marie Johnson*
- Brenda Dawson** *In Memory of my parents*
- Riley Elliott**..... *In Honor of the ministries of First Congregation Church of Essex Junction*
- Howard & Janne Giles**..... *In Memory of David & Anne Cozzens,
Howard & Lois Giles and Lois Rossman*
- Martha Hopkins** *In Memory of my parents, Arthur & Lois Anderson*
- Joanne Irwin** *In Memory of Edwin & Dorthea Hilbert and Alan Irwin*
- Andrea J. Goedken & Linda B. Jackson**..... *In Memory of George Arthur Jackson*
- Alex, Monica, Liam & Ethan John** *In Memory of N.V. & Mary John and
John & Alice Murphy*
- Marie & Dave Johnson** *In Memory of our parents*
- Genevieve & Henry King** *In Memory of Grandma & Grandpa Gibson*
- Connie Marshall**..... *In Honor of my Barden family and my Marshall family*
- Judy & Kevin McCullen**..... *In Memory of Peg & Ed Hurst and Donna McCullen
and In Honor of Shannon, Sean, and Kevin*
- Maureen McKenzie** *In Memory of Mom, Dad, Jim and Mark*
- Mark Mendes**..... *In Memory of Margaret & George Mendes*
- Betty Moody**..... *In Memory of Karl K. Moody, Jr.*
- Jessica & Jonah Moos** *In Honor of family
and In Memory of Leora & Annette*
- Lindalou Parker** *In Memory of Erica Eastham & Krianna & Kelsey Couture*
- Judy Pomainville**..... *In Memory of Wesley & Virginia Larrabee*
- Carolyn Rushford**..... *In Honor of Nick & Jamie Rushford*
- Paula & Rusty Sargent**..... *In Honor of Paula's mom, Charlotte Lapidow
and In Memory of Rusty's mom, Helen Sargent*
- Jane Schneider** *In Memory of Russ and In Honor of my parents*
- Andrea & Steve Sharp**..... *In Memory of our parents*
- The Shearer Family** *In Memory of Patricia & Steve Shearer and Malcolm Forbes*
- Gorden & Lauren Starkey** *In Memory of our parents,
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Starkey Sr., and Richard Busciglio*
- Carolyn Toof**..... *In Memory of Dick Toof*
- Carl & Alison Wermer** *In Memory of our parents*
- John & Phyllis Willey** *In Memory & In Honor of our parents, both living and deceased*

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

The family of 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

***Congratulations to Bill & Arlene Bickford
as they celebrate their 71st wedding anniversary!
They were married on December 24, 1950.***

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/>

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: <https://zoom.us/j/740803865>



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39O39ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

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

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