



# 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  
Christmas Eve 2021

**A Service of Lessons & Carols ~ 9pm**

*"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

Still, Still, Still  
Traditional Austrian Melody  
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Ben Logan  
Denise Keating, piano  
arr. by Lucy Ann Warriner  
Marie Johnson, organ

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

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

Introit

The Birthday of a King

William Neidlinger

Call to Worship

**Leader:** On this most sacred of nights, we remember the ageless story of the very presence of God coming into the world in the form of a vulnerable child.

**Women:** The belief in God's presence is as vulnerable today as it was then. Giving birth renews our hope in God, humanity and our shared future.

**Men:** Today, faith in God needs protection just like our small children. Baby Jesus offers us a challenge and a calling.

**Everyone:** Most of us just want to curl up in the warm embrace of God and sense the divine presence as it grows within us throughout our journey.

**Leader:** God pictured as a child gives us an opportunity to be good parents as we protect, nurture and learn about life and love. Come, let us lift up baby Jesus in our lives that our faith may grow during these times of great need.

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.  
Glory 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 Koch 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!!!**

The Prophecy Foretold

Isaiah 9:1-7

Read by Zoe Moos

The Sacrament of Baptism

Wilder William Johnson

*We joyously welcome Wilder into our church community and Jesus' movement of love and light. His proud parents are Emma and Josh Johnson. His proud grandparents are Gorden and Lauren Starkey, David Sicalowski and Joanne and William Johnson. Be sure to give them a warm First Church welcome.*

The Peaceable Kingdom

Isaiah 11:1-9

Read by Allie Hoffman

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 folk 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.**

The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

Read by Anna Kinney

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

The Earliest Christmas Morn

Althouse/Phillips

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7

Read by Jacob Hoy

**Carol**

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**

**Hark! O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;  
Yet in the dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.**

**O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to folk on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of God's heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.**

**O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angel, the great glad tidings tell,  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!**

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.**

Musical Response O Come, All Ye Faithful

The Holy Child and His Visitors

Luke 2:8-20

Read by Braeden Koch

**Carol**

**Angels We Have Heard on High**

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see, him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Wisemen Come

Matthew 2:1-11

Read by Izzy Owens

Christmas Meditation

A Child's Demands

Rev. Mendes

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. On the way out, please extinguish your candles and place them in the receptacles. Thank you.*

The Light of the World

John 1:1-5,14

Read by Charlie McGeary

**A Final Carol**

**Silent Night, Holy Night**

**Gruber**

*Cooper Spaulding will play the first stanza of the carol alone on the violin  
Then the congregation will sing the verses.  
Then Cooper 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 mild,**

**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

*\* The evening offering will be taken on your way out. Please give generously in the basket provided so the vital work of our congregation and our outreach to those in need may continue unabated.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL**

**AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!**

*Special thanks to Cooper Spaulding for offering such beautiful violin music for the service.*

# **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@fcej.org](mailto:welcome@fcej.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/3rlsISv>

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://youtube.com/c/fcej)



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



FACEBOOK

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



INSTAGRAM

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



INTERNET

[fcej.org](http://fcej.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]