



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



**Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
Nothing surpasses the love you impart –
You my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

**Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
Ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me,
Now and forever your child I will be.**

Prayer of Invocation & Unison Lord’s Prayer..... Deacon Alison Wermer

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.

Gospel Scripture Reading Read by Laurie Chipman

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9-18

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Children's Message.....Rev. Mark Mendes

Pastoral PrayerRev. Mark Mendes

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

Musical Prayer Response God is So Good

Traditional**

Hymn

Your Ways Are Not Our Own

#170

© 1988, Pilgrim Press

**Your ways are not our own, O gracious God most high,
Yet we would follow in your paths and on your love rely.**

**Christ teaches us to bless the ones who curse and harm,
To turn the other cheek when struck, attackers to disarm.**

**Yet, we cannot excuse abuse in any form,
For all are children of your care, and love must be our norm.**

**How shall we show your love, your pardon to believe?
You bid us share as we are blessed and give as we receive.**

**Forgiveness is our joy, receiving, giving, too.
Keep us from judgments hard and cruel, that we may dwell with you.**

Gospel Scripture ReadingRead by Rev. Josh Simon
Luke 6:27-36

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Anthem

You Have to Come Down to the Lakeshore Cesáreo Gabaráin**

© 1979, 1987, Cesáreo Gabaráin. Published by OCP.

Sermon

Love in Action

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 on the way out.*

Outdoor Ministry Special Offering Today, February 20—This special offering is used to support camp scholarships for the youth of our church and to support the facilities and organizations that provide this vital ministry. What better way than being outside in God’s beautiful creation to feel the presence and love of our creator! Please consider contributing to this important special offering. Please clearly mark your gift as for Outdoor Ministry.

***Closing Hymn**

Community of Christ

#314 (vs 1 & 3)

©1992, Hope Publishing Company**

**Community of Christ, who make the Cross your own,
live out your creed and risk your life for God alone:
The God who wears your face, to whom all worlds belong,
whose children are of every race and every song.**

**Community of Christ, through whom the word must sound -
cry out for justice and for peace the whole world ‘round:
Disarm the powers that war and all that can destroy,
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish into joy.**

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction.....Rev. Josh Simon

***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.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.**

*Postlude

March in D

G.F. Handel**

All music performed by Marie Johnson on organ

*Please stand if you are able

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A Few Key Announcements:

- ◆ Sunday Worship - One service at 10am through February
 - ⇒ In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fceej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fceej)
 - ⇒ 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.
 - ⇒ Fellowship Hour is online via Zoom at 11:15am: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87536093221> / Meeting ID: 875 3609 3221
- ◆ Music: Sanctuary Choir and Finally at First Praise Band are on hiatus until further notice
- ◆ 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

Faith Formation Hybrid - PreK up through 8th grade

- ◆ In person (masked) & online @ 10:30am
- ◆ Gathering in Marvin Lounge following Children's Message
- ◆ Participating online? Feel free to arrive early & chat with a volunteer
- ◆ All volunteers are vaccinated — everyone must be masked, regardless of vaccination status.
- ◆ High school youth are welcome – reach out to Laurie & be a helper
- ◆ Gathering Circle & story conversation/questions & activity (link for activity in Weekly email)

Nursery is OPEN for vaccinated & masked adults & infants – 3 yrs

- ◆ Air Purifier is running & worship speaker

Young Apostles ~ 3rd through 5th grade and a parent or grandparent

- ◆ Next meeting is Sunday, March 14 at 4pm

Youth Gathering ~ 6th grade through 12th grade

- ◆ No Gathering on February 20 and 27 due to Winter Break. Next Gathering is March 6.

New Member Class

Rev. Mark will be leading a New Member Class after worship on February 27. We'll be meeting in the Marvin Lounge and via Zoom. Please contact the office if you need childcare.

Essex Eats Out—Friday, March 4

Essex Eats Out will be offering a drive-through meal of soup, bread and dessert. We are looking for soup makers and cookie bakers. For more information and to sign up, please visit our website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A48AAAD2CA2FF2-essex>.

Reminders:

- ◆ Church office is closed Monday, February 21 in observance of President's Day.
- ◆ Please remember to contact Jen in the church office with any scheduling needs or changes: welcome@fceej.org—thank you!
- ◆ Articles for the March newsletter are due by February 22.

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@fceej.org or call 1(802) 878-5745.

The family of Tom James
The family of Lynn Coddington
Donna & John Burnett
Don Lorraine
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
Sharon Dettenrider
The Family of Mary Gellatly
Jordan
Sean McKenzie
Jaime Real
Claire Glatz
Emily Broude
Students (and their parents!)
...and all persons affected by COVID19

Altar Flowers:

There are several open dates for altar flowers. This is a lovely way to honor and remember loved ones while adding more beauty to our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Visit our website to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a48aaad2ca2ff2-altar>

CONNECTIONS:

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

Our “Weekly Update” eConnection
<https://www.fceej.org/v5/serving-others/get-involved>

Our monthly
“SPIRIT@FIRST” eNewsletter*
<http://fceej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>

**also available in a printed, snail-mailed format*



Sunday Morning Worship @ 10am
Communion on 1st Sundays
Teleworship: [youtube.com/c/fceej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fceej)



Sermon Talk Back
Tuesdays at 8:30am in person in the Marvin Lounge and via Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>



Wednesday Night Searchers
7pm via Zoom—next meeting is February 23
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83272183334>



Noontime Book Group
3rd Mondays @ 11:30am, via Zoom in until further notice

Coffee Clatter continues to be on hiatus—further updates as events warrant.



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39O39ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

[fceej.org](https://www.fceej.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

Organ: Marie Johnson

Piano: Denise Keating

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Officers

President: Cathy Shearer

Vice President: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [treasurer@fccej.org]

Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditors: Betsy Weischedel & Steve Wood

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Lisa Clark, Derek Lyman

Communications: Francis Gravel

Deacons: Alison Wermer, Judy McCullen—Co-Chairs

Finance & Pastoral Relations: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Hospitality: Jen Dooley

Human Resources: Cathy Shearer

Missions: Paula Sargent

Music: Denise Keating

Nominating: Dick Harris

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees: Kaki McGeary

Ushering: Marlene Frank

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sue Wood

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert