



# 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**  
**The First Sunday of Lent**  
**March 6, 2022**

*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 Children's Faith Formation Program is in person and begins at 10:30am after Children's Message.*

***Currently, masks are required for all attendees.***

*A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All  
In the Spirit of Christ*

Prelude

Be Thou But Near

J.S. Bach\*\*

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.*

Preparing for Worship

Introductory Reading

Ring of the Singing Drum and Minute of Silence

Introit

Come, Rejoice in God

J. Berthier

Call to Worship & Lighting the First Lenten Candle: The Journey

Reader: The Season of Lent teaches us that faith is a journey. Faith is not a once in a lifetime dramatic experience. Faith is not something we find in a place. Faith is not following a set of rules.

**Congregation: Faith is a journey. The bible moves from the garden and ends in the city. Humanity's understanding of God continuously changes with culture, language, time and context. Jesus journeys from Bethlehem to Galilee to Jerusalem.**

Reader: Today, we light the first Lenten candle acknowledging that faith is a journey and God travels with us along our way. *(Light 1 purple candle)*

**Congregation: Jesus be with us on our journeys so that we will always have a companion in which to share the divine adventure. And please, join us today in this worship service.**

Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator,  
 With you no shadow of turning we see.  
 You do not change, your compassions, they fail not,  
 All of your goodness forever will be.  
 Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!  
 morning by morning new mercies I see.  
 All I have needed, your hand has provided.  
 Great is your faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,  
 Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.  
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
 Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside.  
 Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!  
 morning by morning new mercies I see.  
 All I have needed, your hand has provided.  
 Great is your faithfulness, Lord unto me.

## Prayer of Invocation &amp; Unison Lord's Prayer

**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

*After the 2nd service's children's message, PreK – 8th graders are invited for a time of Faith Formation. All will return for Communion with their families.*

Pastoral Prayer ..... Rev. Josh Simon

Today's Lenten Focus of Prayer: Thanksgiving

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

**Lighting a Candle for Someone in Need of Prayer**

*Anytime before, during, or after the worship service, everyone is free to come light a candle for someone in need of prayer. You might come up during a hymn or during the silence in the pastoral prayer or even as you first arrive at church. Feel free to take a prayer shawl and/or prayer card for yourself or a loved one.*

Musical Prayer Response

Into My Heart

Harry Clarke\*\*

**O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face  
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.  
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,  
As distant but compelling, you call us each by name.**

**O God, of all living, both banished and restored,  
Compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope restored.  
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease,  
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon and in peace.**

## Gospel Scripture Reading

Luke 4:1-13.....The Temptation

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone." '

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." '

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone." ' Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." ' When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Anthem

The First Song of Isaiah

Jack Noble White\*\*

Communion Meditation

The Prospect of Being Wrong

Rev. Mark Mendes

## A Time of Confession

*It is an ancient ritual of the church to seek out confession before observing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Today, we will lean into that tradition by offering some time to first write [earlier during the service perhaps] and then bring up your confession written on the provided paper and place it in the large bowl of water. The specially made paper with your confession written on it will then dissolve as it floats deeper into the water, symbolizing that God forgives and no longer remembers your failings and or shortcomings of behavior. As your paper dissolves, let the weight of you sin lighten as you claim the freedom of being. Once everyone is seated we will complete the rite of confession by saying the following.....*

Leader: Jesus proclaimed a message of forgiveness and love. In the name of our Lord, I proclaim to you that your sins are forgiven.

**People: Loving God, thank you for welcoming me home with a ring, robe and embrace. May your undeserved forgiveness give me the freedom to be a better person. I accept your grace and pledge to be more loving. Alleluia and amen.**

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

*Today, the Deacons will pass out plates of gluten free bread and juice to each pew. Please unwrap your plate and wait for the direction of the minister to receive your communion elements. When the minister directs, dip your bread into the cup and partake immediately.*

*People worshipping at home are encouraged to take their communion elements and partake at the same time as the congregation in the sanctuary. Together we are one body of Christ at First Church.*

*Special note:* *In order to welcome as many people as possible to Christ's table, all bread is gluten free and the juice is non-alcoholic grape juice.*

*Absolutely everyone is welcome at Christ's table.*

## 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.*

Lead on Eternal Sovereign, we follow in your way,  
Loud rings your cry for justice, your call for peace this day.  
Through prayerful preparation, your grace will make us strong,  
To carry on the struggle to triumph over wrong.

Lead on Eternal Sovereign, we follow not with fear  
For in each human conflict, your words of strength we hear.  
That when we serve with gladness, you will not let us fall,  
Our trust is in your promise that love will conquer all.

Lead on Eternal Sovereign, till sin's fierce war shall cease,  
And all your saints together will sing a hymn of peace.  
Then all in your dominion will live with hearts sets free,  
To love and serve each other for all eternity.

## Benediction

Pastoral Benediction..... Rev. 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.  
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.

\*Postlude

Prelude and Fugue

Handel\*\*

Thank you to Marie Johnson for providing organ accompaniment, the Sanctuary Choir for their gifts of music, and to Judy McCullen and Maureen McKenzie in their role as Deacons.

\*Please stand if you are able

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## 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.

Kaki McGeary and family

Donna & John Burnett

Russ Dettenrider

Don Lorraine

Josh Ludwig

Bruce Giannuzzi

Nancy Hayes

Bill Barrett (Nancy Hayes son-in-law)

Patty Garvey

Dave Johnson

Joe and Ann Wells

The Family of Mary Gellatly

Jordan

Sean McKenzie

Jaime Real

Claire Glatz

Emily Broude

Students (and their parents!)

...and all persons affected by COVID19

*The flowers on the altar  
are given by Carl & Alison Wermer  
in celebration of Family Birthdays in March*

### CONNECTIONS:

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

Our "Weekly Update" eConnection

<https://www.fccej.org/v5/serving-others/get-involved>

Our monthly

"SPIRIT@FIRST" eNewsletter\*

<http://fccej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>

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



**Sunday Worship** @ 8:30 & 10:15am

**Communion** on 1st Sundays

**Teleworship:** [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej)



**Sermon Talk Back**

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



**Wednesday Night Searchers**

7pm in Marvin Lounge and via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/740803865>



**Noontime Book Group**

3rd Mondays @ 11:30am, in the Marvin Lounge and via Zoom.

### ONGOING PROGRAMS

- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter**, 8am every Friday at Martone's
- ⊕ **Bridge Group**, Every 3rd Friday at 1:30pm Marvin Lounge—next meeting is 3/18



FACEBOOK

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



INSTAGRAM

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



INTERNET

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



YOUTUBE

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

### **A Few Key Announcements:**

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship - 8:30 and 10:15
  - ⇒ In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej) (8:30 service only)
  - ⇒ 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.
- ◆ 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 - PreK through 8th grade

- ◆ All volunteers are vaccinated — everyone must be masked, regardless of vaccination status.
- ◆ High school youth are welcome – reach out to Laurie & be a helper

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

- ◆ Junior Youth - 6th-8th grade - March 6, 13 & 27 from 11:30am to 12:30pm
  - ⇒ Join Pastor Josh & Laurie for fellowship and an art project: Who is Jesus to you? Check on the Free Little Art Gallery & Library and play some games in the Youth Room. We'll close in time to get you home for lunch.
- ◆ Youth Gathering for High School - 9th – 12th grade - Today, March 6 from 5:30 to 6:30
  - ⇒ Join Pastor Josh and our YM team for fellowship, connect with friends, and plan service projects for this summer.

### **Wednesday Night Lenten Studies**

- ◆ Pastor Josh is leading a discussion on The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity. This study will root us in our Christian tradition and, with new insights, deepen our awareness of God's presence, renew our commitment to the Path of Jesus, and empower our trust the creativity of the Spirit. Books are available in the church office. Suggested \$5 donation.
- ◆ Rev. Mark will be looking at different aged groups within the church and lead a brainstorming session on practical ways our church can resource them and provide programs that will feed their souls and nurture them as human beings. The ideas garnered from these brainstorming sessions will then be appropriated into the life of our community.
- ◆ Both groups will be offered on Wednesday nights from 7:00 to 8:30 in person at the church and via Zoom: ID# 861 3832 8437, passcode 141168.



## **Grab 'n Go Chili**

The Missions Committee will be hosting a chili fundraiser to benefit our Outreach Programs on March 18th. A choice of meat or vegetarian chili, corn bread muffins and cheese topping will be available to order for \$10.00/quart!

- ◆ To DONATE: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0b4fa8a822a2fe3-donations>
- ◆ This year we will be providing the quart containers for you to fill. Available for pick up at the church.
- ◆ To ORDER online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0b4fa8a822a2fe3-grabngo>
- ◆ To order by phone: call Jenn @ FCCEJ (802)878-5745
- ◆ Deadline to order Wednesday, March 16th
- ◆ Drive-through pick up: 4-6 PM on 3/18. Deliveries will be made between 4-5pm. Correct cash or a check payable to FCCEJ is appreciated. To volunteer, please email Monica John-  
[vtjohns@comcast.net](mailto:vtjohns@comcast.net)

## **Heavenly Food Pantry**

The Heavenly Food Pantry will now allow families to “shop” inside the building on a limited basis. Registration will take place outside, with a maximum of 4 families allowed inside the building at any one time. Masks will still be required for both volunteers and families visiting, and the food pantry is committed to continue its mission of feeding those in the area who may need assistance. The next food distribution is Monday, March 14.

For more information or to volunteer, please visit our website: [www.fccej.org/Serving-Others/Heavenly-Food-Pantry](http://www.fccej.org/Serving-Others/Heavenly-Food-Pantry)

## **Yarn for Seniors**

The Missions Committee is collecting yarn to give to the Senior Center. Please drop off your donations in the bin located in the church office hallway.

## **Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop**

March has arrived and it's time to THINK SPRING! Currently we have sales of winter inventory however later this month we will be preparing for our “change-over” to spring and summer items. On March 22-23, we will run our Bag Sales and March 29 is our FREE DAY where all clothing is free to customers.

We need YOUR help re-filling the shelves and racks with spring and summer inventory! We accept donations during our business hours. Please remember all items need to be in saleable condition to be accepted by our sorter. We accept men's, women's, and children's clothing, bed and table linens, artwork, smaller household items, and jewelry. We no longer accept books. For questions or to donate, please contact Sue Wood at 878-3068 or [woodsusanjane@gmail.com](mailto:woodsusanjane@gmail.com). Thanks for your continued support throughout the pandemic and steady customer traffic, we continue to meet our outreach of serving others.

# 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