



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
The Second Sunday in Lent
March 13, 2022—First Service

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 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 Medley

Worthy, You Are Worthy
Holy, Holy, Holy

Don Moen
R. Herber & J. Dykes
arr. by Susan Callaway**

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

Where the Spirit of the Lord Is

Stephen Adams**

Call to Worship & Lighting the Second Lenten Candle: The Cost of Discipleship

Each week we will have a call to worship that also includes lighting a Lenten candle, just like during advent. We will ask people in the congregation beforehand to participate in doing the reading and lighting the candle.

Reader: Jesus tells his disciples that he was going to suffer at the hands of the political and religious leaders, even to the point of death.

Congregation: He said this to teach his followers that when you live out your faith, there will be repercussions—for some do not like nor follow Jesus' path of love and justice.

Reader: Then as now, followers find this disturbing and would rather have an easier faith. Peter rebuked Jesus, we create easier religious constructs to follow which diminish the power of Christ's message and call.

Congregation: Jesus invites all of us to deny our own needs and follow his way. It may be tough, but he assures us that the benefits include meaningful living and eternal rewards.

Reader: Jesus, give us the strength and courage to answer your call to love our neighbor, ourselves, and our enemies. Lead us into more meaningful lives.

(Light 2 candles)

Opening Hymn

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

#286

Refrain:

**Spirit, spirit of gentleness,
blow through the wilderness, calling and free,
Sprit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.**

**You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
And over the eons you called to each thing,
“Awake from your slumbers and rise on your wings.”**

[Refrain]

**You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
And down in the city you called once again,
When you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.**

[Refrain]

Prayer of Invocation & 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. Josh Simon

After the 2nd service children’s message, PreK – 8th graders are invited to follow Laurie for a time of Faith Formation.

Welcoming New Member: Allison VanSteenburg

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.

The Ordination of Our Deacons

The Introduction

Leader 1: The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction greets you in the name of Jesus Christ who calls all of us to ministries of love. Hear these words from the apostle Paul, “My friends, there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them all.

People: There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.

Leader 2: There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our particular service.

People: The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each and every person to build up the community.

Leader 1: Christ is like a single body, which has many parts.

People: It is still one body even though it has different parts.

Leader 2: If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share in its happiness.

People: All of us are a part of Christ’s body.

The Presentation

Leader 1: These people have been called by God in accordance with the faith and order of our church to serve as Deacons. They have accepted their calls and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Ordained at First Service

Betty Busciglio
Alison (Sunny) Wermer
Gary Hartman

Ordained at Second Service

Rusty Sargent
Allison Vansteensburg
Maureen McKenzie
Judy McCullen

Leader 2: Sisters and brothers, it is an honor to be entrusted with the duties and responsibilities of ministry as a Deacon. Having prayerfully considered your duties and responsibilities, are you prepared to serve with the help of God?

Candidates: I am.

Leader 1: Do you promise to exercise your ministry as a Deacon diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

Candidates: I do, relying on God’s grace.

Leader 2: Members of First Church, you have heard the promises of these members. They have answered the call to be your Deacons and leaders within the church. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them and support their ministry among us. Let us rise and witness to our commitment to their role as Deacons within our church.

People: We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and partner with you to help build a community of respect, kindness and peace.

The Laying on of Hands

Leader 1: The laying on of hands is the symbolic act whereby the church recognizes God's call in the lives of faithful men and women. We lay hands upon these people so that the power of the Holy Spirit may empower them to uphold the office of Deacon at First Church.

Rev. Mark, Rev. Josh, all past Deacons and anyone connected to the candidates are welcome to come forward to lay hands on the new Deacons as a prayer of empowerment is prayed.

People: May the Holy Spirit strengthen and equip you with everything good to do God's will and to be a great Deacon at First Church. Receive the authority to execute the office of Deacon in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Declaration

Leader 2: In the name of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the people of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, I rejoice to announce: You are ordained as Deacons of First Church! In accordance with the faith and order of this church and the United Church of Christ, I extend to you the right hand of Christian fellowship.

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mark Mendes

Today's Lenten Focus of Prayer: Contemplative

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

Threefold Amen

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Hymn

When Peace, Like a River

#438

**When peace like a river, uphold me each day,
when sorrows like sea billows roll,
whatever my lot, you have taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."**

Refrain: It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.

**O God, speed the day that is filled with your light,
when clouds are rolled back as a scroll;
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall appear,
"even so" - it is well with my soul.**

Refrain: It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.

Gospel Scripture Reading

Luke 13: 22-35

Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Anthem

Spirit of God

Steve Garmaas-Holmes**

Sermon

God's Kingdom

Rev. Josh Simon

A Time of Confession

It is an ancient ritual of the church to confess our shortcomings before God. Today we lean into that tradition by offering time to first write [earlier during the service perhaps] and then bring up your confession written on the provided paper and place it in one of the large bowls 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 your 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.

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.*

Closing Hymn

God of Grace and God of Glory

#436, vs. 1,3,5

**God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
crown your ancient Church's story, bring its bud to glorious flower.**

**Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.**

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control.

Shame our reckless, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.

**Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Make our broken spirits whole, Make our broken spirits whole.**

**Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the search for your salvation be our glory evermore.**

**Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving you whom we adore, Serving you whom we adore.**

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

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

Melchior Teschner
arr. Austin North **

*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 or call 1(802) 878-5745.

Kaki McGeary and family

Donna & John Burnett

Russ Dettenrieder

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 Sylvia Nyhagen
in memory of her husband, Ed.*

CONNECTIONS:

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

Our "Weekly Update" eConnection

[https://www.fccej.org/v5/serving-others/
get-involved](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



Sermon Talk Back

Tuesdays at 8:30am in the Marvin Lounge and via Zoom: [http://zoom.us/
j/740803865](http://zoom.us/j/740803865)



Wednesday Night Searchers

7pm in Marvin Lounge and via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/>



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



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9