



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 Third Sunday in Lent
March 20, 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, mask wearing is determined by the comfort level of the individual.

<p><i>A Welcoming Community, In the Spirit of Christ</i></p>	<p><i>Accepting and Serving All</i></p>
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Prelude Medley

Adagio from Sonata II

Felix Mendelssohn**

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

My Life is in You, Lord

Daniel Gardner**

Call to Worship & Lighting the Third Lenten Candle: Entering the Temple

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 1: On this Journey through Lent we are called to look into the mystery of God found right under the surface of daily life.

(Light the Journey and Discipleship candles)

Reader 2: In all four gospels, Jesus enters the temple and challenges their practices and theological assumptions. He turns over tables, drives out the money changers and rails against the hypocrisy of the religious leaders.

Congregation: Jesus challenges those of us in church to be ever vigilant when it comes to making human traditions into God's Law. God's way is always bigger than ours and so we must remain humble.

Reader 3: 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.

Reader 4: Jesus, give us the strength and courage to answer God's call to love our neighbor, ourselves, and our enemies. Lead us into more meaningful lives.

(Light the Lenten Candle of Entering the Temple)

Opening Hymn

I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

#295

**I sing a song of the saints of God, faithful their whole lives through
Who bravely labored, lived and died for the God they loved and knew.**

**And one was a doctor and one was a queen
and another a shepherd in pastures green.**

**They were saints of God, if you know what I mean,
God, help me to be one too.**

They loved their God and they lived that love.

It was loving that made them strong.

**They did was what right, for Jesus' sake,
lived justly their whole lives long.**

**And one was a prophet and one was a priest
and another was slain by a fierce wild beast.**

There is no earthly reason, none in the least, why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past, there are hundreds of thousands still.

The world is filled with living saints who choose to do God's will.

**You can meet them in school, on the road, or at sea,
in a church, in a train, in a shop or at tea;**

for the saints are folk like you and like me, and I mean to be one too.

Deacon's 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. Mark Mendes

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

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Josh Simon

Today's Lenten Focus of Prayer: Petition and Intercession

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.

Musical Prayer Response

Amen, Amen

Spiritual**

Hymn

We Limit Not the Truth of God

#316

**We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind,
To notions of our day and sect, crude, partial and confined.
Not, let a new and better hope within our hearts be stirred
O God, grant more light and truth to break forth from your word.**

**Darkling our great fore parents went, the first steps on the way,
T'was but the dawning yet to grow into the perfect day
And grow it shall, our glorious sun, more fervid rays afford
O God, grant more light and truth to break forth from your word.**

**Eternal God, Incarnate Word, Spirit of flame and dove,
Enlarge, expand all living souls to comprehend our love;
And help us all to seek your will with wiser powers conferred;
O God, grant more light and truth to break forth from your word.**

Gospel Scripture Reading

Luke 13: 1-17

Repent or Perish

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." '

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Anthem

Glorify Thy Name
We Will Glorify

Donna Atkins
Twila Paris
Arr. by Stan Pethel**

Sermon

The Easy Target in the Blame Game

Rev. Mark Mendes

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 who are partners in ministry with us
Thank you for your financial generosity.*

Closing Hymn

We Would Be Building

#610

**We would be building; temples still undone
o'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift,
waiting till love can raise the broken stone,
and hearts creative bridge the human rift.**

**We would be building, Architect Divine,
reveal the shape of life in your design.**

**Teach us to build, upon the solid rock
we set the dream that hardens into deed,
ribbed with fine steel, both time to change and mock,
the unfailing purpose of our noblest creed.**

**Teach us to build, Maker, lend us sight to see
the towers gleaming in the light.**

**O Keep us building, Savior may our hands
ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts,
when to our ears there come divine commands
and all the pride of sinful will departs.**

**We build with you, O grant enduring worth
until your promised realm shall come on earth.**

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

The Greatness of the Lord

Richard Miles **

*Please stand if you are able

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A Few Key Announcements:

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship - 8:30 and 10:15
 - ⇒ In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej) (8:30 service only)
 - ⇒ We are pleased to offer in-person worship—masks are optional.
 - ⇒ Music:
 - Marie Johnson and Denise Keating are leading Sanctuary Choir during first service
 - Rick Dooley leads our Praise Band Finally @ First at second service
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st 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!

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 Sharon Dettenrieder
in memory of Eric Dettenrieder*

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 April 15



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39O39ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9