



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 Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 27, 2022—Second 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.

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

Way Maker

CCLI 7115744**

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

Enter, Rejoice and Come In

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Call to Worship & Lighting the Fourth 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: : As our Lenten Journey continues, we remember that the mystery of God is ever before us in the day to day living of every person. Jesus meets us in life.

(Light three candles)

Reader 2: Today, we lift up the importance of being quiet, for in the solitude of our own thoughts, many experience the divine.

Reader 3: Elijah experienced God in sheer silence, Moses alone by the burning bush, Hagar in the desert, Isaiah – Samuel – Anna - all while alone in the temple, Jonah as he sunk into the sea, Daniel in the Lion's den.....so many people in our faith stories found God while alone.

Reader 4: Jesus found God alone in the wilderness of temptation; in solitude he heard God's call to open his message to everyone, Jesus retreated for quiet prayer at the end of hard days; every night after teaching in the temple he retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane and sought time alone; and Jesus hung alone on the cross and rose alone in the tomb.

Congregation: So much of our life of faith is a quiet and personal relationship with our God. It has always been so. The good news is that God will meet us in the quiet of our thoughts.

(Light the Fourth Candle)

Reader 6: Let us pray. God of being, when we meet you atop mountains or when we pray in our closets or converse with you in our minds, meet us and inspire us to faith, hope and love. Amen

Opening Hymn

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

#286

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 2nd service ~ PreK - 8th graders are invited to follow Laurie for faith formation time in our peer rooms with air purifiers running. High school youth are welcome to help. All our volunteers are vaccinated, and masks are optional.

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Josh Simon

Today's Lenten Focus of Prayer: Seek / Inquire

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

Our God Is Here

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Hymn

God of Change and Glory

#177

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'

The Parable of the Lost Coin

'Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

The Parable of the Prodigal and his Brother

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.'

But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." '

Anthem

Our God Is Here

CCLI 4511377**

Meditation

Real Life Grace

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

Our church has many vibrant ministries and a strong outreach into the community. Our work is not only changing lives, but also making our community a better place in which to live. Thank you to all who are offering your gifts to the church and partnering with us in our mission to follow Christ.

Closing Hymn

You Are the Seed

#528

**You are the seed that will grow a new sprout;
you're a star that will shine through the day;
You are the yeast and a small grain of salt,
a beacon to glow in the night.**

**Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all,
messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.**

**Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;
"Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world."**

**You are the flame that will brighten the way,
sending sparkles of hope, faith, and love;
you are the shepherds to lead the whole world
through valleys and pastures of peace.**

**Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all,
messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.**

**Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;
"Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world."**

Benediction

Pastoral Benediction Rev. Mark Mendes

***Sung Community Benediction**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be!
With God our Creator, family all are we,
Let me walk with my fellow in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

*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 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

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