



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
Christmas Eve 2022
A Service of Celebration, Carols & Communion ~ 11pm

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9:6-7

Prelude	<i>One Day</i>	Matisyahu
	<i>Light of the World</i>	Daigle
	<i>O Come All Ye Faithful</i>	Wade
	Medley Arranged by Rick Dooley	

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

We encourage everyone, both guests and members, to sign the Friendship Book and check any categories of need. This will allow the church and her staff to best serve you. Thank you.

Introit	<i>Hope Was Born this Night</i>	MacDonald & Frey
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Lighting the Christ Candle The Firkey-Cunningham Family

Call to Worship

Leader: The anniversary hour of God's entrance into our world is upon us. A little more than 2020 years ago, Jesus entered our world and changed it forever. The gulf between God and humanity was bridged with love beyond measure. The God of mystery took form and embraced all people. Come, let us remember and enter that sacred story with our own.

People: As we enter this sacred space, we enter the long flow of the faithful who enter into a relationship with the Living Presence of the Divine. We come ready to give birth to God in our own lives and world.

Everyone: We come to worship and praise the Living God made known to us in Jesus Christ. Amen and Alleluia!!!

*Opening Carol *Joy to the World*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the Earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness and wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders of God's love.**

A Time of Confession

It is an ancient tradition of the church to ask for the forgiveness of our sins and to amend all broken relationships before receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion. On this night of all nights, we confess our shortcomings as a community of faith and as individuals, hoping that Christ's continued entrance into our lives might create healthier and more joyful people.

The Call to Confession

Leader: Let us come and lay our hearts, minds and souls before the Prince of Peace, let us confess our wrongful behaviors before God's throne of love.

People: Thank you, God, for sending a Son that cares and understands our plight. We lay before you our brokenness, our willful acts of self absorption, our hurts and worries and all those things that cause us to suffer from our separation from you.

Leader: Let us now lay our burdens down.

Unison Prayer of Confession & Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

All Powerful Creator, as a child laying in a manger you have taught us the importance of being vulnerable enough to accept care from others.....forgive us for thinking that we are the center of the universe.....forgive us for honestly believing that we can do everything ourselves.....forgive us for rejecting the warm embrace of others as we journey through a world that is often dark and filled with demons and distractions.....forgive us for not crying out in hunger for a parent that is out of sight.

Adoring and Doting Parent of us all, help us to break the walls of isolation and find the depths of love in relationship to you and to our neighbor. Help us to offer our lives in building a kingdom of hope, peace, joy and love. Hear us now as we share the prayer Jesus taught us to say.....

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.

The Assurance of Pardon

A Christmas Carol

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.
And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold;
When peace shall over all the earth, its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world sends back the song which now the angels sing.

A Christmas Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Josh Simon

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Congregational Musical Response:

A--men, A--men, A--men, A-men, A-men

The Prophecy of Jesus Christ

Isaiah 11:1-9

Read by Brian Chipman

A Special Christmas Offering

Invitation and Offering

Anthem

Mary, Did You Know

Lowry

Prayer of Dedication

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Luke 2:1-20

Read by Shannon McCullen

***A Christmas Carol**

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

A Christological Hymn: Philippians 2:1-11 Read by Kevin McCullen

A Meditative Anthem *Christmas Hallelujah* Cohen**

A Christmas Meditation *Both Old and New* Rev. Mendes

A Christmas Carol Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Tonight, we will celebrate Holy Communion by passing the elements out to the congregation. Rev. Mendes, Rev. Simon and the Deacons will pass the elements to the congregation; take the bread and hold it until Rev. Mendes directs you to partake and then once you take the cup partake whenever you would like. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith. The bread is gluten free and the grape juice is non-alcoholic.

Absolutely everyone is welcome at Christ's table!

Spreading the Light of Christ

From the Christ Candle, Rev. Mendes and Rev. Simon will light their candles and then proceed to pass Christ's light to the whole congregation. We ask everyone to be careful.

The Final Lesson: John 1:1-14 Read by Laurie Chipman

***A Christmas Carol**

Silent Night, Holy Night

The first verse will just be violins played by Emerson Stapleton.

Then the congregation will sing all the verses together.

Then Emerson will play it again on violin.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.

Round yon virgin, mother and child.

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherd quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia.

Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.

Radiant beams from thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace.

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Pastoral Benediction

*Please stand as you are able

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

- ◆ *Special thanks to Finally @ First for providing music for tonight's service!*
- ◆ *Thanks also to Emerson Stapleton for offering beautiful violin music for the service.*
- ◆ *We will have only one Christmas Day service at 10am. It will be casual, include some tasty culinary treats, and kids are invited to come in their PJ's.*
- ◆ *We will also have only one worship service on January 1, 2023 at 10am.*

Christmas Poinsettia Dedications

Betty Adams..... In honor of family
Bill Bickford Sr. In memory of Arlene Bickford
Mindy & Bill Bickford..... In memory of our dear mother, Arlene Bickford
Dave & Bethany Blake..... In memory of victims of gun violence
Jenny Bourn.....In memory of Thomas Connelly
Brian & Laurie Chipman.....In honor of all grandparents and great-grandparents
Bill Coddington.....In memory of Lynn
Sue & Dennis Conti..... In honor of our family
Sharon DettenriederIn memory of Doug Dettenrieder and Eric Dettenrieder
Myrna Doney.....In honor of Christmas love
Jen & Rick Dooley..... In memory of Harry Dooley, and Dot & Joe Pine
Howard & Janne Giles.....In memory of Howard & Lois Giles and David & Anne Cozzens
Gary Hartmann In honor of Rev. Josh Simon's new ministry
and in memory of my dad, Bill Hartmann
Hoy Family..... In honor of Thomas & Sarah Hoy, Guy & Sandy Stone, and our children
Joanne Irwin..... In honor of my family and in memory of Alan
Linda B. Jackson.....In memory of George A. Jackson
Marie & David Johnson In memory of loved ones
Jen Kelly.....In honor of Matthew, Scott, and Leona
Derek Lyman..... In memory of Brian Latuch and Phyllis Buchanan
Judy & Kevin McCullen..... In memory of Ed & Peg Hurst, and Donna McCullen
McGeary Family.....In memory of Nancy, Bev, Bob, Colleen, Kathryn, Trevor, and Kevin
Mark Mendes..... In memory of George, Margaret, and Jessica
Elizabeth Miller.....In honor of Mark Dolye and In memory of Dorothy Hart
Jessica & Jonah Moos..... In memory of Leora Moos and Annette Manly
Mally Powell..... In honor of the Christmas season
Carolyn Rushford..... In memory of my grandparents
Sanctuary Choir..... In memory of John Mauger and Marsha Duell
Andrea & Steve Sharp..... In honor of the fantastic staff at FCCEJ
Cathy & Thomas Shearer..... In memory of Malcolm Forbes and Pat Shearer
Josh Simon In honor of Kelly Simon & Bobbie Simon
Lauren & Gorden Starkey..... In memory of our parents: Gorden & Garnet Starkey
and Richard Busciglio
Heather Stein..... In celebration of the Christmas season
Ann Marie Sullivan..... In honor of Michael & Ann Marie's 45th anniversary
Beth Volker..... In memory of Joan McGrath Greve
Carl & Alison Wermer..... In memory of our parents: Bob, Dorothy, Kerstin, John

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.

Victims of gun violence and their families

Malley Powell

Family and friends of Wayne Hathaway

Faith Truax

Family and friends of Floyd Hewitt

Fletcher Coolidge

Maureen Evans

Grace Goodwin

LaPierre Family

Dan Harmon

Prajna Faux

Joe and Ann Wells

Elizabeth Stone

Sean McKenzie & Sandy Wynne

Bernie Currier

All those suffering due to
the violence in Ukraine

Joyce Jacobs

...and all persons affected by COVID19

Ann Gray

CONNECTIONS:

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

Our "Weekly Update" eConnection: <http://bit.ly/3rlslSv>

Our monthly "SPIRIT@FIRST" eNewsletter* <http://fccej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>
**available in a printed, snail-mailed format*



Sunday Morning Worship

- In person & streamed @ 8:30
- In person & Faith Formation @ 10:15
- Communion on 1st Sundays

Teleworship: youtube.com/c/fccej



Sermon Talk Back

Tuesdays at 8:30am in the Marvin Lounge and Zoom:

<http://zoom.us/j/740803865>

ONGOING PROGRAMS!

- ⊕ **Tai Chi Class**, Tuesdays at 10:15pm in the Fellowship Hall
- ⊕ **Yoga @ First**, Tuesdays at 5pm in the Sanctuary
- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter**, every Friday @ 8am at Martone's
- ⊕ **Lunchtime Book Group**, 3rd Mondays in Marvin Lounge
- ⊕ **Bridge Group**, 3rd Fridays @ 1:30pm in Marvin Lounge



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39O39ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9