



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
Third Sunday of Advent
December 11, 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. Nursery care is available at both services for infants through 3 y/o. On the first Sunday of the month, the Sanctuary Choir and organ play at both services. **Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.***

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

Prelude	<i>Es ist ein Ros entsprungen (A Rose Has Sprung Up)</i>	Trad. German** arr. Sally DeFord
---------	--	-------------------------------------

An Extravagant Welcome

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.*

Greeting and Announcements

Our Ministers will welcome everyone to church and then highlight some significant events and or announcements in our shared life.

Musical Introit	<i>What Child is This</i>	Greensleeves**
Duet—Bill Bickford, Sr. / Bill Bickford		

Call to Worship Deacon

Leader: Come, let us remember the joy that comes from our faith in God and the love that Jesus preached. Whether we are welcomed home with a warm embrace of sense the presence of God in the wilderness; we can claim joy.

Pulpit Side: The prodigal left his family and journeyed through hard times. Finally, he came to himself and returned home to find a loving father, food aplenty and grace filled acceptance.

Lectern Side: The Israelites longed for home when they were in Babylonian captivity and despite great odds, God brought them home through a desert of blooming flowers and to safety.

Lectern Side: The Israelites longed for home when they were in Babylonian captivity and despite great odds, God brought them home through a desert of blooming flowers and to safety.

Leader: God is our home and promises an all expense paid free return trip to the a kingdom of hope, peace, joy and love. Come, let us get on the peace train as we journey toward the divine way.

***Opening Hymn**

Angels We Have Heard on High

#125**

Lighting the Third Advent Candle of Joy

First Service: The Heavenly Food Pantry Volunteers

Second Service: The Blake Family: Bethany, Dave, Abby, Nora and Kira

Prayer of Invocation and 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 CE Director Laurie Chipman

The Congregation Sings as the Children Come Forward

**Jesus loves the little children, all God's children of the world.
Whether young or old or new, Jesus loves us through and through,
Teaching us to love all creatures in the world.**

The Congregation Sings as the Children Return to Their Families

**God has made us all a rainbow. Colors dancing 'round and 'round.
In our hair and skin and eyes, big and little, every size,
God has made us all a rainbow dancing 'round.**

After Children's Message, children return to their families at First Service and transition to Faith Formation Peer Groups (PreK—8th) at Second Service. Parents, please pick up your children by 11:30.

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Josh Simon

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

Prayer Response

***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vs. 2
O come, O Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.***

Choir & Congregation**

Hymn

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#131**

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Prophetic

Isaiah 35:1-10

[page 513]

New Testament Letter

James 5:7-12

[page 181]

New Testament Gospel

Luke 1:46-55

[page 44]

Anthem

O Come Precious Savior

Dana Mengel**

Sermon

Magnifying the Lord

Rev. Mark Mendes

Celebrating Our Giving to God at First Church

*Thank you to everyone, both at home and in the sanctuary,
who are financially supporting our ministry.*

Invitation

Offertory

The King of Glory Comes

Trad. Israeli folk song**
arr. Betty Pulkingham

*Doxology and Prayer

#778**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

#129**

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

Canon in D Major

Johann Pachelbel**
arr. Tom Barabas

*Please stand if you are able

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 (802) 878-5745.

Victims of gun violence and their families

Family and friends of Floyd Hewitt

Prajna Faux

Elizabeth Stone

Bernie Carrier

Rodney

Joyce Jacobs

Ann Gray

Malley Powell

Faith Truax

Fletcher Coolidge

Grace Goodwin

Dan Harmon

Joe and Ann Wells

Sean McKenzie & Sandy Wynne

All those suffering due to
the violence in Ukraine

...and all persons affected by COVID19

***The flowers on the altar are given by Maureen McKenzie
in memory of Roger Van Den Dorpel***

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 Morning Worship

- In person & streamed @ 8:30
- In person & Faith Formation @ 10:15

Communion on 1st Sundays

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

On hiatus through December

ONGOING PROGRAMS

- ⊕ **Coffee Clatter**, 8am every Friday at Martone's
- ⊕ **Bridge Group**, Every 3rd Friday at 1:30pm
Marvin Lounge—next meeting is December 16



Lunchtime Book Group

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



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39039ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

A Few Key Announcements

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship - 8:30 and 10:15
 - ⇒ In-person and streamed via youtube.com/c/fccej (8:30 service only)
**Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #728093-A. All Rights Reserved.
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month.
 - ◆ Sincere thanks to Jonah Moos, Ed Guild, Gary Hartmann, Francis Gravel, and Linda Lou Parker, operating the live stream tech!
 - ◆ Thank you to Bethany Blake and the Sanctuary Choir for the beautiful music today!
- Sunday Morning Faith Formation Peer Groups—10:30am**
- ◆ Pre-K through 8th Grade—Faith Formation after our Children's Message at 2nd service
Parents, please come pick up your children by 11:30

Heavenly Food Pantry

The food distribution days for December are Monday, December 12 at 5:30pm and Thursday, December 15 at 2pm. We continue to need the following food items:

Juice, Baked beans, Canned pasta, Chunky soups, Canned green beans, and small bags of dry cat food. We can also use dozen-sized egg cartons.

The pantry needs help to fulfil the delivery part of its mission. If you have an hour or so available on a food pantry day and the means to deliver 8-10 bags of food, then the pantry could REALLY use your help. Please call the church office at 802-878-5745 or send an email to welcome@fccej.org. We appreciate all the support as we continue the pantry's mission of seeing that no one goes hungry! www.fccej.org/Serving-Others/Heavenly-Food-Pantry.

Yoga @ First

Come practice a compassionate, inquisitive sequence to integrate the mind, body, and soul. In each session, we will focus, breathe, build heat, strengthen, and relax. Tuesdays, from 5-6:15pm in the Sanctuary. Wear comfortable, non restrictive clothing. Bring a mat or borrow one. Donations (to FCCEJ) welcome, but not required.

The Red Tent is Back!

Our church and the members of the Missions Committee have long been supporters of Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP). As winter approaches one of the most urgent needs is socks. For our un-housed neighbors, keeping their feet warm and healthy is a major problem. JUMP has asked FCCEJ if we would be the "White Sock Church." The need is for all-cotton, new white socks. Tube socks will fit most any adult foot. Please bring your donations of socks and foot powder to the Red Tent, located in the church office hallway.



JUMP will be holding their third Online Auction February 1-10, 2023. The theme again will be "Showing Love for JUMP". The success of this JUMP fundraiser will be based on the number and type of items being auctioned and the number of people who place bids on those items. Please help spread the word about JUMP seeking donations for the auction and encouraging people to bid on items in February.

Please contact Margaret Welch for more information: 802-862-2428 or auction@jumpvt.org.

Christmas Pageant News

Elementary Kiddos

Is your child feeling too old to be a young angel, sheep or shepherd but would still like to participate? Join Jenny & Ed this Sunday from 9:40 to 10:05 in the Marvin Lounge. We'll learn the carols that will be sung during the pageant to help lead the congregation in singing.

Calling ALL Youth

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Schedule

12/11 – Rehearsal from 11:30-2pm, PreK-5th joining from 11:30-12noon

12/17 – Pageant afternoon dress rehearsal TBD

12/18 – Pageant Sunday at both 8:30am & 10:15am services

Christmas Caroling

Join us at Mansfield Place and Mapleridge on Sunday, December 11 and Williston Place on Friday, December 16 to bring some Christmas joy to their residents. Singing will begin at 5:30pm and song books will be provided.

Blue Christmas Service —today 12/11 at 3pm in the Sanctuary

The holiday season from Halloween through New Year's Day can be difficult on folks as they remember loved ones that are no longer physically alive or deal with dysfunctional familial issues that seem to blossom during this period of time. The Blue Christmas Service will lift up these times and put them within the context of a comforting and loving God. During this time, there will also be an opportunity for healing offered by our ordained clergy and Deacons. Everyone is welcome at this service and if you know someone hurting during this time of year, reach out and offer to bring them with you.

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

5pm Outside Family Service

We will have our popular, kid-friendly Christmas Eve Service at 5pm directly in front of the church outside on the steps and lawn. We will have special guests that will tell the story Christ's birth. This is also a great service in which to bring a young family with kids.

9pm Service of Lessons & Carols

This is the traditional service where folks read the birth narrative, and our musicians sing of the glory of God and the unique nature of God's inbreaking in the world. We are also blessed to have a baptism planned, and music offered by our Sanctuary Choir, directed by our Organist/Choir Director, Bethany Blake.

11pm Contemplative Service

This service is our quieter service that includes the sacrament of Holy Communion. We have some lessons and carols as well as the lighting of our candles at the midnight hour. We are also blessed to have our band Finally @ First leading music for the service.

Christmas Sunday

Join us Sunday morning at 10am to celebrate the birth of the Christ child. We'll have a carol-sing, a time for reflection & meditation, and Christmas treats. This will be an all-family worship service.

Weekly Calendar: December 11 - December 18

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, December 11

8:30 & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary
9:15am: Pageant Carol Rehearsal, Marvin Lounge
10:30am: Faith Formation, Peer Rooms
11:30am: Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary,
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
3pm: Blue Christmas Service, Sanctuary
3:30pm: High School Youth Gathering Holiday
Party, Marvin Lounge
5:30: Christmas Caroling, Mansfield Place &
Mapleridge

Tuesday, December 13

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge
10:15am: Tai Chi Class, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary
*6:30pm: Boy Scouts Three Rivers District
Roundtable, Fellowship Hall*
7pm: Deacons, Marvin Lounge

Thursday, December 15

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
2pm: Food Pantry Distribution, Fellowship Hall
6:30pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
7pm: Open & Affirming Sub-Committee,
2nd Floor Program Room

Saturday, December 17

8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Monday, December 12

8:30am: Food Pantry Set-up, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution,
Fellowship Hall
7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, December 14

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
3pm: Food Pantry Committee, Marvin Lounge
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary
6pm: Troop 624 Leaders Meeting, Marvin Lounge
7pm: BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall

Friday, December 16

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
9am: Giving Tree Gift Distribution,
Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
1:30: Piano Lesson, Sanctuary
1:30pm: Bridge Group, Marvin Lounge
5:30pm: Christmas Caroling, Williston Place
*7pm: Burlington Amateur Radio Club, Fellowship
Hall*

Sunday, December 18

Pageant Sunday / Friendship Sunday

8:30 & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups