



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

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

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. Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.

*A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All
In the Spirit of Christ*

Prelude

Sonata in A Major K. 208

Domenico Scarlatti**

Lighting a Prayer Candle: During the prelude or one of the hymns, people are invited to come forward and light a candle for someone that needs prayers or for which you are grateful.

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

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

Musical Introit

Lord Jesus, Sun of Righteousness

Harold Darke**

Call to Worship Deacon Alison Wermer

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made,
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

People: This is the place where God has called, let us rejoice and come together to work, praise and settle into the loving arms of God.

Leader: Worship is not a spectator sport, let us come together to hear the word of God, raise our songs in praise and pray together for the betterment of our neighbors and the world.

***Opening Hymn**

O Jesus, I Have Promised

#493**

Prayer of Invocation & **Unison Lord's Prayer**..... Deacon Alison Wermer
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.

New Testament Gospel Lesson

John 9:1-41

[page 78]

Children's Message..... Rev. Mark Mendes

Prayers of Adoration

During this time of prayer, we will focus our prayers on God: how we understand God and our gratitude for who God is and what God has done in your lives.

Before we pray, everyone is asked to connect with two or three people for a minute or two and share one way we understand God and some way we have seen God in our lives. Be sure to ask other members of your group to prayer for you during the upcoming week .

Pastoral Prayer of Adoration

During this part of the pastoral prayer, the minister will lift up ways by which we know God and express our gratitude for what God has done in our lives. The minister will then invite folks to share some of those prayers during the congregational prayer. Then we will sing.....

Just as I Am [# 207]

**Just as I am, without one plea but that your love was shed for me,
and that you called inviting me, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

Anthem

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Graham Kendrick**

arr. Jack Schrader

Prayers of Supplication and or Petition

During this time of prayer, we will focus on our own needs in our lives and ask God to take care of them. Be sure to ask other members of your group to prayer for you during the upcoming week.

Before we pray as a congregation, everyone is asked to connect with two or three people for a minute or two and share one need in which you are asking for God's help.

A Pastoral Prayer of Supplication or Petition

During this part of the pastoral prayer, the minister will lift up areas in our lives where we need God's help. The minister will then invite folks to share some of those prayers during the congregational prayer time. Then we will sing....

Just as I Am [# 207]

**Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fighting and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!**

The Ordination of Our New Deacons [insert]
Donna Burnett, Robert Driver, Mary McHugh

Lenten Meditation "The Danger of Defining Sin" Rev. Mark Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *Sonata in A Major K 331, Movement 1* Mozart**
[excerpt]

The Doxology All Glory Laud and Honor #216*

**All glory, laud and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way,
Our Praise and prayer and anthem we offer you this day.**

Closing Hymn In the Midst of New Dimensions #391*

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 *Sarabande from Suite in D Minor HWV 437* G. F. Handel**

*Please stand as you are able

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A Few Key Announcements

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ 8:30 and 10:15. Streamed via youtube.com/c/fccej (8:30 service only)
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month.
- ◆ Spiritual Friends for PreK through 2nd at 10:30 in Peer Rooms
- ◆ 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!

Community Concerts @ First

Community Concerts @ First - Please join us next Sunday March 26 at 3pm for a Community Concert @ First. Pianist David Feurzig will perform as part of his “Play Every Town” tour to raise awareness about climate change and build community. All concert proceeds will support 350Vermont's efforts to build collective power for climate justice. The FCCEJ sanctuary choir will collaborate with Feurzig for one piece.

After the concert, stay and enjoy a Community Soup Supper in the Fellowship Hall, hosted by the FCCEJ Missions Committee. The soup dinner is by donation. Proceeds will go to 350 Vermont.org, a people-powered and people-led climate justice movement in Vermont.

Ukrainian Easter Bread Fundraiser

In an effort to support our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, we are offering Ukrainian bread for Easter. There are three varieties available; 8” round braided, 9” round apple coffee cake, and 5”x6” with decorative icing. **Deadline to order is April 5.** Bread will be delivered on Easter morning to FCCEJ.

Fellowship Hall Floor Update

The new Fellowship Hall floor is scheduled to be installed the week of March 27. Please note that the Fellowship Hall will be inaccessible starting Monday, March 27 through Friday, March 31. Our new floor will be in before Easter! ☺

Planned Giving Seminar—POSTPONED TILL MAY 4

Our Planned Giving Seminar has been postponed till Thursday, May 4. The time remains the same: 6:30 to 8pm in the Fellowship Hall. Holly LeMieux, a local estate planning attorney, will be the presenter. Covered topics will include estate planning, wills, and elder law. Whether FCCEJ benefits from your planned giving or not, the Planned Giving Committee encourages everyone to have a written plan (such as a will, trust or estate plan). The Planned Giving Seminar is free and open to church members and friends of FCCEJ.

Please contact the church office if you would like to attend.

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 Mally Powell

Jacki Knapp

Russ & Alma Wilson

Kathy Galbraith

Juliana Faux

John Venner

Elizabeth Stone

Bernie Currier

Joyce Jacobs

Grace Goodwin

Dan Harmon

All those suffering due to violence in Ukraine

...and all persons affected by COVID19

Altar flowers are a wonderful way to honor your loved ones.

Use Sign-Up Genius or call the church office for available dates:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a48aaad2ca2ff2-2023#/>

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

ONGOING PROGRAMS!

- ◆ **Sermon Talk Back**, Tuesdays at 8:30am in Marvin Lounge & Zoom: <http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ◆ **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/39039ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Today, Sunday, March 19	Deacon Ordination, Pretzel Sunday
Next Sunday, March 26	Receiving New Members during 2nd Service, Community Concerts @ First presents Dave Feurzig on piano, 3pm in the Sanctuary. Community soup supper to follow in Fellowship Hall
Thursday, May 4.....	Financial Planning Seminar, 6:30pm, Fellowship Hall

Easter Call To Care Baskets

The Annual Easter Basket project is in full swing! Cathy Lapierre is spearheading the creation of Call to Care baskets for to family, friends, and neighbors in the community.

All donations must be in by April 1. Assembly will be April 2-4. Distribution/Delivery of baskets will be April 5-9.

Requests: Please e-mail Jen welcome@fccej.org by April 1 if you wish a friend or family member to receive a basket or if you are able to deliver a few.

Here is a possibilities list: puzzles (crosswords, word-search, other activity booklets), stuffed animals, lip balm, travel tissues, hand sanitizers, flower seeds, playing cards, mandala coloring books, mechanical and colored pencils, stress balls and toys etc.

Donations may be dropped off at the church Monday-Friday 8am-2pm or on Sunday mornings.

The Red Tent

Our church and the members of the missions committee have long been a supporter of The Joint Urban Ministry Project or J.U.M.P. In our November 2022 newsletter, Missions Committee members asked for new socks to be placed in the red tent display outside the Marvin Lounge. Thank you for all the donations! J.U.M.P. has enough socks to meet the need, but now has is requesting warm gloves sized both for adults and children. The gloves can be left in the Red Tent outside the Marvin Lounge. Thank you to all who are able to help in this important outreach project!

Weekly Calendar: March 19—March 26

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, March 19

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary & Streaming*
10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th), Peer Rooms
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, March 21

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
7pm: Missions, Marvin Lounge
CE, 2nd Floor Program Room
Communications, Fellowship Hall
HRC, Conference Room
Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Thursday, March 23

8am: Food Pantry Set-up, Fellowship Hall
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting, Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
2pm: Food Pantry Distribution, Fellowship Hall
5:30pm: Piano Lesson, Marvin Lounge
*6pm: Cub Scouts Lion Den,
2nd Floor Program Room*
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
Racial Justice Task Force, Youth Room

Saturday, March 25

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

Monday, March 20

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

Wednesday, March 22

*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship,
Fellowship Hall*
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary
7pm: Searchers, Fellowship Hall
BSA Troop 624, Gym

Friday, March 24

April Newsletter Articles Due

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship,
Fellowship Hall*
4pm: Blue Spruce Grange, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, March 26

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary & Streaming*
10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th), Peer Rooms
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
3pm: Community Concerts @ First presents
Dave Feurzig, Sanctuary
Community Soup Supper to Follow,
Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups