



# 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) **Website:** [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)



# The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 26, 2023

*Our First Service with organ and traditional choir is streamed and begins at 8:30am with access on our webpage: [www.fccej.org](http://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*

***Lighting a Prayer Candle:*** *During the introit or one of the hymns, people are invited to come forward and light a candle for someone that needs prayers or something 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

*Standin' in the Need of Prayer*

Spiritual

Call to Worship .....Deacon Mary McHugh

Leader: Jesus comes to all of us in different ways depending on our backgrounds, experiences, needs and spiritual journeys.

**People: He meets some secretly at night, by the well in the middle of the day, during a service in the synagogue, by the sea as fish are caught, around the dinner table, at weddings and funerals, in crowds or alone in deserted places, by the river or at the mountaintop or in the desert, in your closet, or travelling down the road, or in the garden.**

Leader: Jesus meets us whenever and wherever we open our hearts to his words of love and the Presence of the Living God. Come, let us sing.

**\*Opening Hymn**

**Gather Us In  
[handout]**

**Marty Haugen**

Prayer of Invocation & Unison Lord's Prayer .....Deacon Mary McHugh  
**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..... Laurie Chipman, CE Director

### Smart Phone Prayers

*It seems odd to think but how people have prayed has changed over time.*

*Praying was different when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness from when the temple was the center of religious life. Praying as an immigrant is different from praying from a settled and secure place. Today, our first prayer is adapted to acknowledge the importance that our smart phones have in our lives. Rev Mark will guide us through this time of prayer with 21st century technology.*

*You are invited to use this type of prayer on a daily basis in between the times when you are playing games or surfing the web!*

### Pastoral Prayer of Thankfulness

*During this part of the pastoral prayer, the minister will lift up the prayers from his smart phone and then invite folks to raise their own smart phone prayers. 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.**

The Reception of New Members

### **Congregational Vows, Welcome and Reception**

Deacon to the congregation: Jesus calls us to spread God's extravagant love to all peoples and nations, offering everyone the gift of grace. Do you who witness this rite of membership, promise your support to these new members so that they might live a life where Christ's joy and meaning is manifested?

**People: Gail and Jenn, we welcome you with joy in the communion life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ at First Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

## Meditative / Listening Prayer

*During this time of prayer, we will focus on simply sitting in silence with our God and listening for God's voice or guidance in our lives. Begin with sitting comfortably, claiming peace in your space, and then breathing deeply: quiet your soul. This type of prayer encourages triaging the thoughts in your mind by acknowledging and letting go of the thoughts that distract you and focusing on the ones that draw you to the Divine. This naturally takes time to figure out, but you'll become proficient quicker than you think.*

*Incorporating this prayer practice into your life is perhaps the most effective way of re-connecting with God, for few of us practice intentional quiet and listening.*

## Practicing Meditative Prayer Corporately

*During this part of the pastoral prayer, let's practice meditative or listening prayer in our corporate lives. Let us continue in silence as we listen for a minute or two focusing our thoughts on our church and where God is leading us. Rev. Mark will then ask folks to share those thoughts with the congregation. 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!**

New Testament Scripture    John 11:1-53—The Story of Lazarus    [page 80]

Lenten Meditation    *Being Alive*    Rev. Mark Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory    *Just a Closer Walk With Thee*    Spiritual

**\*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 Sweet By and By*    Joseph Webster**

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 us walk with each other 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 as you are able

**A Few Key Announcements**

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship -
  - ⇒ 8:30 and 10:15. Streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej) (8:30 service only)
  - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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, and Francis Gravel, operating the live stream tech!
- ◆ Thank you to Rick Dooley and Finally @ First for the beautiful music today!

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- This 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
- Monday, 3/27-Friday, 3/31 .....Fellowship Hall Floor Installation
- Next Sunday, April 2 .....Palm Sunday, Holy Communion, Sanctuary Choir Cantata  
*Refer to blue insert for Holy Week details*
- Sunday, April 30 .....Community Concerts @ First presents Paul Asbell  
3pm in the Sanctuary
- Thursday, May 4 .....Financial Planning Seminar, 6:30pm, Fellowship Hall

## 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](mailto: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



*The flowers on the altar this morning are given by  
Melissa Ward in honor of Rev. Mark Mendes and his family.*



### 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](http://bit.ly/39039ht)



INSTAGRAM

[bit.ly/3rlfgZf](http://bit.ly/3rlfgZf)



INTERNET

[fccej.org](http://fccej.org)



YOUTUBE

[bit.ly/3oPpBv9](http://bit.ly/3oPpBv9)

## **Community Concerts @ First**

Community Concerts @ First - Please join us this afternoon at 3pm! Pianist David Feurzig will perform as part of his "Play Every Town" tour to raise awareness about climate change and build community. The FCCEJ sanctuary choir will perform 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.

## **Easter Call To Care Baskets**

The Annual Easter Basket project is in full swing! All donations must be in by April 1. Assembly will be April 2-4. Distribution/Delivery of baskets will be April 5-9. 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 help deliver. Here is a possibilities list: puzzles (crosswords, word-search, other activity books), 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.

## **Ukrainian Easter Bread Fundraiser**

In an effort to support our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, we are offering Ukrainian bread for Easter. **Deadline to order is April 5.** Bread will be delivered on Easter morning to FCCEJ.

## **Fellowship Hall Floor Update**

The new Fellowship Hall installation begins tomorrow, March 27. Please note that the Fellowship Hall will be inaccessible from Monday, March 27 through Friday, March 31. Our new floor will be in before Easter! 😊

## **Planned Giving Seminar**

Our Planned Giving Seminar is scheduled for Thursday, May 4 from 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. **Contact the church office if you would like to attend.**

## **Faith Formation & Youth Gatherings**

3/26 Faith Formation Peer Groups

3/26 Junior Youth (6th-8th) 11:30-1:30pm Pizza lunch & Mission project

3/29 HS Youth Gathering 1:15 -3:15pm @ FCCEJ Ice Cream Sundaes

7pm On Zoom – Parent chat on book 'New Directions for Holy Questions'

4/2 Lenten Scavenger Hunt (inside) following both worship services

4/5 7pm On Zoom – Parent chat on book 'New Directions for Holy Questions'

4/9 Easter Pancake Breakfast serving 7-10am

Volunteer sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0545a8ab2faaf58-easter#/>

4/16 Junior Youth (6th -8th) 11:30-1:30pm

Young Apostles (3rd-5th & parent) 4-5pm

# Weekly Calendar: March 26—April 2

\*Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections\*

## Sunday, March 26

8:30\* & 10:15am: Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th), Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Junior Youth, Youth Room  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
3pm: Community Concerts @ First presents  
Dave Feurzig, Sanctuary  
Community Soup Supper to Follow,  
Fellowship Hall

## Tuesday, March 28

**Fellowship Hall Floor Installation**  
8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary  
5:30pm: Finance Committee, Marvin Lounge  
7pm: Trustees, Marvin Lounge  
Stewardship Committee, Conference Room

## Thursday, March 30

**Fellowship Hall Floor Installation**  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*  
*5:30pm: Piano Lesson, Sanctuary*  
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## Saturday, April 1

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

## Monday, March 27

**Fellowship Hall Floor Installation**  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*  
*7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

## Wednesday, March 29

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

## Friday, March 31

**Fellowship Hall Floor Installation**  
8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*

## Sunday, April 2

**Palm Sunday, Sanctuary Choir Cantata,  
Holy Communion**  
8:30\* & 10:15am: Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-2nd),  
Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary  
1pm: Racial Justice Task Force, Church Grounds  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*