

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.

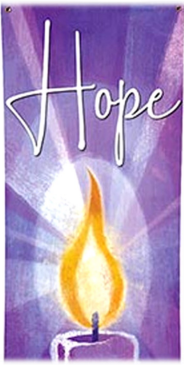
1 Church Street

Essex Junction, VT 05452

Phone: 802-878-5745 **E-mail:** welcome@fccej.org **Website:** www.fccej.org



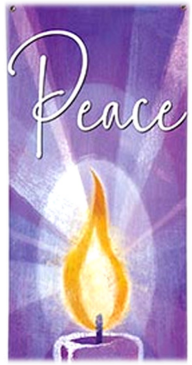
First Service



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023



We offer two different worship services: 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 the Finally @ First Praise Band is live in the sanctuary at 10:15am and is not streamed. On the first Sunday of each month, when we celebrate Holy Communion, we offer one service at 10am where everyone worships together. Our Faith Formation Program for PreK through 8th is in person and starts at 10:15am in worship and then breaks

out into peer groups. The Nursery is available at both services—self serve at 8:30 and staffed at 10:15.

Currently, mask wearing is determined by the individual.

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

Order of Worship

Introit

Noel III (en Musette)

Louis-Claude Daquin**

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

Introit

Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice

David Ashley White**

Lighting the Second Candle of Advent: Peace..... The Evans Family

Call to Worship Led by Deacon Rusty Sargent

Leader: The ways of the world are crazy and chaotic with wars, economic injustice and newscasts that revel in humanity's blunders.

Pulpit Side: However, in Christ's Church we seek peace for our hearts, peace for our families and peace for the wider world.

Lectern Side: We come for a little quiet and Godly reflection so that our hearts and souls might be nourished and strengthened.

Pulpit Side: We come to hear God's word in scripture and to see how it applies to our lives. We come to grow in the faith and make the world a better place.

Lectern Side: We come to connect with friends and to be a part of a community grounded in love, where kindness and mercy rule.

Sermon *The Theology of What God Wants* Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *Into My Heart*

Harry D. Clarke**

***Doxology for the Christmas Season**

#148**

What Child is This

Bring gifts of incense, gold and myrrh,

Come peasant, king, to own him

The king of kings salvation brings

Let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the king,

whom shepherds guard and angels sing

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

the babe the son of Mary.

***Hymn**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#131**

***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

Still, Still, Still

Salzburg Melody**

arr. Sally DeFord

***Please stand as you are able**

♦ Sincere thanks this morning to our musicians who provided the beautiful music!

⇒ Bethany Blake and the Sanctuary Choir

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MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fccej.org]

Ministers of Visitation:

Rev. Ron Faux [revronfaux@gmail.com] / Mary McHugh [mmmchugh@hotmail.com]

Christian Education Director: Laurie Chipman [lchipman@fccej.org]

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Elizabeth Miller [childrensministry@fccej.org]

Music Director: Bethany Blake [bblake@fccej.org]

Social Media Marketing Coordinator: Andrea Hickey [socialmedia@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Jen Kelly [welcome@fccej.org]

Music

Chair of Music: Denise Keating

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Men at First Director: Bill Bickford

Officers

President: Cathy Shearer

Vice President: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [treasurer@fccej.org]

Assistant Treasurer: Matt Clark [mclarkdiscovery48@gmail.com]

Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditor: Betsy Weischedel

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: 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

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees: Kaki McGeary

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert

OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

If you require prayers for yourself or a loved one; or if you wish a call from a pastor, please contact the church office.

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii
Everyone affected by the recent floods
Victims of gun violence and their families
Family and Friends of Bob Vincent
Family and friends of Alma Wilson

Albert
Ruby and Family
Michael Flynn

Tony Lamb
Bruce Gianuzzi
Sandy Tallman
Maureen Evans & Family
Bernie Currier
All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine and the Middle East
...and all persons affected by COVID19



****The flowers on the altar this morning are given
by The Ehler Family In Memory of Michael Ehler****



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:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036#success>
- ♦ **Tai Chi Class**, Tuesdays at 10:15am 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 @ 11:30am in Marvin Lounge
- ♦ **Bridge Group**, 1st & 3rd Fridays @ 1:30pm in Marvin Lounge



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39039ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

A Few Key Announcements

- ◆ On the first Sunday of each month, we offer a single worship service at 10am. This provides us the opportunity to connect with our faith family as we celebrate Holy Communion together.
 - ⇒ This service is In-Person & Streamed with organ and Sanctuary Choir
 - ⇒ Staffed nursery care is available
 - ⇒ Spiritual Friends for PreK through 2nd grade offered after Children's Message
- ◆ Two Morning Services on Other Sundays
 - ⇒ 8:30am—In-Person & Streamed with organ and Sanctuary Choir
 - ⇒ 10:15am—In Person with Finally @ First Praise Band & Faith Formation for children
 - ⇒ Nursery for up to 3 y/o offered at both services—self-serve at 8:30 & staffed at 10:15

Pageant Update

Today, December 10th ~ Pageant Rehearsal 11:30-1:30pm

All children are encouraged to stay after 2nd service for a few minutes to determine where they can participate in the pageant as a shepherd, sheep or angel.

Pageant Sunday is December 17th

Come see "*A Busy Night*", our 2023 Christmas pageant, presented at both our services. Join us and celebrate the birth of Jesus, told by a magi from the east with a busy innkeeper and shepherds who were visited by an angel. It will be a fun, joyful service with lots of moving parts, especially our two sweet new babies of the congregation playing baby Jesus. Come sing the carols, hear a clarinet duet at 8:30am, our Joyful Noise (children/youth) sing at 10:15am and our Sanctuary Choir at both services.

Special Offerings in December

The Pastor's Fund—December 17th:

In these economic uncertain times, there is a unique opportunity to help those in our local area who have financial needs. The Pastor's Fund is used at the discretion of our minister to provide support for heating bills, emergencies, food, etc. for both members and non-members. What a great way to show our caring to our community!

Veterans of the Cross—December 24th:

This Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

Weekly Calendar: December 10—December 17

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, December 10

9:30am: Joyful Noise, Marvin Lounge
8:30* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming*
10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK—8th)
11:30am: Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary & Gym
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 12

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge
10am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
5pm: Yoga @ First, Sanctuary
6:30pm: BSA District Roundtable, Fellowship Hall & 2nd Floor Program Room
7pm: Deacons, Marvin Lounge

Thursday, December 14

8:30am: Essex Art League, Fellowship Hall
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting, Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
12pm: Montana Leadership, Program Room
Hiawatha Food Drive Delivery, Fellowship Hall
6:15: Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary
6:30pm: Eagle Scout BoR, Marvin Lounge
7pm: Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
Cub Scout Pack 630, Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 16

8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary
Give It A Go Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
9am: Reiki Class, Marvin Lounge
Weight Loss Support Group, Fellowship Hall
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11am: Pageant Dress Rehearsal, Sanctuary
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
1pm: Joyful Noise Choir, Sanctuary
1:30pm: Caroling, Mansfield Place, Mapleridge, Williston Place

Monday, December 11

8:30am: Food Pantry Set-Up, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
5pm: Essex Pediatrics Workshop, West Wing
5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution, Fellowship Hall
7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, December 13

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

Friday, December 15

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
4:30pm: Burlington Amateur Radio Club, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 17

Pageant Sunday—All Family Worship

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

Events in italics = Local Community Groups