



# **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.*

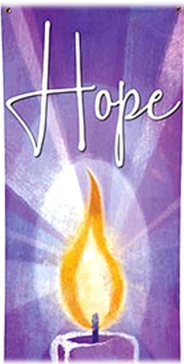
**1 Church Street**

**Essex Junction, VT 05452**

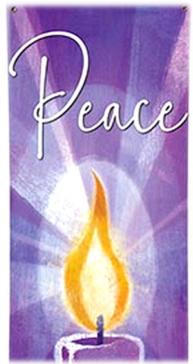
**Phone:** 802-878-5745 **E-mail:** [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) **Website:** [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)



*Second 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](http://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*

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

*Prepare Ye*

Stephen Schwartz

Lighting the Second Candle of Advent: Peace..... The Heavenly Thrift Shop 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.**

Leader: In this place, we seek to be different from the world: civil, respectful, generous, united and committed to a higher good. Come, let us worship God, follow Jesus and seek out the Spirit.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation.....Deacon Rusty Sargent

**\*Opening Hymn**

*Here I Am to Worship*  
[insert]

**Tim Hughes**

Children's Message

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 Transition to Peer Groups\***

**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.**

*\*Parents, please collect your children from their peer rooms by 11:30\**

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer** .....Rev. Ron Faux, Minister of Visitation

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

**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.**

**Musical Response**

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**#116**

**O Come, desire of nations, bind  
All people's in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease  
Fill the whole world with heavens peace  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O Israel.**

Scripture

Old Testament Prophetic      Isaiah 40:1-11      [page 517]

New Testament Epistle      2 Peter 3:8-15a      [page 186]

New Testament Gospel      Mark 1:1-8      [page 27]

Anthem

*Light of the World*

Lauren Daigle

Sermon

*The Theology of What God Wants*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *Mary, Did You Know*

Mark Lowry

**\*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**

*City of God*

**Dan Schutte**

**\*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**

**◆ Sincere thanks this morning to our musicians who provided the great music!**

⇒ Rick Dooley and the Finally @ First Praise Band

## 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://fcej.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](https://bit.ly/39039ht)



INSTAGRAM

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



INTERNET

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



YOUTUBE

[bit.ly/3oPpBv9](https://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 care for infants through 3 years available at both services—self-serve at 8:30 and 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 members and non-members. What a great way to show our caring to our community!

**Veterans of the Cross—December 24th:** This fund has been caring for active & retired clergy, and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "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!

## **IMPORTANT REMINDER**

Annual committee reports are due to the office by **December 31.**

Please email your submissions to [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org).

# 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*

# 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