



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

Love. Serve. Grow.

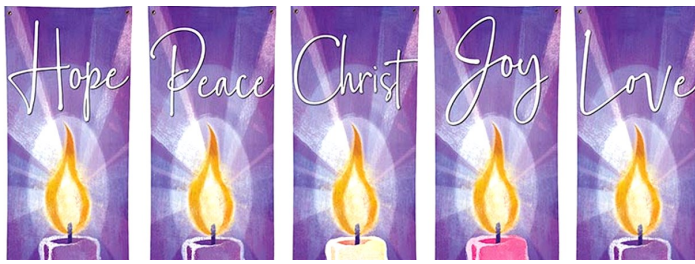
A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All in the Spirit of Christ

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
The First Sunday After Christmas
December 31, 2023**

We offer two different worship services: our First Service with organ and traditional choir is streamed on the 2nd and 4th Sunday 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 streamed on the 3rd Sunday of the month. On the first Sunday of each month we celebrate communion and only have one service at 10am and it is streamed. Our Faith Formation Program for all children is in person and starts at 10:15am.

Our Nursery is open at all services.

Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.

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

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

Musical Introit

The First Noel

**

Call to WorshipDeacon Rusty Hartmann

Leader: Come, let us praise the lord.

Pulpit Side: Let the heavens with all its angels, hosts and resurrected children of God praise God and Christ's glorious name.

Lectern Side: Let God's created order offer praise: the sun, moon, and shining stars, the laws of the universe, and even the great sea monsters.

Pulpit Side: Let the fire and hail, the stormy wind and snow, the seasons and cycles of the earth, let them all praise the Lord.

Lectern Side: Let the mountains and hills, oceans and lakes, fruit trees and good food, as well as all growth beautiful to our sight, let them all praise the Lord.

Pulpit Side: Let all creatures of our God praise the Lord, from wild to domesticated animals, from the creatures of the sea to those that fly.

Lectern Side: Let everyone praise the Lord, from princes to paupers, men and women, young and older.

Everyone: Let us all praise the Lord. The Divine Presence alone is to be exalted. We are God's people. Let us simply thank the Lord for life, beauty, truth, and love.

Opening Hymn** **Angels We Have Heard On High** ***

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

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mark Mendes

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

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.

Musical Response (F@F & Congregation) ******

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all gracious King.

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Scripture

Old Testament Prophetic

Isaiah 61:1-4

[page 536]

New Testament Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

[page 45]

Anthem

Let's Tell the World

Eric Hutchinson**

Rick Dooley, lyrics

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem (F@F and Congregation)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**

***Doxology**

**

**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.**

***Hymn**

Go Tell It on the Mountain

**

***Benediction**

Pastoral Benediction..... Rev. Mark Mendes

***Sung Community Benediction**

Go Now In Peace

**

**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 if you are able

- ◆ We are thankful to be blessed with the talents of these awesome musicians this morning:
⇒ Rick Dooley and Finally @ First Praise Band

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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.

Safe travels for everyone
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
Connor Bryce and Family
Bernie Currier

Ruby and Family
Michael Flynn
Tony Lamb
Bruce Gianuzzi
Maureen Evans & Family
All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine and the Middle East
...and all persons affected by COVID19

*The flowers on the altar are given by Beth Volker,
in remembrance of John Denver on what would have been his
80th birthday.*

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

Dates to Remember:

Sunday, December 31—One service at 10am

Committee Reports for Annual Meeting due—please email submissions to welcome@fccej.org

Monday, January 1—Church office closed all day

Sunday, January 7—One service at 10am

Sunday, January 21—Pulpit Exchange with Rev. Devon Thomas

Sunday, January 28—New Members Class, 11:30 in Marvin Lounge

Montana Service Trip

Tickets are available now for the *Cabin Fever Calcutta* happening on March 9th. Names of those who purchase tickets on or before 1/15/24 will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 cash prize. Don't miss out on this opportunity to support the Montana Service Trip.

Grief Support Group

2nd Thursday of each month from 10am to 11:30am in Marvin Lounge.

This group is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. It is a place to share and connect with others. The facilitators hope to provide a safe, supportive environment in which participants learn from each other, discover ways to cope with grief, and offer the assurance that we are not alone. Grief is a normal, natural, and necessary experience!

The sessions are facilitated by Sharon Dettenrieder, MSN, RN and Mary McHugh, MAPS. Both Sharon and Mary have years of experience in leading Grief Support groups as well as personal experience with loss. First session is Thursday, January 11.

Please contact the church office for more information: 802-878-5745 or welcome@fccej.org.

New Members Class Offered

Have you found a place where you are welcomed? Do you appreciate a faith that encourages you to use your mind? Are you looking for a church that teaches values of love, kindness, inclusion and forgiveness to your children? Do you appreciate great music from multiple choral or musical groups? Do you feel the warmth and support of our staff and members? Do you want to be a part of an organization that helps to better the structures and tone of the wider Essex community?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then we would love you to come and explore what membership in our church means. On January 28, after second service, around 11:30am, we are offering a New Members Class where you can learn about our church and her many ministries. You will learn about our history, as well as what our denomination, the United Church of Christ, stands for and how they operate. Lunch is provided. Childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact the church office at 802-878-5745 and we'll be happy to arrange it.

Weekly Calendar: December 31 - January 7

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, December 31

10am: All Family Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, January 2

8am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall
8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary
6pm: BSA Troop 624 District Meeting, Fellowship Hall
7pm: Church Council, Marvin Lounge

Thursday, January 4

8:30am: Essex Art League, Fellowship Hall
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting, Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
6pm: Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
Cub Scout Den Meetings, Fellowship Hall, Gym, Program Room, Classrooms

Saturday, January 6

8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary
Give It A Go Support Group, Marvin Lounge
9am: *Weight Loss Support Group, Fellowship Hall*
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

Monday, January 1

10am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Kitchen
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, January 3

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

Friday, January 5

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
1:30pm: Bridge Group, Marvin Lounge

Sunday, January 7

10am: Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming
10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-2nd)
11am-12pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary
Junior Youth, Kitchen, Youth Room
Montana Team, 2nd Floor Program Room
Racial Justice Committee, Conference Room
Bogardus Family Event, Marvin Lounge
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 [mattclark48discovery@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