



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



Second Service

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Second Sunday in Lent
February 25, 2024

We offer two different worship services: our First Service with organ and traditional choir is in-person and streamed and begins at 8:30am with access via 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 have a single service at 10am and is in-person and streamed. Our Faith Formation Program for all children is in person and starts at 10:15am. Listen Assist Headsets are available in the Narthex and next to the elevator and can be used with or without hearing aids.

Our Nursery is open at all services.

Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.

<p><i>A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All In the Spirit of Christ</i></p>

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

Return to God

Marty Haugen

Call to WorshipLead by Deacon Rusty Sargent

Leader: Our God is good. Our God wants goodness in our lives. We come here today to seek out how to align our lives with God's will so that our lives might more closely align with God's joy, meaning and hope.

People: We all come here with our own problems, difficulties and issues. None of us can live up to God's vision for humanity. None of us can even live up to our own set of values of image of perfection.

Everyone: We all fall short of the glory of God.

Leader: Come, let us welcome Jesus and his ways into our lives. Come, let us proclaim Jesus to be the Messiah. Come, let us take up Christ's cross and gain our lives in return. Come, let us worship our God in song.

***Opening Hymn**

Just a Closer Walk with Thee
[insert]

Chris Muglia

Deacon's Prayer of InvocationDeacon Rusty Sargent

Children's Message..... Laurie Chipman & Elizabeth Miller

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 Return to Their Families*

**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.**

**Today is All-Family Worship—children remain in the Sanctuary to worship with their families.*

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")** Rev. Karen Mendes

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 and Candle Lighting

During the first five Sundays of Lent, we will provide a time for folks to come up and light a candle for a loved one who has died or for someone in your life in need of prayer. While we light our candles, music will be provided.

Sharing One's Spiritual Journey Mary McHugh

Anthem

Lord, I Need You

Matt Maher

New Testament Scripture Reading: Mark 8:31-38

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Sermon

Losing and Saving

Rev. Karen A. Mendes

Rev. Karen Mendes is switching pulpits with Rev. Mark Mendes today. Karen is the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Burlington Vermont and is Mark's wife. Be sure to give her a warm FCCEJ welcome back!

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem

Open the Eyes of My Heart

Paul Baloche

***Doxology**

#778**

**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**

How Can I Keep From Singing?

Robert Lowry

[insert]

***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 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!

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.

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii
Everyone affected by the recent floods
Victims of gun violence and their families

Albert

Ozzy and Family

Andrea & Steve Sharp

Family and Friends of Marilyn Vincent

Family and Friends of Joyce Jacobs

Bruce Blackman

Frank Smith

Connor Bryce and Family

Ruby and Family

Michael Flynn

Bruce Gianuzzi

Maureen Evans & Family

All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine and the Middle East

...and all persons affected by COVID19

Flowers on the altar are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or celebrate a special day. A dedication is included in the bulletin about who donated the flowers and who/what they are honoring.

Scan the QR code or use this link to sign up for 2024:



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-46881013-fccej>

CONNECTIONS:

Signup Online! <https://bit.ly/3dwsHji>

Our "Weekly Update" eConnection: <http://bit.ly/3rlsSv>

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:

March 3 ~ One service at 10am, Holy Communion

March 10 ~ Daylight Savings Time Begins—Spring Forward!

Rev. Devon Thomas, guest preacher

Community Concerts @ First presents Va et Vient, 3pm in the Sanctuary

March 17 ~ Pretzel Sunday, Receiving New Members

March 23 ~ FCCEJ Leadership Training, 9am-11am

March 24 ~ Palm Sunday

Sanctuary Choir Cantata

The Youth Calendar:

February 25 & March 3 ~ off—school break weekends

Community Concerts @ First

The 2024 lineup for CC@F is here! Mark your calendars and come enjoy these fabulous artists!

- ♦ **March 10 : Va Et Vient** - Vermont trio playing traditional Québécois, French & Cajun tunes
- ♦ **April 14: Vermont Virtuosi** - Flute and piano
- ♦ **September 29: Hairpeace** - Guitar and vocal duo performing acoustic music from the 60's through today
- ♦ **November 3: Alicia Chapman**, Oboe

A portion of the proceeds for all concerts will go to non-profit organizations in our community and all take place on Sundays at 3pm in the Sanctuary.

Click the QR Code or visit the Seven Days website for tickets:

sevendaystickets.com/organizations/community-concerts-at-first-congregational-church



Cabin Fever Calcutta

The Montana Service Team is hosting the 7th annual Cabin Fever Calcutta on March 9th. It is an evening of fun and fellowship, and the perfect time to shake the winter doldrums. Be sure to purchase your ticket at our table in Fellowship Hall!

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. 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. Next session is 3/7. Contact the church office for more info: 802-878-5745 or welcome@fccej.org.

Weekly Calendar: February 25 - March 3

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, February 25

Pulpit Exchange w/ Rev. Karen Mendes

All Family Worship

8:30 & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming

1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Monday, February 26

8:30am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

5pm: Thrift Shop Advisory Board, Marvin Lounge

7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Tuesday, February 27

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge

10:15am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall

10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary

7pm: Stewardship, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, February 28

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary

7pm: Searchers, Marvin Lounge

BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall

7:15pm: Bell Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Thursday, February 29

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge

12pm: Calcutta Committee, Marvin Lounge

6pm: Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary

7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Friday, March 1

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

1:30pm: Bridge Group, Marvin Lounge

Saturday, March 2

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

Sunday, March 3

One Service at 10am: Sanctuary/Streaming

10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-2nd)

11am-12:30pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

11:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary

Montana Team, 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 Specialist: Andrea Hickey [socialmedia@fccej.org]

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

Music

Chair of Music: Mindy Bickford & Joann Irwin—Co-Chairs

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Men at First Director: Bill Bickford

Officers

President: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Vice President: Terri Stein

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

Assistant Financial Secretary: Linda Bogardus

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [treasurer@fccej.org]

Assistant Treasurer: Matt Clark [mattclark48discovery@gmail.com]

Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditors: Betsy Weischedel, Allan Kinney

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Derek Lyman & Terri Livak

Communications: Francis Gravel

Deacons: Alison Wermer, Judy McCullen—Co-Chairs

Finance & Pastoral Relations: Terri Stein

Hospitality: Jen Dooley

Human Resources: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Missions: Ann Marie Sullivan

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees: Kaki McGearry

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert