



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

Palm Sunday

March 24, 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.

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Processional

The Palms

Jean Baptiste Faure**
arr. Ira B. Wilson

*At the beginning of the service, **everyone, especially our children**, are encouraged to line up behind the choir members as they process from both sides of the church or join them as they pass your pew. Follow the choir members and wave your palms as everyone parades in. Once you reach the front of the church, you may return to your seat.*

Congregation: Once the choir is assembled at the front of the Sanctuary, they will indicate through a raised hand that it is time for you to join in the singing, with this text....

**Sing and rejoice, O blest Jerusalem,
Of all thy sons sing the emancipation.
Through boundless love the Christ of Bethlehem
Brings faith and hope to thee forevermore.**

**Join all and sing, His name declare,
(SOLO LINE: Let ev'ry voice resound with acclamation)
Hosanna! Praise the Lord!
Bless Him who cometh to bring us salvation.**

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

Call to Worship Alison Wermer, 1st Service
Maureen McKenzie, 2nd Service

Leader: Today is the last Sunday of Lent, a time when lift up our palms and shout our hosannas to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem.

People: We like parades for Jesus and still welcome him and his teachings of love into our hearts.

Leader: On Palm Sunday, we also turn the corner and see in the near future the passion of Christ: the betrayal, scourge and death.

People: We like parades better than violence and are saddened to hear about the pain and anguish Jesus received at the hands of the Jewish leadership and Roman empire. We identify with his pain today!

Leader: Come, let us experience our lives within the context of Jesus’ life and know that Jesus is one with humanity through both the parades and pains of existence.

Opening Hymn** *All Glory, Laud and Honor* **#216*

Deacon’s Prayer of Invocation Alison Wermer, 1st Service
Maureen McKenzie, 2nd Service

The Sacrament of Baptism Noelle Joyce Sargent

Be sure to give a warm First Church welcome to our own Allie & Asa Sargent and their precious child Noelle. The proud grandparents are Dick & Anne Harris, and Tiffany & Bill Sargent.

Children’s Message

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mark Mendes
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.

Sharing One’s Spiritual Journey Dick Harris



A Musical Cantata by the Sanctuary Choir
Bethany Blake Directing

Come Walk with Me**

by Pepper Choplin

Part I

Narration 1/Prologue

Come Walk With Me

Narration 2

Blessed Is He Who Comes

Narration 3

Come Walk With Me to the Upper Room

The Upper Room

Narration 4

Crossroads at Gethsemane

Come Walk With Me to the Cross

Narration 5

Hanging on a Cross

Narration 6

Come Walk With Me, He is Gone

Lay His Body Down

No Greater Love

Narration 7

Part II of the Cantata will be performed on Easter Sunday at the first service.



Soprano:

Brenda Dawson, Terri Livak,
Amanda Palmer, Judy Pomainville,
Beth Volker

Alto:

Denise Keating, Gretchen Owens,
Andrea Sharp, Carolyn Toof

Tenor:

Bob Driver, David Johnson, Pete Schmalz

Bass:

Michael Bottamini, Francis Gravel,
Doug Olufsen

Narrators:

Riley Elliott, Rob Evans, Teddy Owens

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Prelude in D Major BWV 936

J.S. Bach**

***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**

Just As I Am

#207**

***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**

What God Ordains Is Always Good

Pachelbel**

***Please stand if you are able**

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Bethany Blake, the Sanctuary Choir, and the narrators for all their hard work and dedication to bring us this amazing musical cantata!

Dates to Remember

March 24 ~ Palm Sunday, Sanctuary Choir Cantata, Scavenger Hunt

March 28 ~ Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall

March 29 ~ Good Friday Service, 7pm in the Sanctuary

March 31 ~ Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service, 6:30am at Holy Family Gazebo

Easter Breakfast, 7-10am, FCCEJ Fellowship Hall

Egg Hunt, 9:30am (inside)

Easter Services @ FCCEJ, 8:30* & 10:15 in the Sanctuary & Streamed*

Children & Youth

Pretzel Sunday was enjoyed by all! The children enjoyed making their own pretzels during peer groups and relished the warm pretzels of doughy goodness for snack! This Sunday is Palm Sunday. Peer groups will read about Jesus' visit to Jerusalem, with crowds cheering "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" May we be reminded that a lot happens in a week between Palm Sunday and Easter, and to give praise to Jesus' love for us!

Blessings!

Elizabeth, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Faith Formation Sunday Morning Calendar

March 24 – Peer Groups (PreK-8th)

March 31 – Easter – All Family Worship

JH & SH Youth:

March 24 ~ JH Youth (6th – 8th) 11:30-1:30pm

March 31 ~ JH & SH can volunteer as breakfast helpers anytime

Easter Weekend Prayer Vigil

The ancient Prayer Vigil answers Jesus' call to pray, from the moment of Christ's death at 3pm Friday afternoon, to the moment of his resurrection at 7am Easter morning: 40 hours. Individuals, couples, or families are encouraged to sign up for one hour. Once the hour is complete, please let the next person in so they can have the same experience. We will break the prayer vigil for the Good Friday service and for the Nepali worship so there are 35 slots available.

Use Sign Up Genius or call the church office [802 878-5745] and tell Jen your time preference.



Parking

The FCCEJ parking lot is designed to maximize traffic flow. It's crucial to only park in designated spaces, except for active loading or unloading. When drivers park outside the lined spaces, it creates dangerous conditions for other drivers, pedestrians, and emergency vehicles if they were needed. Remember that we have a contract with the medical offices across Church Street to use their parking lot for overflow parking. Particularly on our single service Sundays and holidays, please consider parking in that lot and leave the FCCEJ spaces open for visitors and those that may be dealing with mobility issues. Thank you!

FCCEJ Audio/Visual Open House

On Sunday, April 7, the Communications Committee invites you to stay after worship (single service at 10am) and see a demonstration of how we stream our services, control our cameras, and other interesting tidbits related to our online presence. 11am(ish) in the Sanctuary.

Special Offering Reminder

Next Sunday we will be collecting our Special Offering for March. This offering goes to our Pastor's Fund, which is a designated account providing assistance in critical times of need. Please note "Pastor's Fund" on your check. Thank you!

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.

The Haitian People
Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii
Everyone affected by the recent floods
Victims of gun violence and their families
Jon Eric Lindholm
Albert
Ozzy and Family
Andrea & Steve Sharp
Russ Wilson & Cathy Galbraith
Juliana Faux
Family and Friends of Joyce Jacobs

Marie Johnson
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

*The flowers on the altar are given by Sylvia Nyhagen
in loving memory of her husband, Ed.*

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

Weekly Calendar: March 24 - March 31

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, March 24

Palm Sunday—Choir Cantata

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary/Streaming*
10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)
11:30am: Junior Youth
Scavenger Hunt, Inside FCCEJ Facility
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
5pm: Cub Scout Pack 630 Leadership Meeting, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, March 26

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
Finance Committee, Marvin Lounge
7pm: Stewardship, Marvin Lounge
Trustees, Program Room

Thursday, March 28

Maundy Thursday

8am: Food Pantry Set-Up
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
2:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution,
Fellowship Hall & Sanctuary
6:30pm: Maundy Thursday Service,
Fellowship Hall

Saturday, March 30

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, Marvin Lounge

Monday, March 25

8:30am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, March 27

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

Friday, March 29

Good Friday

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
3pm: Prayer Vigil Begins
7pm: Good Friday Service, Sanctuary

Sunday, March 31

Easter Sunday

6:30am: Sunrise Service at Holy Family Gazebo
7am-10am: Easter Breakfast, Fellowship Hall
8:30* & 10:15am: All-Family Worship,
Sanctuary/Streaming*
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups