

*The First Congregational Church
of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ*



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

“We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We agree to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As in the past, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.”

**One Church Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452**

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E-mail: welcome@fcej.org

Website: www.fcej.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of Essex Junction UCC



Open and Affirming means that we welcome everyone to First Church including our GLBTQ brothers and sisters.

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
United Church of Christ
December 17, 2017
Christmas Pageant Sunday

A Welcoming Community,

Accepting and Serving All

In the Spirit of Christ

Prelude

*Pastorale
Of The Father's Love Begotten*

Zipoli
Lenel

An Extravagant Welcome

*No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this place.*

Welcome Greeting and Announcements

Our Ministers will welcome everyone to church and highlight events in our shared life, then the Deacon on Duty will welcome everyone and invite people to raise significant celebrations to the congregation or introduce yourself or guests. We encourage everyone to sign the Friendship Books.

Call to Worship

Leader: We come to church to experience the sacred ritual of our children's Christmas Pageant. Lines will be forgotten, laughter will erupt, pride will be apparent and the warmth of the holiday will be manifest.

People: Christ's story is still shared and known throughout the world. We come to hear the familiar story from new voices and in new ways. Christ is alive and his teaching still rings out.

Leader: Come, let us worship the living God.

Opening Hymn

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

#144

Prayer of Invocation and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

Our Father 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 lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

Children's Message*Sending in the Angels/Lighting the 3rd Advent Candle*
For first & second services, Manu is in the Nursery with audio and the service is streamed to Fellowship Hall. Please return to your seats and watch for your instructions on when to join in the pageant.

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.**

**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.**

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Requests Offered within the Community

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Congregational Musical Response.....*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* [page 116]

O come, desire of Nations bind, all peoples in one heart and mind;

Make envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O u r 2 0 1 7 C h r i s t m a s P a g e a n t

I Wonder as I Wander

A Christmas Play written by Rev. Karen A. Mendes in 2010

2017 Revisions by Laurie Chipman

Scene 1

Carol: *Magi We of Orient Are (We Three Kings)* #254 v1

**Magi we of orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and Fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Scene 2

Carol: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* #133

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

Scene 3

Carol: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Baby Jesus to his place)*

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set they people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

Scene 4

Carol: *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (*Young Shepherds, Sheep and Angels move to the Narthex.*)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the King of angels.

O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Scene 5

Carol: *Angels we have Heard on High* #125 v1 & 2

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why our joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Carol: *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (*Toddler Jesus to his place*) #154

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,

Behold throughout the heavens there shone holy light

(refrain)

The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,

rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth.

(refrain)

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,

And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

(refrain)

Scene 6

Carol: *Joy to the World* #132 v1

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive its king;

Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,

And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Carol: *Joy to the World*

#132 v 2 & 3

**Joy to the Earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness and wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders of God's love.**

"Our Home, Our Future, Our Time".....A Capital Campaign Message

First Service.....Rob Evans

Second Service.....Joanne Irwin

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem 1st Service *Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

Bach

2nd Service *In The Bleak Midwinter*

Sykes

Soloists: Denise & Hillary Keating and Whitney Noel

Doxology.....*Of the Parent's Love Begotten* [page 118]

**Of the parent's love begotten when the worlds were yet to be
One there was with no beginning, one who is eternally,
Source and Ending of all things that have been,
And all things that are to be, forever and forever.**

Final Words and Pastoral Benediction

***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, watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith and in love

*Postlude:

The Fifers

Dandrieu

*Please stand if you are able.

Deacon: Anne Harris

Ushers & Greeters: 1st Service Meghan Bartlett, Cathy Shearer, Lester & Muriel Nutting

Ushers & Greeters: 2nd Service Carolyn & Dave Antone, Cathy Shearer, Bill Keithcart

The flowers on the altar are given by the Weischedel family to thank the church family for all you have done for Keenan and our family over the past year.

Cast

In order of appearance

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Narrator</i> | <i>Rev. Josh Simon</i> |
| <i>Magi 1</i> | <i>Braeden Koch</i> |
| <i>Magi 2</i> | <i>Zoe Moos</i> |
| <i>Magi 3</i> | <i>Charlie McGeary</i> |
| <i>Magi 4</i> | <i>Erik Frivoll</i> |
| <i>Magi 5</i> | <i>Tessa Nowell</i> |
| <i>Joseph</i> | <i>Munroe Shearer</i> |
| <i>Mary</i> | <i>Emma Parker</i> |
| <i>Shepherd 1</i> | <i>Jake Hoy</i> |
| <i>Shepherd 2</i> | <i>Carley Goedken</i> |
| <i>Shepherd 3</i> | <i>David Hoy</i> |
| <i>Shepherd 4</i> | <i>Alex Abakah</i> |
| <i>Advisor 1</i> | <i>Cornelia Abakah</i> |
| <i>Advisor 2</i> | <i>Emmerson Stapleton</i> |
| <i>Advisor 3</i> | <i>Caitlin McGeary</i> |
| <i>Gabriel</i> | <i>Ethan Goedken</i> |
| <i>Star</i> | <i>Makaylah Moos</i> |
| <i>Baby Jesus.</i> | |
| <i>Toddler Jesus</i> | <i>1st service Langston Dean</i> |
| | <i>2nd service..... Hope Whitfield</i> |

Remaining Cast members ... plus many more

Young Angels: Addie Stein, Teddy Owens, Lia Wolinsky

Young Shepherds : Izzy Owens

Sheep: Alec Mayville, Betty & Lily Marthaler, Addie & Trista Stein, Molly Bourn

Goat: Izzy Bourn

Donkey: Kallen Lefevre

Costumes: Eva Cunningham-Firkey, Myrna Doney

Technical Support: Trista Acebo, Laura Cunningham-Firkey, Kaki & Matt McGeary,

Jessica & Jonah Moos, Thomas Shearer, Rev. Josh Simon, Leo Wermer

Director: Laurie Chipman

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Carol Mauger

Jack Lucas

Les

David Tibbetts

Judy Janwich

Mike Heston

Cathleen & Lilianna

Lilly and Donald

Jaime Real

Roger Couture

Alexa

Don Mable

Shirley Boucher

Roger Kalar

Acacia Moore & family

Donna

Ruth Legendre

Emily Schueren & family

Sharon Kennedy

Mickey McKenzie

Campbell Miller

Please let us know if you would like a name added to our Prayer Ministry, you can write it on the Friendship Pad, call or email the office or send us a note, welcome@fcej.org

*** * * TODAY * * ***



TODAY , December 17th ~ Potluck & Christmas Caroling

11:30-All-church potluck lunch

12:30- Join us for caroling to our member's houses

TONIGHT, December 17th ~ A Quiet Service for Healing

7:00 pm All Are Welcome!



MONDAY DEADLINE, Christmas Poinsettias

Order your poinsettias for Christmas services in memory or honor of a loved one or special event. They are \$12.95 and come in red, white and a marbled variety. Let Jen know your preferences and your dedication will be remembered in the Christmas bulletins.



2018 Flower Chart is UP TODAY!

In the hallway out of Fellowship Hall, choose a date to remember loved ones or honor a special date in your family! \$34 for the flowers and you can take them or leave them for us to find someone who needs some love!

****Please help us fill up the month of January!****



TODAY ~Pick up Your Pledge Envelopes

If you ordered envelopes with your pledge to FCCEJ they are in the Fellowship Hall on one of the tables.

TODAY, Hannaford Cards & Reloads on Sale



*** * * Children, Youth & Family Announcements * * ***

Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2017

Your 2017 Total is now up to \$1139.61

Remember to bring your Sunday School offering.
Use an envelope in the pews to distinguish it from
the regular offering.



Faith Formation Sunday School Calendar

Preschool – 6th grade

December 17th ~ All in worship for Pageant Sunday
December 24th ~ 10am worship only ~ all in worship
December 31st ~ all in worship

Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

Our 5th & 6th graders meet ONCE a month from 11:30-1:30pm
Mission Focus ~ Meal ~ Fellowship/Games

January 7th ~ Junior Youth Group ~ 11:30-1:30pm

*** * * Opportunities To Volunteer & Donate * * ***

Dismas House Meal Volunteers Needed!

Looking for volunteers to provide dinner for 10-15 residents & staff.
Great opportunity to grab a couple friends
and serve on Wed, Dec 27th.



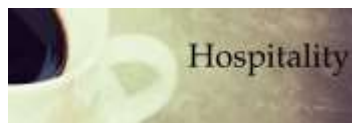
Next Food Pantry days are Thursday, December

21st, 2-6pm and Monday, January 8th, 5:30-7:30pm

We are in need of baked beans, tuna fish, cereal, jam & jelly and
canned fruit to restock our cabinets.

In Need of Long Red Toboggan Sleds to Borrow

For our clients to bring their Food Pantry bags home
in the winter-the shopping carts don't work well!



Hospitality Needs YOU!

The Hospitality Committee is extremely low on members
and helpers. Unfortunately, this has and will result in coffee
hour not taking place after each Sunday service on a
consistent basis. If you are willing to volunteer your time to support the hospitality
work, please contact Jackie Parks, Hospitality Chair at 324-9206. Thank you.



Thanks From The Giving Tree!

Again this Christmas season, the many families who received gifts for their children through the Giving Tree program have expressed so often how very grateful they are for the generosity of our congregation. One mother stated that our gifts mean that her children would wake up on Christmas morning with their voices filled with excitement and joy. Another stated that our gifts would be the only ones that her child would receive. It can be difficult for us to imagine what it must be like to struggle to celebrate the spirit of giving at Christmas. Thank you to each of you for bringing joy to so many during this season of Christ's birth.

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Regular Hours: 10am-3pm Tues & Wed, 4-8pm Thurs

First Saturday, January 6th 9am-12pm

Fall/Winter Donations can be dropped off at the Shop anytime.

Special Christmas & Nearly New Section

Winter Potluck, January 15th, 6pm, Marvin Lounge



* * * **SAVE THE DATES** * * *



“Our Home, Our Future, Our Time”

Capital Campaign Information Meetings

Sunday, January 7th & 14th @ 9:45 & 11:30 (after both services)

Wednesday, January 10 @ 6pm

Please join us for a Capital Campaign Information Meeting to learn all about the proposed capital projects and budget! Childcare will be available. A preliminary list of proposed projects was developed by our Trustees, with lots of input from Church Council, committees, and the congregation during a feasibility study last fall. Our church has been working with John Alden and his architectural firm Scott & Partners to develop more detailed plans and cost estimates. We look forward to sharing this information at the January meetings, and hearing your feedback! Also be sure to mark your calendars for our **Annual Meeting on January 28**, when the congregation will be voting on whether to move forward with the campaign!

Early Bird Calcutta Tickets On Sale

Early Bird Tickets for the Cabin Fever Calcutta on March 10, 2018 are on sale until January 15th. By purchasing an Early Bird ticket, you are entered into a drawing for a \$100 cash prize, to be awarded the night of the Calcutta. Stop by the table in Fellowship Hall and get yours today.



THIS WEEK: December 17th– 24th

- TODAY:** 8:30am **Worship Service & Christmas Pageant / Sanctuary**
10:15am **Worship Service & Christmas Pageant / Sanctuary**
11:30 - 12:30 pm **All Church Pot Luck Pageant Party / Fellowship Hall**
12:30 pm **Christmas Caroling / offsite**
1:00 - 2:00 pm **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
2:30 - 4:00 pm **Cub Scout Meeting / Marvin Lounge**
- MONDAY:** 9:30 - 11:00 am **Tai Chi / Fellowship Hall**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
1:30 - 4:00pm **Food Pantry Stocking / FH & Gym**
5:30 - 6:30 pm **Group Victory / Youth Lounge**
5:30 - 6:45 pm **Yoga with Jonah / Gym**
5:30 - 7:30 pm **Girl Scout Troop / Third Floor**
6:00 - 8:00 pm **Scout Meeting-Judy McCullen / Marvin Lounge**
6:30 - 9:30 pm **Joe's Big Band / Fellowship Hall**
- TUESDAY:** 8:30 - 10:00 am **Sermon Talk Back / Marvin Lounge**
10:00 am - 3:00 pm **Heavenly Cents Thrift Store**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
6:00 - 7:30 pm **Capital Campaign Communications / Youth Lounge**
6:30 - 8:00 pm **Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor**
7:00 - 9:00 pm **Missions / Marvin Lounge**
- WEDNESDAY:** 8:00 - 11:30 am **Food Pantry Delivery / Fellowship Hall**
9:30 - 11:00 am **Tai Chi / Gym**
10:00 am - 3:00 pm **Heavenly Cents Thrift Store**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
5:30 - 7:00 pm **Finally @ First / Fellowship Hall**
6:00 - 8:00 pm **Capital Campaign Steering Committee / Marvin Lounge**
6:30 - 7:30 pm **Currier Bells / Sanctuary**
6:30 - 8:30 pm **Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor**
7:00 - 8:30 pm **Boy Scouts / Fellowship Hall**
- THURSDAY:** 9:00 am **Newsletter Volunteers / Marvin Lounge**
10:00 - 11:30 am **Art Class / Gym / Third Floor**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
12:00 - 1:30 pm **Book Discussion Group / offsite @ Joanne Irwin's house**
4:00 - 8:00 pm **Heavenly Cents Thrift Store**
5:30 - 6:45 pm **Yoga with Jonah / Gym**
6:15 - 7:00 pm **Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary**
6:30 - 8:00 pm **Eagle Scout Board of Review / Third Floor**
7:00 - 8:30 pm **Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary**
7:30 - 9:00 pm **Confirmation Class / Marvin Lounge**
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
- SATURDAY:** 9:00am - 4:00 pm **Nepali Community Worship / Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall**
1:00 - 2:00 pm **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
1:30 - 4:00 pm **Marie Johnson-Organ / Sanctuary**

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

Church Administrator: *Jen Dooley* [welcome@fccej.org]
Interim Music Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@gmail.com]
Christian Education Director: *Laurie Chipman* [lchipman@fccej.org]
Associate Pastor: *Rev. Josh Simon* [jsimon@fccej.org]
Senior Pastor: *Rev. Mark Mendes* [mmendes@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: *Jenny Bourn* [jennybourn4@gmail.com]
Currier Bell Choir Director: *Carolyn Harris* [899-6759]
Finally @ First Director: *Rick Dooley* [rickdooley5@gmail.com]
Heavenly Harmony Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@gmail.com]
Joyful Noise: *Jessica Moos* [jessicamoosvermont@gmail.com]
Men At First Director: *Bill Bickford, Jr.* [bill.bickford@aol.com]
Sanctuary Choir Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@gmail.com]

Committee / Church Officer Contacts

President, Chair Human Resources Committee: *Brenda Crocket* [881-5253]
Vice President, Chair Finance & Pastoral Relations: *Carl Wermer* [879-7650]
Treasurer & Historian: *Ann Gray* [878-4088]
Asst. Treasurer: *Dan Petherbridge* [879-0261]
Financial Secretary: *Pat Seaver* [879-4445]
Clerk: *Alison Wermer* [879-7650]
Christian Education: *Jenny Bourn* [802-309-7441]
Communications: *Kevin Dorn* [878-3696]
Deacons: *Rick Dooley* [578-0229] *Mike Bottamini* [879-0763]
Hospitality: *Jackie Parks* [324-9206]
Missions: *Sandy Tallman* [879-0665]
Music: *Judy Larrabee* [236-0604]
Nominating: *Carl Wermer* [879-7650]
Stewardship: *Kathy Finnie* [878-3696]
Trustees: *Kevin Meilleur* [238-4041]
Ushering: *Michael Sullivan* [879-6044]

Recognized Groups at First Church

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop [879-6552] *Sue Wood* suewood@myfairpoint.net or
Linda Bogardus at lbogardus@myfairpoint.net
Heavenly Food Pantry Contact: *Valerie Gabert* [879-0109]
Called To Care Contact: *Beth Volker* [879-4708]
Nepali Christian Community Contact: *Dan Raut* [310-4371]
Craft Fest Committee Contact: *Linda Bogardus* [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net]

mission
M O M E N T S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, December 17, 2017

Third Sunday of Advent

Psalm 126 or Luke 1:47-55

Shouts of Joy

We love movies where the downtrodden and beaten and dismissed character in a story finally gets their due and all the evil in the narrative gets punished. The girl who is bullied; the poor family who saves their neighborhood; the basketball team nobody thinks will win does win; the orphan boy forced to live under the stairs who becomes a mighty wizard—these are all the kinds of stories that give us a buzz and engender hope. They reorder expectations about whose likely to have power in this world. This is the story of Jesus. A story that shines a light on the powerless of this world. Jesus, born to a mother who felt lifted-up by her pregnancy and whose expectations were that her child would be remarkable.

All mothers should feel that joy of expectation for their children. But there is a hard truth in the world as it is – not every child has the same opportunity or privilege. Some children are born in a world of misery and hunger, some have no access to education, some are born with a skin color that will mean that they will to work twice as hard to get what others take for granted. This is a hard truth to digest. We depend on our belief in the basic fairness of the world.

The question for faithful people is how does God work in this world for justice and fairness? One could say that in Genesis God gave us the world and its resources are at our disposal. What we have we done with that gift? How have we loved this world into being?

The young pregnant Mary believes that God will fix and reorder injustice. What can churches do to spread her joy to all children?

It is not necessary to be a big church to spread one's love of children into the world. Mt. Cavalry Church, in Woodstock, Virginia, has only 5-7 people in worship on a Sunday, but their members share their love by making special small quilts for children in their county's shelters. Father north, in Gloversville, New York, the First Congregational UCC houses a program called CAPTAIN (Community Action for Parents, Teens and Interested Neighbors). It provides food, life skill training, support, homework help and a place to go for any teen or youth in the area. FCC

Gloversville has only 40 in worship.

There is a mission field around your church. In it teenagers languish without support, children need a blanket and all young mothers need hope and joy. What can you do with what you have?

What joy can you share, in this season of giving, to a world that longs to show its love for all God's children?