

*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**

Phone: 802-878-5745

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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
September 10, 2017
Welcome Back Sunday

A Welcoming Community,

Accepting and Serving All,

In the Spirit of Christ.

Order of Worship

Prelude

*Declaration
The Great Commission*

Groden
Livingston

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 then 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 a friend as a guest. We encourage everyone to sign the Friendship Book.

Introit 1st
2nd

*Joyful Joyful
The Pledge*

Beethoven
VBC Kids

Call to Worship

Leader: Welcome to this sacred place.

People: A place made sacred by our yearning for God.

Men: A place made sacred by God's value of justice.

Women: A place made sacred by the community of love created.

Men: A place made sacred by the varied gifts offered to God.

Women: A place made sacred by forgiveness, challenge and hope.

People A place made sacred by our yearning for God.

Leader: Come, let us worship our God in this sacred space.

*Opening Hymn 1st
2nd

*I Sing the Mighty Power of God
Blessed Be Your Name (song sheet)*

#12
Redman

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.

The Sacrament of Baptism.....Cohen James Ploof

Be sure to give a warm welcome to Cohen today as he joins Jesus' movement of love and faith in this world. His proud parents are Ginger Pearl Irish and Scott Bradley Ploof.

Children's Message

After the Children's Message, children in Preschool up through Senior High are welcome to join us for Welcome Back activities. Kathryn is in the Nursery with a speaker for you to listen in the room or the service is streamed to Fellowship Hall. Parents/Grandparents are welcome to accompany the kids, help them get settled and stay or return to worship. All children & youth will return to worship during the final hymn.

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.

Anthem 1st
2nd

*Place in the Valley
Stand Up*

Besig
Nettles

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Requests Offered within the Community

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response 2nd

Time After Time

Lauper

If you're lost you can look and you will find me

Time after time

If you fall I will catch you I'll be waiting

Time after time

Time after time

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Anthem 1st

Evidence of Grace

McDonald

2nd

Imagine

Lennon

The 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.**

***Hymn of Preparation**

We Would Be Building

#607

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Torah

Exodus 3:1-12

[page 39]

New Testament Epistle

Romans 12:9-21

[page 124]

Sermon

Those Gentiles & Tax Collectors

Rev. Mendes

***Closing Hymn 1st**

Jesus Loves Me

#327

2nd

Everlasting God (song sheet)

Brown

Benediction

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:**

Rejoice In The Lord

Mason

*Please stand if you are able.

*The flowers on the altar are given by Steve & Sue Wood
in loving memory of their dads at harvest time.*

Deacon: Betsy Weischedel

Greeters: 1st: Sylvia Nyhagen & Pat Seaver; 2nd: Alan & Beth Kinney

Ushers: 1st: Mary Ellen Grove; 2nd: Maureen McKenzie & Nancy Milne

First Church's Prayer Ministry

Coby Miller	Jack Lucas	Keenan Weischedel
David Tibbetts	Judy Janwich	Mike Heston
Emily Carroll & family	Lilly and Donald	Jaime Real
Michael Flynn	Carol	Don Mable
Shirley Boucher	Roger Kalar	Acacia Moore & her family
Ralph Abeling	Donna	Ruth Legendre
Emily Schueren & family	Sharon Kennedy	Mickey McKenzie
Campbell Miller	George Jackson	Cathleen & Lilianna
Ann Mudgett-Learned	Kelly King	Marion Ferris @ Starr Farm

*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@fccej.org*

* * * **TODAY** * * *

WELCOME BACK
SUNDAY

TODAY ~ Welcome Back Sunday

Back to Two Worship Services 8:30 & 10:15am

Fun & Games~Faith Formation Program Begins

Hot Dogs & Hamburgers Picnic by the CE Committee on the lawn after worship

Music by Finally @ First and a Dessert Potluck table

Church Office Hours are back to Fall/Winter Schedule

Monday - Friday 9am-2pm



Donate Stocks

Stock Donated

If you have recently donated stock to the church, please contact
Pat Seaver, Financial Secretary at vtri2@aol.com or 879-4445



How To Support Hurricane Relief

http://www.ucc.org/disaster_hurricane_harvey

If you do not feel comfortable giving online, make a check out to
FCCEJ with Hurricane Relief in the memo line and we will send it
in as a group check.



* * * **THIS WEEK** * * *



Yoga @ First is BACK next week with TWO CLASSES!

Jonah is back from his summer adventures and Monday class has started again PLUS he has added a Thursday evening class as well. Both classes will meet in the gym from 5:30-6:45. All levels from beginner to experienced are absolutely welcome. You can bring your own mat or borrow one of Jonah's. Classes are free but donations are gratefully accepted for FCCEJ. Welcome Back Jonah!

Tuesday Morning Sermon Talkback

Join us on Tuesdays from 8:30-10am for coffee, baked goods and a lively discussion of the sermon (and other topics!) that was delivered the previous Sunday. Join us for the conversation, the goodies, the camaraderie, or all of the above!



Wednesday Night Searchers



We are back to our regular time of 7-9pm. Join us as we embark on our first book, the 2017 Vermont Reads, "Brown Girl Dreaming" by Jacqueline Woodson. We will read the book and then Ms Woodson will be speaking at Burlington High School on October 23rd 6-8 pm and we will attend that presentation. We will have copies of the book in the office early in the week.

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



Faith Formation Sunday School Offering 2017

Your 2017 Total is now up to \$743.59

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

TODAY, September 10th ~Welcome Back Sunday Fun & Games

Fall Faith Formation Program Begins, Hot Dog & Hamburger Picnic by the CE Committee on the lawn after worship, music by Finally @ First and a Dessert Potluck

September 17th ~ Class time

September 24th ~ Class time

October 1st ~ First Sunday Spiritual Friends with Preschool – 4th grade

5th – 12th grade in worship as ushers & greeters





Junior Youth @ FCCEJ

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

September 17th ~ 11:30am – 12:15pm ~ JYG Call Out

Parents meet in the Youth Lounge on 2nd floor
5th & 6th graders gather in youth room on the 3rd floor

October 1st ~ Junior Youth Group ~ 11:30-1:30pm

Youth Ministry

Find ways to volunteer in the community & here at church – many things await you!

~Help a neighbor or a friend

~Bring your offering with you for worship and put it in the ‘color me’ envelopes -
support the Humane Society of Chittenden County

~Find ways and places to connect with your God & have Spirit time

Welcome Back Sunday, September 10th ~ 10:15am worship with fun activities for all!

Help with outdoor games for the younger children during the picnic on the lawn.

Sunday, September 17th, 5pm ~ Jr & Sr High Youth Group Call Out BBQ @
Pastor Mark’s house.

Confirmation Call Out

Confirmation will again be offered this year to anyone entering
9th grade or older. The Kick-off event will be Sunday,
September 24th, 5-6:30 pm with pizza for parents and students.
If you cannot make it that evening, please see Rev. Mark.



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

Looking for 2017-18 Faith Formation Volunteers

At First Church we believe it’s important to follow Jesus’ example of
taking time to get to know each other and build community... whether it’s
in class time or a large group activity, across the generations or in each of
our classes during second service. Faith is not taught, Faith is
caught! Join the fun and help the children and youth catch the Spirit!



Nursery: Lend a hand and help us strive to meet our two to one ratio

Spiritual Friends: Enjoy great conversations with the kids

Faith Formation Class Leaders & Helpers: Be a class leader or helper for kids preschool
age and up – weekly emails from Laurie – all items gathered for you

Multi-Age Activity Helpers: Extra hands when all ages are together - PreK-Sr. High

**Next Food Pantry days are this Mon., September 11th, 5:30-7:30pm
and Thurs., September 28th, 2-6pm**

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

We are still all set for egg cartons ~ our storage for them is limited.



Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Regular Hours: 10am-3pm Tues & Wed, 4-8pm Thurs,
9am-12pm first Sat/month

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

BAG Sale Happening NOW!

Come on over and see all the wonderful bargains
Meeting for Volunteers & Any Who Are Interested in Volunteering
Monday, September 18, 6:30 pm in the Marvin Lounge

Currier Hand Bell Choir Needs YOU!!

We are so blessed to have a magnificent multi-octave hand bell set here
at FCCEJ. Think of ringing hand bells as a team sport. We all work
together to make beautiful music. No one person is more important than
another (except for our wonderful Director, Carolyn Harris. Can't play
without her!). You don't need to have a music background at all. Just a
sense of rhythm. We rehearse on Wednesday nights at 6:30, starting
Sept.20th in the Sanctuary. Please feel free to drop by to try it out or watch a rehearsal.
We'll give you an easy bell to start.



We Need Your Help ~ First Church Craft Fest

Volunteers are needed to hand-deliver our Silent Auction appeal letter to over 250 local
Essex and Essex Junctions businesses. We have decided to hand-deliver this year to
save time and money, as well as give a personal touch to the appeal. No experience
necessary, just a friendly smile and the ability to walk a short distance!

We need to have these personalized letters delivered before the end of September! We
can give you letters for one or more streets, depending on how much time you have
available in the next few weeks. If you can help or have any questions, please contact:

Phyllis Willey - willeykrewe@yahoo.com

Diana Higgins - dhiggins0812@gmail.com

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

Third Thursday Family Dish Share

September 21st from 5:45-7pm

Join us on the 3rd Thursday of the month for a great family dish share supper, fellowship and a chance to meet others here at First Church that you may not know and reconnect with old friends. Everyone at First Church is welcome! Bring a dish to share...anything really. Come be a part of this wonderful faith community and connect with God through Christian fellowship and a meal!

Friday, September 22nd ~ Faith On Tap

On Friday 9/22 6pm at the Jericho Tavern FCCEJ will be participating in our first ever inter-church Faith On Tap with United Methodist Church of Jericho, Essex Methodist Church and Good Shepard Lutheran Church and you are all invited to join us!!! This is an opportunity to get to know people of faith from two other religious traditions in a safe and friendly environment where together we can practice the time honored Christian tradition of getting together over a beer, or a non-alcoholic beverage, depending on your taste. Help us build bridges and more importantly build friendships as these four congregations meet together on a Friday night. This event will be bi-weekly so if you cannot make it the first night there will be others. Hope to see you!

Friday, October 20th ~ 150TH Anniversary Celebration Dinner

@ the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds

5:30 p.m. Social Hour

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Program

Celebrating
150
YEARS

Cost: \$45 per person – this includes building rental, set up and take down, and meal ~ hand-carved baked ham, stuffed chicken breast, roasted red potatoes, fresh-steamed green beans, tossed salad, rolls & butter, celebratory cake, coffee & tea. In addition, there will be a cash bar. Church members will have no responsibilities other than to come and enjoy themselves.

Tickets can be purchased on Sundays after Labor Day following both services. Or, you can mail a check, payable to FCCEJ with the notation “150th Anniversary Celebration” in the memo line, to First Congo Church of Essex Junction, Attn: 150th Anniversary Committee, 1 Church Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452. Tickets purchased by mail will be held for pick up on the night of the event. Anyone purchasing by mail who wants their ticket(s) ahead of the event, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your check. **Deadline for purchase of tickets: Friday, October 13th**

THIS WEEK: September 10th - 16th

- TODAY:** 8:30am **Worship Service / Sanctuary**
10:15am **Worship Service / Sanctuary**
1:00 - 2:00 pm **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
- MONDAY:** 12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
3:30 - 8:00pm **Heavenly Food Pantry (open 5:30-7:30) / FH & Kitchen**
5:30 - 6:30 pm **Group Victory / 3rd Floor**
5:30 - 6:45 pm **Yoga with Jonah / Gym**
- 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**
5:00 - 7:00 pm **AP Search Committee / Marvin Lounge**
7:00 - 9:00 pm **Deacons / Marvin Lounge**
- WEDNESDAY:** 10:00 am - 3:00 pm **Heavenly Cents Thrift Store**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
5:30 - 7:00 pm **Finally @ First / Sanctuary**
7:00 - 9:00 pm **Wednesday Night Searchers / Marvin Lounge**
7:00 - 8:00 pm **Boy Scouts / Gym**
- THURSDAY:** 10 - 11:30 am **Art Class / Third Floor / Gym**
12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
4:00 - 8:00 pm **Heavenly Cents Thrift Store**
5:00 - 6:00 pm **Calcutta Committee / Marvin Lounge**
5:30 - 6:45 pm **Yoga with Jonah / Gym**
6:30 - 7:00 pm **Heavenly Harmony / Sanctuary**
7:00 - 9:00 pm **Essex Eats Out Quarterly Meeting / Marvin Lounge**
7:00 - 8:30 pm **Sanctuary Choir / Sanctuary**
- FRIDAY:** 12:00 noon **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**
1:30 - 4:30 pm **AgeWell (CVAA) Staff Meeting / Fellowship Hall**
1:30 - 4:00 pm **Bridge Club / Marvin Lounge**
- SATURDAY:** 9:00am - 12:00 pm **Nepali Comm Worship & Meal / All Building**
9:30 - 11:30 am **Women's Spirituality / Marvin Lounge**
1:00 - 2:00 pm **Brown Bag / Fellowship Hall**

MINISTRY AT FIRST CHURCH

Church Administrator: *Jen Dooley* [welcome@fccej.org]

Interim Music Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@juno.com]

Christian Education Director: *Laurie Chipman* [lchipman@fccej.org]

Bridge Part-time Associate Pastor: *Devon Thomas* [dthomas@fccej.org]

Youth Team *Devon Thomas & Erica Garvey* [egarvey@fccej.com]

Senior Pastor: *Rev. Mark Mendes* [mmendes@fccej.org]

Music Ministry

Cherub Music: *Kim Hamilton* [khamilton@ccsuvt.org]

Currier Bell Choir Director: *Carolyn Harris* [899-6759]

Finally @ First Director: *Rick Dooley* [rickdooley5@gmail.com]

Heavenly Harmony Director: *Marie Johnson* [mdjkiln@juno.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@juno.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]

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
U N I T E D C H U R C H O F C H R I S T

September 10, 2017

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 12: 1-14

Remember, Restore, Renew

Signs do all kinds of things. At election time, they tell your neighbors where you stand and what you support. On your car bumper they express your feelings, your family configuration, your nationality, your religious beliefs and sometimes they just tell the person behind you to “slow down.” In this origin story—this first Passover—when the Israelites painted their doors to mark themselves, the sign they painted on their doors was how the angel of death knew who would be spared. In that story, the signs meant life or death. Later, the first Christian churches used the sign of a fish to indicate when and where they would meet. In that setting, the signs meant secrecy and safety. Today, our churches use signs to announce something about themselves publicly.

What’s on your sign? The sign in front of your church? What does it tell the world about who you are, or how you worship, or what you believe? Out on Long Island, in New York, there’s a church with a famous sign. It’s been featured on CNN and in Newsday and recently received 89,000 “thumbs up” on Reddit, the social media website. Unassuming and typical in appearance, the sign’s message changes frequently and often reflects current events. It belongs to Wantagh Memorial United Church of Christ. Some of its recent signs include: “Christ came to take away our sins not our minds.” “Come and practice being human with us!” “Jesus was a refugee.” “Also open between Christmas and Easter.” And, “God prefers kind atheists over hateful Christians.”

The church posts photos of its signs on its Facebook page. These posts get responses from the public and are often reposted and tweeted. In an interview with Newsday, Rev. Ron Garner, the pastor of the congregation, said, “We now live in a culture where things must be 140 characters or less to get people’s attention, I just see this as another way of getting the message out there.”

What does the sign in front of your church say about your congregation and what sort of people worship inside? Who do you welcome? How do you hear the message of Jesus? What do you share about yourselves with the world? What’s on your sign?