



# 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) **Website:** [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)



**The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**  
***Our Home, Our Future, Our Time***  
**A Capital Campaign Celebration**  
**April 16, 2023 - Second Service**

*Our First Service with organ and traditional choir is streamed and begins at 8:30am with access on our webpage @ [www.fccej.org](http://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 not streamed.*

***Currently, mask wearing is determined by the individual.***

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

*Order of Worship*

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

*We encourage everyone, both guests and members, to sign the Friendship Book and check any categories of need that might be appropriate. This will allow the church and her staff to best serve you. Thank you.*

Introit

*Come, Now Is The Time to Worship*

Brian Doerksen

Call to Worship .....Deacon Rusty Sargent

**Leader:** God calls us to build kingdoms of love and justice in this world: places where people can live in peace and harmony. Communities where civility and respect rule the day.

**People:** The tower of Babel tells the story of humanity building a city where God's way of equality and kindness is ignored and replaced with human corruption and power.

**Leader:** God wants society to be just. Jesus preached for the inclusion of all people in the kingdom. Our church community, both the people and the building, should reflect these divine demands.

**People:** Come, let us re-dedicate this building and our family of faith to the purposes of God and spreading Christ's good news.

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

**\*Opening Hymn**

***Shout to the Lord***  
**[handout]**

**Darlene Zshech**

Children's Message.....Laurie Chipman

**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 Transition to Peer Groups**

**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.**

Old Testament Scripture

Haggai 1:1-2:9

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***Our Home, Our Future, Our Time Celebration***

Presenting Before and After .....Dave Johnson & Kaki McGeary: Co-Chairs

Introductory Remarks

Slide Show Presentation

A Litany to Celebrate First Church's Accomplishments

Rev. Mendes: God calls us to build a kingdom filled with love where acts of compassion, kindness and forgiveness build a healthy community. Jesus invited us to live into this way of being. We call it the church.

President Shearer: At the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, we come together to learn about Christ's kingdom of love. We worship and praise, we feed and clothe our neighbors, we serve on committees and as officers as we work with our staff to run the place, we sing and play in musical groups, we lift up our children and youth, and we reach out into the wider community to support goodness in all its forms.

Rev. Mendes: To accomplish this ministry we need a functional building in good shape and ours had some issues, embodying detractions from negligence, age, disrepair and obsolescence.

President Shearer: Then Church Council established the Our Home, Our Future and Our Time Capital Campaign to bring our facilities up to speed so that it nurtures instead of hinders our witness in the world.

**Congregation: We looked at all the materials presented, we listened to our leaders and then we voted to move forward with the Our Home, Our Future, Our Time Capital Campaign.**

Kaki McGeary: Dave Johnson and I became Co-Chairs of an august body of members who raised over \$1,100,000 to accomplish projects the entire church voted in order to make our building an able assistant to our ministry.

Dave Johnson: Kaki McGeary and I, plus the entire Capital Campaign Committee, worked with the Trustees to oversee the congregation's project list and ensure that they were accomplished to our specifications and liking.

Capital Campaign Committee: We participated in the feasibility study, we worked with the congregation to develop the project list, we worked with contractors and businesses, we pledged our gifts early, and we made decisions to ensure the success of the campaign.

**Pledgers: After the presentations, we gave our funds to the campaign. When the elevator needed work, some of us pledged for an extra year. We gave freely so that Christ's work in this sacred building might continue.**

**Everyone: We are thrilled to have been a part of this successful project. We celebrate our refurbished building and its use in Christ's work. We lift up the faith it took to step into such an endeavor. Thank you, God, for offering us the opportunity for a brighter future.**

President Catherine Shearer: We should all be proud of what we have accomplished here. Come, let us thank the key leaders who contributed so much of their time and energy to guarantee its success.

The Recognition of the Capital Campaign Committee

The Recognition of Co-Chairs Kaki McGeary and Dave Johnson

Anthem

*What Faith Can Do*

Scott Davis  
Scott Krippayne

New Testament Scripture

2 Peter 2:1-5

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Meditation

*The Connection between Body and Spirit*

Rev. Mark Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

*With My Own Two Hands*

Ben Harper

**\*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.**

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

**Rise Up**

Andra Day

**I'll rise up, I'll rise like the day,**

**I'll rise up, I'll rise unafraid,**

**I'll rise up, and I'll do it a thousand times again.**

**I'll rise up, high like the waves.**

**I'll rise up, in spite of the ache.**

**I'll rise up, and I'll do it a thousand times again.**

**And I'll rise up, I'll rise up, I'll rise up. I'll rise.**

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**Hide it under a bushel, no! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Hide it under a bushel, no! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Hide it under a bushel, no! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**Jesus is alive today, we're gonna let it shine;  
Jesus is alive today, we're gonna let it shine;  
Jesus is alive today, we're gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

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 as you are able

### **A Few Key Announcements**

- ♦ Regular Sunday Morning Worship -
  - ⇒ 8:30 and 10:15. Streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej) (8:30 service only)
  - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month.
  - ⇒ Faith Formation Peer Groups for PreK through 8th grades during 2nd service
- ♦ Sincere thanks to Jonah Moos, Ed Guild, Gary Hartmann, and Francis Gravel, operating the live stream tech!
- ♦ Thank you to Rick Dooley and Finally @ First for the beautiful music today!

## 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) or call (802) 878-5745.

Victims of gun violence and their families  
Peter Gray, Pam Blake and Don Gray  
Family and Friends of Nadine Hoffman  
Jacki Knapp  
Russ & Alma Wilson  
Kathy Galbraith  
John Venner

Elizabeth Stone  
Bernie Currier  
Joyce Jacobs  
Grace Goodwin  
Dan Harmon

All those suffering due to violence in Ukraine  
...and all persons affected by COVID19



***Altar flowers are a wonderful way to honor your loved ones.***

***Use Sign-Up Genius or call the church office for available dates:***

***<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a48aaad2ca2ff2-2023#/>***



## 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:  
<http://zoom.us/j/740803865>
- ♦ **Tai Chi Class**, Tuesdays at 10:15pm 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 in Marvin Lounge
- ♦ **Bridge Group**, 3rd Fridays @ 1:30pm in Marvin Lounge



FACEBOOK

[bit.ly/39039ht](https://bit.ly/39039ht)



INSTAGRAM

[bit.ly/3rlfgZf](https://bit.ly/3rlfgZf)



INTERNET

[fccej.org](http://fccej.org)



YOUTUBE

[bit.ly/3oPpBv9](https://bit.ly/3oPpBv9)



## **Giving Envelopes**

The envelopes have arrived! Please stop by the Fellowship Hall this morning to collect yours. Thank you for your patience!

## **Lunchtime Book Group**

The Lunchtime Book Group meets tomorrow, April 17 at 11:30am in the Marvin Lounge. This month we will discuss *The Girl from the Channel Islands* by Jenny Le Coat. It is the story of a young Jewish woman trapped on the Island of Jersey while it was occupied by the Nazis in World War II. Unable to escape the island where she had taken refuge two years before, she decides to hide in plain sight as an interpreter for the Germans. She forges friendships with the local community and with a sympathetic German officer, but her fear for her safety continues to grow. Bring a brown bag lunch and plan to join us for lively discussion and friendly fellowship. All are welcome!

## **Vacation Bible Camp 2023 - Hero Hotline – Called Together to Serve God!**

August 7-11, 2023 - Outside on the church lawn or inside on a rainy day.

<https://www.fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/vb-camp-registration/>

### **Morning Session: Drop off between 8:45-9am**

You & Me Toddler (attend with an adult) up thru current 5th graders

Youth Assistants – current 6th—12th graders

Closing segment of the morning session starts at 11:30. Parents are encouraged to arrive by 11:45, or before, to hear the topics of the morning and pick up their children who are not registered for the afternoon session.

### **Afternoon Session: Immediately after morning session till 4pm**

Parents – here is your full day option – cost is \$50/afternoon or \$250 for the full week. Scholarships are available.

Campers have lunch, watch a movie, do a VBC mission/art project and play games.

## **Community Concerts @ First - Paul Asbell Plays & Sings Steel-String Americana**

Sunday April 30, 2023 at 3pm in the Sanctuary ~ \$20 suggested donation

Blues guitarist Paul Asbell will share fresh takes on blues and jazz standards, old-timey country tunes, and original pieces from the “American roots” tradition.

Concert proceeds will support Essex CHIPS and FCCEJ. Tickets are available via this link: <https://sevendaystickets.com/events/118903>

## **Planned Giving Seminar - Thursday, May 4 at 6:30pm**

Holly LeMieux, a local estate planning attorney, will be the presenter. Covered topics will include estate planning, wills, and elder law. Whether FCCEJ benefits from your planned giving or not, the Planned Giving Committee encourages everyone to have a written plan (such as a will, trust or estate plan). This event is free and open to church members and friends of FCCEJ.

**Please contact the church office if you would like to attend.**

## **Faith Formation Peer Groups for 2022-23**

All ages are encouraged to ask questions, as we learn together about Jesus and the love our God has for everyone.

April 9th (Easter) & 23rd ~ All Family Worship

16th & 30th ~ Peer Groups

## **Church World Service**

Welcome Backpack kits for CWS

Sign up and bring in donations by Sunday, April 30th. Children and youth will fill them during 2nd service: [www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0545a8ab2faaf58-cwswelcome#/](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0545a8ab2faaf58-cwswelcome#/)

## **Young Apostles**

3rd – 5th graders with a parent/guardian/grandparent

April 16th from 4-5pm

Guest Janne Giles, retired school teacher, and her large Vermont floor map.

## **Junior Youth ~ Sundays from 11:30-1:30pm**

April 2nd & 16th ~ Make crayons for Kings Street Youth Center

May 7th & 21st ~ inviting this year's 5th graders to JY time ~ activity plans are in process

## **High School Youth**

Wednesdays 1:45pm – 3:15pm @ FCCEJ

April 5th & 19th (1st & 3rd Wednesdays of May as well) Reach out to Laurie and let her know you are coming. Snacks provided. Come unwind and destress.

No gatherings on school break weeks

## **Youth Parent Gatherings**

Thursday, April 20th from 7-8pm

Parents of youth in grades 6th-12th – come fellowship & experience what youth gatherings look and can offer your youth. Dessert provided.

## **Heavenly Food Pantry**

The Heavenly Food Pantry will be open to families residing in Essex, Essex Junction and Westford Thursday, April 27 from 2pm to 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. There are no income requirements to visit the food pantry and a variety of food is available to everyone.

The Food Pantry is always in need of reusable shopping bags as well as baked beans, chunky soups, canned pasta, and small bags of cat/dog food. We are also looking for anyone able to deliver to our clientele that are unable to visit the food pantry in person. Please contact the Church Office if you are interested and as always, thank you for your support of this meaningful and important ministry in our community!

## **Essex CHIPS Book Club**

Attention parents and caregivers of 4th-8th graders! Essex CHIPS invites you to join us for Pages, a book club for Parents and Caregivers. The book we will discuss is *Middle School Matters: The 10 Key Skills Kids Need to Thrive in Middle School and Beyond-and How Parents Can Help*. We will meet Tuesdays, April 18, May 9, May 23, June 6 and June 20 from 5:30pm-7pm. We will provide child care for 4th-8th graders during the meetings. The first discussion will be focused on chapters 1-4. If you don't have time to read everything please still come to the discussion. We will serve dinner to both the children and caregivers. If you have younger children who require childcare please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate them. Essex CHIPS Teen Center is located at 2 Lincoln Street, 2nd Floor in Essex Junction.

## **Volunteers Needed**

Age Well is seeking volunteers to provide regular social interaction and assistance to seniors in their homes. Help older Vermonters by delivering Meals on Wheels, providing friendly visits, shopping, errands, assistance with appointments, organizing, bill paying, respite, minor home repairs, veterans visiting veterans and more. Time is based on your availability--it can vary from one day a week to two days a month (M-F between 8am-4pm). Contact our Volunteer Department at 662-5249 or [volunteer@agewellvt.org](mailto:volunteer@agewellvt.org) for information.

## **EDD Adaptive Sports**

Registration is open for the 7th annual Dream Big 5K: Run, Walk, Roll on April 30, 2023 sponsored by EDD Adaptive Sports! The Dream Big 5K in Essex is an inclusive running event with general and adaptive divisions. The race brings together the Essex-Westford community for a morning of friendly competition and is an opportunity for athletes with disabilities to experience racing in a supportive setting. Join us in Essex, VT - or virtually anywhere - to support EDD Adaptive Sports programs. 10am race start time. Donate to the "Essex Strong" team established by an EDD athlete, or create your own personal fundraiser.

Register or donate online: <https://runsignup.com/dreambig5krunwalkroll>

## **COTS Walk - Sunday, May 7, 2023**

This family-friendly annual event is a 3.6-mile route through downtown Burlington, passing some of the shelters and facilities operated by COTS. This is designed to illustrate the path a person experiencing homelessness might take when using COTS services. The walk begins and ends in Battery Park with music, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and other fun activities. Bring your friends, family, co-workers, dogs and strollers...all are welcome!

This year, COTS is planning a hybrid event with daily online activities. Starting April 1, COTS will have 25 daily walk activities for every weekday of the month available on their website and ready to explore as we count down to COTS Walk day on May 7th!

FCCEJ has a team for the Walk which you can join! The Team is First Congregational Church of Essex Junction and Gail Cromie is listed as team captain. Not a walker? There are other ways to participate! There are a wide range of volunteer opportunities available on the day of the walk and you can make a donation on our team's COTS site. Simply Google COTS Walk 2023 or go to Committee on Temporary Shelter: [www.cotsonline.org](http://www.cotsonline.org)

# **Weekly Calendar: April 16—April 23**

\*Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections\*

## **Sunday, April 16**

8:30\* & 10:15am: Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Faith Formation Peer Groups  
(Prek-8th grade), Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary  
Racial Justice Task Force, Marvin Lounge  
Junior Youth, Youth Room  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*3pm: Hosting Trekkers Youth Group, 3rd Floor*  
4pm: Young Apostles, Fellowship Hall

## **Tuesday, April 18**

*Hosting Trekkers Youth Group, 3rd Floor*  
8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge  
10:15am: Tai Chi Class, Fellowship Hall  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary  
*6:30pm: Eagle Scout BoR, 2nd Floor Program Room*  
7pm: Missions, Marvin Lounge  
Communications, Fellowship Hall

## **Thursday, April 20**

*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*5:30pm: Piano Lesson, Sanctuary*  
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
Youth Parents Gathering, Marvin Lounge  
Open & Affirming Sub-Committee,  
2nd Floor Program Room

## **Saturday, April 22**

*8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary*  
*Give It A Go Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*  
*9:30am: Weight Loss Support Group,*  
*Marvin Lounge*  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

## **Monday, April 17**

*Hosting Trekkers Youth Group, 3rd Floor*  
8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up, Fellowship Hall  
11:30am: Lunchtime Book Group, Marvin Lounge  
*Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*5:30pm: Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary*  
*7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

## **Wednesday, April 19**

8:30am: Food Pantry Delivery, Fellowship Hall  
*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*

## **Friday, April 21**

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

## **Sunday, April 23**

8:30\* & 10:15am: All-Family Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*