



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
A United Church of Christ
July 2, 2023

During the summer months, we have one service at 9am. During the rest of the year, we offer two distinct worship services. Our 8:30am service with organ and traditional choir is in person and streamed. Access is available through our webpage: www.fccej.org. You can watch that service live or any time thereafter. Our 10:15am service with our praise band is in the Sanctuary and is not streamed.

Our Faith Formation Program for all children is in person starting in September at 10:30am.

Currently, mask wearing is determined by the individual.

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

Order of Worship

Prelude

From A Distance

Julie Gold**

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

Our Minister will welcome everyone and highlight significant events in our shared life, then the Deacon on Duty will welcome everyone and invite people to sign the Friendship Book.

Musical Introit

My Country Tis of Thee

Samuel Francis Smith**

Call to Worship Deacon Maureen McKenzie

Leader: Welcome, we are here to worship the Living God. Before the law was given as a means of grace for living, before there was a dedicated space in which to worship, before the Hebrew community self identified as such, there were prayerful tears, a demand for justice, an opportunity to rest and an invitation to follow the Living God.

People: The Israelites cried out to God and God felt their anguished cries, challenged Pharoah to let the people go and led the way out of Egypt and into the desert.

Leader: Moses heard God's call in the burning bush. Miriam expressed the people's joy of freedom in her song of deliverance. And the people trustingly followed God away from Pharoah's army, through the Red Sea waters and into the unknown dangerous wilderness.

Everyone: God still calls to us to follow. Come, let us sing of those tales of faith that have led us to this place.

*Opening Hymn

I Love to Tell the Story

#522**

A Time of Confession

The Invitation

Leader: Thank you God for meeting us on the mountaintops, but more importantly in the valleys of life. We all have times when we live through anguished experiences and deal with difficult circumstances. We all suffer through poor choices we've made and their implications in our lives. We do things that hurt ourselves, those we love, strangers and even the wider world. The ritual of Confession admits this reality and challenges us to do better next time.

People: **Come, let us enter into this time of self-reflection and growth.**

Unison Prayer of Confession

Loving God, we could all do more to protect your creation and live into your call to be the stewards of the earth. Forgiving Christ, we could all forgive a bit more in our lives and live into your love more abundantly. Creative Spirit of the Living God, we could all do better in using our gifts to make our church and the world a better place. Forgive us and help us to claim your power in being better people.

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Each one of us is the apple of our Creator's eye. Jesus adores everyone in this room. The Spirit of the Living God gives us the gift of love so that we might always strive to live healthier lives. All of you are cherished beyond measure and challenged to live into Jesus' way. On behalf of God, I declare to you that you are beloved.

People: **We will strive to live into Christ's way of love. Amen and Alleluia.**

Children's Message

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.**

Pastoral Prayer & Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

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

Blackbird

Lennon/McCartney**

*Congregational Hymn of Choice

Each week, our organist Bethany Blake invites the congregation to select a hymn of their choice by raising your hand for the worship leader to call upon you.

New Testament: Paul Shares his Spiritual Journey

Acts 9:1-19

[page 97]

Sharing Our Spiritual Journeys

Alison Wermer

Emily Guziak

Musical Anthem

My God and I

J.B. Sergei**

The Sacrament of Holy Communion..... Rev. Ron Faux

The Invitation and Words of Institution

Music

Ave Verum (on a traditional melody)

Everett Titcomb**

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Today, we will partake of communion by passing the bread and cup out to each person. The Minister will direct everyone to eat your piece of bread at the same time. When the cup is passed out, everyone is invited to partake when they choose. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Prelude to the Dance
[excerpt]

David Lanz**

*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**

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

#459**

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, watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith and in love.

*Postlude

This Land is Your Land

Woody Guthrie**

*Please stand as you are able

***Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #728093-A. All Rights Reserved.*

A Few Key Announcements

- ◆ Summer Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ 9am — Streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month.
- ◆ Sincere thanks to Jonah Moos, Ed Guild, Gary Hartmann, and Francis Gravel, operating the live stream tech!
- ◆ Thank you to Bethany Blake and Beth Volker 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 or call (802) 878-5745.

Victims of gun violence and their families

Matthew Carney

Family & Friends of June Nadeau

Peter Gray, Pam Blake and Don Gray

Father of Adam Hoy

Maureen Evens & Family

Dana Bills

Jacki Knapp

Bruce Parker

Russ & Alma Wilson

Kathy Galbraith

John Venner

Elizabeth Stone

Bernie Currier

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—on hiatus till September
- ◆ **Coffee Clatter**, every Friday @ 8am at Martone’s
- ◆ **Lunchtime Book Group**, 3rd Mondays in Marvin Lounge
- ◆ **Bridge Group**, 1st & 3rd Fridays @ 1:30pm in Marvin Lounge—on hiatus till Sept.



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39039ht

INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

Summer Schedule—June through Labor Day

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ One service at 9am. Streamed via youtube.com/c/fccej
 - ⇒ All Family Worship—Faith Formation on hiatus till September
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month
 - ⇒ Rev. Mark on vacation June 26 through August 2

Vacation Bible Camp Online Registration! August 7-11

Join us from 9am to 12noon or 9am to 4pm. Scholarship funds available. We are breaking ground with our afternoon session and are looking for campers. Cost should not stop you. Youth are being interviewed. Volunteers are working hard. Please sign up ASAP to help us with preparations.



Community Concerts @ First

On Sunday July 9 at 3pm, Community Concerts @ First will present singer/songwriter Jon Gailmor. Gailmor is passionately committed to the power of music, emotions and laughter, and boy do we need all of them, now! This family-friendly show is appropriate for folks of all ages.

Concert proceeds will support EDD Adaptive Sports and FCCEJ. Tickets are available online with the link below or by phone (802-878-5745) \$20 suggested donation, free for 18 and under. <https://sevendaystickets.com/events/jon-gailmor-7-9-2023>

Audio/Visual Support

We are looking to expand our audio/visual team for Sunday morning worship. This involves running the streaming video for the 8:30 service and controlling the cameras. We will provide all the training needed. Please contact the church office—welcome@fccej.org— if you are interested or would like more information.

Faith Formation Volunteer Recruitment for 2023-24 Program Year

It's that time of year when we start recruiting for Faith Formation volunteers for our next program year. If you love kids, want to know more about the bible and grow in your faith, please reach out to Laurie.

Faith is not taught, faith is caught. Help other catch the faith, and catch some yourself. Church life is so much more fun and full when we help others, learn and grow. Pick your level of comfort. Chat with a current volunteer or Laurie. We follow our Safe Conduct Guidelines. All volunteers go through a training and receive weekly emails from Laurie to help keep you connected and supported. Reach out to her and she can help you figure out the best fit. lchipman@fccej.org

Weekly Calendar: July 2—July 9

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, July 2

9am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming
All Family Worship - Communion Sunday
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Monday, July 3

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

Tuesday, July 4

Church Office Closed All Day

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, July 5

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
1:30pm: Craft Fest Planning, Fellowship Hall
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Thursday, July 6

8:30am: Essex Art League, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
7pm: Men @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Friday, July 7

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Saturday, July 8

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

Sunday, July 9

9am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming
All Family Worship
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups