



# **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  
A United Church of Christ  
September 3, 2023**

*During the summer months, we have one service at 9am. 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](http://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 is for children PreK through 8th grade 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 *Ashokan Farewell* Jay Ungar\*\*  
Zachary Jackman, violin; Marie Johnson, piano

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 *Rigaudon in G Major* George Frederick Handel\*\*

Call to Worship .....Deacon Judy McCullen

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made,  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**People: This is the place where God has called me to be. Let us come together and rejoice in the freedom to worship, in rest from work that nurtures our souls, and in this community where we experience the goodness of God through human acts of love.**

Leader: Come, let us worship and praise our God.

\*Opening Hymn *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* #12\*\*

## A Time of Confession

### Call to Confession

**Leader:** We all have a rich and vibrant inner life, a place where we converse with God and reflect about our relationships, behaviors and areas of both growth and failure. This is a gift from God.

**People:** It is vitally important for our own well-being to enter into an internal time of discernment with God. It is also good for the soul and our own maturation to confess the places where we fall short of the glory of God. Both private and public witness helps.

**Leader:** Come, let us lay our darkness and sin at God's throne of mercy, forgiveness and love.

### Unison Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, even before our confession is manifested in verbal form, we assume your forgiveness. Forgive us for the ways we fall short of your great commandment for life. Forgive us when we do not listen for your voice or seek your presence. Forgive us when do not treat our neighbors with civility, respect or kindness. And forgive us when we too easily assume your forgiveness without honest regret or a thoughtful plan to overcome our faults. Help us to do better and follow Christ more closely. Amen.

### Assurance of Pardon

**Leader:** We begin with a stalwart truth of the faith: that no behavior severs our relationship with God; like a parent, God always welcomes us home with open arms. Let us allow that truth to change our lives. I declare to you, your sins are forgiven, 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.***

### \*Congregational Hymn of Choice

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

New Testament Scripture

Matthew 16:13-20

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Anthem

*For Good*

Stephen Schwartz\*\*

Hillary and Denise Keating, duet

Summer Meditation

*Who Do You Say Jesus Is?*

Rev. Mendes

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Invitation and Words of Institution

Music

*In Remembrance of Me*

Ragan Courtney/Buryl Red\*\*

### **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 dip your pieces of bread into the cup and partake together. When each cup is received, everyone is welcome to partake when they choose. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith.*

***Absolutely everyone is welcome at Christ's table.***

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

*Sarabande from Suite 17 in F Major*

Froberger\*\*

**\*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.**

Benediction

**\*Sung Community Benediction**

**Go Now In Peace**

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**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

*Les Tambourins*

Johann Philipp Kirnberger\*\*

\*Please stand as you are able

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◆ **Sincere thanks this morning to:**

- ⇒ Jonah Moos, Gary Hartmann, and Francis Gravel, operating the live stream tech
- ⇒ Bethany Blake, Zachary Jackman, Marie Johnson, and Denise & Hillary Keating for the beautiful music

**A Few Key Announcements**

◆ **Summer Sunday Morning Worship - June through Labor Day**

- ⇒ One Service at 9am — Streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej)
- ⇒ All Family Worship—Faith Formation on hiatus till September
- ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month.

◆ **Two Services Beginning Next Sunday, September 10**

- ⇒ 8:30am—In-Person & Streamed with organ and Sanctuary Choir.
- ⇒ 10:15am—In Person with Finally @ First Praise Band & Faith Formation for children PreK through 8th grade.
- ⇒ Nursery Care for infants through 3 years offered at both services.

## 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.

Students and Families Navigating  
"Back-to-School"

Dana Bills

John Venner

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii

Bernie Currier

Everyone affected by the recent flooding

Grace Goodwin

Victims of gun violence and their families

Dan Harmon

Matthew Carney

All those suffering due to violence in Ukraine

Family & Friends of June Nadeau

...and all persons affected by COVID19

Maureen Evans & Family

### 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 10:15pm 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 @ 11:30am in Marvin Lounge
- ◆ **Bridge Group**, 1st & 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](https://fccej.org)



YOUTUBE

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

## **Community concerts @ First presents Bethany Blake**

On Sunday, September 24th at 3pm, music historian and keyboardist Bethany Blake will play music for harpsichord and organ at FCCEJ. The program will feature music by French and German composers, including Bach, Couperin, and Rameau.

Your suggested donation of \$20 supports the Community on Temporary Shelter and the FCCEJ Community Outreach. Children under 18 are admitted free.



**SCAN FOR  
TICKETS**

## **Welcome Back Sunday—September 10th**

Join us as we celebrate the beginning of our Program year!  
Faith Formation Games during 10:15am worship for Children & Youth  
Bouncy House & Picnic to follow Outside on the Lawn  
(*weather permitting*)



Picnic sponsored by the CE Committee  
(*Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Veggie Burgers, Chips & Watermelon*)

Bring a finger-food dessert to share  
(*Bars, cookies – looking for no-nut and gluten free options*)



## **VIA's Statewide Convention**

Vermont Interfaith Action's Eighth Annual Statewide Convention will be held Wed, Sept 6 from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, 43 Hebard Hill in Randolph, Vermont. Everyone is welcome to join us for:

- Reports about our issue work
- Opportunities to talk with justice-minded people from all over the state and across the spectrum of faith traditions
- Training on three foundational aspects of community organizing
- Sharing a meal together
- Celebrating interfaith worship together
- Approving our Revised By-Laws during a brief business meeting

Use this link to register: <https://bit.ly/VIAStatewideConvention>. Suggested donation is \$25, but no one will be turned away from lack of funds. For more information, contact [debbie@viavt.org](mailto:debbie@viavt.org) or (802) 651-8889.

# **Weekly Calendar: September 3—September 10**

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

## **Sunday, September 3**

9am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming  
All Family Worship, Holy Communion  
10:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*

## **Tuesday, September 5**

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge  
10am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
5pm: Yoga @FCCEJ, Sanctuary  
*6:30pm: BSA Troop 624 District Meeting, Fellowship Hall*  
7pm: Church Council, Marvin Lounge

## **Thursday, September 7**

*8:30am: Essex Art League, Fellowship Hall*  
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting, Marvin Lounge  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
7pm: Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

## **Saturday, September 9**

*8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary  
Give It A Go Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*  
*9am: Weight Loss Support Group, Fellowship Hall*  
*10am: Reiki 1 Class, Marvin Lounge*  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*3:30pm: Schreiber Wedding*

## **Monday, September 4**

**Labor Day—Church Office Closed**  
8:30am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

## **Wednesday, September 6**

*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
*6pm: Boy Scouts Troop 624 PLC, Marvin Lounge*  
6:30pm: HRC, Conference Room  
7pm: Wednesday Night Searchers, Marvin Lounge  
*BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall*

## **Friday, September 8**

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market  
*11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
*4pm: Blue Spruce Grange, Fellowship Hall*

## **Sunday, September 10**

8:30am\* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Faith Formation, Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Welcome Back Picnic, Church Grounds  
Craft Fest Team, 2nd Floor Program Room  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*