



# **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 17, 2023  
Second Service**

*We offer two different worship services: 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 Finally @ First Praise Band is live in the sanctuary at 10:15am and is not streamed. Our Faith Formation Program for PreK through 8th is in person and starts at 10:15am in worship and then break out into peer groups. Nursery care for infants through 3 y/o is available at both services.  
**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

Musical Introit

*Joy to the World*

Hoyt Axton

Call to Worship ..... Deacon Mary McHugh

Leader: God brought order to primordial chaos and invited humanity to come enjoy the ride of the earth spinning through space.

**People: We respond to the beauty of creation with awe and wonder.**

Leader: Jesus came to us preaching love and justice and invited us to follow in his ways.

**People: We respond to the greatest teacher of all time with earnest effort to be better people.**

Leader: God's Spirit dwells in our hearts and draws us into community with abundant gifts and a worthy purpose.

**People: We welcome the Spirit into our hearts and celebrate being a part of God's family on earth.**

Leader: God reaches out to us in many ways. God is always the initiator. Our job is to train our senses to discern God's presence and respond.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation..... Deacon Mary McHugh

**\*Opening Hymn**

***Lean On Me***  
**[handout]**

**Bill Withers**

Children's Message

*Friends After All*

Rev. Mark & 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 Faith Formation**

**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.**

*[Parents, please collect your children in their Peer Rooms by 11:30]*

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.**

Prayer Response

***Multiplied***

**Bo & Bear Rinehart**

**God of mercy, sweet love of mine  
I have surrendered to Your design  
May this offering stretch across the skies  
And these hallelujahs be multiplied,  
these hallelujahs be multiplied.**

Scripture

Old Testament

Exodus 14 told narratively

[page42]

New Testament

Matthew 18:21-35

[page 15]

Anthem

*What Faith Can Do*

Davis / Krippayne

Sermon

*Looking Back*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

*Your Grace is Enough*

Matt Maher

**\*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**

***Lord I Lift Your Name On High***  
**[handout]**

**Rick Founds**

\*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**

### ◆ **Two Sunday Morning Services**

- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Holy Communion is offered the first Sunday of each month

### ◆ **Sincere thanks this morning to:**

- ⇒ Rick Dooley and Finally @ First Praise Band for the wonderful music!

## **September Faith Formation**

17 ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)

24 ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)

Acolyte Orientation in Sanctuary (3rd grade & up) 11:30-12noon

## **Finally @ First Praise Band**

Do you enjoy singing? Play an instrument? Percussionist? Keyboardist? Finally @ First is looking for folks to join us! Our musical pieces range from traditional hymns to contemporary Christian to 70's throwbacks to 80's rock ballads to current indy rock – We're up for anything! Rehearsals are generally Wednesday nights 5:30-7:00, and we sing at second service on most Sundays during the program year. For more information, contact Rick Dooley, at [rickdooley5@gmail.com](mailto:rickdooley5@gmail.com) or call/text at 802-578-0229.

## **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 necessary training. Please contact the church office—[welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)—if you are interested or would like more information.

## **Craft Fest - Saturday, November 11**

We have a couple craft tables still available! If interested please contact Ann Gray at [grayann8@aol.com](mailto:grayann8@aol.com).

# 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.

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii  
Everyone affected by the recent flooding  
Victims of gun violence and their families

Dana Bills  
John Venner  
Bernie Currier  
Grace Goodwin  
Dan Harmon

Norma Edwards  
Sandy Tallman  
Matthew Carney  
Family & Friends of June Nadeau  
Maureen Evans & Family

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

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\* We're thrilled to announce the birth of *Evelyn Alana Tracy Wermer* on September 6. \*  
\* Parents are Jon Wermer & Hannah Tracy. \*  
\* Grandparents are Carl & Alison Wermer. \*  
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## 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)

# MINISTRY DIRECTORY

## Staff

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

Ministers of Visitation:

Rev. Ron Faux [revronfaux@gmail.com] / Mary McHugh [mmmchugh@hotmail.com]

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

Music Director: Bethany Blake [bblake@fccej.org]

Social Media Marketing Coordinator: Andrea Hickey [socialmedia@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Jen Kelly [welcome@fccej.org]

## Music

Chair of Music: Denise Keating

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Men at First Director: Bill Bickford

## Officers

President: Cathy Shearer

Vice President: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [treasurer@fccej.org]

Assistant Treasurer: Matt Clark [mclarkdiscovery@gmail.com]

Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditor: Betsy Weischedel

## Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Derek Lyman

Communications: Francis Gravel

Deacons: Alison Wermer, Judy McCullen—Co-Chairs

Finance & Pastoral Relations: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Hospitality: Jen Dooley

Human Resources: Cathy Shearer

Missions: Paula Sargent

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees: Kaki McGeary

## Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert

# Weekly Calendar: September 17—September 23

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

## Sunday, September 17

8:30am\* & 10:15am: Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Faith Formation, Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Junior Youth, Youth Room  
Montana Service Trip, Marvin Lounge  
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

## Tuesday, September 19

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge  
10am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
6:30pm: *Eagle Scout BoR, Marvin Lounge*  
7pm: CE, 2nd Floor Program Room  
Communications, Conference Room

## Thursday, September 21

11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
7pm: Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
Open & Affirming Subcommittee,  
2nd Floor Program Room  
*Cub Scouts Pack 630, Fellowship Hall*

## Saturday, September 23

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, Marvin Lounge*

## Monday, September 18

8:30am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall  
10am: *Essex Art Group, Fellowship Hall*  
11:30am: Lunchtime Book Group, Marvin Lounge  
*Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
6pm: Hospitality, Marvin Lounge  
7:30pm: *Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

## Wednesday, September 20

8am: Food Pantry Food Drop-off, Fellowship Hall  
10am: Missions Committee, Marvin Lounge  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
6pm: Wednesday Night Searchers, Marvin Lounge  
*BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall*

## Friday, September 22

**October Newsletter Articles Due**  
8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
2:30pm: Communications/Social Media,  
Marvin Lounge  
4pm: *Blue Spruce Grange, Fellowship Hall*

## Sunday, September 24

8:30am\* & 10:15am: Worship,  
Sanctuary & Streaming\*  
10:30am: Faith Formation, Peer Rooms  
11:30am: Young Apostles,  
2nd Floor Program Room  
Craft Fest Committee, Marvin Lounge  
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
3pm: Community Concerts @ First presents  
Bethany Blake, Sanctuary

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*