



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
September 24, 2023
First 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. 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

Prelude *Prelude in E Major BWV 854* J.S. Bach**
from the *Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I*

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 *Sanctuary* Thompson/Scruggs**

Call to Worship Deacon Mary McHugh

Leader: The Bible is jammed packed with stories of God's extravagant love. God cherishes the beauty, wonder and power of the created order and loves each person with abandon.

Lectern Side: God is tender and comforting with folks who are vulnerable, grieving or hurt.

Pulpit Side: God is challenging and tough with folks who consciously go against known commands to care for our neighbors.

Lectern Side: God offers special insight and wisdom along with the accompanying accountability to those who have oversight over others.

Pulpit Side: God is merciful and kind to those who earnestly seek to live their lives in faithful ways and who necessarily fall short .

Leader: Like a parent with many children, God loves us all differently depending on who we are and how we live. We are all precious in God’s sight; come and breath in the love.

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

Opening Hymn** ***Rejoice, You Pure in Heart **#55****
[vs. 1, 3, 5]

Children’s Message

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

Fourfold Amen

Robert G. Barrow**

Hymn** ***Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart **#290****
[vs. 1, 3, 5]

Scripture

Old Testament	The Story of Jonah	[page 667, told narratively]
New Testament	Matthew 16:1-21	[page 17]

Anthem *Day by Day* K. Lee Scott**

Sermon *God’s Ways Are Not Our Ways* Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Awesome God

Rich Mullins**

***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**

We Shall Overcome

#570**

*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, holding you in love.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.**

*Postlude

Toccata in G Minor

Johann Pachelbel**

[excerpt]

*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:**

- ⇒ Bethany Blake and the Sanctuary Choir for the beautiful music!

September Faith Formation

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

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

Community concerts @ First presents Bethany Blake

Today 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 FCCEJ. Children under 18 are admitted free.



Mission Sunday

As a faith community, we support a variety of local organizations. Next Sunday, October 1, our Missions Committee is hosting a Mission Fair/Expo in the Fellowship Hall from 9am to noon. Representatives from JUMP, VIA, USCRI, Spectrum Vermont, and many others will have tables set up and are looking forward to speaking with you! Missions is an important pillar at FCCEJ and on October 1, we are providing an opportunity to celebrate all we accomplish together as well as learn how we can do even more. We hope you will join us!

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—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.

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.

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii
Everyone affected by the recent flooding
Victims of gun violence and their families
Tony Lamb
Norma Edwards
Sandy Tallman
Matthew Carney
Maureen Evans & Family

Dana Bills
John Venner
Bernie Currier
Grace Goodwin
Dan Harmon

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

*The flowers on the altar this morning
are given by Riley Elliott in memory of his parents.*

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

INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

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 24—October 1

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, September 24

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

Tuesday, September 26

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: Stewardship Skit Rehearsal, Sanctuary
5:30pm: Finance Committee, Marvin Lounge
7pm: Trustees, 2nd Floor Program Room
Stewardship Committee, Marvin Lounge

Thursday, September 28

8am: Food Pantry Set-up, Fellowship Hall
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting, Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
2pm: Food Pantry Distribution, Fellowship Hall
7pm: Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Saturday, September 30

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 25

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

Wednesday, September 27

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

Friday, September 29

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

Sunday, October 1

World Communion Sunday ~ Mission Sunday

8:30am* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary & Streaming*
9am-12pm: Mission Fair, Fellowship Hall
10:30am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-2nd)
11:30am: Music Committee, Sanctuary
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups