



# **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 24, 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. 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                                      *If Today You Hear the Voice of God*                                      Ed Bolduc

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**

***Here I Am to Worship***  
**[handout]**

**Tim Hughes**

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 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.**

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.**

Anthem

*All the People Said Amen*

Matt Maher

Scripture

Old Testament  
New Testament

The Story of Jonah  
Matthew 16:1-21

[page 667, told narratively]  
[page 17]

Sermon

*God's Ways Are Not Our Ways*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

*I Could Sing of Your Love Forever*

*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**

*Shout to the Lord*  
[handout]

**Darlene Zschech**

**\*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 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](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  
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](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 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  
Junior Youth, Youth Room  
12pm: Music Library Organizing, Sanctuary  
*1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*