

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
October 8, 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.

The Nursery is available at both services—self serve at 8:30 and staffed at 10:15.

Currently, mask wearing is determined by the individual.

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

Order of Worship

Prelude *Lamb of Glory* Greg Nelson/Phil McHugh

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 *Where the Spirit of the Lord Is* Stephen R. Adams

Call to Worship Deacon Jonah Moos

Leader: God calls out to us and invites us to live good lives. Sometimes, instead of following God's ways of love, we do what we want.

People: Help me to follow.

Leader: God teaches us about good and evil. God gives us the law to teach us how to live with each other.

People: Help me to follow.

Leader: God sent prophets to remind to live good lives and follow in God's ways. Then God sent us Jesus to show us how to live in love.

People: Help me to follow.

Leader: God invites all of us to live lives full of goodness and righteousness. God helps us shape our lives closer to God's gracious will.

Deacon’s Prayer of Invocation..... Deacon Jonah Moos

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.**

**PreK –8th transition to Faith Formation*

Parents, please collect your children from 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.**

Musical Response

Oh, How He Loves You and Me

Kurt Kaiser

Hymn

God of the Ages

#592

Scripture

Old Testament Prophetic

Isaiah 5:1-7

[page 491]

New Testament Epistle

Philippians 3:4b-14

[page 153]

Gospel

Matthew 21:33-46

[page 18]

Anthem

God Bless the Child

Arthur Herzog Jr. /
Billie Holiday

Sermon

Forward Through the Ages

Rev. Mendes

A Stewardship Moment

Riley Elliott

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Give Thanks

Henry Smith

***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**

Some Glad Morning

#595

*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

Since Jesus Came Into My Heart

Charles Gabriel

*Please stand as you are able

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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
- ⇒ Nursery for infants through 3 years available at both services—self-serve at 8:30 and staffed at 10:15.
- ⇒ Holy Communion is offered the first Sunday of each month

◆ **Sincere thanks this morning to:**

- ⇒ Denise Keating for the beautiful music!

◆ **October Faith Formation**

- ⇒ **October 8, 15, 22, & 29** ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)

Gratitude.

So Many Ways to Give.

Does 13-year-old Emma (Addie Stein) really know more than her dad (Bill Bickford) about computer programming?

Or does our pastor, Mark Mendes, encourage a donation of Vermont Maple Syrup in the collection plate?

Come to church on October 22 and find out as we entertain you with *Fintech at First*, presented by the Stewardship Committee and Finally@First to kick off the Stewardship Campaign,

Gratitude. So Many Ways to Give.

New Member's Class Offered

Do you appreciate a faith that encourages you to use your mind? Are you looking for a church that teaches values of love, kindness, inclusion and forgiveness to your children? Do you appreciate great music from multiple choral or musical groups? Do you feel the warmth and support of our staff and members? Do you want to be a part of an organization that helps to better the structures and tone of the wider Essex community? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then we would love you to come and explore what membership in our church means.

On October 22 after the second service we are offering a New Members Class where you can learn about our church and her many ministries. You will learn about our history as well as what our denomination, the United Church of Christ, stands for and how they operate. Lunch is provided. If you need child care, please call the church office at 802-878-5745 and let us know.

Heavenly Food Pantry is Turning 25!

We are thrilled to announce that the Heavenly Food Pantry will celebrate 25 years of feeding the communities of the City of Essex, the Town of Essex, and Westford on Sunday, October 15. Everyone who has volunteered over those 25 years or been active in any way at the Pantry is invited to attend a service at the church to be recognized for your kindness and generosity in making the Pantry the success that it is today.

We are proud of the efforts of so many who have offered their help not only on the days when the pantry is open for food distribution but also to those who pick up donations from places like Hannaford's grocery store or Costco, to those who deliver food to places like Mansfield Place or Whitcomb Woods, Town Meadows, the Salvation Army or Chittenden Feeds, and to those who generously give food and monetary assistance to the Pantry. Community Groups like the Rotary, the Lions' Club, Holy Family Catholic Church as well as local schools which donate food and services will also be honored.

Please come to help us celebrate. There will be Pantry staff speaking, great music, and CAKE!

Racial Justice Group

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas

"Black Angels of the Green Mountains:

The Challenge of Black Abolitionists in Antebellum Vermont"

Are you concerned about racial equity in our state and country? Would you like to learn about the history and how to move forward? Please join us on Sunday, October 15 at 3pm in the Sanctuary for a lively lecture and discussion about this very important topic. This event is free and open to the public so bring a friend!

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.

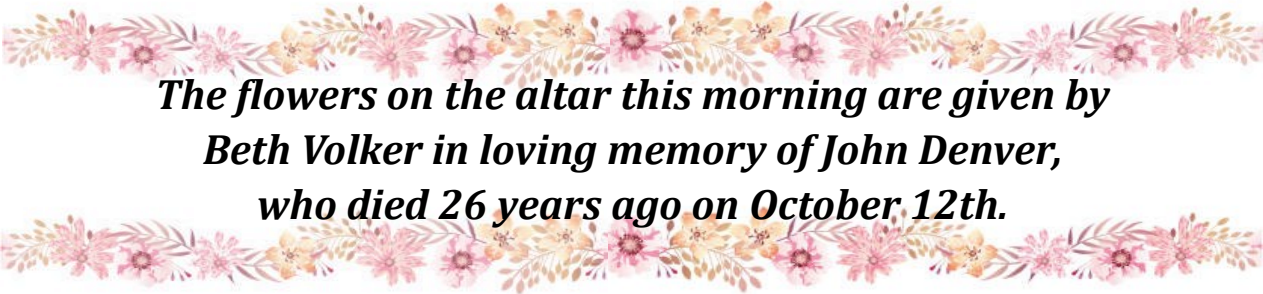
Solaris Vocal Ensemble's 10th Anniversary Celebration Concert with guest choirs and Joe's Big Band is Saturday, October 21 at 7:30 at First Unitarian Universalist Society in Burlington. In addition to Solaris, the first half of the concert will feature five guest choirs – Aurora Chamber Singers, Bella Voce Women's Chorus, Counterpoint Vocal Ensemble, the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington Choir, and the UVM Catamount Singers - which will sing individual pieces and then join to sing Mack Wilberg's rousing arrangement of *Bound for the Promised Land* as well as an exciting rendition of *May the Circle Be Unbroken* arranged by Solaris' own James Stewart. Topping off this musical extravaganza will be local favorite, Joe's Big Band. This 17-piece band's special blend of American jazz standards will cap off the night of celebration. The concert is free. Donations will be gratefully accepted at the door for the Vermont Flood Response and Recovery Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation. Bethany Blake will be providing accompaniment.

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
Maureen Evans & Family
Bernie Currier
All those suffering due to violence in Ukraine
...and all persons affected by COVID19



*The flowers on the altar this morning are given by
Beth Volker in loving memory of John Denver,
who died 26 years ago on October 12th.*

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 10:15am in the Fellowship Hall
- ◆ **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

Weekly Calendar: October 8—October 15

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, October 8

8:30am* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary & Streaming*
10:30am: Faith Formation Peer Groups
(PreK-8th)
11:30am: Racial Justice Group, Marvin Lounge
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, October 10

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge
10am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
4:30pm: Ushering Committee, Marvin Lounge
*6:30pm: Boy Scout 3 Rivers District Roundtable,
Fellowship Hall*
7pm: Deacons, Marvin Lounge

Thursday, October 12

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

Saturday, October 14

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

Monday, October 9

Indigenous Peoples Day—Office Closed
8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up, Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge
5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution, Fellowship Hall
7pm: Stewardship Skit Rehearsal, Sanctuary
7:30pm: Group Victory, Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, October 11

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
3:30pm: Food Pantry Committee, Marvin Lounge
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary
6pm: Troop 624 Leaders Meeting, Marvin Lounge
7pm: Wednesday Night Searchers, Marvin Lounge
BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall

Friday, October 13

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

Sunday, October 15

8:30am* & 10:15am: Worship,
Sanctuary & Streaming*
10:30am: Faith Formation Peer Groups (PreK-8th)
11:30am: Craft Fest Committee, Marvin Lounge
Junior Youth, Kitchen, Youth Room
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups