



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
November 19, 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 the Finally @ First Praise Band is live in the sanctuary at 10:15am and is not streamed. On the first Sunday of each month, when we celebrate Holy Communion, we offer one service at 10am where everyone worships together. Our Faith Formation Program for PreK through 8th is in person and starts at 10:15am in worship and then breaks 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 *We Give Thanks, O Lord* Traditional

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 *Place In The Choir* Bill Staines

Call to Worship Deacon Allison Van Steensburg

Leader: Come, let us thank be grateful for the beauty of creation and celebrate the wonders of God's natural world.

People: We are awed by the variety of the world's natural surroundings, the diversity of animal life, the intricate systems of our bodies and how everything works together for good.

Leader: Our earth draws us to faith and inspires us to dance, work, play, and love. God's universe inspires our passion for life.

People: Sunrises and sunsets begin and end our days with beauty. Birds and whales sing with the freedom of playful or purpose driven movement. Friendship and love warm our hearts and unite us in community. We climb mountains, swim in lakes, play games, learn, and laugh with enthusiasm.

Leader: Life is a great gift. Let us celebrate the goodness of our lives and praise God for our many blessings.

***Opening Hymn** *To You, O God, All Creatures Sing* #17 [vv. 1, 3, 5]

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation.....Deacon Allison Van Steensburg

Children's Message

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer**

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

***Hymn** *There Is a Balm in Gilead* #553

Scripture

Old Testament Judges 4:1-11 [page 170]

New Testament Matthew 25:14-30 [page 22]

Anthem *I Wanna Thank You, Lord* Patsy Ford Simms

Sermon *Monetary Lessons* Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *I Can Only Imagine* Bart Millard

***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

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.

Postlude

Joshua Fit The Battle

Arr. Robert G. Olson

*Please stand as you are able

◆ **Sincere thanks this morning to our musicians who provided the great music!**

⇒ Bethany Blake on the organ

⇒ Bill Bickford and Men at First

OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

If you require prayers for yourself or a loved one; or if you wish a call from a pastor, please contact the church office.

Those impacted by the fires in Hawaii
Everyone affected by the recent floods
Victims of gun violence and their families
Family and friends of Alma Wilson
Albert
Ruby and Family
Michael Flynn
Tony Lamb

Family and Friends of Norma Edwards
Bruce Gianuzzi
Sandy Tallman
Maureen Evans & Family
Bernie Currier
All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine and the Middle East
...and all persons affected by COVID19



**The flowers on the altar this morning are given by Sharon Dettenrieder
In memory of Doug Dettenrieder.**



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
- ◆ **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

A Few Key Announcements

- ◆ On the first Sunday of each month, we offer a single worship service at 10am. This provides us the opportunity to connect with our faith family as we celebrate Holy Communion together.
 - ⇒ This service is in-Person & Streamed with organ and Sanctuary Choir
 - ⇒ Staffed nursery care is available
 - ⇒ Spiritual Friends for PreK through 2nd grade offered after Children's Message
- ◆ Two Morning Services on Other Sundays
 - ⇒ 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.
- ◆ **Faith Formation Calendar**
 - ⇒ November 19 ~ Peer Groups during 2nd Service (PreK through 8th)
 - ⇒ November 26 ~ All Family Worship

The Giving Tree

As many of you have noticed, the Giving Tree is up in the Narthex filled with gift tags. Sign-Up Genius will go live today for those of you who like to seek on line for a tag. We would ask you to return your wrapped or bagged gifts no later than Dec. 10, as we need to sort the gifts by family and get them ready for families to pick them up.

If you take a tag from the tree at church, please secure the tag to your wrapped gift. If you select a gift from the Sign-Up Genius, you will need to create your own tag. It should include the identifying number of the gift – ex: 11A - and the age and gender of the child. This will allow the family to know which gift goes to each of their children.

One last request. If you choose to give a gift card, please place it in a small wrapped box or bag with the tag attached. Gift cards can easily be misplaced among all of the larger gifts. This makes it easier for us to keep track of them.

We hope you enjoy this wonderful opportunity to provide a few bright moments during the holidays for children in the City and Town of Essex and Westford.

Thank you,

Elaine Raymond, Anita Guild and Sharon Dettenrieder

Hanging the Greens

Each year on the Sunday before Advent begins, the Deacons invite anyone who is interested to join them in decorating the church. We put up the wreaths and ribbons, we set up the manger scene outside, we get the advent wreath ready, we set up the Christmas Trees and we listen to Christmas carols, snack on goodies a bit and have fun.

This year, the Deacons invite you to come and join them in decorating the sanctuary at 11:30am on Sunday November 26.

Weekly Calendar: November 19—November 26

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, November 19

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming*
10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)
11:30am: Racial Justice Task Force, Marvin Lounge
Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary, Gym & 2nd Floor
Program Room
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, November 21

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 @ First, Sanctuary
6:30pm: Eagle Scout Board of Review, Marvin Lounge
7pm: Communications, Conference Room

Thursday, November 23

Thanksgiving—Church Office Closed

11am: The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Kitchen
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge

Saturday, November 25

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, Fellowship Hall

Monday, November 20

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

Wednesday, November 22

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

Friday, November 24

Church Office Closed

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, November 26

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary & Streaming* - All Family Worship
11:30am: Hanging the Greens, Sanctuary
Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary & Gym
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

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 [mclarkdiscovery48@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