



# 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

## Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2024

*We offer two different worship services: our First Service with organ and traditional choir is in-person and streamed and begins at 8:30am with access via our webpage: [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org). You can watch that service any time thereafter. Our Second Service with our praise band is live in the sanctuary at 10:15am and it is streamed on the 3rd Sunday of the month. On the first Sunday of each month we celebrate communion and have a single service at 10am and is in-person and streamed. Our Faith Formation Program for all children is in person and starts at 10:15am. Listen Assist Headsets are available in the Narthex and next to the elevator and can be used with or without hearing aids.*

*Our Nursery is open at all services.*

***Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.***

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

Prelude                                      *Arioso* (Sinfonia from *Church Cantata No. 156*)                                      J.S. Bach\*\*  
arr. Norman Johnson

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

Introit                                      *L'entretien des Muses* (conversation of the muses)                                      Rameau\*\*

Call to Worship .....

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made....

**People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Leader: God has called us to goodness and love.....

**People: Let us respond and change our lives accordingly.**

Leader: Jesus calls us out of the darkness and into the light...

**People: Like all animals, let us be drawn to the flame, to the light.**

Leader: Come, let us worship and praise our God and our Friend Jesus.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation .....Alison Wermer (1st Service)  
Maureen McKenzie (2nd Service)

**\*Opening Hymn                                      *Beautiful Jesus*                                      #44\*\***

**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 Peer Groups (PreK-8th)\***

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 pick up your children by 11:30.*

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")** ..... Rev. Devon Thomas

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 and Candle Lighting**

*During the first five Sundays of Lent, we will provide a time for folks to come up and light a candle for a loved one who has died or for someone in your life in need of prayer. While we light our candles, a member of the choir will sing Hymn 550 followed by Bethany playing Sonata No.5 in C Minor, Op.10 No.1 (excerpt from mvt. 2)*

Sharing One's Spiritual Journey ..... Bob Driver

Scripture Reading:

Epistle: Ephesians 2:1-10 [page 148]

Read by the Deacon

Gospel: John 3:14-21 [page 71]

Read by Rev. Thomas

Anthem

*The Great Commission*  
[Sanctuary Choir, 1st Service]  
*Sontine*  
[Duet—Bethany Blake & Denise Keating, 2nd Service]

John Carter\*\*  
  
Beethoven\*\*

Sermon

*Walk in the Light*

Rev. Devon Thomas

*It is a delight to welcome Rev. Devon Thomas back to FCCEJ and back into the pulpit. Rev. Thomas went through the VTCUCC MSSC's MID program starting in 2016 and was ordained here at FCCEJ on December 2, 2018 with great pride and joy from all of our members. Devon served as our Bridge Part- time Associate Pastor starting on March 9, 2016 where he preached, led educational activities and worked with the youth. He also valiantly played chess with Rev. Mendes when time allowed.*

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

*\*Doxology*

*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.*

Martin Luther\*\*

#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*

*In The Cross of Christ I Glory*

#193\*\*

*\*Benediction*

Pastoral Benediction.....

Rev. Devon Thomas

*\*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

\*Please stand if you are able

## 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 floods  
Victims of gun violence and their families

Albert  
Ozzy and Family  
Andrea & Steve Sharp  
Russ Wilson & Cathy Galbraith  
Juliana Faux  
Family and Friends of Joyce Jacobs  
Marie Johnson

Bruce Blackman  
Frank Smith  
Connor Bryce and Family  
Ruby and Family  
Michael Flynn  
Bruce Gianuzzi

Maureen Evans & Family  
All those suffering due to violence in  
Ukraine and the Middle East  
...and all persons affected by COVID19

***The flowers on the altar are given by Carl & Alison Wermer  
In memory of their parents:  
John & Kirsten Wermer and Robert & Dorothy Knox.***

### 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](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)

### **Prayer Shawls Needed**

During the Season of Lent, we offer free prayer shawls from our extensive collection to give to people who either need one for themselves or know of someone in their lives who would benefit from such a gift. In addition, our two Ministers of Visitation have begun offering a prayer shawl to the folks they visit. Although we are not completely out of prayer shawls, it would be prudent for those of you who knit to make one of two for our collection. They should be large enough to wrap around one's shoulders or put over your legs. As completed, please drop off at the church office and thanks.

### **Ushers & Greeters**

The Hello Church Family,

My name is Aimee Koch, and I serve on our wonderful church's Greeting and Ushering Committee. I ask you to consider greeting/ushering in March and April. Here are the time commitments for each service:

- First of the Month Single Service: 9:40-11:15
- First Service: 8:10-9:15am
- Second Service: 9:55-11:15am

Below is the link to the Sign-Up Genius. Not comfortable signing up online? No problem! I'm more than happy to sign you up! Email me - [aimkath@comcast.net](mailto:aimkath@comcast.net) and I'll get you on the calendar. Include the date and service time at which you're willing to serve.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A48AAAD2CA2FF2-fccej2#/>

Thank you so much for considering volunteering in one of our services and for your support in helping us continue to Love, Serve and Grow!

### **Vacation Bible Camp**

Mark your calendars now!

August 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mornings 9am-12noon OR All-Day 9am to 4pm (\$100 / camper ~ scholarships available)

Campers ~ Toddlers with a Parent & PreK up through current 5th graders

Register Online! Take a moment and sign up today! Campers and all volunteers can register on this link: [www.fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/](http://www.fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/)

### **Easter Weekend Prayer Vigil**

The ancient Prayer Vigil answers Jesus' call to pray, from the moment of Christ's death at 3pm Friday afternoon, to the moment of his resurrection at 7am Easter morning: 40 hours. Individuals, couples, or families are encouraged to sign up for one hour. You will have the Sanctuary to yourself to pray, or read scripture, or sing hymns, or simply to sit in silence and soak in God's presence. Once your hour is complete, people are asked to let the next person in so they can have the same experience. We will break the prayer vigil for the Good Friday service and for the Nepali worship so there are 35 slots available. You can sign up on the clipboard in worship or by calling the church office [802 878-5745] and tell Jen your time preference.

### **Dates to Remember**

March 10~ Rev. Devon Thomas, guest preacher

Community Concerts @ First presents Va et Vient, 3pm in the Sanctuary

March 17 ~ Pretzel Sunday, Receiving New Members

March 23 ~ FCCEJ Leadership Workshop, 9am-11am

March 24 ~ Palm Sunday, Sanctuary Choir Cantata

March 28 ~ Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall

March 29 ~ Good Friday Service, 7pm in the Sanctuary

March 31 ~ Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service, 6:30am at Holy Family Gazebo

Easter Breakfast, 7-10am, FCCEJ Fellowship Hall

Easter Services @ FCCEJ, 8:30\* & 10:15 in the Sanctuary & Streamed\*

### **Children & Youth**

This 4th week of Lent peer groups will read John 13:1-17, Jesus washes the disciples' feet. They will work on a footprint's activity as they consider ways they can serve others.

May we all reflect on a time when someone did something kind for us, and we in return did the same! Let's continue to practice loving God by serving others.

Share your smile!

*Elizabeth*

### **Faith Formation Sunday Morning Calendar**

March 10, 17, 24 – Peer Groups (PreK-8th)

March 31 – Easter – All Family Worship

### **JH & SH Youth:**

A time to build self-confidence. Unwind. Build Community with those around you.

March 10 ~ JH Youth (6th – 8th) 11:30-1:30pm

March 17 ~ Pretzel Sunday – JH help with peer groups, SH can volunteer

11:30am Youth & Parent Meeting for NE Regional Youth Event/Summer Service

Project Days – please bring your calendars

March 24 ~ JH Youth (6th – 8th) 11:30-1:30pm

March 31 ~ JH & SH can volunteer as breakfast helpers anytime

### **Grief Support Group**

2nd Thursday of each month from 10am to 11:30am in Marvin Lounge.

This group is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. The sessions are facilitated by Sharon Dettenrieder, MSN, RN and Mary McHugh, MAPS. Both Sharon and Mary have years of experience in leading Grief Support groups as well as personal experience with loss. Next session is 3/14. Contact the church office for more info: 802-878-5745 or [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org).

## **Weekly Calendar: March 10 - March 17**

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

### **Sunday, March 10**

8:30\* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary/  
Streaming  
9am: *Reiki Class, West Wing*  
10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)  
11:30am: Junior Youth, Youth Room, Kitchen  
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
3pm: Community Concert, Sanctuary

### **Tuesday, March 12**

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge  
10:15am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
5pm: Yoga @ FCCEJ, Sanctuary  
7pm: Deacons, Marvin Lounge  
*BSA Three Rivers District Roundtable,  
Fellowship Hall & Program Room*

### **Thursday, March 14**

10am: Grief Support, Marvin Lounge  
*Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary*  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
6pm: *Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary*  
6:30pm: *Eagle Scout BoR, Marvin Lounge*  
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

### **Saturday, March 16**

8am: *The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary*  
*Give It A Go Support Group, Marvin Lounge*  
9am: *Weight Loss Support Group, Fellowship Hall*  
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
11am: Joyce Jacobs Memorial & Reception,  
Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Kitchen  
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Marvin Lounge*

### **Monday, March 11**

8:30am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
1:30: Food Pantry Set Up, Fellowship Hall  
5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution,  
Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary  
7:30pm: *Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

### **Wednesday, March 13**

11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
3pm: Food Pantry Committee, Marvin Lounge  
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop  
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
6pm: *BSA Troop 624 PLC, Marvin Lounge*  
7pm: Searchers, Marvin Lounge  
*BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall*  
7:15pm: Bell Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

### **Friday, March 15**

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market  
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*  
1:30pm: Bridge Group, Marvin Lounge  
7pm: *Burlington Amateur Radio Club,  
Marvin Lounge*

### **Sunday, March 17**

8:30\* & 10:15am: Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming  
10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)  
11:30am: Youth Parent Meeting, Program Room  
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

*Events in italics = Local Community Groups*