



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
The Fifth Sunday After Epiphany
February 9, 2025

The first Sunday of each month we celebrate the Lord's Supper with one unified service at 10am. The remaining Sundays of each month we offer two distinct worship services. Our first service, at 8:30am, is traditional with our Sanctuary Choir and organ music. Our second service begins at 10:15 and is more contemporary with music from our Finally @ First Praise Band. Our first service is streamed every week, and our second service is streamed on the third Sunday of each month. Our Faith Formation Program for PreK-8th grade occurs during our second service. Our nursery is open for children 6 months-3 years at both services (self-serve at 8:30 and staffed at 10:15). Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.

<i>A Welcoming Community</i>	<i>Accepting and Serving All</i>
<i>In the Spirit of Christ</i>	

Order of Worship

Prelude	<i>The Girl with the Flaxen Hair</i>	Claude Debussy
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An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements	Deacon Alison Wermer
<i>No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome in this place.</i>	

The Deacon's Greeting

Our Deacon will welcome everyone to our community of faith; ask if anyone has special joys to share; invite any guest to introduce themselves if they want to and encourage anyone to fill out the welcome sheet found in the pew to lift up any needs and place it in the offering plate.

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.

Introit	<i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i>
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Call to Worship.....	Deacon Alison Wermer
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Leader: In a temple long ago, with incense burning and the sanctuary hot with the Spirit of God, Isaiah heeded God's call and become one the greatest prophets of Israel, a prophet Jesus listened to and based his teachings upon.

People: **Thank you, God, for sending us prophets to shake us up a bit and direct us to kinder, more righteous lives.**

Leader: On the side of the road with lightning striking hot with the Spirit with difficult questions and life changes, Paul heard Jesus and shifted from persecuting Jesus followers to being one of the most important.

People: Thank you, God for demanding that we repent of projecting your ways of love into our ways of violence and demonizing our opponents. Give us eyes of discernment to see your ways of peace.

Leader: On the Galilean shore with empty nets after a long night of frustration, four fishermen saw the abundance of God in the form of multitudes of fish and became Jesus’ fishers of folk.

People: Thank you, God for calling us to be your disciples in the midst of frustrating lives so that we might spread your Good News to all and find peace.

***Opening Hymn** *Shall We Gather at the River* # 597

Deacon’s Prayer of InvocationDeacon Alison Wermer

Children’s Message Rev. Devon Thomas

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 collect 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**, and deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

Prayer Response *Beautiful Jesus* # 44

**Beautiful sunshine, clear, so lovely, moonlight,
stars shine like angels, ranked through space:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines clearer,
In perfect beauty, love, and grace.**

Scripture Readings			
Old Testament	Prophetic	Isaiah 6:1-8	[page 492]
New Testament	Epistle	I Corinthians 15:1-11	[page 135]
	Gospel	Luke 51-11	[page 47]

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

Soar Like an Eagle

Jay Althouse

Sermon

Heed the Word

Rev. Devon Thomas

Offering Our Gifts to God

Rev. Devon Thomas

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Valse II

Maurice Ravel

*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.

*Closing Hymn

You Walk Along Our Shoreline

504

*Benediction

Pastoral BenedictionRev. 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

Sonatina op 36 no. 4

Muzio Clementi

*Please stand if you are able

◆ Sincere thanks to Bethany Blake and the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir for sharing their amazing musical talents with us this morning!

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. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

Judy Moreau

Jed Cilley

Joanne Irwin

Jim Driscoll

Family and friends of Nancy Hayes

Victims of gun violence and their families

Ashley Frazer and Family

Carol Daigle

Chris Hathaway

Bruce Parker

Kim Sonntag

Jon Eric Lindholm

Patty Giroux

All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine, the Middle East, and around the world

***The flowers on the altar this morning are given by Matt & Whitney Noel
In memory of Matt's dad passing away 15 years ago on 2/10***

Community Concerts @ First presents Mama Tried Bluegrass Band

Sunday, February 9, 2025 • 3pm

Join us for the first CC@F of the new year on February 9th!
Mama Tried is an all-gal, foot stomping, bluegrass, country,
folk and blues string band from Vermont.

Bandmembers:

- ◆ Rebecca Padula - Vocals, guitar and ukulele
- ◆ Linda Kallinger - Fiddle and Vocals
- ◆ Clare Innes - Banjo, Ukulele and vocals
- ◆ Kathy Mulligan - Bass

Tickets are available online using the QR code or at the door.
\$20 suggested donation, free for kids 18 and under.



Weekly Calendar: February 9–February 16

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<p><u>Sunday, February 9</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/ Streaming* 10:30am: Faith Formation—Peer Rooms 11:30am: Music Committee— 2nd Floor Program Room <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 3pm: Community Concert “Mama Tried”— Sanctuary</p>	<p><u>Monday, February 10</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, 2nd Floor Storage Room, Kitchen 10am: Called to Care—Marvin Lounge <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 1pm: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen 5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary 7:30pm: <i>Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i></p>
<p><u>Tuesday, February 11</u> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop 10:15am: Tai Chi—Fellowship Hall <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 3:30pm: Food Pantry Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>6:30pm: BSA Three Rivers District Roundtable— Fellowship Hall, 2nd Floor Program Room</i> 7pm: Deacons—Marvin Lounge</p>	<p><u>Wednesday, February 12</u> 10am: <i>Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 1pm: VT Outdoor Ministry Team—Marvin Lounge 4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>5pm: Essex Pediatrics Workshop— 3rd Floor, 2nd Floor Program Room</i> 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary 6:30pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i> 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge</p>
<p><u>Thursday, February 13</u> 10am: Grief Support—Marvin Lounge <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary Youth Ministry Team—ZOOM</p>	<p><u>Friday, February 14</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 1:30pm: Bible Study—Marvin Lounge</p>
<p><u>Saturday, February 15</u> <i>8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing</i> <i>Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> 8:30am: <i>Weight Loss Support —Fellowship Hall</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>	<p><u>Sunday, February 16</u> 8:30 & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 10:30am: Faith Formation—Peer Rooms 11:30am: Ushering Committee—Marvin Lounge Junior Youth—Youth Room, Kitchen, Gym <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

Scripture Study Group

A Scripture Study Group is starting in February, led by Mary McHugh. The group will meet in Marvin Lounge from 1:30 – 3 pm on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month, beginning February 14. Mary is starting with Genesis; a good teaching tool for learning how to explore scripture. Genesis teaches us to ask the questions we can use with any scripture passage: who is God in this passage, who are we, and how are we in relationship to God, each other, and creation? After Genesis, the group will decide together what to study next! Come to any or all sessions.

Cabin Fever Calcutta

Do you have your ticket yet for our 8th Cabin Fever Calcutta to be held on March 8, 2025 at the Catamount Country Club? The evening promises lots of fun and fellowship just when we all are ready to get out and about. Your \$150 ticket includes a buffet dinner for two plus one Calcutta ball number.

We have secured many interesting prizes, assuring that a prize is awarded every 3rd or 4th ball drawn. Prizes include hotel and restaurant packages, gift certificates to local eateries, and a wine grab. The grand prize is \$1000.

Tickets for the Calcutta can be purchased at the Service Trip table in Fellowship Hall. Contact Sharon Dettenrieder at Sharon.dettenrieder@gmail.com for additional information.

Proceeds from this event support our Intergenerational Service Trips. Watch for information in the spring about our 2026 domestic trip to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. The trip will be led by Lisa Clark and Betsy Weischedel.

Currier Hand Bell Choir is seeking new members to join our group.

You do NOT need to read music or have a musical background, but being able to keep a beat is helpful. Please join us as we begin practicing for Easter morning. We will teach you how to make beautiful music. Please contact the church office for more information.

Grief Support Group

2nd Thursday of each month from 10 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 February 13. Contact the church office for more information.

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]

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Elizabeth O'Beirne [childrensministry@fccej.org]

Music Director: Bethany Blake [bblake@fccej.org]

Social Media Marketing Specialist: Munroe Shearer [socialmedia@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Jen Kelly [welcome@fccej.org]

Music

Chair of Music: Mindy Bickford

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Men At First Director: Bill Bickford

Officers

President: Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Vice President: Terry Stein

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

Assistant Financial Secretary: Linda Bogardus

Treasurer: Dan Petherbridge [treasurer@fccej.org]

Assistant Treasurer: Matt Clark [mattclark48discovery@gmail.com]

Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditors: Betsy Weischedel, Alan Kinney

Committee Chairs

Christian Education:

Derek Lyman, Terri Livak—Co-Chairs

Communications:

Francis Gravel, Beth Warren—Co-Chairs

Deacons:

Alison Wermer, Judy McCullen—Co-Chairs

Finance & Pastoral Relations: Terry Stein

Hospitality: TBD

Human Resources:

Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Missions: Ann Marie Sullivan

Nominating: Lauren Starkey

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees: TBD

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert