



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**

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Second Service

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
The Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 18, 2025

From May 25 through Labor Day weekend, we follow our Summer Worship Schedule. The Sunday service each week starts at 9am and we have special music from individuals or groups that have volunteered, which gives our two musical groups [Sanctuary Choir & Finally @ First] the summer to rest and simply enjoy worship. Our streaming will continue with a simple wide shot of the service and not the multiple cameras and special screen shots of the hymns and various parts of the bulletin which gives our tech folks a break. Our nursery is open each week with a paid attendant for ages 6 months through 3 years. Children three and older are asked to join their parents in worship which gives our Faith Formation volunteers a little time off as well.

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

Order of Worship

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements	Rev. Mark Mendes
<i>No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome in this place.</i>	

The Deacon's GreetingDeacon Maureen McKenzie
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.

Musical Introit	<i>Wade in the Water</i> 	African-American Spiritual
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Call to Worship.....Deacon Maureen McKenzie
Leader: After Jesus died and rose from the dead, he came to the disciples and everyday people, empowering them with the Holy Spirit of God.

People: The politicians and powerful who helped shape God's presence and message did not like appreciate Jesus and his teachings. They thought his death would be the end of the movement.

Leader: But God had a different plan. Jesus continued to be with the regular people and give them the words and wisdom to continue to preach the Good News.

People: Still to this day, many of the well-connected and rich do not always like Christ's message and try to stifle it. And still to this day, normal every day people seek to spread love, kindness and peace to all.

Leader: Come, let us claim Christ's resurrection power so that we might speak boldly and live lives of meaning, unity and joy.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

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.

*Opening Hymn

Gather Us In
[handout]

Marty Haugen

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 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.

The Reception of New Member.....Lou Ann Pioli

Congregational Vows, Welcome and Reception

Deacon to the Congregation: Jesus calls us to spread God's extravagant love to all peoples and nations, offering everyone the gift of grace. Do you who witness this rite of membership, promise your support to this new member so that she might live a life where Christ's joy and meaning is manifested?

People: Lou Ann, we welcome you with joy in the communion life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of our church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and be witnesses of Christ's love in this world.

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Unison Prayer Response

Rise Up

Andra Day

I'll rise up, I'll rise like the day

I'll rise up, I'll rise unafraid

I'll rise up and I'll do it a thousand times again

And I'll rise up, high like the waves

I'll rise up, in spite of the ache

I'll rise up and I'll do it a thousand times again

I'll rise up, I'll rise up, I'll rise up. I'll rise.

New Testament Scripture Readings

Historical

Acts 4:1-31

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Anthem

Stand in Your Love

Josh Baldwin

Easter Sermon

A Day in the Life

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and

Offertory

With My Own Two Hands

Ben Harper

Prayer of Dedication

***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**

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Graham Kendrick

[handout]

*Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***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 if you are able

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Rick Dooley and Finally @ First Praise Band, for sharing their musical talents with us this morning!

✠ Presented in accordance with our Royalties for Spirituals Project: a practice of valuing musical contributions of enslaved Africans to American worship and song. We honor unrecognized musicians who created these pieces by singing them with reverence, gratitude, and open hearts. Royalties set aside for the use of these songs today will go to a local organization that supports African American musicians.

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.

Dave Johnson

Bruce Blackman

Family and friends of Duke Ehler

Danair Williams

Josh Winslow

The Moos Family

Family and Friends of Geoff Grove

Juno Johnson

Karen

Judy Moreau

Family and Friends of Joseph Kamuda

Joanne Irwin

Jim Driscoll

Family and Friends of Arthur LaGrange

Victims of gun violence and their families

Carol Daigle

Bruce Parker

Jon Eric Lindholm

Patty Giroux

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

~ **UPCOMING EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS** ~

- **Sunday, May 25**—One Worship Service at FCCEJ at 9am
Worship Service at Mount Philo at 10am
- **Saturday, May 31**—Essex Pride Festival, 12-4pm at Maple Street Park
- **Sunday, June 1**—Music Appreciation & Celebration Sunday
Ice Cream Social after worship
Pride Worship Service, 3pm in the Sanctuary
- **Sunday, June 8**—Scout Sunday
Celebrating Graduates in Worship

SUMMER SCHEDULE—MAY 25 THROUGH LABOR DAY

- ♦ Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ One service at 9am. In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://www.youtube.com/c/fccej)
 - ⇒ All Family Worship—Faith Formation on hiatus till September
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month
 - ⇒ Rev. Mark on vacation July 1 through August 4

Celebrating Graduates

Do you have a graduate in the family? Graduation Sunday is June 8!

Email Jen at the church office (welcome@fccej.org) the following info:

- ♦ Name of graduate
- ♦ Graduation/recent picture & baby/young picture
- ♦ School (high school, undergrad, graduate) & degree if applicable
- ♦ Their plans for the future

The deadline for submissions is May 23. Contact the church office for more information.

Grief Support Group

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

This 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 June 12. Please note, the group is taking a hiatus in July and August and will resume in September.

Scripture Study Group

Scripture Study Group, led by Mary McHugh, is exploring the Gospel of Luke. We meet in Marvin Lounge from 1:30-3pm on the 2nd & 4th Fridays of the month.

Come to any or all sessions!

Heavenly Food Pantry Initiative

The Heavenly Food Pantry is, by its very name, committed to feeding the folks in our community who experience food insecurity. But another significant goal of the Pantry is to ensure that our volunteers, who guarantee our success, are well-cared for. Volunteers perform a multitude of tasks to include stocking shelves, inventorying food to assure its freshness, collecting donations from our partners like Hannaford's and Costco, distributing food to places like Whitcomb Woods and Town Meadows, helping with food drives, setting up the pantry on open days and, of course, assisting clients as they select their food. We have recently learned that people may not be aware that the pantry has an advisory board to make decisions for the pantry as well as to resolve any issues. We encourage you to let us know how we're doing and welcome any suggestions about how we might better serve this community. We also look forward to working with you to resolve any concerns you may have. We want to make sure that our volunteers' experience continues to be pleasant, rewarding, and fun.

The board is comprised of the following people: Anita Guild, Mary Richer, Suzanne Reardon, Mary-Ellen Grove, Valerie Gabert, Mary Morris (a community member), Lisa Clark, Betsy Weischedel, Elaine Raymond and Rev. Mark Mendes. Please feel free to reach out to any of us with a concern. An initial contact can be made with Lisa Clark, Betsy Weischedel, or Elaine Raymond. Our contact information is in the church directory. We're here to keep the incredible mission of the Heavenly Food Pantry thriving and we thank you for your support!

Essex Pride Festival—Saturday, May 31

From the City of Essex Junction's first Gay Pride Event, FCCEJ has participated in supporting LGBTQ folks in their celebration of equal rights under the law. On May 31st, we will again host "games on the green" right in the middle of the field surrounded by performers and all sorts of organizations that also support equal rights for ALL people in our community. We'll have games set up for all to play, crafts for kids to sit down and create, and pamphlets sharing our church's journey toward, and support of, equality. 12 noon to 4pm at Maple Street Park.

This year, we have been invited to host a worship service to expand the City's Gay Pride Event which will be held on June 1st at 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary. If you would like to help with any of these activities and or events, please contact the church office.

Weekly Calendar: May 18—May 25

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<u>Sunday, May 18</u> 8:30 & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th) <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>Champlain Valley Association—Sanctuary</i>	<u>Monday, May 19</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, 2nd Floor Storage Room, Kitchen 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> Lunchtime Book Group—Marvin Lounge <i>3:30pm: Nepalese Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i>
<u>Tuesday, May 20</u> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge & Zoom [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036] 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: CE—Marvin Lounge Communications—2nd Floor Program Room Trustees—Fellowship Hall	<u>Wednesday, May 21</u> 8am: VT Food Bank Delivery—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room 10am: Missions Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing <i>6:30pm: BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i> 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge & Zoom [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85355169054]
<u>Thursday, May 22</u> 8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge</i> 3pm: Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary <i>5:30pm: Reiki Sharing—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> <i>6:30: Eagle Scout Board of Review—West Wing</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary	<u>Friday, May 23</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 <i>6:30pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall</i>
<u>Saturday, May 24</u> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary,</i> <i>West Wing</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge</i>	<u>Sunday, May 25</u> 9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/ Streaming* 10am: All-Family Worship—Mt. Philo <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>Events in italics = Local Community Groups</i>