



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**

July 6, 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.

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In the Spirit of Christ*

Order of Worship

Prelude *Battle Hymn of the Republic* Trad. melody

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements
*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.*

The Deacon's Greeting Jim Glatz
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 *America , the Beautiful* Samuel A. Ward

Call to Worship
Leader: We are Protestants and as such we look to the Word of God for guidance in our lives. Early leaders of the reform movement sacrificed and even died to bring scripture to us in our own language.
People: **Scripture is at the heart of our worship service and Faith Formation Program and Jesus' biblical teachings guide us in how we live on a day to day basis.**
Leader: When Elijah was getting old and ready to retire, God appointed Elisha to carry on the work with signs, wonders, and teachings.
People: **Come, let us explore an ancient biblical practice as we seek God's guidance in our lives today. Come, let us worship and praise our God.**

*Opening Hymn *Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast* # 318

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

Children's Message

Jessica Moos

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

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

There's a Song

Handt Hanson

Congregational Hymn of Choice

For the middle hymn, the worship leader will ask the congregation for suggestions to what to sing. This affords the congregation the opportunity to choose their favorite hymn for all of us to sing.

The Practice of Lectio Davina [A Hands on Biblical Practice]

Introduction

One Scripture engagement technique that has a long and rich history is lectio divina, Latin for "sacred reading," it has been in use for over a thousand years and was originally practiced by monks who noticed that at times individual words, phrases, or verses seemed to leap off the page with a special personal importance. These special words or verses can give a sense of encouragement, comfort, thankfulness, or conviction that often applies to present situations and can draw us closer to God. The four traditional stages of lectio divina are lectio (reading), meditatio (meditation), oratio (prayer), and contemplatio (contemplation).

Reading the Scripture

Psalm 30

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple of David.

**I will exalt you, O God, for you have lifted me up,
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.**

O God, my God, I cried to you for help, and you healed me.

**You brought me up from the realm of the dead, O God;
you restored my life as I was sinking into the grave.**

**Sing praises to God, all you faithful; give thanks to God's holy name.
For God's anger lasts but a moment, but God's favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning.**

As for me, I said in my security, "I shall never be shaken."
By your favor, O God, you had established me as a strong mountain;
but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

To you, O God, I cried, and to you I made my appeal:
"What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?
Hear me, O God, and be gracious to me! O God, be my helper!"

You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
O God, my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Jonah will read the passage aloud a total of three times. Each time, we will attend to a different aspect of the text

The First Reading: Find a word, phrase, image, or metaphor that is especially meaningful to you. After the reading, we will sit in silence for two minutes. Focus intently on why the Holy Spirit might have chosen these words to speak to you today. Reflect on how it might apply to your life. Is it relevant to something that you are going through? Does it bring to mind a struggle that you have been dealing with? Do certain people come to mind that God may want you to reach out to or reconcile a relationship with? Is there a strong sense of movement or change that needs to happen? When you are thinking about a passage in God's presence, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate that passage so that you can grasp the message in terms of your own life.

Then you are invited to share it aloud: a simple statement of one or a few words with **No elaboration!**

The Second Reading: Listen anew to the scripture passage and see what draws you into the text this time. We will sit in silence again for 1-2 minutes. During this time, go deeper and reflect on what they see or hear is going on in their phrase or text and think about why did this text come to the fore? Look for meaning and insight concerning what God wants for your life or the life of our church. Anyone is free to briefly share in one or two sentences, what additional meaning you have drawn from your word, phrase or text.

Then one **last reading** of Scripture and time of Reflective Silence

Anthem
Beth Volker, soloist

Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream

Ed McCurdy

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation, Passing Out the Elements & Prayer of Thanksgiving

This morning, we will observe communion in the traditional congregational way by passing out the elements of bread and juice to the congregation. Please hold onto the bread until you are asked to partake and then feel free to partake of the cup whenever you want; this symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

My Country 'Tis of Thee

Samuel F. Smith

Beth Volker, soloist

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost, amen.**

*Hymn

O Beautiful, for Spacious Skies

**O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat, across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law.**

**O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.**

**O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.**

*Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

*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

As We Depart

Robert Thygerson

*Please stand if you are able

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Jonah Moos for leading worship and to Denise Keating and Beth Volker for sharing their incredible musical talents with us!

***The flowers on the altar this morning are given by Linda Lou Parker
In honor of Bruce Parker.***

SUMMER SCHEDULE 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 till August

SUMMER PASTORAL COVERAGE

While Rev. Mendes is on vacation, the following people will be officiating the worship services in conjunction with our Deacons:

- ◆ July 13th: M.I.D. Josh Sharp
 - ◆ July 20th : Mary McHugh
 - ◆ July 27th: Rev. Arnold Thomas
 - ◆ August 3rd: Rev. Arnold Thomas with Special Guests: The Green Mountain Gospel Choir
- For any and all pastoral emergencies, please first call Jen Kelly at the church office so that she can coordinate the pastoral coverage [802-878-5745]. Leave a message in her voice mail if it's after hours—she receives notifications on her cell phone and will respond in a timely fashion.

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@fcej.org or call (802) 878-5745. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

Family and friends of Bruce Parker
Family and friends of Bruce Blackman
Family and friends of Malcolm LeVanway
Family and friends of Elaine Helmstutler
Family and friends of Ruth Furman
Danair Williams
Joe Shields
Heather Rogers
Sean Garvey
Josh Winslow
Family and Friends of Geoff Grove

Judy Moreau
Victims of gun violence and their families
Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear
in their communities
Carol Daigle
Jon Eric Lindholm
Patty Giroux
All those affected by violence in Ukraine, the
Middle East, and around the world
Everyone that may be privately suffering

Heavenly Food Pantry

We've been selected as a recipient for the Hannaford's "Fight Hunger Bag Program" for the month of July. Heavenly Food Pantry will receive \$1 from every purchase of a reusable bag for \$2.50 from the Hannaford's in Essex (21A Essex Way). The Food Pantry is always in need of reusable bags so consider donating it—with maybe some non-perishables to stock our shelves. Peanut butter, baked beans, cereal, spaghetti sauce, specialty soups, canned veggies, and condiments are most appreciated, and we also need empty one-dozen egg cartons.

Hospitality Updates

During the month of July, the Hospitality Committee is taking a break from serving food and drink during Fellowship Time after worship. If you would like to volunteer to make coffee and provide baked goods for a July Sunday, please contact Sue Conti—sueconti@comcast.net.



VACATION BIBLE CAMP 2025

AUGUST 4—AUGUST 8

Register today!



Faith Formation Summertime Worship

Children's Worship Bulletins – by Illustrated Ministry

- Weekly in the Narthex for kids to use during the service, finish at home, and share with their family. Activities are based on the Sunday scripture.

Weekly Calendar: July 6–July 13

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, July 6

9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Monday, July 7

10am: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
2pm: VBC Planning—Marvin Lounge
3:30pm: Nepalese Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary
7pm: HRC—Conference Room

Tuesday, July 8

8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom:
[<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036>]
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, July 9

10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
6:30pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing

Thursday, July 10

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
5pm: Reiki Share—Marvin Lounge

Friday, July 11

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
6pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall

Saturday, July 12

8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge
The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing
9:30am: Craft Group—West Wing
10am: Reiki 1 Class—Marvin Lounge
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Sunday, July 13

9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups