



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

August 17, 2025

From May 25 through September 7, 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 In the Spirit of Christ</i>

Order of Worship

Prelude

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Mark Mendes

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.*

The Deacon's GreetingRiley Elliott

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.

Introit

Take Me As I Am from *Jekyll & Hyde*

Leslie Bricusse
Frank Wildhorn

Call to Worship.....Riley Elliott

Leader: God brought order out of chaos when the Divine Spirit gave shape and meaning to the unformed substance of creation.

People: Then Adam and Eve ate the apple and their offspring allowed envy and jealousy to bring a murderous spirit into existence .

Leader: God offered commandments as a graceful way for people to get along as families and villages grew and organized into cities and nations.

People: Then humanity ignored the commandments of how to get along and even worse used the grace filled law to separate people from each other and even from God.

Leader: God then sent prophets and priests to remind people how to get along and prioritize their lives around God’s presence.

People: Many of the prophets and priests were co-opted by their own grasp for power and prestige; the ones who preached God’s ways were killed, ignored or ostracized.

Leader: Then Jesus came and we know what happened to him! Come, let us listen closely to the Word and reflect on God’s true meaning in our lives. Come, let us worship and praise the Living God.

*Opening Hymn

Praise to the Living God

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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.

Children’s Message

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response

Chorale

J.S. Bach

*Congregational Hymn of Choice

Scripture Readings

Old Testament	Isaiah 5:1-7	[page 491]
New Testament	Luke 12:49-56	[page 57]

Special Music

You Will Be Found from *Dear Evan Hansen*

Pasek/Paul
arr. Mac Huff

Summer Sermon

Connecting the Dots

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Not While I'm Around from *Sweeney Todd*

Stephen Sondheim

***Doxology**

**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**

Lead on, Eternal Sovereign

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***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**

***Please stand if you are able**

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Terry, Heather, and Am Stein, and Bethany Blake for sharing their musical talents with us this morning!

*The flowers on the altar this morning are
Remembering the birthday of Marion Ferris from her children.*

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.

George Beech
Janet Warden
Danair Williams
Joe Shields
Heather Rogers
Sean Garvey
Josh Winslow
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 the violence in
Ukraine, Gaza, and around the world
Everyone that may be privately suffering

SUMMER SCHEDULE THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ One service at 9am. In-person and streamed via 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

SAVE THE DATE—SEPTEMBER 14 IS WELCOME BACK SUNDAY

- ◆ On September 14th, we leave behind our summer worshipping schedule and enter our program year with two services at 8:30 and 10:15am, except for the first Sunday of each month where we have one unified service at 10am.
- ◆ Join us after 2nd service for a barbeque lunch, hosted by our CE Committee, as well as a bouncy house, and a chance to catch up with friends about summer vacations, school plans and fall activities. This is a great Sunday to invite a friend or a neighbor to church.

Vacation Bible Camp 2025—God is Calling You, Just as You Are

Let's celebrate the end of the summer together.

"God is Calling You!"

Saturday, August 23rd 9am-12pm & Sunday, August 24th 9am-11am

Children and Youth - Kindergarten to 8th grade are welcome!

We encourage you to look at your calendars and sign up this week!

Reminder, if you're only able to join the fun one of the days, please sign up for what works best for your schedule!

Please use register via SignUP Genius found on the FCCEJ website or scan the QR code.

*** We appreciate any donated magazines for use with our VBC weekend craft. ***

Please bring donated magazines and place them in the designated box next to the children's table in the Narthex or drop them off at the church office.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

American Teenager—A Conversation Supporting Trans Youth

Author Nico Lang will be in Vermont on Monday, August 18 for a reading and Q&A at the First UU Society of Burlington (152 Pearl St.), in partnership with the Pride Center of Vermont, Ishtar Collective, and the Rainbow Bridge Community Center.

Nico Lang is a longtime LGBTQ+ journalist, as well as the author of the recently released book *American Teenager*, which documents the lives of trans kids and their loved ones in seven different states. Their goal was to speak back to extreme anti-trans rhetoric about youth by showing trans kids as they actually are: powerfully human.

Burlington Pride Parade 2025

FCCEJ is participating in the Burlington Pride Parade along with other ONA churches in the Vermont UCC Conference. This year's theme is "Power in Resilience". Here are the details:

Lineup Location: St. Paul Street between Main & College (same as last year)

Lineup Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Parade Start: 12:00 PM

Please contact the church office if you would like to join us representing our faith family!

Josh Pallotta House Soda Drive

When: Now through the Fall

What: Soda with sugar

Where: Big Blue Bin in the Fellowship Hall

Who: Josh's House—an organization that combines local and national resources, emergency services, and research to provide veterans the resiliency, transition and reintegration tools to help them sustain or return to full and healthy lives.

Heavenly Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to need reusable shopping bags as well as baked beans, chunky soups, canned pasta, peanut butter, and cereal.

We are also looking for volunteers who are able to deliver to our clientele that are unable to visit the food pantry in person. Please contact the Church Office or Anita Guild at anitalguild@gmail.com if you are interested and as always, thank you for your support of this meaningful and important ministry in our community!

FCCEJ Calendar Reminder

As we gear up to our program year, it is crucial to keep the FCCEJ Master Calendar up to date. The FCCEJ facility occupied every day of the week. Many internal committees have recurring meetings on the calendar, however, **PLEASE** confirm your meeting times with the church office, and check the calendar regularly—at least once a week. You can access the calendar in Sunday's bulletins, the weekly email, on bulletin boards at the parking lot door and by the admin office, and through our website: www.fccej.org/v5/calendar-news/calendar/

Weekly Calendar: August 17—August 24

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<p><u>Sunday, August 17</u> 9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>	<p><u>Monday, August 18</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> Lunchtime Book Group—Marvin Lounge <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i></p>
<p><u>Tuesday, August 19</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—Program Room</p>	<p><u>Wednesday, August 20</u> 8am: Food Bank Delivery—Fellowship Hall 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 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing Bell Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary</p>
<p><u>Thursday, August 21</u> 10am: VBC Team Meeting—Marvin Lounge <i>Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:30pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i></p>	<p><u>Friday, August 22</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:30pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall</i></p>
<p><u>Saturday, August 23</u> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing</i> <i>8:30am: Weight Loss Support Group—Fellowship Hall</i> 9am: Vacation Bible Camp—West Wing, Gym 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>	<p><u>Sunday, August 24</u> 9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 9:15am: Vacation Bible Camp—West Wing, Gym <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>

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]

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: Sue Conti

Human Resources:

Judy Larrabee Pomainville

Missions: Ann Marie Sullivan

Nominating: Lauren Starkey

Stewardship: Kathryn Brennan

Trustees:

John Burnett, Rob Gibson—Co Chairs

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Valerie Gabert