



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 31, 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.

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Order of Worship

Prelude Sonatina Op. 55 No. 1 "Vivace" Kuhlau

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 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.

Introit *Come As You Are*

Call to Worship..... Jim Glatz

Leader: We are surrounded by the beauty of Vermont. Sometimes we get so busy we forget to not only see Vermont's beauty, but to give thanks.

People: Thank you, God, for the beauty of Vermont that surrounds us each day.

Leader: We are surrounded by the love of family, friends and strangers. Sometimes we get so busy we forget to take the time to embrace the love.

People: Thank you, God, for the love that surrounds me each day.

Leader: We are surrounded by God in so many different forms. Sometimes we get so busy we don't even see God's Spirit at work in and around us each day.

People: Thank you, God, for your ever-present presence in my life.

Leader: Come, let us be grateful for the Beauty, Love, and God that greet us each day.
Come, let us sing of our blessings.

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 Bob Driver
Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other
A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer
Musical Response Chorale *O Lamb of God, Pure, Spotless* [excerpt] J.S. Bach

*Congregational Hymn of Choice

Scripture Readings
Old Testament Jeremiah 2:1-13 [page 541]
New Testament Luke 14:1-14 [page 59]

Special Music *The Gospel Ship* 🎶

Summer Sermon *The Gift of Humility* Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God
Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication
Offertory *How Can I Keep From Singing*

*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.**

*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

Chaconne in D Minor (excerpt)

Louis Marchand

*Please stand if you are able

- ♦ Sincere thanks to Judy Pomainville, Doug Olufsen, Mindy Bickford, Bill Bickford Jr., and Bethany Blake for providing the beautiful music 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.

Sylvia Nyhagen
Allysa Williams
Kathy & Mike Murray
Colleen Kelly
Gracie O'Malley and family
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

**** The flowers on the altar this morning are given by Anna Izzo
In celebration of her mother's birthday. ****

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 14
 - ⇒ 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.

WELCOME BACK SUNDAY: THE CE/F COMMITTEE DESSERT CHALLENGE!

Greetings one and all! One part of the planning for Welcome Back Sunday is always soliciting for desserts. This year the CE/F Committee is challenging all other committees to bring a dessert for everyone's enjoyment as well as engage in a friendly competition. We're looking for a dessert that's easy to serve that would feed a dozen or so people. Here's an opportunity for each committee to not only highlight their baking skills, but they could also feature what they are planning for the coming program year. Of course, anyone wanting to participate by bringing a dessert on their own is always welcome, as well as anyone who wants to pitch in on set-up, clean-up or even flipping burgers! We look forward to your entries. Happy Baking!

Community Concerts at First

CC@F presents Tracy Grammer on Sunday, September 21 at 3pm in the Sanctuary

Called "a musician and singer of dazzling versatility" (No Depression), Tracy Grammer is among contemporary folk music's most beloved artists. Renowned for her pure voice, deft guitar and violin work, and incantatory storytelling, Grammer has recorded and performed with Joan Baez and Mary Chapin Carpenter, headlined several of the nation's top folk festivals and enjoyed 12 consecutive years as one of folk radio's 50 top-played artists, both solo and with the late Dave Carter. Join us to enjoy this incredible show!

"One of the finest singers and musicians anywhere in folkdom." - Boston Globe

"A brilliant artist" - Joan Baez

A portion of the 2025 CC@F concert proceeds will support Red Cross Disaster Relief.

\$20 suggested donation, free for kids 18 and under.

Tickets are available online via the link below or by phone through the FCCEJ office.

Purchase online at <https://www.sevendaystickets.com/e/tracy-grammer>

Burlington Pride Parade 2025

On Sunday, September 7, 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!

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. Next session is September 11.

Josh Pallotta House Soda Drive

When: Now through the Fall

What: Soda with sugar

Where: Big Blue Bin in the Fellowship Hall

Why: Many veterans depend on alcohol to cope with anxiety or negative emotions. When they stop drinking, their brain may start looking for "other forms of stimulation". This is sometimes called a "replacement addiction,". Sugar, especially sucrose, the simplest form of sugar often found in sour candies and soda, is often a welcome substitute in these scenarios, because it triggers the release of dopamine and increases feelings of pleasure.

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, canned veggies, chunky soups, canned pasta, peanut butter, and cereal.

We are also in need of volunteers who can deliver to our clientele that are unable to visit the food pantry in person. Please contact the Church Office if you are interested and as always, thank you for your support of this meaningful and important ministry in our community!

Wednesday Night Searchers

On Wednesday September 10th, Searchers begins meeting again with the 5th season of *The Chosen*: a widely acclaimed dramatization of Jesus and his ministry. This season features Jesus in Jerusalem toward the end of his life when he took on the religious authorities, taught the disciples about the true discipleship, and shared the Last Supper. These experiences as reported in the gospels helped to shape our understanding of faith in significant ways. Everyone is welcome at this eight week [Sept 10 – Oct 29th] session. We meet from 7-9pm in Marvin Lounge.

Weekly Calendar: August 31—September 7

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<p><u>Sunday, August 31</u> 9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 10:30am: Youth Ministry Team—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>2:30pm: Hayes Family Gathering—Marvin Lounge</i></p>	<p><u>Monday, September 1</u> Labor Day—Church Office Closed All Day <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i></p>
<p><u>Tuesday, September 2</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> <i>5pm: BSA Troop 624 Leaders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:30pm: BSA Troop 624 District Meeting—Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Church Council—Marvin Lounge</p>	<p><u>Wednesday, September 3</u> <i>10am: 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 <i>BSA Troop 624 PLC—West Wing</i> <i>6:30pm: Eagle Scout BoR—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>7pm: BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i></p>
<p><u>Thursday, September 4</u> <i>8:30am: Essex Art League—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary</p>	<p><u>Friday, September 5</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 1:30pm: Bridge Group—Marvin Lounge</p>
<p><u>Saturday, September 6</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> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>	<p><u>Sunday, September 7</u> 9am: All-Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 10am: Craft Fest Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 12pm: Burlington Pride Parade</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Events in italics = Local Community Groups</i></p>

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/

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