



# 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)   **Website:** [www.fccej.org](http://www.fccej.org)



*First Service*

**The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**  
**Welcome Back Sunday**  
**September 14, 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).*

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

**Order of Worship**

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

The Deacon's Greeting ..... Judy McCullen  
*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 | <i>Day by Day</i> | K. Lee Scott |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|

Call to Worship.....Judy McCullen  
**Leader:** Welcome to the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction. Jesus welcomed everyone to his Way and so we do the same thing here in this sacred place. How could we do anything else!

**People:** **I don't come to church as much as I know I should.**

**Leader:** You are welcome here.

**People:** **I have behaviors and thoughts that are not always good.**

**Leader:** You are welcome here.

**People:** **I do not follow God's ways of love and justice very well.**

**Leader:** You are welcome here.

**People:** **I have done things in the past that were not good.**

**Leader:** You are welcome here.

Leader: I am leading worship and am a Deacon of the church but I am just as guilty as all of you in all of these ways.

People: **You are welcome here to lead and guide us, who better! Come, let us all seek to be better people and have the courage to follow in Jesus' way. Come, let us worship our God and Friend**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*Rejoice, You Pure in Heart*

# 55

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

*God Is Calling You, Just As You Are*

VB Camp Staff

**Responsive VB Camp Song**

*Children, Go Where I Send Thee* ☿

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")**

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response

*A Chorale*

Robert Schumann

New Testament Scripture Readings

Gospel Luke 15:1-10 [page 59]

Epistle I Timothy 1:12-17 [page 162]

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

Blessed Assurance Phoebe P. Knapp  
arr. Mark Hayes

Sermon

*The Key to Righteous Living*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *Sonata No. 6 in C Minor mvmt. 3* (excerpt)

Giovanni Pescetti

**\*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

*Divertimento in G Minor (Allegro)*

Francesco Durante

\*Please stand if you are able

- ♦ Sincere thanks to Bethany Blake and the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir for sharing their awesome 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](mailto:welcome@fccej.org) or call (802) 878-5745. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

|   |                            |  |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Friends & family of Nancy Allen<br>(Service is 9/20/25 at 11am<br>in the FCCEJ Sanctuary) | Gracie O'Malley and family | Everyone experiencing<br>uncertainty and fear<br>in their communities              |
| Victims of gun violence<br>and their families   | Janet Warden               | All those affected<br>by the violence in<br>Ukraine, Gaza, and<br>around the world |
| Mark Benton & Family  | Danair Williams            | Everyone that may be<br>privately suffering  |
| Rob Robinson  | Joe Shields                |  |
| Sylvia Nyhagen  | Heather Rogers             |  |
| Allysa Williams   | Sean Garvey                |  |
| Kathy & Mike Murray   | Josh Winslow               |  |
| Colleen Kelly   | Judy Moreau                |  |
|   | Carol Daigle               |  |
|   | Patty Giroux               |  |

*\* The flowers on the altar this morning are given by  
Diane & Michael Bottamini, in celebration of their 55 wedding anniversary. \**

## Altar Flowers

Flowers on the altar are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or celebrate a special day. We include a note in the bulletin about who donated the flowers and who/what they are honoring. Scan the QR code or use this link to sign up for the remaining Sundays in 2024:



## UPCOMING EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- ♦ Sunday, September 21: CC@F presents Tracy Grammer, 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary
- ♦ Sunday, September 28: Organ Concert, 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary
- ♦ Sunday, October 5: Mission & LIFT (Living In Faith Together) Sunday
- ♦ Sunday, October 26: Celebration Sunday  
Halloween Party, 11:30am at FCCEJ
- ♦ Saturday, November 8: Craft Fest, 9am to 3pm at FCCEJ
- ♦ Sunday, November 16: New Members Class, 11:30am in Marvin Lounge  
CC@F presents Diana Fanning, 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary

### **Scripture Study Group**

Scripture Study Group, led by Mary McHugh, will begin exploring the book of Revelation.

#### **Please note the adjustment to the schedule and location:**

The group will start on Friday, September 26 and meet each Friday through October 24. 1:30 to 3pm in West Wing. All are welcome—come to any or all sessions!

### **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!

### **Community Concerts at First**

CC@F presents Tracy Grammer this 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!

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

### **Wednesday Night Searchers**

On Wednesday evenings, Searchers are meeting to view the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup>] session. We meet from 7-9pm in Marvin Lounge.

### **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 October 9.

## Weekly Calendar: September 14—September 21

**\*Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections\***

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|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Sunday, September 14</u></b><br/> 8:30* &amp; 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/<br/> Streaming*<br/> 10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)<br/> 11:30am: Welcome Back BBQ—FCCEJ Grounds<br/> 1pm: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p>   | <p><b><u>Monday, September 15</u></b><br/> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall,<br/> Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room<br/> 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> Lunchtime Book Group—Marvin Lounge<br/> 7:30pm: <i>Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i></p>  |
| <p><b><u>Tuesday, September 16</u></b><br/> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom:<br/> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036">[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036]</a><br/> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop<br/> 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 3pm: Nominations Committee—Marvin Lounge<br/> 5pm: <i>Vermont State Math Group—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 7pm: CE—Marvin Lounge<br/> Communications—2nd Floor Program Room</p>                     | <p><b><u>Wednesday, September 17</u></b><br/> 8am: Food Bank Delivery—Fellowship Hall<br/> 10am: Missions Committee—Marvin Lounge<br/> <i>Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop<br/> 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary<br/> 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing<br/> 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge<br/> <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i></p> |
| <p><b><u>Thursday, September 18</u></b><br/> 11am: <i>Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i><br/> 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 12pm: Calcutta Committee—Marvin Lounge<br/> 6:15pm: <i>Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i><br/> 6:30pm: <i>Cub Scouts Pack 630—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary</p>   | <p><b><u>Friday, September 19</u></b><br/> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s<br/> 10am: <i>Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 1:30pm: Bridge Group—Marvin Lounge<br/> 7pm: <i>Burlington Amateur Radio Club—Marvin Lounge</i></p>   |
| <p><b><u>Saturday, September 20</u></b><br/> 8am: <i>Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i><br/> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing</i><br/> 8:30am: <i>Weight Loss Support —Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 10am: <i>Reiki 1 Class—West Wing</i><br/> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop<br/> 11am: Nancy Hall Memorial Service &amp; Reception—Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall<br/> 11:30am: <i>Autism Playgroup—Gym</i><br/> 1pm: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge</i></p> | <p><b><u>Sunday, September 21</u></b><br/> 8:30* &amp; 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/<br/> Streaming*<br/> 10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th)<br/> 11:30am: Craft Fest Committee—Marvin Lounge<br/> 1pm: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i><br/> 3pm: Community Concerts @ First—Sanctuary</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