



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



First Service

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 21, 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 Accepting and Serving All In the Spirit of Christ</i>

Order of Worship

Prelude *Andante Alexandre Guilmant* arr. George Blake

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 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 *Where the Spirit of the Lord Is* Stephen R. Adams

Call to Worship.....Judy McCullen
Leader: Welcome, we believe that our God is the great shaker and mover of the creation story. God spoke and brought order out of chaos. God partnered with humanity to care for the world.

People: Once the created order was in place with all its diversity and expansive nature; God declared everything very good. The foundation of all physical existence is goodness. Thank God!

Leader: Jesus came to the world to remind us that goodness is still the heart of God's story; goodness begets love, beauty, joy, hope, tenderness, mercy and forgiveness.

People: Jesus reflected God most clearly and his teachings return us to the foundational idea of goodness. Come, as followers of Jesus let us soak in God's goodness today as we worship the living God.

***Opening Hymn**

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

25

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, Deacon

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response

Kyrie

Russian Orthodox traditional music

***Hymn**

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

495

Scripture Readings

Old Testament	Torah	Genesis 1:26-29	[page 1]
New Testament	Gospel	Luke 10:38-40	[page 55]
	Epistle	I Timothy 2:1-15	[page 162]

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

I Will Call Upon the Lord

Michael O'Shields

Sermon

Discerning God's Presence

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Arietta

Grieg

***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**

Jesus Loves Me

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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

Solfegietto CPE

Bach

*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!

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.

Jane Piper	Janet Warden	Patty Giroux
Tracy Grammer & Family	Danair Williams	Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities
Friends & family of Nancy Allen	Joe Shields	All those affected by the violence in Ukraine, Gaza, and around the world
Mark Benton & Family	Heather Rogers	Everyone that may be privately suffering
Rob Robinson	Sean Garvey	
Sylvia Nyhagen	Josh Winslow	
Allysa Williams	Judy Moreau	
Kathy & Mike Murray	Victims of gun violence and their families	
Colleen Kelly	Carol Daigle	

*The flowers on the altar this morning are given by Lorinda Elliott
In honor of their 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 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—POSTPONED

The Tracy Grammer concert scheduled for today at is postponed due to an emergency within the artist's family. The new date of the concert is Sunday, January 11, 2026—3pm in the Sanctuary. If you purchased a ticket for the September date, it will be honored at the January concert. You may also request a refund. PLEASE NOTE: Refunds must be requested no later than September 25. We apologize for any inconvenience and ask that you keep Ms. Grammer and her family in your prayers. Thank you.

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop

The seasons are changing and the Shop is changing it's hours from Wednesday, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm to Thursday, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm. This change will take effect the first Thursday in October which is October 2nd. The October hours will be Tuesday, 10:00 - 1:00, Thursday, 3:00 - 6:00, Saturday, 10:00 - 1:00. The Shop will also be open on the first Sunday of the month, starting October 5th, from 11:30 to 12:30, for church members to drop off donations and shop.

Community To-Go BBQ

Sunday, October 5th, after the 10am service, the June 2026 Montana Service Trip is hosting a Community To-Go Barbecue! Each delicious meal will feature Rick Catering's famous chicken or pork barbecue sandwich, coleslaw, fruit salad, chips, a cookie, and a drink.
Suggested donation: \$15 per meal. Your support helps fuel our journey of service and connection. Weather permitting, we'll have tables set up on the lawn so you can enjoy your meal with friends and neighbors.

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 21—September 28

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<u>Sunday, September 21</u> 8:30 & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th) <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 3pm: Community Concerts @ First—Sanctuary	<u>Monday, September 22</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Stewardship Skit Rehearsal—Sanctuary <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i>
<u>Tuesday, September 23</u> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036] 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop 10:15am: Intermediate Tai Chi—Fellowship Hall <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 5:30pm: Finance Committee—Marvin Lounge 7pm: Stewardship Committee—Marvin Lounge Trustees Committee—2nd Floor Program Room	<u>Wednesday, September 24</u> <i>9:30am: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> <i>10am: 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 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i>
<u>Thursday, September 25</u> 8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Storage Rooms 9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting—Marvin Lounge <i>11am: Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge</i> 3pm: Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary	<u>Friday, September 26</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—West Wing <i>6:30pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall</i>
<u>Saturday, September 27</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 —Fellowship Hall</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>2pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i>	<u>Sunday, September 28</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming* 10:30am: Faith Formation (PreK-8th) 11:30am: Craft Fest Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 3pm: Organ Concert—Sanctuary <i>Events in italics = Local Community Groups</i>

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