



# 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**

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*First Service*

*A Welcoming Community      Accepting and Serving All  
In the Spirit of Christ*

Prelude	"Raindrop Prelude" Op. 28 No. 15	Frederick Chopin
An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements		Rev. Mark Mendes
	<i>No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome in this place.</i>	

Introit *O Lord, My God, You Are My Refuge* J.S. Bach/arr. Hal Hopson

**People:** Jesus' stories teach us how to understand not only the nature of God, but how to claim the Divine in our daily lives.

Leader: Jesus' way of teaching is easier to understand, but more challenging at the same time.

**People:** Finding God in the midst of life is what the faith is all about. Come, let us enter the fierce, fun, and fantabulous journey of faithful living. Come, let us listen and learn from the greatest teacher of all time.

**\*Opening Hymn**

*I Love to tell the Story*

# 522

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

*Hallelujah*

Abraham Maraire

**\*Hymn**

*O Jesus, I Have Promised*

# 493

Scripture Readings

Old Testament      Prophetic      Jeremiah 32:1-15      [page 570: narrative]

New Testament      Gospel      Luke 16:19-31      [page 61]

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

Sermon

*Discernment Lesson # 2*

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory      *Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho*       African-American Spiritual

**\*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

*Every Time I Feel the Spirit* ✨

African-American Spiritual

\*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.

Jane Piper  
Tracy Grammer & Family  
Friends & family of Nancy  
Allen  
Mark Benton & Family  
Rob Robinson  
Sylvia Nyhagen  
Allysa Williams  
Kathy & Mike Murray  
Colleen Kelly

Janet Warden  
Danair Williams  
Joe Shields  
Heather Rogers  
Sean Garvey  
Josh Winslow  
Judy Moreau & Family  
Victims of gun violence  
and their families  
Carol Daigle

Patty Giroux  
Everyone experiencing  
uncertainty and fear  
in their communities  
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 in memory of Diana Higgins,  
from her family.***

### **UPCOMING EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

- ◆ Sunday, September 28: Organ Concert, 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary  
Don't miss this rare opportunity to enjoy the talents numerous local organists in one church, on one day! Come to the Organ Concert celebrating the 40th anniversary of our organ! Featured organists include Eun Hee Park, Evan Allen, Wayne Schneider, Catherine McMaster, Bethany Blake and Marie Johnson.
- ◆ Sunday, October 5: Mission & LIFT (Living In Faith Together) Sunday  
Community BBQ in support of the 2026 Montana Service Trip
- ◆ Sunday, October 19: Stewardship Skit in Worship, both services
- ◆ Thursday, October 23: Dismas House Volunteer Appreciation Dinner,  
5pm at Holy Family Parish Hall—RSVP by October 8
- ◆ Sunday, October 26: Celebration Sunday / Bible Sunday
- ◆ Halloween Party, 11:30am at FCCEJ  
Craft Fest Sign Ups in Fellowship Hall
- ◆ Saturday, November 1: FCCEJ Grounds Spruce Up, 9am—12pm
- ◆ 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!

### **Craft Fest—Saturday, November 8 from 9am to 3pm**

Time to start thinking about our big Craft Fest event coming up in November and how you can help. There are ample opportunities for everyone!

Sign-up sheets will be available in Fellowship Hall on October 19th, October 26th, and November 2nd after both services. The table will have sign-ups for sweet shoppe, luncheon items, silent auction and volunteering the day of the event. All donations for silent auction and non-food items for the luncheon will be accepted on these Sundays.

### **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.

### **Service Trip Community 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.

### **Giving = Healthy Church**

Our 2026 Stewardship Campaign - Nutrition = Healthy Body; Giving = Healthy Church - will kick off on Sunday, October 19 at both services with the skit, *"It's a Blunderful Life."*

Men At First will join the cast to lead us all in song at the end.

Come watch our original comedy, written by Emily Guziak, and see what we think would happen if our church coffers suffered. Laugh and sing with us as we enter into this time of giving with curiosity and generosity.

### **Committee Fair – October 19**

Come join us in Fellowship Hall on **October 19, between services and after the second service**, to meet committee members, learn what they do, and discover how you can share your gifts. Coffee, conversation, and plenty of ways to get involved await!

### **Called to Care Meeting**

Check in Time! How are things going? Questions? What's coming up? (NEWS)

For members and anyone interested in being part of our Visitation Ministry.

Monday, October 13 from 10-11:30am in Marvin Lounge.

### **Dismas Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**

Vermont Dismas is excited to invite all dedicated Dismas volunteers to a special evening to celebrate you! As a heartfelt thank you for your time, talent, and commitment, Dismas is hosting a free spaghetti dinner. This is our way of expressing gratitude for everything you do to make our community stronger and brighter.

Dismas volunteers from First Congregational Church of Essex Junction and Holy Family, St. Lawrence and St. Pious churches are invited to the event, as well as people interested in becoming a volunteer.

Event Details:

- Date: Thursday, October 23
- Time: 56:30pm
- Location: Holy Family Parish Hall, 30 Lincoln St.
- Cost: Free for all volunteers/potential volunteers

The Burlington and Winooski Houses provide housing and meals and support services for the former prisoners transitioning to society. Volunteers prepare meals, deliver them and dine in community with the residents.

Expect a delicious meal, good company, and a chance to connect with fellow volunteers and Dismas staff and learn more about Dismas.

If possible, please RSVP by October 8 ([guziakemily335@gmail.com](mailto:guziakemily335@gmail.com)) to help us with food preparation. Bring your appetite and your inspiring spirit! Thank you for making a difference.

## Weekly Calendar: September 28—October 5

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

<b><u>Sunday, September 28</u></b> 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	<b><u>Monday, September 29</u></b> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 7:30pm: <i>Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i>
<b><u>Tuesday, September 30</u></b> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036">[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036]</a> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop 10:15am: Intermediate Tai Chi—Fellowship Hall <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>	<b><u>Wednesday, October 1</u></b> <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 Giving Tree Planning—Conference Room 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing <i>BSA Troop 624 PLC—West Wing</i> 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i>
<b><u>Thursday, October 2</u></b> <i>8:30am: Essex Art League—Fellowship Hall</i> 9am: Piano Tuning—Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall <i>11am: Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> <i>6:30pm: Cub Scouts Pack 630 Den Meetings—</i> <i>Fellowship Hall, West Wing, Classrooms</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary	<b><u>Friday, October 3</u></b> 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 Bridge Group—Marvin Lounge
<b><u>Saturday, October 4</u></b> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary,</i> <i>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>GMKCS—Gym, 3rd Floor, Kitchen, West Wing</i>	<b><u>Sunday, October 5</u></b> 10am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming* 10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th) <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>   <i>Events in italics = Local Community Groups</i>