



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
October 19, 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 10:15am 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

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 Allison VanSteensburg
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

Call to Worship.....Allison VanSteensburg
Leader: Our Creator God gives us a world with enough rich arable land to provide food for all of earth's inhabitants. Our Creator gives us minds to understand the seasons and cycles of the earth and the knowledge of how best to plant and grow. Our God has blessed us with much.
People: Thank you, God, for hearts, and hands, and voices.
Leader: God plants a deep desire in our very being to connect with others in friendship, love, civic society and community. God's very being models a tri-fold community.
People: Thank you, God, for hearts, and hands, and voices.
Leader: Come, let us worship the Living God in our midst .

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

Elizabeth O'Beirne,
Children's Ministries Coordinator

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mendes

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response by Men At First

New Testament Scripture Readings

Gospel Luke 17:11-19 [page 62]

Historical Acts 5:1-11 [page 93]

Special Music by Men At First

A Stewardship Drama

It's a Blunderful Life

This year's stewardship skit was written and directed by Emily Guziak and its dramatic troop includes Jen Kelly, Lorrie Driscoll, Cathy Shearer, Judy Pomainville, Bill Bickford Jr., Beth Volker, Alex John, and Heather, Am, and Tristan Stein. Kathryn Brennan assisted with directing, stage managing, and stepping in as understudy.

Stewardship Witness by Bob Driver

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Musical Offering by Men At First

***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

*Please stand if you are able

- ♦ Sincere thanks to Men At First, under the direction of Bill Bickford, and special guest artist Mindy Bickford, 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.

Family and friends of
Judy Moreau
Jane Piper
Gracie O'Malley & Family
Tracy Grammer & Family
Friends & family of
Nancy Allen
Mark Benton & Family
Rob Robinson
Allysa Williams

Kathy & Mike Murray
Colleen Kelly and Family
Danair Williams
Joe Shields
Heather Rogers
Sean Garvey
Josh Winslow
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 given by Carl & Alison Wermer
In honor of their 43rd anniversary. ***

Kick off our 2026 Stewardship Campaign with “It’s a Blunderful Life.”

Laugh and sing with us as we enter into this time of giving with comedy, curiosity, and generosity.

Cast and Crew

Rev. Mark Mendes: Bill Bickford Jr.
Hopeful, but increasingly unhinged

Stewardship Chair, Kathryn Brennan: Cathy Shearer
Enthusiastic but exasperated

Council President, Judy Larrabee Pomainville: Judy LP
Hilariously obsessed with rules

Parishioner One: Lorrie Driscoll
Hopeful realist

Parishioner Two: Heather Stein
Slightly bitter, tells it like it is

Child One: Am Stein
Precocious

Child Two: Tristan Stein
Even more precocious

Choir member: Jen Kelly
Grieving over loss of music

Beth the Angel: Beth Volker
Sparkly and sassy guardian angel

Narrator: Guy Noir
Ever comical

Music: Men At First

Director & Writer: Emily Guziak

Producer & Understudy: Kathryn Brennan

Scene Breakdown

SCENE ONE: “No Committee, No Cry (Actually, Lots of Crying)”
Setting: Church office, July 2025

SCENE TWO: “Sunday Service: Survivor Edition”
Setting: Church sanctuary, September 2026 (14 months later)

SCENE THREE: “The Ghost of Outreach Past”
Setting: Coffee shop, March 2027

SCENE FOUR: “Rock Bottom... Literally, No Cushions Left”
Setting: Church sanctuary, October 2027

UPCOMING EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- ◆ Sunday, October 19: Committee Fair & Craft Fest Sign Ups in Fellowship Hall
- ◆ Thursday, October 23: Dismas House Volunteer Appreciation Dinner,
5pm at Holy Family Parish Hall
- ◆ Sunday, October 26: Celebration Sunday / Bible Sunday
Nearly New Set Up, 1-3pm in the Gym
- ◆ Saturday, November 1: FCCEJ Grounds Spruce Up, 9am—12pm
- ◆ Sunday, November 2: Congregational Meeting, 11:15am in the Sanctuary
Andrea Gagner-Murphy, Josh Palotta House ED in Fellowship Hall
- ◆ 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

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 need volunteers! The pantry has two distribution days each month and we're looking for people to help our guests navigate through the process. We also need people that will deliver to our clientele who are unable to visit the food pantry in person. The time commitment isn't extensive, but the rewards to your spirit definitely are! Please contact the Church Office if you are interested and thank you for your support of this important ministry in our community!

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

The Craft Fest is quickly approaching, and we need volunteers—there are ample opportunities for everyone! Sign up sheets will be available in Fellowship Hall on October 19 & 26, and November 2 after worship. The table will have sign ups to make treats for the sweet shoppe and luncheon, and donate a basket to the silent auction. You can also donate time to be a greeter, take a shift in nearly new and help in the kitchen. All donations for silent auction, non-food items for the luncheon and any nearly new items will be accepted these Sundays. Thank you!

Craft Fest Luncheon Needs

The Craft Fest Luncheon Team is looking for folks who love to cook! We are in need of the following: Butternut squash soup, meat & vegetarian chili, and mac-n-cheese.

We also need the following items: Shredded Cheddar Cheese, Chips, Cream, Ice, Hotdog Rolls, Coke/orange soda/Sprite, Bottled water, Potato Chips/Doritos, Please stop by our table after the church services on October 19 to sign up OR contact Janne Giles to make or donate for any of the above food items at giles.janne52@gmail.com.

Committee Fair – October 19

Come join us in Fellowship Hall **today after each 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!

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 FCCEJ and Holy Family, St. Lawrence, and St. Pious are invited, as well as people interested in volunteering.

Event Details:

- Date: Thursday, October 23
- Time: 5-6:30pm
- 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 former prisoners transitioning to society. Volunteers prepare meals, deliver them, and dine with the residents. Expect a delicious meal, good company, and a chance to connect with fellow volunteers and Dismas staff and learn more about the organization.

Aurora Chamber Singers with Bethany Blake

Bethany Blake is playing organ & piano for the Aurora Chamber Singers concert at College Street Congregational Church in Burlington, Sunday, Nov. 9, at 4pm. The organ console was replaced this month, so it is like a new instrument! Also, acoustics in this sister church are outstanding! The concert is based on early and modern settings of the same sacred texts, and it is the choir's debut with director Cameron Brownell. Guest cellist Frances Rowell is also performing a piece with Bethany. Tickets are available online at <https://sevendaystickets.com/e/through-a-glass-darkly/tickets> or at the door. Hope to see you there!

“Drop-In” Choir

Come one, come all, to our “Drop-in Sundays” choir days on the first Sunday of each month, when there is only one worship service at 10 am. Please warm up with the choir at 9:30 am, and then join us during the service as we praise God through music! The sheet music will be provided at those warmups, and can also be requested ahead of time if you wish. Thank you!

Upcoming “Drop-in” dates: Nov. 2 and Nov. 30

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 November 13.

Weekly Calendar: October 19—October 26

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<u>Sunday, October 19</u> 8:30 & 10:15am: All Family Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 11:15am: Committee Fair—Fellowship Hall 11:30am: Craft Fest Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>	<u>Monday, October 20</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> Lunchtime Book Group—Marvin Lounge 6pm: Bell Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i>
<u>Tuesday, October 21</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> 7pm: CE—Marvin Lounge Communications—2nd Floor Program Room	<u>Wednesday, October 22</u> <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym
<u>Thursday, October 23</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 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary	<u>Friday, October 24</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>
<u>Saturday, October 25</u> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing, Kitchen, Fellowship Hall</i> 8:30am: Weight Loss Support —Marvin Lounge 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> GMKCS—Gym, 3rd Floor, Kitchen, West Wing	<u>Sunday, October 26</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming* <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>

Events in italics = Local Community Groups