



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



Second Service

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Stewardship Celebration Sunday
October 26, 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</i>	<i>Accepting and Serving All</i>
<i>In the Spirit of Christ</i>	

Order of Worship

Prelude	Sonata Op. 2 No. 1, excerpt from Mvt. 4	Beethoven
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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>	

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	Give Thanks	Henry Smith, arr. Ken Barker
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Call to Worship.....Allison VanSteensburg
Leader: Our Creator and creative God offered order to a universe filled with chaos. As Divine words erupted with intention, substance and beauty spewed into grace filled awe.

People: Thank you, Creator God, for unimagined diversity, expansive magnificence, delicate expressions, and a vast unending universe.

Leader: Jesus offered us both power and vulnerability in a mixture that continues to teach all of us with true love. With compassion for the poor, challenge to the self-righteous, and mercy to all, Christ offers us a way to live with meaning, joy and hope.

People: Thank you, Savior, for always welcoming us home as precious children with a warm embrace, plenty of food, a ring for our finger, and a comfortable bed.

Leader: The Spirit continues to infuse our hearts and minds with the gift of discernment that we might know God and follow in Christ’s way. Come, let us be thankful for the many ways God comes into our lives.

***Opening Hymn** *God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens* #556

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 *Reformation and the Bible* Rev. Mark Mendes
Elizabeth O’Beirne

Pastoral Prayer
Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other
A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response *Waltz No. 3 in G Sharp Minor Op. 39*  Brahms

***Hymn** *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* #126

Old Testament Reading Deuteronomy 14:22-29 [page 133]

New Testament Readings

Gospel Luke 18:9-14 [page 62]

Epistle Philippians 4:10-20 [page 154]

Special Music *Twelve Gates into the City* Trad. Spiritual
arr. Larry Shackley

Sermon *The Draw of Money* Rev. Mendes

Giving Our Gifts to the Lord

Our minister will invite everyone to bring their 2026 pledge cards forward to the altar and place it in one of the two wicker baskets AND / OR place your weekly gift into the offering plate. Together, everyone's giving is responsible for the many and varied ministries of FCCEJ.

Offertory

Waltz No. 2 in E Major Op. 39

Brahms

Prayer of Dedication

***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**

Great is Your Faithfulness

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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

***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@fcej.org or call (802) 878-5745. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

Judy Allen
Jane Piper
Gracie O'Malley & 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 Julie Leach
In honor of Willis Real.*

WARNING FOR A SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ESSEX JUNCTION

Sunday, November 2, 2025 - 11:15 A.M.

To the members of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction,

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST:

A Special Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction will be held in the Sanctuary of the Church on Sunday, November 2, 2025 at 11:15am to act upon the following business:

Article I: To vote upon following the Succession Model for the replacement of our retiring Senior Pastor.

On behalf of the Church,
Brenda Dawson, Church Clerk

UPCOMING EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- ◆ Sunday, October 26: Celebration Sunday / Bible Sunday
The Stewardship committee welcomes you to a special coffee hour time between services today. Come to Fellowship Hall to say hello and enjoy some delicious treats!
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
- ◆ Sunday, November 23: Hanging the Greens, after 2nd service in the 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

Thanks to all who signed up to bring in food and supplies for the Craft Fest Luncheon. Much appreciated! There are still slots open for butternut squash soup (vegetarian) and vegetarian chili. Please stop by our table after the church services on October 26th to sign up OR contact Janne Giles to make or donate for any of the above food items at giles.janne52@gmail.com.

Community Concerts @ First presents Diana Fanning

Sunday, November 16 at 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary

Tickets are \$20 per adult—under 12 is free—and available online at:

www.sevendaystickets.com/e/diana-fanning-piano/tickets

Concert proceeds benefit Red Cross Disaster Relief and FCCEJ

Diana Fanning has toured extensively as a solo performer and chamber musician throughout the U.S. and in England, France, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, the Czech Republic, Canada and Germany. In recent years she has performed at the Schloss Leopoldskron (“Sound of Music” castle) in Salzburg, and in Prague at the invitation of the International Dvorak Society.

As a chamber musician, Ms. Fanning has been a guest artist with the Takacs, the Schumann, the Jupiter and the Alexander String Quartets, and with ensembles from Point Counterpoint Music Camp, which she owned and directed for ten years with her husband Emory Fanning. As a member of the Davydov-Fanning Duo with the outstanding cellist Dieuwke Davydov, she has performed widely in the U.S., completed eight concert tours of Europe, and recorded for Radio Netherlands. Ms. Fanning is currently an Affiliate Artist at Middlebury College. We are very fortunate to be able to bring such a talented and renowned performer to our community—we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity!

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 26—November 2

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

<u>Sunday, October 26</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary/ Streaming* <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>	<u>Monday, October 27</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room 11:30am: <i>Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 6pm: Bell Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary 7:30pm: <i>Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i>
<u>Tuesday, October 28</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—Marvin Lounge Trustees—2nd Floor Program Room HRC—Conference Room	<u>Wednesday, October 29</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 <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall, Gym</i>
<u>Thursday, October 30</u> <i>10:30am: Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>6:15pm: Music Rehearsal—Sanctuary</i> 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary	<u>Friday, October 31</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>
<u>Saturday, November 1</u> <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 —Marvin Lounge</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> GMKCS—Gym, 3rd Floor, Kitchen, West Wing	<u>Sunday, November 2</u> 10am: Worship—Sanctuary/Streaming 11:15am: FCCEJ Congregational Meeting— Sanctuary 11:30am: Craft Fest Committee—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i>

Events in italics = Local Community Groups