



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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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
The First Sunday After Epiphany
January 11, 2026

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	Choeur Celeste from Suite on Sixteenth Century Hymn Tunes	George McKay
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An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.*

The Deacon's GreetingDeacon 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	Barcarolle from Tales of Hoffmann	Jacques Offenbach
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Call to Worship.....Deacon Judy McCullen
Leader: You are welcome here for God shows no partiality. God doesn't have favorites but welcomes everyone into a divine relationship.
People: **God wants to have a relationship with me!**
Leader: The Old Testament God welcomed all the nations and peoples to the mountain of God no matter who they were or where they were on their spiritual journeys.
People: **God wants a relationship with *them*!**
Leader: Jesus and the Holy Spirit show no partiality either; they welcomed Samaritans and prostitutes, gentiles and the diseased, Ethiopian eunuchs and judgmental persecutors .
People: **Wow, Jesus really wants a relationship with everyone; that is welcome news, crazy and problematic, but totally cool. Thanks, God!**

A Reading About Jesus for Epiphany

*An Epiphany Hymn

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star
O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to they perfect light.
Born a king on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him a again
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.
O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to they perfect light.
Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies
O, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to they perfect light.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation and 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.

The Children's Message

The Congregation Sings as the Children Come Forward

Jesus loves the little children, all God's children of the world.
Whether young or old or new, Jesus loves us through and through,
Teaching us to love all creatures in the world.

The Congregation Sings as the Children Transition to Faith Formation* (PreK-8th)

God has made us all a rainbow. Colors dancing 'round and 'round.
In our hair and skin and eyes, big and little, every size,
God has made us all a rainbow dancing 'round.

[*10:15 Service]

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

A Musical Response

Sarabande in G Minor

G. F. Handel

Anthem

Gigue in G Minor

G. F. Handel

New Testament Gospel Readings

Gospel

Matthew 3:13-17

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Historical

Acts 10:34-48

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***Hymn**

Arise, Your Light Has Come

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Sermon

Really, God Shows No Partiality?

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

The Word

Lennon/McCartney

***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**

I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

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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

Dance of Love

arr. Carol Landis

***Please stand if you are able**

♦ A big thank you to Bethany Blake for providing the beautiful music this morning!

OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

If you desire prayers for yourself or a loved one; or if you wish for a call from a pastor,

Audrey MacGibbon	Allysa Williams	Carol Daigle
Elaine Tornello	Kathy & Mike Murray	Patty Giroux
Patty Geiger	Colleen Kelly and Family	Everyone experiencing
Thomas Cencer	Joe Shields	uncertainty and fear
Tatyana Szymanski	Heather Rogers	in their communities
Shashannah	Sean Garvey	All those affected by the
Jane Piper	Josh Winslow	violence around the world
Gracie O'Malley & Family	Victims of gun violence	Everyone that may be
Rob Robinson	and their families	privately suffering

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. After the last worship service, you may take your flowers home or have them delivered to a homebound member. Scan the QR code or use this link to sign up for Sundays in 2026: www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-53196874-altar#/



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Tracy Grammer Concert:** TODAY, Sunday, January 11—3pm in the Sanctuary
- **FCCEJ Annual Meeting:** Sunday, February 1—11:15am in the Sanctuary & on Zoom
- **Chili Grab-N-Go:** Sunday, February 8—After each service in the Fellowship Hall
- **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Tuesday, February 17—5:30 to 7pm in the Fellowship Hall
- **Daylight Saving Time Begins:** Sunday, March 8—Spring Forward or be late to church!
- **Cabin Fever Calcutta:** Saturday, March 14—5pm at Catamount Country Club

Community Concerts @ First

The CC@F presents Tracy Grammer on Sunday, January 11 at 3pm in the FCCEJ 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!

"One of the finest singers and musicians anywhere in folkdom." - Boston Globe

"A brilliant artist" - Joan Baez

\$20 suggested donation, children 12 and under are free.

A portion of the concert proceeds will support Red Cross Disaster Relief. Tickets are available online via the link below or by phone through the FCCEJ office.

www.sevendaystickets.com/e/tracy-grammer.

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 February 12.

Heavenly Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is looking to replenish their supplies of canned fruit, baked beans, ready-made pasta (Spaghetti-O's, etc.) and drip coffee (regular and decaf). Donations may be dropped off at the parking lot and office entrances of the church. Our next distribution day is tomorrow, January 12 from 5:30-7:30.

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!

Grab 'n Go Chili - Sunday, February 8th after each service

Please support the Montana Service Trip to the Blackfeet Reservation this June. Our team is hosting a Grab 'n Go Chili fundraiser on Sunday, February 8th. The suggested donation is \$20 for the purchase of a quart of chili and 4 sides of cornbread. Pre-orders are encouraged via Sign Up Genius or by contacting Betsy Weischedel at eweischedel@gmail.com.



Early Bird Calcutta Tickets

Early Bird tickets are now available for our 9th Cabin Fever Calcutta to be held on Saturday, March 14, 2026 at the Catamount Country Club. Each \$150 ticket includes a buffet dinner for two plus one Calcutta ball number. Those purchasing tickets prior to January 18th are entered into a drawing, to be held at the Calcutta, for a \$100 cash prize.

Letters to those who joined us last year were mailed with information about how to purchase a ticket. Starting in January, there will be a table in Fellowship Hall where tickets can be purchased. Proceeds from this event support our Intergenerational Service Trips. For more information, please contact Sharon Dettenrieder at Sharon.dettenrieder@gmail.com.

Drop-In Choir

Come one, come all, to our “Drop-in Sundays” choir day on February 1, when there is only one worship service at 10 am. Please warm up with the choir at 9:30am, and then join us during the service as we praise God through music! The sheet music will be provided at the warmup, and can also be requested ahead of time if you wish. Thank you!

Stay Connected!

Our weekly EConnection contains timely information about the FCCEJ faith community including children/youth happenings, special events, links to online bulletins and worship services, and our current calendar.

Our monthly newsletter “SPIRIT@FIRST” is available by “snail mail” and email, as well as posted on our website.

You may provide your contact information via the Friendship Pad and indicate which communications you are interested in receiving. We promise not to overwhelm your inbox.

Weekly Calendar: January 11—January 18

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, January 11

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming*
 11:30am: Youth Group—Youth Room, Kitchen
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 3pm: Community Concerts @ First presents Tracy Grammer—Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, January 13

8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom: [<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036>]
 10:15am: Intermediate Tai Chi—Fellowship Hall
 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
6pm: Cub Scout Den Mtg—2nd Floor Program Room
 7pm: Deacons—Marvin Lounge

Thursday, January 15

9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting—Marvin Lounge
11am: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 12pm: Calcutta Team—Marvin Lounge
 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
Cub Scout Pack 630—Fellowship Hall
 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary
 Pastoral Search Committee—Marvin Lounge

Saturday, January 17

8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge
The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing
8:30am: Weight Loss Support —Marvin Lounge
 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Monday, January 12

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 1pm: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
 5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary
7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, January 14

10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary
 6pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing
 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge
 BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 16

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's Deli
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 1:30pm: Bridge Group—Marvin Lounge

Sunday, January 18

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming*
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups