



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 Second Sunday After Epiphany
January 18, 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

An Extravagant Welcome and AnnouncementsRev. Mark Mendes
*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey
you are welcome in this place.*

The Deacon's GreetingDeacon Bob Driver
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.....Deacon Bob Driver
Leader: God ordered the world in some beautiful ways with seasons and cycles, all sorts of creatures great and small, stars that inspire and an infinity found in the magnified depth of a flower.

People: **You make my heart sing, God!**

Leader: God offers humanity all the best, from strawberries to coconuts, from mercy to love, from ecstatic pleasure to caring friendship, from intellectual pursuits to physical feats, from forgiveness to hope.

People: **You make my heart sing, God!**

Leader: God inspires us to build a kingdom of justice and peace, of inclusion and acceptance, of work and rest, of purpose and meaning, of abundance for all and unadulterated joy.

People: You make my heart sing, God!

Leader: Come, let us offer our praise to our God, Friend, Hero and Leader.

An Epiphany Reading About Jesus

***Opening Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

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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

Elizabeth O'Beirne

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

A Musical Response

Sehnsucht

Halfdan Kjerulf

***Hymn**

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know

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Scripture Readings

Old Testament Psalter

Psalms 40:1-11

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New Testament Gospel

John 2:1-12

[page 71]

Anthem

What Gift Can We Bring

Jane Marshall

Sermon

Faith in Jesus Begins with This...

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

***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**

Rejoice, You Pure in Heart

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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**

- ♦ A big thank you to Bethany Blake and the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir, for providing the awesome 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, please contact welcome@fccej.org or call (802) 878-5745. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

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

- **FCCEJ Annual Meeting:** Sunday, February 1—11:15am in the Sanctuary & on Zoom
- **Chili Grab-N-Go:** Sunday, February 8—After each service in Fellowship Hall
- **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Tuesday, February 17—5:30 to 7pm in Fellowship Hall
- **Ash Wednesday Service:** Wednesday, February 18—7pm in the Sanctuary
- **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

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.

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 Thursday, January 22 from 3pm to 6pm.

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!

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.

Through the month of 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.

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.



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 10am. 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!

WARNING FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ESSEX JUNCTION

Sunday, February 1st, 2026
11:15 A.M.

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

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST:

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction will be in the Sanctuary and via Zoom (using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82433264153> on Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 11:15 A.M. to act upon the following business:

- Article I: To hear and act upon the reports of the Church Officers, Committees and Recognized Groups of the Church.
- Article II: To act and vote upon the proposed budget for 2026.
- Article III: To act and vote upon the proposed by-laws revision.
- Article IV: To elect all church officers and committees required by the by-laws of the Church and others as may be necessary.
- Article V: To authorize the Finance Committee to borrow money and sign notes pledging the credit of the Church, if needed, to meet the current expenses of the Church.
- Article VI: To transact any other business which may properly be brought before this Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the Church,

Brenda Dawson, Church Clerk

Weekly Calendar: January 18—January 25

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, January 18

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

Tuesday, January 20

8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom:
[\[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036\]](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
 7pm: CE—Marvin Lounge
 Communications—2nd Floor Program Room

Thursday, January 22

8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Storage Rooms
 9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting—Marvin Lounge
10am: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge
 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
 Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary
5:30pm: Reiki Share—Marvin Lounge
6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
 7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary

Saturday, January 24

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 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Office Closed

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
 11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*
 Lunchtime Book Group—Marvin Lounge
7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge

Wednesday, January 21

8am: Food Bank Delivery—Fellowship Hall
 10am: Missions Committee—Marvin Lounge
Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary
 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge
 BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 23

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's Deli
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
 1:30pm: Bible Study—Marvin Lounge
6:30pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall

Sunday, January 25

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming*
 11:30am: Youth Group—Youth Room, Kitchen
 Confirmation—Marvin Lounge
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Events in italics = Local Community Groups