



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 Third Sunday After Epiphany
January 25, 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).

A Welcoming Community

Accepting and Serving All

In the Spirit of Christ

Order of Worship

Prelude *Piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 13 "Pathétique" II. Adagio cantabile.* Beethoven

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 *Berceuse* [excerpt] Charles Gounod

Call to Worship.....Deacon Judy McCullen

Leader: Followers of Jesus saw his footprints in the ancient prophetic texts that brought hope and light to a people who walked in darkness.

People: Thank you, God, for allowing Christ Spirit to guide your people long before he appeared on earth. From the creation to the kings from the prophets to the priests; Jesus has guided humanity.

Leader: Then Jesus came to earth to correct and clarify the teachings and understandings of God that humanity twisted to their own benefit. Every place he went, Jesus taught and healed the people and turned them to God.

People: Thank you, God, for sending your son to live among us, experiencing and personally understanding what it means to be a human being.

Leader: Christ’s Spirit continues to guard and guide all of us as we figure out the meaning and purpose of life. May we be enriched beyond measure!

Opening Epiphany Reading About Jesus

*Opening Hymn

Crown with Your Richest Crowns

301

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

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

A Musical Response

Danse Lente [excerpt]

César Franck

*Hymn

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

42

Scripture Readings

Old Testament	Prophetic	Isaiah 9:1-4	[page 494]
New Testament	Gospel	Matthew 4:12-25	[page 3]
	Epistle	I Corinthians 1:1-9	[page 127]

Anthem

What Gift Can We Bring

Jane Marshall

Sermon

And so it Begins...

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Interlude

César Franck

*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

Waltz in E Flat Major

Frédéric Chopin

***Please stand if you are able**

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

Elizabeth Stone
Judy Kinnear
Audrey MacGibbon
Elaine Tornello
Patty Geiger
Thomas Cencer
Tatyana Szymanski
Shashannah
Jane Piper

Gracie O'Malley & Family
Rob Robinson
Colleen Kelly and Family
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 around the world
Everyone that may be
privately suffering

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **FCCEJ Annual Meeting:** Sunday, February 1—11:15am in the Sanctuary & on Zoom
- **Free Dinner for Young Families:** Friday, February 6—5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall
- **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 on our website. Please share your contact information via the Friendship Pad and indicate which communications you are interested in receiving.

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.

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!

Calcutta Tickets

Check out the Intergenerational Service Team table in Fellowship Hall where you can chat with a Team Member to learn more about their June trip to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Tickets for the 9th Cabin Fever Calcutta, to be held on Saturday, March 14th at the Catamount Country Club, support this service trip. Each \$150 ticket includes a buffet dinner for two plus one Calcutta ball number. 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!

Free Dinner for Young Families

On the first Friday of each month, we are hosting a free dinner for families of elementary-age children. No agenda, no program—come and eat and visit with other families. Next dinner is Friday, February 6 from 5:30 to 7 in the Fellowship Hall.

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 25—February 1

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, January 25

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

Monday, January 26

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*
5pm: Thrift Shop Advisory Board—Marvin Lounge
6pm: Pastoral Search Committee—2nd Floor Program Room
7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge

Tuesday, January 27

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
5:30pm: Finance—Marvin Lounge
7pm: Stewardship—Marvin Lounge
Trustees—2nd Floor Program Room

Wednesday, January 28

10am: 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

Thursday, January 29

11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5:30pm: Reiki Share—Marvin Lounge
6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary

Friday, January 30

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's Deli
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Saturday, January 31

8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge
The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing
8:30am: Weight Loss Support —Marvin Lounge
9:30am: Craft Group—Marvin Lounge
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall

Sunday, February 1

10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
11:15am: FCCEJ Annual Meeting—Sanctuary & Zoom
12:30pm: Soup Luncheon—Fellowship Hall
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge

Events in italics = Local Community Groups