



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 of Easter
April 19, 2026

The first Sunday of each month we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Typically we have a single 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).

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| <i>A Welcoming Community</i> | <i>Accepting and Serving All</i> |
| <i>In the Spirit of Christ</i> | |

Order of Worship

Prelude *Sonatina in C Major Movement 1* Theodore Kirchner

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 Greeting.....Emily Guziak
Our Deacon will welcome everyone to our community of faith; ask if anyone has special joys to share, 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 *The Servant Song* Richard Gillard

Call to Worship

Leader: Jesus came to the earth and taught us how to live meaningful lives. His teachings echo throughout our world and in our hearts still.

People: We still love to hear about Jesus and the stories he told. We read the bible at home, and listen to his word in church, and sometimes even spend time studying the word.

Leader: Jesus experienced the betrayal of his friends, the oppression from the Roman Empire, intense suffering and ultimately death. All seemed lost.

People: Even with resurrection hope, life can be difficult: friends can desert us, finances can be challenging, families can be dysfunctional and governments can lose sight of caring for their people.

Leader: Jesus experienced the joy and victory of resurrection.

People: And yet life is good. Love abounds all around us. The earth is bursting with color and life. Food tastes delicious. Friends and families offer nurture and support.

Leader: Jesus' life reflects our own. He lived, died and came back to life to live into the future. And so will we. Come, let us rejoice and be glad that our God meets us in the midst of life.

***Opening Hymn**

I'll Fly Away

595

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.

The Children's Message

New Testament Scripture Readings

Epistle I Peter 1:13-25 Peter's Advice on Holiness Page 182

Gospel Luke 24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus Page 68

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response *In The Garden* [adapted]

I pray in the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;

And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

And he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own.

And the joy we share as we tarry there, all others can surely know.

I pray for my loved ones so dear, like the lilies, God's care is so tender;

And the voice I hear, caring for my dears, the Son of God discloses.

And he walks with them & he talks with them & he tells them he is their own

And the joy they share as they tarry there, all others can surely know.

I shift to the world and her folk, who need God's guidance so dearly,

And the love God shares, for all in despair, the Son of God discloses,

And he walks with us and he talks with us and he tells us we are his own.

And the joy we share as we tarry there, all others can surely know.

Sanctuary Choir Anthem

a joyful alleluia

Gordon Young

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *Glockengeläut (Bell Ringing)* (excerpt)

Edward Grieg

***Doxology**

The Day of Resurrection

245

**Now let the heavens be joyful, let earth its songs begin,
The whole world keep high triumph and all that is there in;
Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend,
For Christ again has risen, our joy that knows no end.**

***Hymn**

Let Us Tongues and Talents Employ

347

***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.**

***Please stand if you are able**

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Bethany Blake and the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir for sharing their amazing musical talents with us 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, you may use the Friendship Pads, email welcome@fccej.org, or call (802) 878-5745. Unless otherwise specified, prayer requests will be printed in the bulletin for a month.

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| Family & Friends of Bill Bickford Sr. Mike Allen Sandi Miller | Bill Bickford Jr. Elizabeth O'Beirne & Family Joe Shields Jeffrey Basiliere Elizabeth Stone Patty Geiger Thomas Cencer Tatyana Szymanski Jane Piper | Josh Winslow 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 |
| Family & friends of Jim Faux Family & friends of Barbara Williams Shashaunah Michael Hahner | | |

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **FCCEJ Leadership Workshop:** TODAY, April 19 at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall
- **CCAF presents Ray Vega:** Sunday, April 26—3pm in the Sanctuary
- **Age Well Workshop:** Thursday, April 30 at 8:30am in the Fellowship Hall
- **LIFT (Living In Faith Together):** Sunday, May 3—assembling care kits in the Fellowship Hall
- **Blessing the Animals:** Sunday, May 17—after each service on the church grounds
- **Confirmation Sunday:** Sunday, May 24—One Service at 10am
- **Music Sunday:** Sunday, May 31—One Service at 10am

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 May 14.

Estate Planning and Wills Clinic In May

The Planned Giving Committee is offering an Estate Planning Seminar and Wills Clinic for all church members and friends on May 21. from 6:30 to 8:00pm in the Main Hall (top floor) at the Holy Family Parish House at 28 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction. The event is FREE.

The Seminar will cover all aspects of estate planning and information about the benefits of having a will. Also covered will be trusts, elder law, Medicaid planning, special needs planning and probate. Holly LeMieux, a local attorney specializing in these matters, will lead the workshop. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts and the New England College of Law.

To attend, please contact Jen in the FCCEJ church office at 802-878-5745 before May 15.

Age Well Vermont Workshop

Age Well and FCCEJ are hosting a workshop for seniors and their families and caregivers. The event will include information on services and resources that Age Well offers as well as how programs are responding to the changes in federal funding, a Q & A period, and giveaways from Age Well and FCCEJ. For more information, contact the church office at: 802-878-5745 or welcome@fccej.org

Event Details:

- Thursday, April 30 in the FCCEJ Fellowship Hall
- Continental Breakfast at 8:30am
- Workshop Begins at 9am
- Event is free

Community Concerts At First

We are excited to welcome back Ray Vega's jazz ensemble as the next performance in our music series! They present Jazz from a refreshingly original and contemporary perspective.

Sunday, April 26 at 3pm in the FCCEJ Sanctuary. Tickets are \$20pp/12 and under are free.

<https://sevendaystickets.ticketsauce.com/e/rayvegajazzensemble>

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Age Well Vermont.

Free Dinner for Young Families

On the first Friday of each month, we host 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, May 1 from 5:30 to 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Menu is breakfast for dinner—eggs, pancakes, bacon, etc...

Three Summer Evenings

Instead of Vacation Bible Camp, the Christian Formation Committee invites the entire church to join us for Three Summer Evenings on June 17, July 22 and August 19, all on Wednesdays. We will follow the story of Moses through fun, fellowship and faith learning. More information will follow.

Heavenly Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to need reusable shopping bags as well as cereal, baked beans, canned fruit, chunky soups, ready-made pasta (Spaghetti-O's, etc.) drip coffee (regular and decaf), empty one-dozen egg cartons, and feminine hygiene products - specifically pads (moderate, heavy, and extra absorbent).

We also always appreciate volunteers—either for organizing, set-up, during the distribution times, or to make deliveries in the Essex area. Contact the church office for more information.

Bible Study: Psalms

Our Bible study group will begin diving into the book of Psalms on Friday, April 24. We meet in the Marvin Lounge from 1:30 - 3 PM. Mary McHugh will be leading and using Walter Brueggemann's book "The Spirituality of the Psalms" as a guide. (No need to buy the book.) Our next meetings will be May 8, June 12 and June 26.

Weekly Calendar: April 19—April 26

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, April 19

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

Tuesday, April 14

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
3:30pm: Food Pantry Committee—Marvin Lounge
7pm: Christian Formation—Marvin Lounge
Communications—2nd Floor Program Room
Trustees—Fellowship Hall

Thursday, April 16

8:30am: Food Pantry Set Up—Fellowship Hall,
Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting—Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge
3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
Food Pantry Distribution—Fellowship Hall,
Kitchen, Sanctuary
6:30pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary

Saturday, April 18

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

Monday, April 13

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

Wednesday, April 15

9:30am: Essex Art League—Marvin Lounge
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

Friday, April 17

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

Sunday, April 19

8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary &
Streaming*
1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall
3pm: Community Concerts At First—Sanctuary

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fccej.org]

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Elizabeth O'Beirne [childrensministry@fccej.org]

Music Director: Bethany Blake [bblake@fccej.org]

Church Administrator: Jen Kelly [welcome@fccej.org]

Social Media Marketing Coordinator: Andrea Sharp [socialmedia@fccej.org]

Commissioned Assistant Minister: Bob Driver

Music

Chair of Music: Steph Field

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley

Men At First Director: Bill Bickford

Officers

President: Terry Stein

Vice President: Kathryn Brennan

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

Assistant Financial Secretary: Linda Bogardus

Treasurer: Darryl Koch [treasurer@fccej.org]

Clerk: Alison Wermer

Assistant Clerk: Brenda Dawson

Historian: Ann Gray

Internal Auditors: Dan Petherbridge, Alan Kinney

Committee Chairs

Christian Formation: Terri Livak

Hospitality: Sue Conti

Communications:

Human Resources: Terry Stein

Francis Gravel, Beth Warren—Co-Chairs

Missions: Ann Marie Sullivan

Deacons:

Nominating: Lauren Starkey

Judy McCullen, Bob Driver—Co-Chairs

Stewardship: Beth Volker

Finance & Pastoral Relations:

Trustees: Rob Gibson

Kathryn Brennan

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman

Heavenly Food Pantry: Betsy Weischedel, Lisa Clark