



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



The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
The Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2026

Our worship opportunities in May are as follows....

May 3rd: One Service at 10 w/ Holy Communion

May 10th : Two Services at 8:30 a.m. [traditional] & 10:15 a.m. [Band]

May 17th: Two Services w/ Band at 8:30 & 10:15. Blessing of Animals

May 24th: ONE Service @ 10 a.m. Confirmation Sunday

May 31st: ONE Service @ 10 a.m. Music Appreciation Sunday

A Welcoming Community Accepting and Serving All
In the Spirit of Christ

Order of Worship

Prelude *Courante from Suite in F Major BWV anh. 80* J.S. Bach

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..... Paula Sargent
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 *Sing Alleluia to the Lord* Linda Stassen
early Christian liturgy

Call to Worship
Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made...
People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Leader: This is the space that has been dedicated to God...
People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Leader: We are the people that have been called by Christ ...
People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Leader: God saw everything made through the divine Word, and indeed, it was very good.
Come, let us worship our God.

***Opening Hymn *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name* # 304**

A Time of Confession and **Unison Prayer of Confession**

Call to Confession

Leader: The Israelites murmured in the midst of miraculous gifts; people crafted a golden calf in the midst of being given eternal laws of life; people cried for other gods in the midst of prophetic guidance; disciples never fully comprehended Jesus' message of humility and abundant grace.

People: People always wander away from God. Humanity always strays from the way. Each one of us always end up turning to lesser and unfulfilling gods.

Leader: Come, let us open our hearts to God's mercy and forgiveness.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Creator God, thank you for the beauty that surrounds and the earth that feeds; forgive us when we pollute your universe and neglect to thank you for food that sustains. Reigning Son of God, thank you for embracing humanity and declaring all of us to be worthy of your love; forgive us when we manufacture mockery, make mischief, and manage malevolence. Educating Spirit of God, thank you for endowing our hearts with divine gifts of discernment, delight and dreams of a new dawn; forgive us when we fall prey to division, derision and diversion. Forgive all of our sins, Merciful God, and help us to live healthier lives. In Christ's name, amen.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: On the cross, Jesus cries out, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." And so in like manner, I declare to you that your sins are forgiven by a compassionate and Merciful Lord.

People: We accept your love and promise to live more God-centered lives. Alleluia and 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 Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th)

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.

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

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.

Musical Response

Come and Find the Quiet Center

Shirley Erena Murray

attr. to B.F.White; harm. Ronald A. Nelson

New Testament Reading

Gospel

John 14:1-14

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Anthem

Christ is Arisen, Indeed!

Natalie Sleeth

Communion Meditation

The Way, Truth, and Life

Rev. Mendes

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

We will celebrate Holy Communion by having the Deacons pass the gluten free bread and alcohol free juice to the people in the pews. Hold the bread until the minister directs you to partake and drink the cup when you would like; this symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of the faith.

Jesus welcomes everyone to the table and so do we!

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Polonaise from Anna Magdalena

Bach

Notebook BWV anh. 117b

***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**

My Eyes Have Seen the Glory

610

*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

Gigue from Suite in F Major BWV anh. 80 J.S. Bach

*Please stand if you are able

- ◆ Sincere thanks to Bethany Blake, the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir, and everyone participating in the “Drop-In” Choir, for sharing their amazing musical talents with us this morning!



*The flowers on the altar today are given by Carl & Alison Wermer
In memory of their parents, Robert & Dorothy Knox, John & Kerstin Wermer.*



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.

Dennis McMahon	Bill Bickford Jr.	Josh Winslow
Family & Friends of Bill Bickford Sr.	Elizabeth O'Beirne & Family	Carol Daigle
Faye Fittipoldi	Joe Shields	Patty Giroux
Mike and Carole Allen	Jeffrey Basiliere	Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities
Family & friends of Jim Faux	Elizabeth Stone	All those affected by the violence around the world
Family & friends of Barbara Williams	Patty Geiger	Everyone that may be privately suffering
Shashaunah	Thomas Cencer	
Michael Hahner	Tatyana Szymanski	
	Jane Piper	

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **LIFT (Living In Faith Together):** TODAY, Sunday, May 3—assembling care kits in the Fellowship Hall
- **Blessing the Animals:** Sunday, May 17—after each service on the church grounds
- **Estate Planning:** Thursday, May 21 in Holy Family Parish Hall from 6:30 to 8pm—register by May 15 through FCCEJ office
- **Confirmation Sunday:** Sunday, May 24—One Service at 10am
- **Music Sunday:** Sunday, May 31—One Service at 10am
- **Ice Cream Social:** Sunday, June 7—after worship (at 9am) in Fellowship Hall

FCCEJ SUMMER SCHEDULE—STARTS JUNE 7

June through August—One Service at 9am

In the Sanctuary and Streamed

All Family Worship

Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month

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.

Three Summer Evenings

During the summer months, the Christian Formation Committee invites the entire church to attend *Three Summer Evenings!*

1. June 17 will be a campfire, along with s'mores, singing and stories
2. July 22 will be camp games
3. August 19 will be a street dance.

Food enough to call dinner will be provided each evening. Plan to join us as we follow the story of Moses through fun, fellowship and faith learning.

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.

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.

Weekly Calendar: May 3—May 10

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, May 3

8:50am: *Piano Lesson—Marvin Lounge*
10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
11am-12pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11am: Youth Gathering—Gym
11:30am: Service Trip Team—Marvin Lounge
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*

Tuesday, May 5

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 Committee—Marvin Lounge
6:30pm: *BSA Troop 624 District—Fellowship Hall*
7pm: Church Council—Marvin Lounge

Thursday, May 7

8:30am: *Essex Art League—Fellowship Hall*
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting—Marvin Lounge
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge*
3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
6:30pm: *Music Lesson—Sanctuary*
Cub Scouts Pack 630 Den Meetings—
Fellowship Hall, Program Room, 3rd
Floor, Gym
7pm: Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary

Saturday, May 9

8am: *Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge*
The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary,
West Wing
8:30am: *Weight Loss Support —Fellowship Hall*
9:30am: *Reiki 3 Class—Marvin Lounge*
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*
GMKCS—Gym, Classrooms
Claire Black Student Recital—Sanctuary

Monday, May 4

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall,
Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*
6pm: Bell Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary
7:30pm: *Group Victory—Marvin Lounge*

Wednesday, May 6

10am: *Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*
5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal—Sanctuary
6:30pm: Men At First Rehearsal—West Wing
7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge
Pastoral Search Committee—2nd Floor
Program Room
BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall

Friday, May 8

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

Sunday, May 10

8:30 & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
9:30am: Joyful Noise Rehearsal—Marvin Lounge
11:30am: Music Committee—2nd Floor Program
Room
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall*

Events in italics = Local Community Groups