



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 First Sunday After Pentecost
May 31, 2026

Our worship opportunities during the year offer two services: one traditional with our outstanding organist and Sanctuary Choir at 8:30 a.m. and one less traditional with our talented Finally @ First Band and our Faith Formation Program for our children at 10:15 a.m. We meet together with communion on the first Sunday of each month. Everyone is welcome to join us as a precious child of God. Each week our service is streamed for all to see live or whenever they would like; check it out on our web page at fccej.org. From June 7th through September 6th, we have one service at 9:00 a.m. with our organist and a group of talented volunteers offering their musical abilities to God and our congregation.

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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 by the Currier Bell Choir.....*Now the Green Blade Riseth*

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements

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

Deacon's Greeting..... Tobe Zalinger

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 by the Currier Bell Choir.....*O How Glorious, Full of Wonder
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Call to Worship..... Tobe Zalinger

Leader: Music is one of the great gifts from our God. It touches our souls like nothing else. It inspires us, shapes our thoughts and leads us into a relationship with the living God. Some would say that music is the clearest incarnation of the Living God humanity knows.

Lectern Side: Music draws us into love.

Pulpit Side: Music challenges us to march for justice.

Lectern Side: Music encourages us to teach our children well.

Pulpit Side: Music demands that we live in peace.

Lectern Side: Music leads us into war.

Pulpit Side: Music wants us to live life to the fullest.

Lectern Side: Music creates memories that keep relationships alive.

Pulpit Side: Music nurtures communities of faith.

Leader: Music inspires us to seek out our God so that we might sing our praises and enter into the sacred dance of life. Come, let us draw strength from our God as we celebrate one of God's greatest gifts.

***Opening Hymn**

Praise to the Living God

8

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation & Unison Lord's PrayerTobe Zalinger
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.....Pastor Bob

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 Return to Their Families
**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.**

Anthem by Heavenly Harmony *To Music*

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Mendes

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Prayer Response by Heavenly Harmony..... *A Quiet Sanctus*

***Hymn**

Rejoice, You Pure in Heart

55

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Psalter Psalm 149 [page 453]

New Testament Epistle Colossians 3:12-17 [page 156]

Gospel Matthew 26:26-30 [page 23]

Anthem by the Sanctuary and Joyful Noise Choirs *The Gospel Ship*

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory Anthem by Men At First.....*Wade in the Water* ☞

***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** ***This Little Light of Mine* ☞ Led by Finally @ First Singers
[handout]**

***Benediction**

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again; by good counsel guide, uphold you.

With a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; wings of shelter safely hide you.

Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; when life's peril thick confound you.

Put unfailing arms around you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; keep love's banner floating o'er you.

Smite death's threatening wave before you;

God be with you till we meet again.

Postlude by Men At First.....*All Day, All Night* ☞

*Please stand if you are able



☞ Presented in accordance with our Royalties for Spirituals Project: a practice of valuing musical contributions of enslaved Africans to American worship and song. We honor unrecognized musicians who created these pieces by singing them with reverence, gratitude, and open hearts. Royalties set aside for the use of these songs will go to a local organization that supports African American musicians.

FCCEJ Ensemble Participants Fall 25-Spring 26

Currier Bell Choir

Linda Hasan, Laura Marthaler, Paula Sargent, Alison Wermer

Sanctuary Choir

Bill Bickford Sr. (60 yrs), Bill Bickford Jr. (33 yrs), Mindy Bickford (26 yrs),
Di Bottamini (40 yrs), Michael Bottamini (40 yrs), Brenda Dawson (23 yrs), Bob Driver (2 yrs),
Francis Gravel (5 yrs), Jane Halsted (1.5 yrs), Joanne Irwin (2 mo), Dave Johnson (42 yrs),
Marie Johnson (32 yrs), Denise Keating (9 yrs), Terri Livak (40 yrs), Doug Olufsen (9 yrs),
Amanda Palmer (15 yrs), Judy Pomainville (18 yrs), Pete Schmalz (4-5 yrs),
Andrea Sharp (8 yrs), Heather Stein (2 yrs), Beth Volker (42 yrs)

*Special appreciation to Bill Bickford Sr for 60 YEARS OF SERVICE
singing in the Sanctuary Choir and Men at First!*

Finally @ First Praise Band

Rick Dooley, Director (13 yrs), Steph Field (15 yrs), Laura Cunningham Firkey (13 yrs),
Linus Goedkin (12 yrs), Matt Kalix-Crisafi (1 yr), Judy McCullum (15 yrs),
Kevin McCullum (15 yrs), Kim Shields (1yr), Kim Sonntag (3 yrs)

*Special appreciation to Laura Cunningham Firkey,
who created amazing harmonies with us from 2013-2026!*

Men At First

Bruce Bass, Bill Bickford Jr. (Director), Bill Bickford Sr., Michael Bottamini, Francis Gravel,
Curtis Guild, Glenn Harple, David Johnson, Albert Koch, Doug Olufsen, Peter Schmalz,
Terry Stein, Clem Turmel

Heavenly Harmony

Mindy Bickford, Di Bottamini, Brenda Dawson, Jane Halsted, Joanne Irwin, Marie Johnson,
Denise Keating, Terri Livak, Whitney Noel, Amanda Palmer, Judy Pomainville, Andrea Sharp,
Heather Stein, Beth Volker

Joyful Noise

Nora Blake, Abigail Blake, Kira Blake, Molly Bourn, Izzy Bourn, Twyla De Vries,
Wade De Vries, Easton Isham, Nora Johnson, Ernest Kalix-Crisafi, Maia Kalix-Crisafi,
Eli Palmer, Liam Palmer, Am Stein, Tristan Stein

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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| Cheryl Dow | Myrna Lindholm | Thomas Cencer |
| Meg Audette and Family | Myrna Dooney | Jane Piper |
| Fletch Coolidge | Faye Fittipoldi | Josh Winslow |
| Annette Whitemar | Mike and Carole Allen | Tatyana Szymanski, Bobby Evans, and all troops currently deployed |
| Laura Cunningham-Firkey and Family | Family & friends of Barbara Williams | Carol Daigle |
| Family & Friends of Polly McEwing | Shashaunah | Patty Giroux |
| Sharon Dettenrieder and the Owens Family | Michael Hahner | Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities |
| Family & Friends of Jean Tucker | Bill Bickford Jr. | All those affected by the violence around the world |
| Dennis McMahon | Elizabeth O'Beirne & Family | Everyone that may be privately suffering |
| Family & Friends of Bill Bickford Sr. | Joe Shields | |
| | Jeffrey Basiliere | |
| | Elizabeth Stone | |
| | Patty Geiger | |

*The flowers on the altar today are given by Linda Lou Parker
In celebration of Linda & Bruce's 57th wedding anniversary.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Ice Cream Social:** Sunday, June 7—after worship (at 9am) in Fellowship Hall
- **Celebration of Life for Bill Bickford Sr.:** Saturday, June 13 at 1pm in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall
- **Celebrating Graduates:** Sunday, June 14

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

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. The kids are welcome to burn off some energy in the gym, too! All are welcome—bring a friend!

Next dinner is Friday, June 5 from 5:30 to 7. If the weather cooperates, we're thinking of a summer cookout—burgers, etc... with tables and games set up outside.

Celebrating Graduates

The end of another school year is just around the corner and we want to celebrate all high school, trade school, college, and post graduate degree recipients related to the FCCEJ family.

Please email Jen at the church office (welcome@fccej.org) the following info:

- ◆ Name of graduate
- ◆ Graduation/recent picture & baby/young picture
- ◆ School (high school, undergrad, graduate) & degree if applicable
- ◆ Their plans for the future

We will acknowledge this milestone in worship on **Sunday, June 14** and share the information in the July/August newsletter. **Deadline is June 1.** Congratulations, Class of 2026!

Searchers

The Wednesday Night Searchers will be viewing and discussing movies through June.

June 3: Left Behind

June 10: The Davinci Code

Wednesday nights at 7pm in Marvin Lounge.

Bible Study: Psalms

Our Bible study group is discussing the book of Psalms. We meet in the Marvin Lounge from 1:30 - 3pm. Mary McHugh is 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 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 June 18.

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.

Weekly Calendar: May 31—June 7

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

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| <p><u>Sunday, May 31</u> Music Sunday 10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming 9:30am: Joyful Noise Rehearsal—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i></p> | <p><u>Monday, June 1</u> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, 2nd Floor Storage Room <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>7:30pm: Group Victory—Marvin Lounge</i></p> |
| <p><u>Tuesday, June 2</u> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036] 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 5:30pm: Stewardship—Marvin Lounge <i>6:30pm: BSA Troop 624 District Meeting—Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Church Council—Marvin Lounge</p> | <p><u>Wednesday, June 3</u> <i>10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Searchers—Marvin Lounge Pastoral Search Committee—2nd Floor Program Room <i>BSA Troop 624—Fellowship Hall</i></p> |
| <p><u>Thursday, June 4</u> <i>8:30am: Essex Art League—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Marvin Lounge</i> 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i> <i>6:30pm: Cub Scouts Pack 630 Den Meetings—Fellowship Hall, 3rd Floor, Gym, Program Room</i></p> | <p><u>Friday, June 5</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s Deli 10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall <i>11:30am: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>12pm: Pizza Luncheon—Josh’s House, Colchester</i> 1:30pm: Bridge Group—Marvin Lounge 5:30pm: Family Dinner—Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Grounds, Gym</p> |
| <p><u>Saturday, June 6</u> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support Group—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing</i> <i>8:30am: Weight Loss Support—Fellowship Hall</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>5pm: Cub Scout Campout—Grounds</i></p> | <p><u>Sunday, June 7</u> 9am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming Ice Cream Social in Fellowship Hall after worship 11:30am: Service Trip Team—Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag Fellowship—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>Bluebird Montessori Open House—West Wing</i> 3pm: Parker/Dow Wedding—Sanctuary</p> |

Events in italics = Local Community Groups