

*A Service to Celebrate the Life of  
Willard "Bill" L. Bickford Sr.*

*March 6, 1932 - April 15, 2026*



*First Congregational Church of Essex Junction  
Saturday, June 13, 2026*

*I am the resurrection and the life.*

*Everyone who lives and believes in me, even though they die, will live  
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.*

*John 11:25-26*

Prelude

Medley of Hymns

Wayne Schneider

Opening Words of Promise and Welcome

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

Memorial Anthem

*My Lord, What a Mornin'*

Men At First

Call to Worship

Leader: We worship the God who inhabits our world and dwells within our lives. We need not look up to find God, we need only to look around within ourselves, beyond ourselves and in the eyes of another.

**People: Our God journeyed with Bill and was a source of strength, goodness and love in his life. All of us got a glimpse of God when Bill came into our lives.**

Leader: We need not listen for distant thunder to find God; we need only listen to the music of life, the words of children, the questions of the curious, and the rhythm of heartbeats.

**People: We have seen God in the gentle, kind and thoughtful ways Bill has come into our lives. His song inspired his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to dance to the music of life, explore the wonder of the universe and discover their own rhythms of being.**

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who inhabits our world, dwells in our own lives and welcomes worldly saints back into the eternal realm of Divine Love.

\*Opening Hymn

*How Great Thou Art*  
Verses 1, 3, 5

[insert]

Greeting

A Time of Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")**

**Our Father, 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.**

Memorial Anthem *Irish Blessing* Men At First

Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren Share

Allegro, Suzuki .....Aliya Sexauer  
"Dry Your Eyes", Kahlil Gibran..... Alyson Bull  
adapted by Carole Vasta Folley  
"An Ode to Grampy" ..... Erika Bickford and Emily Jones  
Psalm 23 ..... Jett and Dylan Haggerty

New Testament Gospel Readings

Luke 11: 2-4 [page 55]  
John 15:1-13 [page 84]

Memorial Anthem *A Place In The Valley* FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir

Meditation Rev. Mark Mendes

A Time of Sharing Bill, Holly, and Bob

**\*Memorial Hymn** *The Old Rugged Cross* [insert]  
Verses 1, 2, 4

**Affirmation of Faith [Romans 8]**

**We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and we know that in everything God works for good with those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Commendations

Pastoral Commendation

Familial and Congregational Sung Commendation: *You'll Never Walk Alone*

**The Bickford Family Sings**

*When you walk through a storm,*

*Hold your head up high and don't be afraid of the dark.*

*At the end of the storm is a golden sky, and the sweet silver song of a lark.*

*Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain,*

*Though your dreams be tossed and blown*

*Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone.*

*You'll never walk alone.*

~~Piano interlude~~

**The Family and Congregation Sing**

*Walk on thorough the wind, walk on through the rain,*

*Though your dreams be tossed and blown.*

*Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart, and you'll never walk alone.*

*You'll never walk alone.*

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

- ❖ *After the service, everyone is invited to a time of fellowship downstairs to support the Bickford family and share stories about Bill's life.*