



Welcome to the

First Congregational Church of Essex Junction (FCCEJ)

2026 Narrative Community & Church Profile

No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are On Life's Journey, You Are Welcome In This Place

FCCEJ is a vibrant, Open and Affirming United Church of Christ congregation located in the heart of Essex Junction, Vermont. We are seeking a compassionate, inspirational and organizationally skilled Senior Pastor to lead us into our next chapter of ministry. FCCEJ is welcoming, joyful, intellectually engaging and deeply committed to serving the wider community and we are looking for a pastor to join us in these callings.



Our Community

[Essex Junction](#) combines small-town relationships with access to the opportunities of Chittenden County. Residents embrace our strong schools, parks, libraries, diverse dining and shopping, proximity to Burlington, the University of Vermont, UVM Medical Center, Lake Champlain and year-round outdoor recreation. The community is known for civic engagement, inclusivity and a strong sense of neighborliness. Our membership draws from many surrounding communities as well as Essex Junction. From the Lake Champlain Islands to Cambridge, Jericho, Williston, Waterbury, members travel to us for our services and mission.

Our History

[FCCEJ](#) was founded in the nineteenth century and has been serving the community for more than 150 years, FCCEJ joined the United Church of Christ in 1961. The church is widely recognized for its outreach ministries, Open and Affirming commitment, food pantry, thrift shop and community leadership.

Who We Are

Our vision is to be the church that most fully embodies Christ's vision of love by fulfilling the spiritual and physical needs of our community. We build relationships with God, each other, the community and the world through prayer, worship, fellowship, education, outreach and service. Our values include:

- Inquiry: we grow through an intellectual journey and feel empowered to challenge, question, and explore our faith.
- Inclusion: We are an open and affirming, diverse, and inclusive congregation that offers an invitation to meet Jesus Christ no matter where you are on life's spiritual journey.
- Service: We seek opportunities to live Christ's love through active engagement in our world.
- Fellowship: We express kindness and compassion with each other through Christian community.
- Stewardship: We are responsible in the use of our time, talent, and treasure to care for our church.
- Worship: We express our faith through meaningful experiences in the presence of God through Word, Sacrament, Music, and Fellowship.
- Fun: We are a place where people can laugh and be joyful.



Congregation Snapshot

Approximately 400 active members and 284 active non-members participate in church life. Worship attendance averages 60–115 for each service. The congregation spans five generations, though we recognize a need to engage more young families and younger adults.



Worship & Music

Meaningful [worship](#), strong preaching and exceptional music are central to congregational life. [Music ministries](#) include Sanctuary Choir, Finally at First praise band, children's music programs, communion, livestream worship and creative seasonal services.

Mission & Outreach

[Major ministries](#) include the Heavenly Food Pantry, Heavenly Thrift Shop, Dismas House dinners, support for veterans, unhoused neighbors, refugee and immigrant communities, mission trips, Pride events and interfaith partnerships.





Faith Formation

[Programs](#) serve children, youth and adults through Sunday classes, confirmation, discussion groups, sermon talk-back sessions, family dinners, mission opportunities locally and across the country, Bible studies and seasonal events.

Ministry Opportunities Ahead

Key goals include engaging younger generations, developing a new strategic vision, expanding diversity, strengthening spiritual formation, evaluating staffing models and sustaining the church's strong culture of connection with the community and state.

Financial Strength

FCCEJ maintains a [healthy financial position](#) with annual income exceeding budgeted expenses, a significant endowment, multiple church-owned properties and a history of successful capital campaigns.

The Pastor We Seek

The congregation identified three primary competencies: Compassion; Inspirational and Engaging Spiritual Formation; and Organizational Leadership & Management. The next pastor should build relationships, communicate faith effectively, empower volunteers and represent the church in the wider community.

Conclusion

FCCEJ encompasses a rare combination of vibrant faith, strong lay leadership, financial stability, community engagement and authentic welcome. The congregation seeks a pastor who will help shepherd us into a faith filled, growing and impactful future. If this role sounds exciting to you and you would like more information, we would love to hear from you! Please visit our [UCC profile](#).

