



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

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

August 16, 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 Praise Band and our Faith Formation Program for our children at 10:15 a.m. We worship 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.

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

Order of Worship

Prelude

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Sebastian Temple

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements

Opening Greeting Deacon Jim Glatz

Our Deacon will welcome everyone to our community of faith; ask if anyone has special joys to share; invite any guest to introduce themselves if they want to 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

Pie Jesu from Requiem

Andrew Lloyd Webber
arr. John Leavitt

Call to Worship Deacon Jim Glatz

Leader: God shows us such grace through the beauty of nature.

People: Thank you, God, for touching my soul and nurturing my spirit through the physical gifts of this world as experienced in my body.

Leader: God empowers us with intellect which can be transformed into wisdom when we speak God's truth in a dark and hungering world.

People: Thank you, God, for the gift of language. May we use it to build your kingdom of mercy, compassion and love.

Leader: All Knowing God, as we listen to the words and witness of your son Jesus today, may our hearts, minds, souls, and strengths be united in purpose as we look to build your kingdom.

Prayer of Invocation and Unison Lord’s Prayer Deacon Jim Glatz

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.

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 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.

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response

Holy, Holy, Holy
(Santo, Santo, Santo)

Argentine folk song

*Hymn

I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

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Scripture Readings

New Testament

Gospel

Matthew 15:1-28

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Epistle

James 3:1-12

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Special Music Anthem

How Can I Keep From Singing

Anonymous
arr. Becky Slagle Mayo

Sermon

Lips and Hearts

Rev. Mendes

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Over My Head ✨

*African American spiritual
arr. John Bell*

***The 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.**

*** Closing Hymn**

We Would Be Building

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Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

Sung Benediction

Deep Peace

Daniel Lynch

*Postlude

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

Austin North
Tune by Melchior Teschner

*Please stand if you are able.

❖ Sincere appreciation to Denise Keating, Andrea Sharp, Amanda Palmer, and Terri Livak for providing the beautiful music this morning!

✨ 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.

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.

*Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen, Senior Pastor at
Charlotte Congregational Church*

David and Family

Emily Guziak

and friends and family of Nancy Thayer

Remi and Family

Family & Friends of Sally Lembake

Family & Friends of Lani Goram

Michael Lafoy

Audrey Sawyer

Allan and Barbara Reith

Family & Friends of Chris Canosa

Family & Friends of Russ Kinaman

Meg Audette and Family

Fletch Coolidge

Family & Friends of Annette Whitemar

Laura Cunningham-Firkey and Family

Myrna Lindholm

Myrna Dooney

Shashaunah

Michael Hahner

Bill Bickford Jr.

Joe Shields

Elizabeth Stone

Patty Geiger

Thomas Cencer

Jane Piper

Josh Winslow

*Tatyana Szymanski, Phil Bourn,
and all troops currently deployed*

Carol Daigle

Patty Giroux

*Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear
in their communities*

*All those affected by violence
around the world*

Everyone that may be privately suffering



***The flowers on the altar today are given by the Children of Marion Ferris
In honor and remembrance of Marion's birthday.***



Altar Flowers

Flowers on the altar are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or celebrate a special day. We include a note in the bulletin about who donated the flowers and who/what they are honoring. Scan the QR code or use this link to sign up: www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-53196874-altar#/



Three Summer Evenings – Part Three

Join us as we come together for the final occurrence in our Three Summer Evenings series.

Everyone had great fun at the first two with food, s'mores, campfire, and games. This Wednesday we will journey with Moses through the Red Sea while simultaneously having a dance party – DJ included! Can you imagine the joy of the Israelites as they left Egypt? Now add a soundtrack!

Wednesday, August 19 from 5:30pm to 8pm.

Soda Drive for Josh's House

The Missions Committee continues to support Josh Pallotta House in Winooski. Josh's House Vermont is for veterans and current military personnel. It's a designed recreation/wellness space offering meeting and study areas, a large communal kitchen, video games, and a state-of-the-art gym. Many of the veterans being served at the Pallotta house are recovering substance abusers. These veterans rely on sugar items to get them through their addiction. Missions is sponsoring a soda drive during July, August & September. You can drop the soda anytime while the church is open. The drop-off place will be in Fellowship Hall. Signs will be posted to provide the exact location.

Remember—sugar soda only, no diet. Thank you for your support!

Coffee House Cabaret

Calling all musicians, poets, dancers, magicians, comedians, etc! Our Coffeehouse Cabaret is scheduled for Sunday, September 20 at 2pm). Please be thinking about performing something in this comfortable environment (with free coffee, tea, and pastries). You may even win a gift card! Must be family friendly content, performers ages 12+, and approximately 5 minutes in length.

Scan the QR Code or use this link for the Sign-Up Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-64781886-coffee>

Contact stephfield87@gmail.com with any questions. Thank you!



Stay Connected!

Our weekly E-Connection contains timely information about the FCCEJ faith community including children/youth happenings, special events, links to online bulletins and worship services, and our current calendar. Our monthly newsletter “SPIRIT@FIRST” is available by “snail mail” and email, as well as on our website. Please share your contact information via the Friendship Pad and indicate which communications you are interested in receiving.

Weekly Calendar: August 16 – August 23

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

Sunday, August 16

9am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*

Monday, August 17

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—
Fellowship Hall, Kitchen,
Storage Rooms
10am: *Highland Dance Camp - Gym*
11:30am: Lunchtime Book Group –
Marvin Lounge
*Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*
6pm: Pastoral Search Committee –
Marvin Lounge

Tuesday, August 18

8:30: Sermon Talkback—
Marvin Lounge/Zoom
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
10am: *Highland Dance Camp - Gym*
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

Wednesday, August 19

10am: *Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall*
10am: *Highland Dance Camp - Gym*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*
3pm: *Highland Dance Rehearsal—Gym*
5:30pm: Three Summer Evenings Part 3
6:30pm: *BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall*

Thursday, August 20

10am: *Highland Dance Camp - Gym*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*
3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
5:30pm: *Reiki Share – Marvin Lounge*
6pm: *Music Lesson - Sanctuary*

Friday, August 21

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's Deli
10am: *Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall*
10am: *Highland Dance Camp - Gym*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*
1:30pm: *BD Meeting –
2nd Floor Program Room*
6pm: *Blue Spruce Grange – Fellowship Hall*

Saturday, August 22

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*

Sunday, August 23

9am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship—
Fellowship Hall*

FCCEJ MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mark Mendes [mmendes@fccej.org]
Commissioned Assistant Minister: Bob Driver [pastorbob@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 [andrea.sharp@gmail.com]

Music

Chair of Music: Steph Field
Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley
Men At First Director: Bill Bickford Jr.

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]
Assistant Treasurer: Matt McGeary
Clerk: Alison Wermer
Assistant Clerk: Brenda Dawson
Historian: Ann Gray
Internal Auditors: Dan Petherbridge, Alan Kinney

Committee Chairs

Christian Formation: Terri Livak

Communications:

Francis Gravel, Beth Warren—Co-Chairs

Deacons:

Judy McCullen, Bob Driver—Co-Chairs

Finance & Pastoral Relations:

Kathryn Brennan

Hospitality: Sue Conti

Human Resources: Terry Stein

Missions: Ann Marie Sullivan

Nominating: Lauren Starkey

Stewardship: Beth Volker

Trustees: Rob Gibson

Recognized Groups

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop: Sandy Tallman
Heavenly Food Pantry: Betsy Weischedel, Lisa Clark