



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**

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The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 6, 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 10:15am. 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 9am with our organist and a group of talented volunteers offering their musical abilities to God and our congregation.

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

Order of Worship

Prelude	<i>“You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)”</i>	Mark Imboden, Tammi Rhoton
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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 Deacon Emily Guziak
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.

Introit	<i>Come, Now Is the Time to Worship</i>	Brian Doerksen
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Call to Worship Deacon Emily Guziak

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Come, people of God, let us give honor and thanks to our God as we seek the ways of Jesus in our lives.

People: We are grateful that God creates life. We give thanks that God wants us to be filled with joy. We are thrilled to have the freedom to worship as we want in this community of faith.

Leader: Come, let us worship our Creator, Savior and Friend.

*Opening Hymn	<i>What a Fellowship</i>	# 471
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Deacon's Prayer of Invocation and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

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

All the People Said Amen

Matt Maher, Paul Moak,
and Trevor Morgan

Scripture Readings:

Old Testament Prophetic

Ezekiel 33:7-11

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New Testament Gospel

Matthew 18:15-20

[page 15]

Anthem

His Grace Abounds

David Todd Green

Meditation

The Hard Part

Rev. Mendes

Celebrating the Lord's Supper

*Today we celebrate Communion by intinction which is where people come forward to receive the elements. Come to either Rev. Mark or Pastor Bob, take a gluten free cracker, dip it into the cup and partake immediately. Be careful to just slightly dip the cracker into the cup without putting your fingers into the juice. If you accidentally drop the cracker in, do not retrieve it, just take another cracker. This will keep the process as germ free as possible. **All are welcome at Christ's table.***

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

***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.**

*** Hymn**

Let Us Tongues and Talents Employ

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Benediction

Pastoral Benediction

***Sung Community Benediction**

Let There Be Peace On Earth

**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be!
With God our Creator, family all are we,
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

***Postlude**

The Blessing

**Chris Brown, Cody Carnes,
Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick**

***Please stand if you are able.**

❖ Today we welcome back to FCCEJ and celebrate the music of Laura and Tom Chadwick – thank you for sharing your amazing musical talents with us!

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.

<i>Bethany Blake and friends and family of Thomas Cencer</i>	<i>Thanksgiving for the homecoming of Tatyana Szymanski and Bobby Evans!</i>
<i>Mike LaMoy</i>	<i>Nick Hella</i>
<i>Josephine Lawrence</i>	<i>Bob Hahner</i>
<i>All those affected by violence around the world</i>	<i>Emily Guziak & friends & family of Nancy Thayer</i>
<i>David and Family</i>	<i>Remi and Family</i>
<i>Patty Giroux</i>	<i>Phil Bourn and all troops currently deployed</i>
<i>Michael Lafoy</i>	<i>Audrey Sawyer</i>
<i>Allan and Barbara Reith</i>	<i>Jane Piper</i>
<i>Meg Audette and Family</i>	<i>Fletch Coolidge</i>
<i>Carol Daigle</i>	<i>Laura Cunningham-Firkey and Family</i>
<i>Myrna Lindholm</i>	<i>Myrna Dooney</i>
<i>Shashaunah</i>	<i>Joe Shields</i>
<i>Bill Bickford Jr.</i>	<i>Josh Winslow</i>
<i>Elizabeth Stone</i>	<i>Patty Geiger</i>
<i>Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen, Senior Pastor at Charlotte Congregational Church</i>	<i>Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities</i>
<i>Flood victims in Nepal and surrounding areas</i>	<i>Everyone that may be privately suffering</i>



****The flowers on the altar today are given by Carl & Alison Wermer
In honor of their grandchildren. ****



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#/



Burlington Pride Parade

Sunday, September 13th at 12pm.

For years, Pride Vermont has been a powerful celebration of visibility, joy, and community in downtown Burlington. This year, FCCEJ will be participating with other churches in the Vermont UCC Conference. The parade starts at 12pm at City Hall Park and ends at Battery Park where the Pride Festival begins at 1pm.

If you are interested in attending and/or carpooling to the event, please reach out to Rev. Mark or Pastor Bob for details.

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!

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.

Community Concerts at First

CCAF presents HairPeace on Sunday, September 27th at 3pm here in our sanctuary. Please mark your calendars now so you don't miss this fabulous concert! HairPeace has been filling the air with music since 1993. Chrystine and Ray's close vocal harmonies blend the songs of the 60s and 70s with original material and an occasional modern tune, bringing a sense of peace, love and community to every show. Joined by the incredible Kenny Z on upright bass, this concert is a must-see! HairPeace has shared stages with national acts such as The Little River Band, Roseanne Cash and Asleep at the Wheel. Visit their website (www.hairpeace.net) to listen to some of their music. Tickets \$20 at <https://sevendaystickets.com/e/hairpeace> or by calling the church office. Children 12 & under admitted free.

2nd Annual Welcome Back Sunday Dessert Challenge

The Christian Formation Committee invites dessert makers of all sorts to enter their best creation in the 2nd Annual Welcome Back Sunday Dessert Challenge on September 20. Bring your best offering, to be judged by the youth, and perhaps you will win a \$25 gift card to Boxcar Bakery, provided by Rev. Mark.

Heavenly Thrift Shop News

Mark Your Calendars! The Thrift Shop will host an “*Open House and Bag Sale Shopping Experience*” for **Church Attendees Only** on Sunday morning, September 13th. Church attendees will have first dibs to buy summer inventory for \$5 before the Bag Sale opens to the public on Tuesday the 15th. Plan to stop by to see what treasures you can find!

Craft Fest

We are currently looking for one more additional crafter. The cost is \$30 and they need to bring their own table. Please contact Ann Gray or the church office. First come, first dibbys.

Grief Support

Grief Support Group resumes Thursday, September 10th in the Marvin Lounge from 10-11:30am. Led by Mary McHugh and Sharon Dettenrieder.

We meet monthly on the 2nd Thursday. This is a safe place to share, question, and learn about the grief experience.

Adult Bible Study

Bible Study upcoming dates and topics:

Fridays September 11 & 25: Genesis - Abraham thru Joseph (chapter 11 - end of book)

October 23 & Nov 13: Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians.

We meet from 1:30-3pm in Marvin Lounge. Led by Mary McHugh.

Wednesday Night Searchers

Every Wednesday Night from 7-9pm, starting on Wednesday September 9th, a group of inquiring folk come together to read books, watch video series and reflect on life and faith in our church and individual lives. We laugh, we cry, we challenge ourselves and each other but through it all we learn and grow together. Everyone is welcome and invited to bring a book or idea of what we should be studying this year.

Lunchtime Book Group

The book we're reading for September is “Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail” by Bill Bryson.

The Appalachian Trail stretches from Georgia to Maine and covers some of the most breathtaking terrain in America—majestic mountains, silent forests, sparkling lakes. If you're going to take a hike, it's probably the place to go. And Bill Bryson is surely the most entertaining guide you'll find. He introduces us to the history and ecology of the trail and to some of the other hardy (or just foolhardy) folks he meets along the way—and a couple of bears. Already a classic, A Walk in the Woods will make you long for the great outdoors.

Join us on Monday, September 21 at 11:30am in Marvin Lounge. Bring a lunch and be part of a lively discussion!

Weekly Calendar: September 6 – September 13

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

Sunday, September 6

9am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
10am: Sanctuary Choir – Sanctuary
Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Service Trip Team –
Marvin Lounge
1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall

Monday, September 7

Labor Day – Church Office Closed

9am: Food Pantry Organizing—
Fellowship Hall, Kitchen,
2nd Floor Storage Room
11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall
3:45 & 4:40pm: Music Lesson - Sanctuary

Tuesday, September 8

8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori
8:30: Sermon Talkback—
Marvin Lounge/Zoom
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
11:30am: Brown Bag - Fellowship Hall
7pm: Deacons—Marvin Lounge, Zoom

Wednesday, September 9

8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall
3pm: Highland Dance Rehearsal - Gym
5:30pm: Finally @ First – Sanctuary
7pm: BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall

Thursday, September 10

8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori
9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting – Conf. Room
10am: Grief Support – Marvin Lounge
Music Lesson - Sanctuary
11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall
3pm: ADK – Fellowship Hall
3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary
7pm: Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary

Friday, September 11

8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone's Deli
8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori
10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall
Music Lesson - Sanctuary
11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall
6pm: Blue Spruce Grange—Fellowship Hall

Saturday, September 12

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 2 Class – Marvin Lounge
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall
2:30pm: Rotary Food Drive Delivery –
Fellowship Hall

Sunday, September 13

10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming
11:30am: Music Committee – Program Room
Craft Fest Committee – Marvin Lounge
12pm: Burlington Pride Parade
1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall