



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

Montana Service Trip & L.I.F.T Sunday

Focusing on Mission

October 4, 2026

Our worship opportunities during the year offer two services: one traditional with our outstanding organist and Sanctuary Choir at 8:30am and one less traditional with our talented Finally @ First Band and our Faith Formation Program for our children at 10:15am. 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 through September, we have one service at 9am with our organist and a group of talented volunteers offering their musical abilities to God and our congregation.

A Welcoming Community

Accepting and Serving All

In the Spirit of Christ

Order of Worship

Prelude

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements Rev. Mark

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

Deacon's Greeting Deacon Allison VanSteensburg

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

Who Is My Mother, Who Is My Brother?

Shirley Murray;
Jack Schrader

Call to Worship Deacon Maureen McKenzie

Leader: God of the Universe, we cry out to you for the world is unjust and full of violence. As we observe destruction, strife and dehumanizing behaviors all around us, we wonder where you are? The wicked are all around us making life difficult.

People: **God plants love in the heart of creation. Jesus taught love above all else. Christians are commanded to forgive, show mercy and care for all people. We are called to change the world.**

Leader: Come followers of Christ and claim love and forgiveness in the midst of hatred. Come, let us build Jesus' peaceable kingdom and strive to make our world a better place.

*Opening Hymn

Let Justice Flow Like Streams

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Unison Prayer of Confession and Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")

Loving God, we come before you sorry that we allow the darkness of the world to hide our light under a bushel. Forgive us when we allow the valley of the shadow to hide our true character of Holy love. Help us to not let the chaos of the world shape our moral character. Keep our hearts true so that mercy replaces judgement, and forgiveness trumps hatred. Help us to be true to you, true to your law, true to Christ's love and true to the Spirit's guidance. We pray this all and more in the name of Jesus Christ who taught us to say when praying.....

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 Assurance of Pardon

Leader: God Created you. You remain the apple of God's eye. God continues to love you with abandon. God offers mercy, peace and forgiveness to all who will accept it.

Everyone: Amen and Alleluia!

Children's Message

Having Fun While Working

Montana Team

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.**

Blackfeet School Volunteering: Isaac Lyman, Andrea Sharp, Danielle Charlebois

Pastoral Prayer..... Rev. Mark

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response

Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

Antiphon: Carolyn Jennings

Homeless Shelter Volunteering: Wendy Wark, Brenda Dawson

Readings:

An Ode We Owe

by Amanda Gorman

New Testament Gospel Reading

Matthew 25:31-44

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Eagle Shield Senior Center Volunteering: Laura, Betty and Lily Marthaler

Special Music

Canticle of the Turning

Rory Cooney
arr. John Ferguson

Property Development Project Volunteering: Derek Lyman & Bill Nedde

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Musical Offering

I Never Said That

Josh M.

Slides of the Montana Trip

***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.

F.A.S.T Food Pantry Volunteering: Betsy Weischedel, Lisa Clark & Monica John

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Music

The Gift of Love

Hal H. Hopson

We will celebrate communion today by passing the elements out to the congregation. First, the Deacons will pass out the bread; please hold it until the minister directs you to partake. Then the Deacon will pass out the cup, which you are free to partake anytime thereafter. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith.

During Communion, slides of the Montana Trip will be shown

***No matter who you are or where you are on your spiritual journey,
you are welcome at Jesus' table.***

*** Hymn**

Lift Every Voice and Sing

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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.**

*Please stand if you are able.

❖ Sincere appreciation to:

- Bethany Blake, the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir and the members of the “Drop In Choir” for providing the fantastic music this morning!
- The members of the Montana Service Trip Team for sharing their stories and representing FCCEJ with amazing dedication and spirit!

❖ *Special request from your Deacons and staff: As we head into “sniffle season” please remember to take your used tissues with you after worship. There are garbage cans in the Narthex, by the elevator, and in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you!*

The flowers on the altar today are given by Linda Lou Parker

In memory of Erica.



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#/



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>Family and friend of Lyn Beliveau</i>	<i>Family and friends of Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen</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>Fran Thomas</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>Carol Daigle</i>	<i>Fletch Coolidge</i>
<i>Myrna Lindholm</i>	<i>Laura Cunningham-Firkey and Family</i>
<i>Shashaunah</i>	<i>Myrna Dooney</i>
<i>Bill Bickford Jr.</i>	<i>Joe Shields</i>
<i>Elizabeth Stone</i>	<i>Josh Winslow</i>
<i>Everyone that may be privately suffering</i>	<i>Patty Geiger</i>
<i>Flood victims in Nepal and surrounding areas</i>	<i>Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities</i>

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.

Grief Support

Grief Support Group meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday in the Marvin Lounge from 10-11:30am. Led by Mary McHugh and Sharon Dettenrieder. This is a safe place to share, question, and learn about the grief experience. Next meeting is October 8.

Adult Bible Study

Bible Study dates & topic: October 23 & Nov 13 / Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians.
We meet from 1:30-3pm in Marvin Lounge. Led by Mary McHugh.

Josh Sharp Ordination & Celebration

We are thrilled to celebrate the ordination of (soon-to-be Reverend) Josh Sharp on Sunday, October 25 at 3pm! There will be an ordination service in the FCCEJ Sanctuary, followed by a pot-luck reception in the Fellowship Hall. More information and a Sign Up Genius will be available in the October newsletter and worship bulletins.

Election Volunteer Opportunity

If you are interested in serving as an election observer at the polls in Essex, Essex Junction, or Williston on Tuesday, November 3 during the peak polling hours (7-9am, 11:30am-1:30pm, 5-7pm), please see Emily Guziak or email guziakemily335@gmail.com. You do not need to be a resident of these towns.

This is a volunteer, nationwide effort organized by the League of Women Voters to protect voter rights. You will only be asked to observe and make a phone call if you witness suspicious behavior. Everyone will work in pairs.

Detailed instructions will be provided, and you will be highly encouraged to attend a Zoom training on October 21 or 24 from 5:30 to 7:30pm. You will be making a difference in ensuring that voter rights are not compromised on this election day!

Cabin Fever Calcutta

The Calcutta Committee is seeking volunteers to help with the 10th annual Cabin Fever Calcutta. This evening of fellowship is our biggest fundraiser for the Service Trip to the Blackfeet Reservation. We need people to help with prize solicitation as well as planning the event. Contact Lisa Clark or Sharon Dettenrieder for more information.

Committee Fair

FCCEJ has members from many different denominations and or religious backgrounds. Each organization operates a little differently with some led by clergy and others led by democratic policy. Our governing body is the congregation with officers and committees elected to accomplish various aspects of running the church. The ministers and staff work with these folks and together we make it work. The heart of FCCEJ is committees and we have a bunch! They work with Rev. Mark with worship, help our children learn about God, organize Fellowship Hour after worship, oversee the music program, and ensure that our building and grounds are maintained. These committees do work and make decisions, working together in community – it's a great way to connect. On October 11th, committee representatives will be in Fellowship Hall before and after the worship services. Come and learn and maybe express interest for a particular committee. Or just come and learn how we make it all happen at FCCEJ.

New Member's Class Offered

Do you like the values of love, justice, inclusion and diversity that we lift up as Christ's teachings here at FCCEJ? Do you enjoy the warmth of community that we cherish here? Do you like the ways we feed and clothe people in need? Do you like the many groups and organizations that we partner with in order to create a more perfect union in Vermont, our nation and world? Do you love the music that comes from so many different and talented groups in our church? Or do you love to come and sit in the sanctuary and soak up God's presence? If so, then maybe it is about time you join this great church. We are offering a New Member's Class to any and everyone who would like to learn more about this amazing faith community. No obligation to join.

Sunday October 18th after the second service (around 11:30am) in the Marvin Lounge.

Childcare offered with advance notice. Please call the church office to make arrangements [802 878-5745].

A deli-style lunch will be provided for all. The class lasts about an hour and a half.

Weekly Calendar: October 4 – October 11

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

<u>Sunday, October 4</u> LIFT Sunday 10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th) 11am-12pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i>	<u>Monday, September 5</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing— Fellowship Hall, Kitchen <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>3:45 & 4:40pm: Music Lesson – Sanctuary</i>
<u>Tuesday, October 6</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>10:15am: Intermediate Tai Chi – Fellowship Hall</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag - Fellowship Hall</i> <i>6:30pm: BSA Troop 624 District Meeting – Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Church Council – Marvin Lounge	<u>Wednesday, October 7</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall 10:30am: Piano Tuning – Marvin Lounge/Sanctuary <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> 3pm: Stewardship Skit Rehearsal - Sanctuary <i>Highland Dance Rehearsal – Gym</i> 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal – Sanctuary <i>Cub Scouts Pack 630 – Fellowship Hall</i> 7pm: Searchers – Marvin Lounge <i>BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall</i>
<u>Thursday, October 8</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 10am: Grief Support – Marvin Lounge <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>3pm: ADK – Fellowship Hall</i> 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary</i> 7pm: Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary	<u>Friday, October 9</u> 8am: Coffee Clatter—Martone’s Deli <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall <i>Music Lesson - Sanctuary</i> <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> 12pm: Service Trip Leadership– Marvin Lounge 6pm: Blue Spruce Grange – Fellowship Hall
<u>Saturday, October 10</u> <i>8am: Give It A Go Support—Marvin Lounge</i> <i>The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary, West Wing</i> <i>8:30am: Weight Loss Support —Fellowship Hall</i> <i>9:30am: Montessori Fall Fling - Outside</i> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> <i>GMKCS – Gym, 3rd Floor</i>	<u>Sunday, October 11</u> 10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th) 11am-12pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i>