



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

October 11, 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 Judy McCullen (8:30)
Allison VanSteensburg (10:15)
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

Call to Worship Deacon Judy McCullen (8:30)
Allison VanSteensburg (10:15)

Leader: Some of God’s best colors are bursting around us, brightening up our Vermont paradise and giving our spirits a nudge of fall gratitude.

People: The seasons remind us that God is in charge with an intelligent design that nurtures the earth and gives humanity a way to understand not only time but the cycles of life.

Leader: Come, let us offer our praise to our Creator and be grateful for the wonders of fall. Come, let us feel the warmth of our community. Come, let us soak in the ever-present Spirit of the Living God.

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 Transition to Peer Groups (PreK-8th)

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..... Pastor Bob
Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other
A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer
Musical Response

* Hymn

We Limit Not the Truth of God

[insert]

Scripture Readings:

New Testament	Epistle	Philippians 4:1-9	[page 153]
	Gospel	Matthew 22:1-14	[page 19]

Special Music Anthem

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Musical Offering

***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**

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go

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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 and the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir for providing the fantastic music this morning!
- ❖ *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 Carl & Alison Wermer
In celebration of their 44th wedding anniversary. **

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#/



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.

Pastoral Search Update

The Pastoral Search Committee is pleased to share that the search for the next pastor of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction continues to move forward with care, prayer, and thoughtful discernment. After reviewing initial candidate materials and identifying individuals whose gifts and experience align with our congregation's mission and values, the committee has begun conducting first-round interviews to learn more about candidates' ministry backgrounds, leadership styles, and visions for congregational life. We anticipate inviting a smaller group of candidates to participate in second-round interviews later this fall, with continued discernment extending into late fall and early winter months. We are encouraged by the progress being made and the quality of candidates who have expressed interest in serving our church, and we remain grateful for the prayers, support, and encouragement of the FCCEJ church family as we seek God's guidance for this important next chapter.

Judy Allen, Matt Clark, Jen Dooley-Secretary, Bob Driver-Chaplain, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Marian Lawlor, Kaki McGeary, Betty Marthaler, Laura Marthaler, Cathy Shearer-Chair, Amy Trimble McIntyre

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. Scan the QR code or follow the link to sign up for the potluck:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0545A8AB2FAAF58-66498972-josh>



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>

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 November 12.

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.

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 **November 1**, 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 11 – October 18

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

<u>Sunday, October 11</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th) <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i>	<u>Monday, September 12</u> Indigenous People’s Day – Office Closed <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 9am: Food Pantry Organizing— Fellowship Hall, Kitchen <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> 1pm: Food Pantry Setup – Fellowship Hall, Kitchen <i>4:30pm: Music Lesson – Sanctuary</i> 5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution – Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary
<u>Tuesday, October 13</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> 6:30pm: BSA Troop Three Rivers District Roundtable— Fellowship Hall, Program Room 7pm: Deacons – Marvin Lounge	<u>Wednesday, October 14</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall <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 7pm: Searchers – Marvin Lounge <i>BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall</i>
<u>Thursday, October 15</u> <i>8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori</i> 9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting – Marvin Lounge <i>11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop 5:30pm: Reiki Share – Marvin Lounge 6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary 7pm: Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary	<u>Friday, October 16</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> 1:30pm: Bridge Group – Marvin Lounge 7pm: Burlington Amateur Radio Club – Marvin Lounge
<u>Saturday, October 17</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> 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i> GMKCS – Gym, 3rd Floor 2pm: ACS Rehearsal - Sanctuary	<u>Sunday, October 18</u> 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th) 11:30am: New Members Class – Marvin Lounge <i>1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall</i>