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.

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ONA
OPEN & AFFIRMING

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
Reformation Sunday
November 1, 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 *Improv on the C Blues Scale*

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 Van Steensburg
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 *Where the Spirit of the Lord Is* Stephen R. Adams

Call to Worship ..... Deacon Allison Van Steensburg
Leader: Scripture teaches us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. They stand up for God, seek goodness, fight for justice, live in peace with all people, and share God's love.

People: They are our heroes, our saints, our role models, our mentors and they teach us how best to live in this crazy world of violence, greed and self-absorption.

Leader: Each day, all of us can lean into these behaviors. We have the will and the way to witness to God's peaceable kingdom. We are God's saints in our world. Come, let us double down on the effort.

Opening Hymn** ***O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed thy grace on thee
And crown thy good with <u>brotherhood</u>, from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat, across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law.

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed thy grace on thee,
And crown thy good with <u>sisterhood</u>, from sea to shining sea.

Deacon's Prayer of Invocation **and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")**

***<u>Loving God</u>*, 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. *<u>And do not let us fall into temptation</u>*, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.**

Children's Message

<u>The Congregation Sings as the Children Come Forward</u>
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.

<u>The Congregation Sings as the Children Transition to Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th)</u>
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.

Scripture Readings:

Old Testament	Prophetic	Isaiah 9:1-7	[page 494]
New Testament	Epistle	Ephesians 6:10-20	[page 151]

Lest We Forget

No one has ever been independent; everyone has leaned upon the past. Every liberty we enjoy has been bought at the cost of martyr's blood; every achievement of the race has been made at the cost of incredible toil. There is not a privilege nor an opportunity that modern society grants to us that is not the product of the labors of others. We drink every day from the wells that we have not dug; we warm by fires we have not kindled; we live by liberties we have not won; we are protected by institutions we have not settled. Our churches are built upon rocks that have been put in place by martyrs of the ages past. Our governments rest upon the foundations cemented in place by the blood of soldiers who tracked their way, barefoot, through icy battlefields or over burning sands. Our courts are reared upon the bodies of those who died for freedom. None of us lives to ourselves, all the past is invested in us.

Sharing their Journey of God in their Military Service

Jane Piper
Dick Harris: Drawing on Faith
Other Veterans or Active Service Members

Honoring Our Military Service Folks

Special Music Anthem *Give Thanks* Henry Smith
arr. Ken Barker

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

We will celebrate communion today by passing the elements out to the congregation. First, the Deacons will pass out the gluten free bread; please hold it until the minister directs you to partake. Then the Deacon will pass out the non-alcoholic juice, which you are free to partake anytime thereafter. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith. Due to a great Sanctuary Choir Anthem, Rev. Mark will share the words of institution all before Christ's meal and then use silent non-verbal language to guide the congregation through each step.

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

Sanctuary Choir Anthem *The Gift of Love* Hal H. Hopson

Honoring Our Saints

Our Protestant Reformers believed that we should not worship or lift-up one person over another since we are all sinners and all saints. We all fall short of the glory of God and we all express Christ's love in spectacular ways. But we all remember people who have touched our lives. Everyone is invited to come forward and light a candle for a loved one who has joined God's eternal realm of peace. Please feel free to say their name out loud, quietly or simply in your mind. This year in our congregation the following people have joined Jesus in heaven.

Lyn Beliveau	Bill Bickford Sr.	Imogene Cheek
Thomas Cencer	Paul DuBuque	Don Gray
Russ Kinaman	Linus Kinner	Bill Lang
Morrie Lewin	Janet Martel	John MacWalters
Polly McEwing	Michael O'Beirne	Howard Osbourne
Larry Terry	Nancy Thayer	

All those in the military who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

As we come forward the following hymns will be played and all are invited to sing along.

Blest Be the Tie that Binds	**# 393**
I Sing a Song of the Saints of God	**# 295**
There Is a Balm in Gilead	**# 553**
Beneath the Cross of Jesus	**# 190**
Jesus Loves Me	**# 327**

Once everyone is done lighting their candles, Taps will be played.

The Playing of Taps by George Bergin Service Officer for VFW Post 6689

Final Song of Remembrance** ***For All the Saints **# 299**

Pastoral Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response *Sarabande from Suite 17 in F Major* Johann Jacob Froberger

Reminder to Offer Your Gifts to God

Today's offering will be taken in baskets by each door as you exit the worship service. Please give just as freely as you enjoy the time spent collecting money used for sacred rituals of faith.

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.

Postlude *Consolation in E Major* Felix Mendelssohn

*Please stand if you are able.

- Sincere appreciation to Bethany Blake, the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir, and the Drop-In Choir for sharing their wonderful musical talents with us this morning!

The flowers on the altar today are given by Wayne & Nancy Hall
In celebration of their 57th 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.

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.

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.

Family and friend of Lyn Beliveau	*Family and friends of Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen*
Mike LaMoy	*Nick Hella*
Josephine Lawrence	*Bob Hahner*
All those affected by violence around the world	*Fran Thomas*
David and Family	*Remi and Family*
Bill Bickford Jr.	*Myrna Dooney*
Michael Lafoy	*Audrey Sawyer*
Allan and Barbara Reith	*Jane Piper*
Laura Cunningham-Firkey and Family	*Fletch Coolidge*
Lou Ann Pioli	*Paula Sargent*
Phil Bourn, all troops currently deployed, and all those adjusting to being back home	
Everyone that may be privately suffering	*Flood victims in Nepal and surrounding areas*
Everyone experiencing uncertainty and fear in their communities	

Annual Craft Fest

The annual Craft Fest is on Saturday, November 14th from 9am to 3pm.
The following are a few ways to assist in FCCEJ's biggest fundraising event of the year:

1. Volunteer on Friday November 13th in setting up the church
2. Volunteer on Saturday November 14th as a greeter
3. Bake a treat for the Sweet Shoppe
4. Make a dish of mac & cheese or chili for the Heavenly Cafe
5. Donate items for Nearly New beginning November 1st

You can sign up at the volunteer table in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings or reach out to the church office if interested in helping. Lastly, mark your calendar and come to shop!
Thank you on behalf of the Craft Fest Committee.

Weekly Calendar: November 1 – November 8

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

Sunday, November 1 **Recognizing Veterans** 10am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:15am: Spiritual Friends (PreK-5th) 11am: Veterans Brunch & Committee Fair – Fellowship Hall Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop Calcutta Committee – Marvin Lounge *1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall* 3pm: Community Concerts at First presents Skylark String Ensemble - Sanctuary	**Monday, November 2** *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall *11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall* *3:45 & 4:30pm: Music Lesson – Sanctuary* 5pm: Thrift Shop Advisory Board – 2nd Floor Program Room 6pm: HRC – Marvin Lounge
Tuesday, November 3 *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* 8:30: Sermon Talkback—Marvin Lounge/Zoom 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop *10:15am: Intermediate Tai Chi – Fellowship Hall* *11:30am: Brown Bag - Fellowship Hall* *5pm: Essex Pediatrics Workshop –* *2nd Floor Program Room, 3rd Floor, West Wing* 7pm: Church Council – Marvin Lounge	**Wednesday, November 4** *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* *10am: Bone Builders—Fellowship Hall* *11:30am: Brown Bag—Marvin Lounge* *3pm: Highland Dance Class –Fellowship Hall* 5:30pm: Finally @ First Rehearsal – Sanctuary Planned Giving – Marvin Lounge Cub Scouts Den Meetings – West Wing, Program Room, 3rd Floor 7pm: Searchers – Marvin Lounge *BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall*
Thursday, November 5 *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* *8:30am: Essex Art League – Fellowship Hall* *10:30am: Music Lesson – Sanctuary* *11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall* *2pm – Video Shoot – Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary* 3-6pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop *6pm: Music Lesson—Sanctuary* 7pm: Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary	**Friday, November 6** 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* 12pm: Mission Lunch – Josh's House *5:30pm: Young Family Dinner – Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Gym*
Saturday, November 7 *8am: Give It A Go Support—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 Hall* *GMKCS – Gym, 3rd Floor* *3pm: Essex Town Cooking Class - Kitchen*	**Sunday, November 8** 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th) 11:30am: Music Committee – Program Room *1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall*