



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
Joshua R. Sharp Ordination
October 25, 2026

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

Order of Worship

Prelude *I Will Lift My Eyes* Bebo Norman

Welcome and Introduction to the Occasion Rev. Mark Mendes
*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this place.*

Introit *Here I Am, Lord* Dan Schutte

Call to Worship Carolyn Rushford

Leader: What do you do, when God calls?

People: Wake up. Listen. Act.

Leader: What do you do when God asks you to do something difficult?

People: Wake up. Listen. Act.

Leader: What do you do when God asks you to do something impossible?

People: Wake up. Listen. Act. Because, with God, nothing is impossible.

Leader: Even changing ourselves?

People: Even changing the world. Wake up. Listen. Act.

Leader: And, with all this living,

People: We worship God.

***Opening Hymn** *Spirit of the Living God* # 283

Pastoral Prayer and Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses") Rev. Sally May
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.

Anthem *Life Uncommon* Jewel

Scripture Readings:
Old Testament

1 Samuel 3:1-11

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Sermon

Rev. Ryan Gackenhaimer

Offering Our Gifts to God
Prayer of Dedication

***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.**

THE ORDINATION OF JOSHUA ROBERT SHARP

Greeting

Rev. Mark Mendes: The Champlain Association of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ greets you in the name of Jesus Christ. Peace be with you.

People: And also with you.

Presentation

Representative of the Local Church Dr. Terry Stein
First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, after carefully considering the call to ordained ministry of Joshua Robert Sharp, respectfully requests that the Champlain Association ordain Joshua to the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ, consistent with scripture and with the traditions of the church universal, and according to the polity of the United Church of Christ.

Ministerial Standards and Standing Committee Representative Rev. Paul Eyer
The MSSC has reviewed the request of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction. We have prayerfully examined Joshua concerning his fitness for ministry in Christ's church. We are pleased, on behalf of the Champlain Association of the United Church of Christ, to authorize the ordination of Joshua into the Christian ministry. Joshua, servant of God, we invite you to come forward as a sign of your consent to receive ordination into Christian ministry.

Terry: Joshua, before God and this congregation, we ask you: After prayerful discernment by yourself and in community, are you persuaded that God has called you to be an ordained minister of the Church of Jesus Christ, and are you ready with the help of God to enter this ministry and to serve faithfully in it?

Joshua: I am.

Mark: Do you, with the Church throughout the world, hear the word of God in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and do you accept the word of God as the rule of Christian faith and practice?

Joshua: I do.

Lynn: Do you accept the polity of the United Church of Christ, including the UCC Ministerial Code; and will you, as an ordained minister in this communion, reach out ecumenically toward all who are in Christ and show Christian love and respect to people of other faiths and people of no faith?

Joshua: I do and I will, relying on God's grace.

Terry: Do you promise to be diligent in your private prayer, to be open to the continuing revelation of God in scripture, and to seek the Spirit at work in the signs of the times?

Joshua: I do, relying on God's grace.

Mark: Will you be faithful in preaching and teaching the Gospel, and in administering the sacraments and rites of the church?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Lynn: Will you seek to regard all people with equal love and concern and undertake to minister impartially to the needs of all? Will you be faithful in exercising pastoral care and leadership, and will you be responsible in keeping confidences shared with you?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Terry: Will you be zealous in maintaining both the truth of the Gospel and the peace of the Church, speaking the truth in love?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Mark: Will you responsibly steward, for the sake of God's future, the resources the Church entrusts to you?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Lynn: Will you care for all of creation, striving to steward with justice the earth and its resources, and to heal the broken places?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Terry: Will you exercise wisdom and courage in carrying out public duties, witnessing and working for God's justice and mercy in each situation?

Joshua: I will, relying on God's grace.

Acclamation

Rev. Lynn Bujnak

Those official delegates of the association (clergy and others so designated) who are able may stand.

Lynn: People of God, you have heard the promises Joshua has made.

What is your will?

Association Members: By the grace of God, we affirm Joshua called and ready! Let us ordain him. Come, Holy Spirit.

Laying On of Hands and Ordination Prayer

Rev. Devon Thomas

The laying on of hands is the traditional act of prayer through which the church in every age asks the Holy Spirit to confer on people who are called to ordained ministry the gifts they will need to serve. At this time, we invite forward Joshua's family, the Association Clergy and representatives, and anyone else who feels so called, to place a hand on Joshua, or on a person connected to Joshua.

Declaration

Rev. Mark Mendes, Clint Russell, Rev. Paul Eyer

Rev. Mark: In the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, and by the authority of the Champlain Association of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, I declare you to be ordained into the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Clint Russell: Today we have prayed to God for your ministry. We will continue to pray for you, as you pray for the church the Holy Spirit calls into being. Partnership with God means working for something we do not fully know and of which we will not see the end. We are not our own. Yet in each generation, we make the faith our own. As some things pass away and new things are foretold let us be the church known for joy and hope and intention. Together let us teach, invite, and embody Christ's wisdom, so that all that has come before and all that will come hereafter will be for God's good and worthy purposes.

Paul Eyer: You are hereby granted Ordained Ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ. We present you with this certificate of standing along with the UCC Ministerial Code.

Joshua: The Peace of Christ be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

***Hymn**

I Hear Them All
[facing page]

Woody Guthrie

Presentation of Gifts

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

La Visionaire from *The 25th Ordre*

François Couperin

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

- ❖ Sincere appreciation to Bethany Blake, the FCCEJ Sanctuary Choir, and Finally @ First Praise Band, under the direction of Rick Dooley, for providing the beautiful music!
- ❖ Everyone is encouraged to join Rev. Sharp in the Fellowship Hall after the service for a potluck meal and celebration.

I Hear Them All

Woody Guthrie

$\text{♩} = 100$ D A

I hear the cry - ing of the hun - gry in the des - erts where they're
 I hear the sounds of tear - ing pag - es and the roar pf burn - ing
 So while you sit and whist - le dix - ie with your mon - ey and your
 I hear the ten - der words of Zi - on, I hear No - ah's wat - er -

5 E A

wandr'-ing. Hear their cry - ing out for heav-en's own be - nev - o - lence u -
 pap - er, all the crimes and ac - quis - i - tion turn to air and ash - en
 pow - er, I can hear the flow - ers grow - ing in the rub - ble of the
 fall. Hear the gent - le lamb of Jud - ah sleep - ing at the feet of

9 D A

pon them. Hear de - struc - tive pow'r pre - vail - ing, I hear fools fals - ly
 vap - or, And the rat - tle of the schack - le far be - yond e - manc - i -
 tow - ers. I hear lead - ers quit their ly - ing, I hear bab - ies quit their
 Bud - dha, and the pro - phets from El - i - jah to the old Pai - ute Wo -

13 A E Fm D

hai - l - ing. To the crook - ed wits of ty - rants when they call.
 pat - or. And the low - li - est who gath - er in their stalls.
 cry - ing. I hear sold - iers quit their dy - ing one and all.
 vo - ka. Take their plac - es at the tab - le when they're called.

17 A E A

I hear them all, I hear them all, I hear them all.

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 – stephfield87@gmail.com

Finally @ First Director: Rick Dooley – rickdooley5@gmail.com

Men At First Director: Bill Bickford Jr. – bill.bickford@aol.com

Officers

President: Terry Stein – terryrobertstein@gmail.com

Vice President: Kathryn Brennan – khbrennan@comcast.net

Financial Secretary: Ann Gray [finances@fccej.org]

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Clerk: Alison Wermer – clwerme@msn.com

Assistant Clerk: Brenda Dawson – bkdvermont@gmail.com

Historian: Ann Gray – grayann8@aol.com

Internal Auditors: Dan Petherbridge, Alan Kinney

Committee Chairs

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Communications:

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Deacons:

Judy McCullen – jhmccullen@yahoo.com

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Rob Gibson – rgibsonvt@gmail.com