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

ONA
OPEN & AFFIRMING

The First Congregational Church of Essex Junction

November 8, 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 *Amazing Grace* arr. Lani Smith

An Extravagant Welcome and Announcements ..... Pastor Bob
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this place.

Deacon's Greeting ..... Deacon Gary Hartmann
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 *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High* Rick Founds

Call to Worship ..... Deacon Gary Hartmann
Leader: In worship today, we offer our lives to You, Lord.
People: Our God, we trust You...
Leader: In worship today, make Your ways known to us. Lord, teach us your paths.
People: Lead us in your truth, teach it to us because you are the God who saves. We put our hope in You always.
Leader: In worship today, show us Your compassion and faithful love.
People: Teach us the way we should go. The way of justice, love, and faithfulness.
Leader: In worship today, we want to honor you.
People: Show us the way of your heart.

Opening Hymn** ***Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant **# 539**

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 ..... Elizabeth O'Beirne

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

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Musical Response ***Threefold Amen*** **# 589**

Hymn** ***There Is a Name I Love to Hear **# 52**

Old Testament Scripture Readings:

Psalm 78:1-7 [page 418]

Amos 5:18-24 [page 662]

Special Music Anthem *Fount of Every Blessing* Lloyd Larson

Meditation Reflection *Tell the Stories* Pastor Bob

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering and Prayer of Dedication

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

***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** ***I Love to Tell the Story **# 522**

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

*Please stand if you are able.

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

The flowers on the altar today are given by Carl & Alison Wermer
In honor of their children's birthdays - John, Roberta, Eva, and Leo.*

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.

Family and friend of Lyn Beliveau	*Tom Bennett and Family*
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	

Bickford Meal Train

As you may know, Bill is going through a difficult battle with cancer. After talking with Bill and Mindy, and with their blessing, Bob (Bill's brother) has set up a Meal Train to help make things a little easier for them during this challenging time.

The Meal Train allows friends and family to sign up to provide a meal on a particular day, helping Bill and Mindy without them having to coordinate meals themselves.

Here's the link to their Meal Train: https://mealtrain.com/vmdwe6

The link provides information about the Meal Train, including available dates, meal preferences, and delivery instructions.

This provides an opportunity for those who would like to help to do so in a practical way.

Annual Craft Fest

The annual Craft Fest is this 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

You can sign up at the volunteer table in the Fellowship Hall between and after worship 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.

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 December 10.

Bible Study

Our November date has moved to Friday, November 20th in the 2nd Floor Program Room at 1:30pm. We will recap the first 5 chapters of Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians and then finish off the letter.

Advent Lectionary Readings will be explored on December 11 at 1:30 - 3PM in the Marvin Lounge. Some key words: watch, wait, prepare, comfort. A key idea: trust in the Spirit of the Lord who brings light, healing, peace and justice!

Giving Tree

Once again FCCEJ is providing Christmas gifts to children in our community through our Giving Tree Program. Starting on Sunday, November 15, there will be a tree with gift tags in the Narthex as well as virtual tags on Sign Up Genius; tags will be available till Sunday, November 29.
Here are the steps for the tags:

1. Select a tag (or two or three) from the tree
2. Fill out the sign up sheet—please include your phone number and email
3. Purchase your gift(s), wrap them, and include the tag on the outside of the wrapping. Please use a gift bag or box for gift cards, too.
4. Drop off your gifts at the tree on Sunday morning or the office during the week

Gifts are due Sunday, December 6
The link for Sign Up Genius will be available and posted soon.
There is always great anticipation around the Giving Tree. We hope you will join us in making this Christmas a season of hope and love for many families in our community.

Weekly Calendar: November 8 – November 15

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Events in italics = Local Community Groups

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*	**Monday, November 9** *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* 9am: Food Pantry Organizing—Fellowship Hall *11:30am: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall* 1pm: Food Pantry Set Up – Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Storage Rooms *4:30pm: Music Lesson – Sanctuary* *5:30pm: Food Pantry Distribution – Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Sanctuary* *Woman Within Circle – Marvin Lounge* 7pm: Bell Rehearsal –2nd Floor Program Room
Tuesday, November 10 *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* *6:30pm: BSA Three Rivers District Roundtable – Fellowship Hall, West Wing* 7pm: Deacons – Marvin Lounge	**Wednesday, November 11** *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 7pm: Searchers – Marvin Lounge *BSA Troop 624 – Fellowship Hall*
Thursday, November 12 *8:15am-3:30pm: Bluebird Montessori* *9am: FCCEJ Staff Meeting – Conference Room* *10am: Grief Support – Marvin Lounge* *10:30am: 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, November 13** 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*
Saturday, November 14 *8am: The Vine Nepali Congregation—Sanctuary* **9am-3pm: CRAFT FEST** 10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop	**Sunday, November 15** 8:30* & 10:15am: Worship—Sanctuary & Streaming* 10:30am: Peer Groups (PreK-8th) *1pm: Brown Bag—Fellowship Hall*

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
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Historian: Ann Gray – grayann8@aol.com
Internal Auditors: Dan Petherbridge, Alan Kinney

Committee Chairs

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