



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

The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

July 7, 2024

From June through Labor Day weekend, we follow our Summer Worship Schedule. Sunday service begins at 9am and we have special music from individuals or groups that have volunteered, which gives our two musical groups [Sanctuary Choir & Finally @ First] the summer to rest and simply enjoy worship. Our streaming continues with a simple wide shot of the sanctuary which gives our tech folks a break. Our nursery is open each week with a paid attendant for ages 6 months through 3 years.

Children three and older remain in worship while Faith Formation is on summer hiatus.

Currently, mask usage is up to each individual.

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

Prelude

The Wind

Cat Stevens

Performed by Ezra and Makaylah Moos

An Extravagant Welcome

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

Greeting and Announcements

Musical Introit

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

Performed by Currier Bell Choir

Call to Worship Deacon Andrea Sharp

Leader: During the final stages of creation, God united with humanity to ease the deep well of divine isolation and loneliness. The result was a marriage between humanity and the divine.

People: Knowing the danger and destruction of loneliness, God created a model of partnership between two people, a union grounded on equality and mutual need.

Leader: Prophets and mystics, sinners and saints, kings and paupers, scientists and philosophers: most all seek to fill their lives with others in the primordial pull toward partnership, perpetuity and participation.

People: Prayer unites us with God and each other. Coming to church draws us together with both the divine and human elements of life. Music makes us dance and our spirits soar. Our intellect is simple gray matter that reaches throughout the universe and beyond.

Leader: Complete and utter union is at the heart of creation and everything written in the bible. Jesus bridges the gap and calls us to an intimacy with God that is full of passion and unrivaled in power and depth.

People: Come, let us enter into relationship with God.

A Time of Confession..... Deacon Andrea Sharp

Call to Confession

Leader: Kings and false prophets, people and priests, from the beginning of time to our present age: people have taken the power, presence and prestige of God and used them for their own means.

People: The biblical warrant attests to this fact. History proclaims this to be true. We know it to be true in our own time and place. Every people, every politician, every nation, every person falls short of the glory of God.

Leader: Come, let us fall on our knees with kings and prophets, priests and people as we seek forgiveness and a fresh start. Come, let us confess our sins before our God.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Loving Creator of this beautiful land, filled with purple, majestic mountains and grain fields that sway in the breeze, come to us today and assure us of your forgiveness and love. When we move toward false idols and lesser gods, help us to recognize the futility of finite, frivolous frills and replace them with the infinite and infallible presence of the divine. Align our senses to the places where the Great I Am speaks and moves and has being. Allow us to see you in the beauty of creation, the blessing of Christ's extravagant love and the ongoing empowerment of the Spirit of God. Forgive us and help us to better ourselves each day as we move toward the very kingdom of God. Amen.

The Assurance of Pardon

Leader: On behalf of the Living God made known in Jesus Christ, I proclaim to you that your sins are forgiven.

People: We accept God's abundant love and will earnestly try to live healthier and more productive lives.

Everyone: Amen and Alleluia.

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 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.**

Pastoral Prayer and **Unison Lord's Prayer ("trespasses")** Jonah Moos

A Time of Silence for Personal Prayer

Sharing Our Prayers with God and Each Other

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

Amazing Grace

Performed by Currier Bell Choir

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Prophetic

Isaiah 54:7-14

[page 530]

New Testament Epistle

James 5:7-11

[page 181]

Gospel

Mark 12:28-34

[page 38]

***Congregational Hymn of Choice**

Each week, the worship leader will ask for a suggestion from those in attendance for a hymn the congregation should sing. The organist will then lead us in the singing. If you pick one the organist cannot sightread, then be ready with another selection.

Summer Meditation

Lessons from the Road

Jonah Moos

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Jonah Moos

The Invitation

Communion Music

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Today, we will partake of communion by passing the bread and cup out to each person. The Worship Leader will direct everyone to partake of the gluten free bread together. The Deacons will then pass out the non-alcoholic grape juice where everyone is welcome to partake when they choose. This symbolizes both the individual and corporate nature of our faith.

Everyone is welcome at Christ's table.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation, Offering, and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

Come On Up to the House

Waits/Brennan

Performed by Ezra, Makaylah, and Micky Moos

***Doxology**

#778

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. Amen.

***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 God's grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood, 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 God's grace on thee,
And crown thy good with sisterhood, from sea to shining sea.**

***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 thanks the morning to:

- ◆ Our fantastic musicians for sharing their talents with us
- ◆ Jonah Moss for leading worship and sharing his experiences

OUR PRAYER MINISTRY

If you require prayers for yourself or a loved one; or if you wish for a call from a pastor, please contact welcome@fccej.org or call (802) 878-5745.

Victims of gun violence and their families
Family and friends of Louise Kolvoord
Family and friends of Dick Allen
Family and friends of Lani Gorman
Chris Hathaway
Bruce Parker
Skip Bergin
Julia Tanner Holly
Kim Sonntag
Jon Eric Lindholm
Family & friends of Ruby Lanza

Patty Giroux
Roger Mathey
Ozzy and Family
Russ Wilson & Cathy Galbraith
Connor Bryce and Family
Michael Flynn
Bruce & Lori Gianuzzi
Maureen Evans & Family
All those suffering due to violence in
Ukraine and the Middle East
...and all persons affected by COVID19

*The flowers on the Altar this morning are given by Anna Izzo
“In honor of my son, Airman Christian Surdak, as he
graduates as an Air Traffic Controller for the Air Force”*

CONNECTIONS:

Signup Online! <https://bit.ly/3dwsHji>

Our “Weekly Update” eConnection: <http://bit.ly/3rlslSv>

Our monthly “SPIRIT@FIRST” eNewsletter* <http://fccej.org/v5/category/newsletters/>

*also available in a printed, snail-mailed format

ONGOING PROGRAMS!

- ◆ **Sermon Talk Back**, Tuesdays at 8:30am in Marvin Lounge & Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89903982036#success>
- ◆ **Tai Chi Class**, Tuesdays at 10:15am in the Fellowship Hall
- ◆ **Yoga @ First**, Tuesdays at 5pm in the Sanctuary
- ◆ **Coffee Clatter**, every Friday @ 8am at Martone’s
- ◆ **Lunchtime Book Group**, 3rd Mondays @ 11:30am in Marvin Lounge
- ◆ **Bridge Group**, On Hiatus till September



FACEBOOK

bit.ly/39039ht



INSTAGRAM

bit.ly/3rlfgZf



INTERNET

fccej.org



YOUTUBE

bit.ly/3oPpBv9

Summer Schedule—June through Labor Day

- ◆ Sunday Morning Worship -
 - ⇒ One service at 9am—in-person & streamed
 - ⇒ All Family Worship—Faith Formation on hiatus till September
 - ⇒ Communion is served in the Sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of each month
 - ⇒ Rev. Mark on vacation July 1 through August 5

Heavenly Food Pantry

Our Heavenly Food Pantry has seen a dramatic increase in the number of clients we serve. On our most recent distribution date, we provided food and other essentials for 53 families – up from about the regular 30. This is approximately a 76% increase.

We are in particular need of the following food items: Cereal, Peanut Butter, Canned Corn, and Baked Beans, although all non-perishable items are gratefully accepted. Please also consider donating non-dairy milk (almond, soy, etc...) as well as gluten-free items and women's hygiene products. Donations can be dropped off just outside the church office or across from the elevator in the grocery cart.

Summer Music in Worship

During the summer, we encourage our musically inclined faith community members to consider sharing their talents in worship. You may nominate yourself, a child, grandchild, or other family member! It could be you and a friend who doesn't attend FCCEJ. It may be a solo, duet, trio, etc. Contact the church office or Bethany to sign up - bblake@fccej.org.

Faith Formation

During the summer months, Children's Ministry will explore The Beatitudes through materials provided in the Narthex. On a weekly basis, children and their families will learn the blessings and hope The Beatitudes offer followers of Jesus. Enjoy!

Vacation Bible Camp ~ August 5- 9, 2024

Hero Central—“Do good! Seek peace and go after it!” Psalm 34:14b

Mornings 9am-12noon OR All-Day 9am to 4pm (scholarship available)

Toddlers with a Parent & on up through current 5th graders—Plenty of room for Campers!

JHY helpers & SHY helpers and/or staff - Register Online today!

<https://www.fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/>

Current Adult Volunteers: Bill Bickford Jr., Bob Driver, Judy Allen, Lauren Starkey, Jane Piper, Doug Olufsen, Eric Lindholm, Mary Ann Phelps, Cathy Lapierre, Ginny Coe, Judy Roy, Amanda Palmer, Mary Anne Warren.

Youth Summer Service Days ~ July 17, 18, 24, & 25

JH & SH Youth participating with our Youth Ministry Team in Hands-On Service Locally

Sign up for all 4 days, just 1 OR partial day that fits into your work schedule

Return YM Registration Form and Vermont Foodbank Permission Forms by July 8th to Laurie

Weekly Calendar: July 7—July 14

Please contact the church office with any changes or corrections

Sunday, July 7

9am: All-Family Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

Tuesday, July 9

8:30am: Sermon Talkback, Marvin Lounge
10:15am: Tai Chi, Fellowship Hall
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
3:30pm: Food Pantry Committee, Marvin Lounge
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*
5pm: Yoga, Gym
6:30pm: *Eagle Scout Board of Review, Marvin Lounge*

Thursday, July 11

11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*
6:15pm: *Music Rehearsal, Sanctuary*

Saturday, July 13

8am: *The Vine Nepali Congregation, Sanctuary, West Wing*
Give It A Go Support Group, Marvin Lounge
9am: *Weight Loss Support Group, Fellowship Hall*
10am-1pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

Monday, July 8

8am: Food Pantry Organizing, Fellowship Hall,
2nd Floor Storage Room
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*
1:30pm: Food Pantry Set Up, Fellowship Hall,
2nd Floor Storage Room, Kitchen
7:30pm: *Group Victory, Marvin Lounge*

Wednesday, July 10

10am: *Bone Builders, Fellowship Hall*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*
4pm-7pm: Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop
6:30pm: Men At First Rehearsal, West Wing
7pm: *BSA Troop 624, Fellowship Hall*

Friday, July 12

8am: Coffee Clatter, Martone's Market
10am: *Bone Builders, Fellowship Hall*
11:30am: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*
6pm: *Blue Spruce Grange, Fellowship Hall*

Sunday, July 14

9am: All-Family Worship, Sanctuary/Streaming
10am: Racial Justice Subcommittee,
Marvin Lounge
1pm: *Brown Bag Fellowship, Fellowship Hall*

Events in italics = Local Community Groups