



**At the First Congregational Church, UCC of Wallingford, CT,
we have discerned the following vision and mission
for our faith lives together:**

Vision

Our faith – rooted in the compassion and teachings of Jesus Christ – is the foundation of our love for one another and service to the world around us.

We offer a home for those seeking deeper meaning or purpose in their lives through the exploration of Jesus Christ's teachings. The love and compassion found in those teachings commit us to uplift each individual and celebrate our shared humanity.

Mission

We will foster spiritual growth, loving communication, and mutual care, thereby empowering us to confront issues that impact our community and the world, including poverty, isolation, and exclusion.

We commit to developing a nurturing environment where all are loved, valued, and inspired to meaningful participation in the life of the church. Through our Christian faith, compassion, and service, we will dedicate ourselves to making a positive impact on the lives of people in our community and beyond.



The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492

Church telephone: (203) 265-1691

Church Office Hours: Tues.– Fri. - 9:00am – 2:00pm

Email: officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org (office)

Website: www.firstchurchwallingford.org

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT



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A Message From the Interim Minister

As of this writing, it is only 11 days until I am on vacation. In only 11 more days I can sleep in, sit in the sunshine, go to the theater, read a book, travel to visit family, spend time with friends, go to the beach, try a new recipe, tackle some home repair projects, plant a garden, repair my clothes, make a quilt, spend time with my new friends from Afghanistan, declutter the garage, visit my home church, visit my grandchildren, spend time at the Mercy Center, visit dear friends in Maryland and New York, attend a Prayer Shawl Anniversary Party, and maybe sit and cuddle with my dog. I have big plans for my vacation.

But before I can go on vacation, I have 4 Worship Services, 2 Celebration of Life Services, 9 Bulletins, some pastoral visits, 10 meetings, an Annual Meeting, and a newsletter to finish. But with so much to do before I can go on vacation, it seems easier to just keep working, spread the work out, and skip the vacation. But I have learned the hard way that vacations are necessary for my mental and physical health. Vacations are needed for fresh perspectives. Vacations are needed to heal my weary soul. Vacations are needed to reconnect to creation and the one who created me.

The tenth commandment, as found in Exodus 20:8-11, is “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” What is a Sabbath day? It is a day of worship and rest. I work on most people’s Sabbath day and I have gotten out of the habit of taking a day for personal worship and rest. Rest is restorative. Taking time to rest is what makes work more meaningful and fun. There are so many things I want to do on my vacation. There are so many things I can’t do while I am working, so I want to cram all those things into my 22 days of vacation. But if I do even a fraction of those things, I will return to work more tired and frazzled than I am now. So I think I need to revise my vacation plans to include maybe two or three things that would give me joy, and then spend the rest of my vacation learning to rest. Practicing Sabbath. Rediscovering God.

However you vacation this summer, don’t forget to rest and be grateful for all that God has done for you.

Shabbat Shalom,

Pastor Meredith



A Message from the Moderators

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Without a doubt, May 4, 2025 was our time to celebrate! Our 350th Birthday Worship and Party brought so many so much joy. It made our hearts full to see everyone who came together to create a spectacular day to honor our past, present, and future. Looking around the sanctuary as worship was about to begin that day brought such an uplifted feeling as we saw new friends and old, familiar and missed faces. Thank you to all who made worship so special, and especially to Sue Phipps who provided inspiration for the service. The music was beautiful. The messages from our guest speakers were amazing, including the inspired message from our beloved Reverend Margaret Jay. Sharing communion as part of the celebration was so moving. Closing the service with a beautiful message from Rev. Connor Filkins brought tears to many eyes and was the icing on the cake! And speaking of cake, and ice cream, and hot dogs, and pasta salad, and....THANK YOU to everyone who played any role in our party on the parade grounds. From our set up crew, to our decorators, to our cooks, to our servers, and our clean up crew, we lift up so much gratitude. So many lent their hands to create a wonderful celebration, a gathering to remember. Thank you to all who contributed to our 350th gift registry on this special day.

After so much wonderful celebration, it is challenging to shift to June and matters that seem more administrative. However, these matters are not just business or administrative. Rather, they are critical events in the life of our church that allow us to demonstrate our love, commitment, and dedication to our living church.

Along these lines, we highlight **Sunday, June 1, 2025** as Generosity Sunday, the worship service when we receive with gratitude pledging commitments for fiscal year 2025/2026. Because of your generosity with time, talent, and treasure, our church changes lives. Please prayerfully consider your pledge of financial support for the coming year and join us on June 1 to celebrate our collective generosity and imagine together what is possible at First Congregational Church.

Our Annual Meeting follows on **Sunday, June 8, 2025**, immediately following the worship service. Your presence is critical as we address a number of issues that will affect the future of First Church. We will be reviewing and voting on the Vision Board's recommendation to adopt the Ministry model as our ongoing organizational structure. Over the past two years, we have trialed this system of Ministries led by coordinators with supportive teams to fulfill ministries consistent with our Vision & Mission statements. The Vision Board acknowledges that improvements in this structure are still necessary. However, it believes that the six Ministries (Administrative, Congregational Care, Faith Formation, Membership, Mission & Outreach, and Worship) and their respective teams, overseen by the Vision Board, represent the most effective, efficient, and meaningful way to engage the congregation as a whole in walking the path God intends for us.

Whether we ultimately adopt the Ministry Model or return to the Boards & Committees model, we will be voting on new church bylaws. These new bylaws simplify and streamline our previous bylaws in ways that allow FCC more flexibility as we move into the future. As is typical of every Annual Meeting, we will also be voting on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025/2026 and on the slate of officers for the coming year. We need everyone to consider their volunteerism and where they can devote time, with passion and in various increments, to ensure the success of First Congregational in the coming year. Oh, and lunch, did we mention that lunch WILL be served at the Annual Meeting? Yes, it will be a time for business and sustenance and fellowship!

Rest assured, we will return to a time to dance and party in the remainder of our 350th anniversary year. Before that, join us on June 1st and June 8th and help us to complete the next tasks that keep the church operating and walking in our Mission, guided by Christ.

With grace and peace,
Lori Folk-Barron and Greg Whitehouse, Co-Moderators

Message from the Minister of Music



The summer months in the past have meant that there would be music programs for children. But, I decided to take a different route this summer as the children in the summer months are heavily scheduled with camps of all sorts: soccer, baseball, art, theatre, musicals, games, outdoor camping, technology of all sorts. The list could go on. So, I am offering some workshops to adults that they may try some of the “instruments” that are available to the children. I have three workshops scheduled at different times hopefully to accommodate as many people as possible as they go on summer vacations. Here is the information below.

WORKSHOPS

1. June Tuesday , June 10, 2025 5:30-7:00 p.m.

BOOMWHACKERS

- can do it seated
- no knowledge of music required
- required to count to 4
- whackers are color coded
- ages 12 to infinity



2. July Tuesday , July 8, 2025 5:30-7:00 p.m.

BELLS. Color coded

Same requirements as above

3 August Tuesday , August 12, 2025 5:30-7:00 p.m.

ORGELKIDS

Learn how to put an organ together. The kids did this last summer.

No knowledge necessary.

I will put three papers on my office door in the connector. Sign up for workshop (s) you would like to do or text me at 860-803-8745. If children want to do these activities, I will try to work out a time when they can do them.

NOTE: UKULELE PLAYERS: I have some events in the works for us, but dates and times have not yet come together.

Hope you all have a happy and healthy summer,

Jeanette



JUNE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

June 1 This is a special Sunday filled with celebrations. This Sunday is Pride Sunday where we will celebrate the One Year Anniversary of becoming an Open and Affirming Church. We will kick off our celebration of PRIDE month, a month lifting up the gifts and challenges of the LGBTQ+ Community and reflecting on how far we have come and how far we still have to go. We will celebrate Generosity Sunday as we receive financial pledges to support the ministry of our church. And we will share in Holy Communion.

June 8 Pentecost Sunday. This day, 40 days after Easter, is when the Spirit came and the church was born. **Wear red** and be prepared to feel the Spirit moving among us. Following the service is our **Annual Meeting** and lunch. We will be voting on our New Structure, the Budget, Revised Bylaws, and Nominations Slate.

June 15 Susan Alker, Guest Preacher Today is **Scholarship Sunday** when students entering college for their first year will be recognized and given scholarships in support of their education. Coffee Hour will feature a Make Your Own Sunday bar.

June 22 Rev. Dr. Charlene Bruce, Preacher

June 29 Rev. Dr. Charlene Bruce, Preacher



Sunday School Families, Woohoo! We made it to the end of yet another Sunday School year. The Faith Formation team would like to thank our teachers, students and congregation for all that was accomplished this year. Our students dove deep into curriculum that spanned throughout the bible.

With targeted discussions, visual demonstrations and curated activities, our children made connections between the bible, our church and the world around them. As we transition into summer, we are excited to announce our 2025 summer Sunday school theme... Walking on Water:

The Miracles and Mysteries of the Bible. This fun, highly interactive program will follow a dueling-aged curriculum with two separate instructional groups, perfect for all students between Pre-K and 8th grade.

The program will run on the following dates:
June 22nd, June 29th, July 13th, July 20th and July 27th.



If you have children interested in attending, please use the QR code below to fill out our virtual registration form. Additionally, we are looking for volunteers to teach our program. Each week will require two instructors.

If you are interested in teaching, please reach out to fccwfaithformation@gmail.com, including both your availability and preferred contact method (email or cell). All students entering 8th and 9th grade in the fall of 2025 will be eligible to participate in our confirmation class. This class will be led by two instructors, and will follow a year long curriculum that navigates topics relating to our church, Christianity and the world around us.

All interested families should email fccwfaithformation@gmail.com. Please include the names of all participants, the grade they will be entering in the fall and their availability for class times. More information on confirmation will be coming soon.

Thank you again for an incredible year of fun, learning, and exploration. We look forward to seeing you all in June for more fun with our summer programming! Warm regards, Madison Torre and the Faith Formation Team



Call to The Annual Meeting

June 8, 2025

To the members of The First Congregational Church of Wallingford, Connecticut: Notice is hereby given of the 349th Annual Meeting of the Church to be held Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 11:15 a.m. via hybrid meeting, both in person in Congregational Hall and via the Zoom application for the following purposes:

1. To receive Annual Reports from Ministers, Vision Board Officers, and Ministries and Teams of the Church;
2. To act upon any business arising from such reports;
3. Discussion and action regarding recommendation to adopt the Ministry Model with a Vision Board & Ministries of Teams as the ongoing organizational structure in place of the previous Council and Boards & Committees model;
4. Discussion and action regarding proposed revised By-Laws with exact version dependent upon outcome of action on Agenda Item #3;
5. To act upon the Proposed Budget for July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026;
6. To receive the Report of the Nominating Team;
7. To elect Officeholders, Vision Board and Ministry Coordinators for 2025-2026 or develop plan for populating Council, Boards & Committees, pending outcome of action on Agenda Item #3;
8. To act upon such other matters as may properly come before the meeting;
9. To open the time capsule from the 325th Anniversary and present contents.

Kathy Filkins

Church Clerk

Stewardship Team - 2025



Please join us on **GENEROSITY SUNDAY - June 1, 2025**

“Generosity is the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly. It is a learned character trait that involves attitude and action entailing both the inclination and actual practice of giving liberally. It is not a haphazard behavior but a basic orientation to life. What generosity gives can vary: money, possessions, time, attention, aid, encouragement, and more but it always intends to enhance the true wellbeing of the receiver. Like all virtues, generosity is in people’s genuine enlightened self-interest to learn and practice.”

Definition of Generosity by Christian Smith from his work with the Generosity Project at Notre Dame University.



How will you serve?



It takes everyone for our Church's Vision and Mission to become real.

Since we are approaching the end of our program year and our annual meeting, please consider, prayerfully, how you would enjoy being involved in and/or supporting our work for the next year. Are you feeling the nudge to serve (or continue to serve) as a coordinator or a team member within a ministry or a specific team?

Please send me an email, call, text or speak to me so I will know your thoughts. lorraine.westervelt@gmail.com 203-257-6964



A Celebration of Life – Megan Perkowski

You are invited to a celebration of life for Megan Perkowski (January 22, 1984 – May 26, 2025) Megan was a beloved lifelong member of the church. A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, May 31 at 10 AM in the sanctuary. Visitation will be Friday, May 30 from 3-7 PM at the BC Bailey Funeral Home, 273 South Elm St., Wallingford. May God comfort those who mourn.



WFC, Women & Families Center

169 Colony ST Meriden, CT 06451

Monthly Drive for June 21, 2025

First Congregational Church

23 South Main ST. Wallingford, CT 06492

Drive through at the back of the church in the parking lot.

WFC has various programs that support youth to adults in Central CT. WFC is a human services Agency serving Middlesex County & the Greater New Haven area. They have programs for homelessness, before & after school in three Meriden schools. They have safe places with project Reach: Robyn's & WHYSE houses. Open DOHR is a Human Resources Training program for low income men, women & Youth. SACS is support for victims of sexual assault. They provide survival kits for homeless youth & kits for support of SACS victims.

Items accepted for donation for SACS kits is: One size fits all unisex sweat suits in neutral colors, socks, deodorant, toothbrush, tooth paste & small stuffed animals.

Safe Places, Project Reach: Robyn's & WHYSE House accepted items are non-perishable food items or Stop & shop or BJ's gift cards. Youth homelessness kits item accepted are snacks, bottled water, flashlight, chap stick, sunscreen, seasonal appropriate clothing.

Before & after school programs K-5 accepted items are age appropriate toys that promote exploration & social engagement, school supplies for homework time or during activities. Any toys or school supplies not needed will be donated to needy families.

Bring Back the Pollinators



FCCW

Join Nancy Tipping, Xerces Society Ambassador, to learn about native bees, their life history, threats, and what you can do to help these important pollinators. The Xerces Society is a nationwide non-profit that works to protect the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats.

Sunday
June 1
Congregation Hall
11:30

JUNE ONA TEAM NEWS

In the past few weeks, The ONA Team has been moving forward in its mission with the continued support of this congregation. With our clothing drive in March, we delivered many undergarments and gift cards to **The Meriden Pride Community**. Members of our team have attended meetings and rallies with Meriden Pride as we work toward building a relationship with them.

June is Pride Month which is a time for the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies to celebrate its many accomplishments and continue fighting for equal rights for its members. Many Pride events are taking place around the state, including Middletown **PrideFEST** on June 7th (more info to come). Join us to show your support.



We want to recognize Juneteenth, June 19th, also known as Emancipation Day. This day celebrates the end of slavery for people in the United States of African descent. In Connecticut, there are numerous events scheduled to empower, entertain and educate the community about equal rights and inclusion.



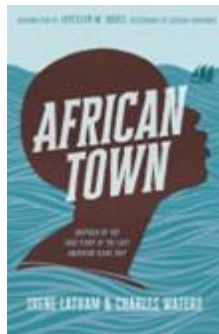
Kassi Filkins helped us create an inspiring look for **our ONA Covenant**, which we plan to hang in the congregation for everyone to see.

The ONA team is choosing a **fiction book focused on Autism**, to read and discuss this summer. Please look for an **ONA Highlight** insert in the bulletin this coming month to find out more details. **Happy Summer!**

Book Club News



For June we are reading “African Town” by C. Walters and I. Latham.
“A powerful and stunning novel in verse.”



Please join us at 6:30 on June 24 in the Guild Room.

This is our last book for the program year. Don't forget to bring your suggestions for next year! And thanks to everyone for another great year of reading, fellowship and lively discussions!



RUMMAGE SALE THANK YOU TO MY CHURCH FAMILY

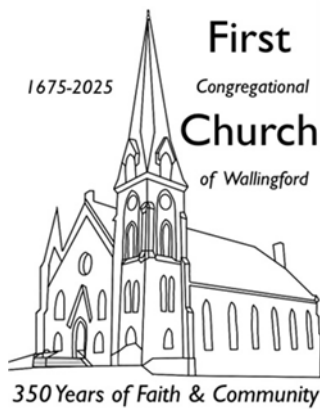
So many times I find myself **in awe** when it comes to our rummage sales! **I am amazed** at the number of items that come in within a two- week span. On the Sunday before the sale starts, I ask for help to set up the tables and bring in the bags and household goods to Congregational Hall after our church service, and **so many of you respond**. During the week, **I'm extremely grateful** for all the volunteers who come every day to sort the clothes, shoes, pocketbooks, linens, household items, and discard the ones with stains, tears, rips, or don't work. To add to my amazement, **I marvel** at all of you who come to work the sale with smiles on your faces and welcome our customers with warm and friendly conversation. Finally, to end the whole rummage effort, **I am most thankful** to all of you who come on Saturday at noon to break down the whole room, bag up all the leftover clothing, stuffed animals, decorative pillows, and household goods, take everything that isn't New Jersey bound to Goodwill, and set the room back up for coffee hour the next day.

I can't begin to individually thank all of you who helped in one way or another to make this spring sale another success. You know who you are but **I'm deeply appreciative to all of you** who contributed clothing or household items, those who sorted and worked the 3-day sale, and those who helped breakdown Congregational Hall after the sale.

Many, many thanks to ALL OF YOU! As always, many hands make light work! Our total earnings for this Spring 2025 Rummage Sale:

\$4,315.36!!!!

In Christian love,
Bernie Annunziata



Join the 350th “Voices of Devotion” Project!

By now, you have heard that one of the many ways we will be celebrating the 350th Anniversary of First Congregational Church in 2025 is with the “Voices of Devotion” Project. Modeled after the Upper Room devotionals that many of us use for our daily devotional time, we are seeking devotionals written by past, present and (hopefully) future members and friends of FCC. With the start of 2025, we have begun to share submitted devotions on a weekly basis via email, and we intend to publish all of the devotions in booklet form at the end of the anniversary year.

Some may find the idea of writing a public devotional to be intimidating, but we want to remind you that the purpose of this project is to celebrate the many voices that have worshipped God at First Congregational Church. We are looking for YOU, the heart, soul, and history of FCC, to lend your voice and offer a devotion that speaks from your heart. Write about an experience, large or small, that told you God is near. Write about an event, a memory, a trial, a person, a meaningful piece of scripture - anything that brought your heart closer to God or reminded you that the Holy Spirit was and is a force in your life.

To create your devotional: Choose a Bible scripture that speaks to you or connects to the story you have to tell. Describe your story and how you apply this story and its spiritual truth to your life. How do you hope others might apply it to theirs?

We pray you say YES to participating in this project. Please use the attached form to submit your devotion. The “Voices of Devotion” team members will confirm the receipt of your submission. If you have submitted your devotion and did not receive confirmation or received a “rejected email message,” please assume we have not received it, and contact us at fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com or at lorifolkbarron@gmail.com. You can also enter your devotional using the Google sheet at this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp_url

We are accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Please feel free to submit more than one devotional if you have more than one story to tell!

With joyful voices,

Lori Folk-Barron, Bernie Annunziata, Marsha Mather, and Bob Weste

“Voices of Devotion” Submission

Name: _____

(as you wish it to appear in the devotional booklet)

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Title: _____

Quoted Scripture: _____

Quoted Scripture Citation: (e.g., Jeremiah 29:11-14) _____

Devotional Text: (up to 500 words) *Please handwritten or type below or attach separate page.*

Prayer:

Please submit devotional by

- Email to fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com
- Use this Google sheet link to enter your devotion directly
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp_url
- Mail to “Voices of Devotion” Project, First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492.



November 9, 2025

In Congregational Hall

Exodus 35:31-32

And he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze.

- **This is the time to gather some wonderful artwork to display in the church art show!**
 "Art" includes photography projects, craft projects, etc.
- **This is a multi-generational display of our congregation's artwork for our 350th celebration year!! Please invite your family & friends are welcome to show their artwork too!**
- ***Drop off to a designated area of Congregational Hall on Sunday, Nov. 2 and the work will be on display on***

Sunday, November 9th

- ***Pick up your art work on Monday, Nov. 10th between 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. or at coffee hour on Sunday, Nov. 16th***



I'm trying to give people time to create something or put things aside as artwork comes home with your children! Please label with family name & artist's name.

Questions? Please email Pam Perkowski at pperkowski@myhts-wallingford.org



Congregational Care

We Would Like to Be There When You Need Us!

We would like to be there when you need us. Sometimes, things happen in life leading to someone needing special care – the loss of a loved one, a hospitalization, a nursing home stay, a prolonged illness, an unsettling life transition, becoming homebound... If you are in need of care or would like to be added to the Prayer List, please call Pastor Meredith at 914 255-1690 or the church office at 203 265-1691. They will share your request with the Visitation Team Coordinators Charlene Bruce and Cliff Castellano. If you would like to be a visitor and join the Visitation Team, contact Charlene at charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net or Cliff at cliffc45@yahoo.com

HELPING HANDS



As many of you may or may not know, we have been providing meals to some members of our church family, who through various circumstances, are receptive to having a meal delivered to them. If you know of someone in our church, who either on a short or long term basis, could benefit from a delicious dinner, please let us know. Also, if you wish to have your name added to our list of folks who have volunteered to make a meal, please let us know. We'd be happy to have you join us!

Helping Hands is just one of many "behind the scenes" groups within our congregation that provides comfort and support to our fellow brothers and sisters.

If there is a need or if you are willing to cook, please contact either Louise Zemina at 203-988-2517 or Bernie Annunziata at 203-415-9809.



Do you have a loved one, a friend, an acquaintance with health, family, personal issues? The Prayer Shawl ministry creates beautiful comforting shawls, lap robes, and blankets for you to give to your loved ones in need. There is always a selection appropriate for men, women, children, parents, caregivers. We have a variety of colors and sizes for you to give. Please ask one of the Care Team (Charlene Bruce, Cheryl Naski, Cliff Castellano, Joan Bushey and Ann Gygax), Pastor Meredith or Kathy Janis for a shawl. All are created by loving hands, blessed in our group and just waiting to give to someone in need of that loving touch, that reminder that they are cared for and cared about through whatever is going on in their lives.

We also create all the Baptismal blankets that are given to each child baptized in our church. Please consider asking for a special blanket for a child in need. Again, we have many sizes, colors and patterns for any child. Perhaps a parent who needs a Prayer Shawl and a special blanket for their child?

Please call or text Kathy Janis 203-376-1173 or email kathrynmjanis@gmail.com with any questions or requests.



A Message from the Flower Team

Thank you to Joe Geremia and Geremia Farms for donating the beautiful begonias and calla lilies for our 350th Birthday celebration on May 4th! Please consider reaching out to Joe to express your thanks for his amazing generosity to First Congregational at the holidays and on special occasions.

We thank our altar flower sponsors for supporting this ministry on a weekly basis. In looking ahead to the next few months, we are in need of sponsors for these dates:

July 13 July 20 Aug 10 Aug 17 Sept 7 Sept 14 Sept 21

Due to increases in their costs, Wallingford Flower Shoppe will be increasing the price of altar flower arrangements for the first time since November 2019. Effective May 1st, altar flower sponsors will be charged \$50 for one large arrangement or \$50 for two smaller arrangements. If you have signed up to sponsor flowers after May 1 and this price increase alters your ability to do so, please contact the church office.

Direct donations to the Flower Fund are always appreciated to allow us to place flowers on the altar on those weeks when we do not have sponsors, to help provide holiday flowers to our homebound members, to provide flowers to our baptismal families, and for special occasions, such as placing palm plants in the chancel on Palm Sunday. Thank you!



The ministry of ushering is a crucial part of worship because it is one of the most visible ministries in the church, nevertheless the usher performs a major role in ensuring that people see and experience that.

People feel invited to serve the church through a welcoming ministry. The church usher duties can be summed up in a few words – making people feel welcome at church, assisting the Pastor with people management, assisting with seating, collecting offering and maintaining a safe environment. Currently, we have six rotating teams. Usher teams are only needed no more than once a month.

If you are interested in joining the ushering ministry, please contact Tony Annunziata at (203) 500-9542

First Congregational Church of
Wallingford
23 South Main St
Wallingford, CT 06492

*The next Spire will be
published in September 2025.
Spire submission deadline for
the September Issue is
August 15th.*

Email the church office at:
officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org

