



**The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

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To make a gift to First Church



**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 up lift 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.

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# First Congregational Church Wallingford, CT



**December 28, 2025**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ Please rise in body or in spirit  
NCH = New Century Hymnal (Black)  
PH = Pilgrim Hymnal (red)

PRELUDE *Pastorale* J.S. Bach

WELCOME

CENTERING MUSIC *Merton* David Thorne

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Praise the Holy One! Praise God from the sanctuary and across the computer screen. Praise God in the morning and the evening, in the afternoon and at night!

**Many: Praise God all people, all nations, all generations!**

**Praise the Holy One who forms and shapes us!**

One: Let our adoration join with the angels! May our songs join with the saints!

**Many: Let us worship the Holy One with gladness! Let us worship our God in truth!**

One: Praise the Holy One for God's abiding presence! Praise God for God's wondrous works!

**Many: Let the name of the Holy One be exalted forever and ever! Praise the Holy One!**

+HYMN *Angels from the Realms of Glory* PH #117

CALL TO REFLECTION

PRAYER OF REFLECTION

**Righteous One, you make all things new, and yet, we often cling to those things, actions, and attitudes that do not serve your purposes. We refuse to confront ourselves and examine our feelings and reasoning out of fear. We may be more concerned with being wrong and needing to change than being faithful to your way and confident of your grace. Meet us in our fears with the assurance that**

**you go with us and welcome us when we turn back to the path you have laid. Transform us, renew us, and redeem us for your glory and in your love. Amen.**

SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANTHEM *Hallelujah* Leonard Cohen  
Christmas Lyrics by Lance & Layne Stafford, Kirby LeMoine, Josh Svorinic

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Isaiah 63:7-9

THE MESSAGE God With Us

HYMN *What Child is This, Who, Laid to Rest* PH #140

CALL TO PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

CALL TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY *Interlude on the Coventry Carol* W.S. Lloyd-Webber

+ DOXOLOGY (melody Angels from the Realms of Glory)

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son.**

**Evermore your voice is raising to the eternal Three in One:**

**Come and worship, come and worship**

**Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

+HYMN *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* NCH #129

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

RESPONSE *Born in the Night, Mary's Child (st 1)* NCH#152

**Born in the night, Mary's Child, a long way from your home;  
Coming in need, Mary's Child, born in a borrowed room**

POSTLUDE *Personat Hodie* Rebecca Groom Te Velde

### Announcements

**Welcome to the First Congregational Church of Wallingford, an Open and Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ! No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Please join us for refreshments and conversation downstairs in Congregational Hall immediately following the service.**

**Serving the church today are ushers:** Roy Cannon, Louise Zemina, Kathy Filkins & Rick Voelker; chimes: Rick Voelker.

**The flowers on the altar are** given in memory of my father, Charles Matakaetis by Rev Dr Charlene Bruce.

**We welcome Susan Alker to our pulpit this morning.** Susan Alker is a student in the Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School. After nearly 30 years of practicing law as a partner in global law firms, she thought she would retire, but God had other ideas, instead calling her to a new life of ministry. While studying part time at YDS, Susan works at Fairfield University teaching ethics, mentoring students in the Ignatian spirituality program, and acting as the earth chaplain in Campus Ministry. A lifelong follower of Jesus, Susan is a member of First Congregational Church Bethel (UCC) and a frequent visiting preacher in UCC congregations. She still does not know how to play the guitar.

**Pastor Jeff Birch** - Sunday, January 4, 2026, will be our new settled pastor's first worship service here at our beloved First Congregational Church of Wallingford. Please join for the service and a time of celebration following the service.

**First Church Star Ball:** You are invited to attend this very special ending to the celebration of our 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup> 6:30-10:30pm at the Elks Club. Tickets will be available after church for \$35 and \$40 at the door.

Rev. Dr. Meredith Jeffers, Interim Pastor  
Dr. Jeanette Gross, Minister of Music.  
Search in Process, Office Manager  
Mr. Tony Annunziata, Sexton  
Search in Process, Director of Sunday  
School and Youth Ministries