

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@firstchurchwlfd.org (office)

Website: www.firstchurchwallingford.org



On June 9, 2024, members of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford voted to become an Open & Affirming congregation and adopted the following ONA Covenant

We, the faith community of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford, United Church of Christ, aspire to live by the wisdom of Christ's teachings. At the heart of our vision and mission is a commitment to inclusivity and acceptance. We welcome everyone regardless of age; race; culture; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; family configuration; economic circumstances; mental, physical, development, and emotional ability; and religious tradition.

Jesus Christ, in speaking to his disciples said this: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another "(John 13: 34).

As current disciples of Jesus, we commit to maintain a nurturing environment where all are loved, valued, and inspired to meanigful involvement in the life of the church. Jesus' teachings of love and compassion call us to uplift each individual and celebrate our shared humanity, both within the sanctuary of this church and throughout the community in which we live and serve.

Diversity in our world is a gift ffrom God which we celebrate. Guided by our Lord's wisdom, we offer an authentic and loving welcome to all who seek a relationship with God, and we proclaim ourselves an Open and Affirming church.

Our work as an ONA Congregation needs to continue moving forward. In the upcoming year, the ONA committee will be providing information and planning activities that will help us learn about and embrace the diversity in our own community.

If you are interested in joining the ONA committee, please contact any committee member or Reverend Jeffers.

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

As the seasons change and we move swiftly toward October, my mind goes to thinking about the great cloud of witnesses with whom we share our lives and our faith. The first Sunday in October we will celebrate World-Wide Communion Sunday, a Sunday when Christians around the world will gather in unity to celebrate Holy Communion, a sacrament that unites, heals us, and makes us one in our quest to be faithful followers of Christ. As we unite our hearts, we will pray for and work toward peace, a peace that stirs our imaginations and passes all understanding.

On October 20 we will celebrate Children's Sabbath, an annual recognition of the joys and challenges of our children. On Children's Sabbath we seek justice for all God's children. Children are not just our future, but a vital part of our present. We owe it to them not just to care for them, but to teach them, advocate for them, and work with them to leave the world a better place than they were born into. Children's Sabbath is a day to focus on our children AND the world's children. They are a magical part of the great cloud of witnesses.

And the last Sunday in October we will be celebrating All Saints Day by ringing bells as we remember all those beautiful souls who have left us in the last year. On that special day we can't help but think of the multitude of saints who have been a part of First Church and who have graced us with the sharing of their lives and ministries.

And we have a collection of the current crop of witnesses in our new Church Directory. When looking through the new directory, I can't help but smile knowing that this cloud of witnesses grows and becomes brighter with each passing year. And so let us run the race set before us with enthusiasm, perseverance, hope, and grace.

Blessings,

Pastor Meredith

A Message from the Moderators



As we serve as both co-Moderators and joint coordinators of the 350th Anniversary Team, we are taking the liberty this month of combining our Message from the Moderators with an exciting report regarding the progress of the 350th Anniversary Team. Before we describe some of the preliminary plans for the 350th Anniversary celebration, we offer much gratitude to the following team members who are developing those plans: Bernie Annunziata, Heidi Bonassar, Tina Caldwell, Lori Folk-Barron, Jeanette Gross, Kristen Hinckley, Pastor Meredith Jeffers, Steve Knight, Marsha Mather, Ken Minkema, Pam Perkowski, Sue Phipps, Mike Savenelli, Debby Voelker, Kathy Wallace, Bob Westervelt, Greg Whitehouse, and Beth Whitner. This team has been brainstorming, organizing, and collaborating over the summer, and we are pleased to present this preliminary calendar of events for the 350th Anniversary year which will be celebrated from January 2025 through December 2025. These dates are subject to change, and additional events may be added. Nevertheless, please be on the lookout for additional information about these activities as 2025 approaches.

Preliminary Calendar of Events

- **January 18, 2025 (Snow-date January 25, 2025) -** Kickoff Dinner and Family Event Join us for a catered event at the church with celebratory, family-oriented programming.
- **February 9, 2025** 350th Anniversary Boy Scout Sunday The Scouts lead us in a historical service.
- March 16, 2025 Silver Tea & Vintage Wedding Dress Fashion Show Join us for an after- church tea honoring our Silver members and descendants of our founding members. Wedding Dress Fashion Show included!
- May 4, 2025 Birthday Celebration at Worship and Party after Service
- May 26, 2025 350th Float in Town Memorial Day Parade
- **June 8, 2025** Annual Meeting Open time capsule from 325th.
- August 23, 2025 Interchurch, Community-Wide Celebratory Picnic
- September 14, 2025 Catch the Spirit 350 and Establishing Our Next Time Capsule
- October 4 and 5, 2025 Celebrate Wallingford and our 350th
- October 17 or October 24, 2025 Concert organized by our Minister of Music, Jeanette Gross
- October 26, 2025 Old Fashioned Worship Service and Cemetery Tour
- November 9, 2025 Church Art Show
- **December 27 or 28, 2025** Epiphany Ball 350th Anniversary Capstone Event

In addition to these events, watch for the publication of First Congregational Church's updated history, historical displays, an anniversary slideshow, an Anniversary gift registry to help provide needed items for the church, commemorative t-shirt sales, and the Voices of Devotion project. All of our usual church events during the program year will also have a special celebratory quality during our 350th year!

Do you have questions or ideas for the 350th Team? Please email us at fcc350team@googlegroups.com or join us at our next meeting scheduled October 8, 2025 at 6 PM.

We look forward to celebrating this momentous year with you. It will be a year honoring the past, present and future of First Congregational Church! Let's get excited!

With the grace and peace of Christ,

Lori Folk-Barron and Greg Whitehouse, Co-Moderators



November 2024

Nov. 17: 10:00 a.m. worship "Our Father: A Journey through the Lord's Prayer" by Pepper Choplin.

Most of you know this prayer well. We teach it to our children as soon as they are able to form the words. Many of us say the words in a habitual fashion.

Pepper Choplin has used the power of music to describe and explore the many facets and dimensions of this short, poignant prayer.

December 2024

Dec. 22, 2024 at Ashlar Village Auditorium A, B, and C Sunday, 2:00 p.m. "Lessons and Carols" for the Residents of Ashlar Village, their families and friends and you, the congregation of First Church Wallingford

REHEARSALS SCHEDULED AS OF AUGUST 15, THE SPIRE DUE DATE

Chancel Choir: Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m. in progress

Handbell Choir: Thursdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Youth Choir: grades 4-8 Sundays, 11:30-a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Children's Choir: grades 1-3 Sundays, 11:15-11;45

Cherub Choir: pre-school- kindergarten TBA

Praise Band TBA





October Worship

October 6, 2024 - World Wide Communion

Neighbors in Need Offering

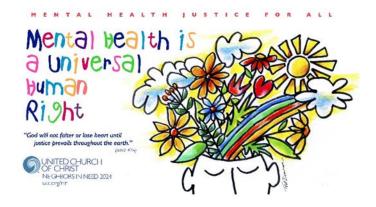
October 13, 2024 - Will You Be First or Last?

October 20, 2024 - Children's Sabbath

Congregational & UCC History (Ken Minkema) (11:30-12:30)

October 27, 2024 – All Saints Sunday

Remembering the Saints Who Have Passed This Year



In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is "Mental Health Justice For All!" This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey. Please give generously on October 6.



Saturday, October 5, 2024 11 AM – 6 PM Sunday, October 6, 2024 11 AM – 5 PM

During Celebrate Wallingford, First Congregational Church will be giving away popcorn and information about our Ministries under our tent at the front entrance to the church.

WE ARE ALSO ASKING FOR YOUR HELP!

Many church members and friends are needed to help work at the tent those days. Your presence would be greatly appreciated! Help us share the great news of our church at this wonderful community event!

PLEASE USE THE LINK BELOW TO SIGN UP TO HELP!

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F084EAEA82AA1FD0-51516784-fcctent



October 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 2024

Our Rummage Sale for the fall is almost here! We always appreciate your contributions of gently used clothing, linens, shoes, coats, pocketbooks and small household items.

We also welcome your help with setting up, sorting, working the sale, and breaking down the tables once the rummage sale is over.

Come be a part of opening our doors to our community, contributing some of your time and resources to our church while enjoying fellowship with one another as we do our Lord's work.

As always, many hands make light work! Thank you!



Thank you and hope to see you there!!!



FOOD DRIVE

Unity in Faith Food Drive

To benefit Master's Manna

September 28, 2024, 9 AM - 11 AM

Congregations and houses of worship across Wallingford are collaborating to hold a town wide food drive benefiting Master's Manna!

Donations of all types of non-perishable foods will be appreciated. All donations will be delivered to Master's Manna at the completion of the drive.

This will be a drive-thru, drop-off event at any of the following locations:

Church of the Resurrection, 131 Pond Hill Road
Faith Bible Church, 28 Chapel Street
First Baptist Church, 114 North Main Street
First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street
First United Methodist Church, 941 Old Rock Hill Road
Grace & St John's Episcopal, 2927 Dixwell Ave, Hamden
Most Holy Trinity Parish, 68 North Colony Street
Our Lady of Fatima Campus, Most Holy Trinity Parish, 382 Hope Hill Road
St Paul's Episcopal Church, 65 North Main Street
Zion Lutheran Church, 235 Pond Hill Road

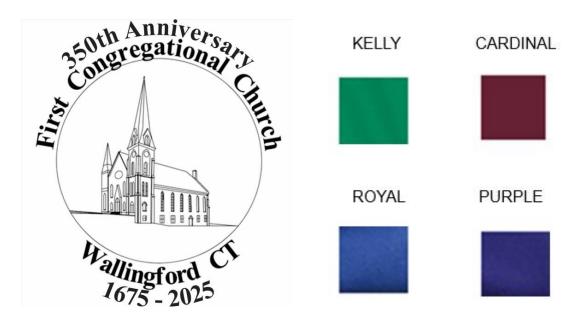
Special thanks to the Islamic Center of Wallingford for monetary support of the drive.

Questions? Please contact Kathy Wallace (203-745-9842) or Lori Folk-Barron (203-314-9885), Drive Coordinators, First Congregational Church.



CELEBRATE OUR 350TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A COMMEMORATIVE TEE SHIRT!

We will be selling tee shirts with the following on the left chest and back (in white) and in the following tee shirt colors:



The cost will be \$25 per adult shirt and \$15 per youth shirt. These will be worn at the 350th celebrations and other church events. They are available in men's sizes S-4XL and youth sizes XS-XL. For questions, please contact Kathy Wallace at kathywacct@gmail.com or 203-745-9842.

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 13th. Pick up in mid-November.

Name:		Phone Nu	_ Phone Number:		
Qty:	Youth/Men:	Size:	Color		
Qty:	Youth/Men:	Size:	Color		
Qty:	Youth/Men:	Size:	Color		
Qty:	Youth/Men:	Size:	Color		



First Congregational Church 23 South Main Street, Wallingford

Date: Saturday, October 19, 2024 Time: 9:00 am to 11:00 am

TO BENEFIT MERIDEN-WALLINGFORD CHRYSALIS INC

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis (Chrysalis) provides crisis intervention, support services, self-sufficiency programs, safety planning, court-based and systems advocacy to victims and survivors of domestic violence and their children through community-based and housing programs. Services include a 60-day emergency Safe-House, a 24-month transitional living program and homelessness prevention advocacy and service linkages. Chrysalis provides prevention education and tailored parent services to interrupt the cycle of violence.

This will be a drive through event. Please enter from Center Street at First Congregational Church.

Items needed include Antiperspirant/Deodorant, Chap Stick, Diapers (especially sizes 3 and up), Hand Cream/Lotion, Nightgowns, Shaving Cream, Shampoo/Conditioner, Women & Children Socks and Slippers, – Tampons, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, and Umbrellas.

Small denomination Gift/Grocery/Gas Cards are very helpful! Cash donations to help purchase these items will be gratefully accepted as well.

As always, your donations are greatly appreciated! Questions? Contact Louise Zemina at louisezem@aol.com or 203-988-2517.

17th First Congregational Church Golf Tournament



Saturday, October 26, 2024

Tee off at 9:00 am at Miner Hills Family Golf 80 Miner Hills Drive, Middletown, CT Raindate: Sunday, October 27 at 1pm

9 Hole Golf Tournament Scramble Format

Lots of fun for people of all ages and abilities Sign up as a team or join up and make new friends.

Adult \$25; Juniors \$20

Includes: Green Fees, Prizes, Picnic, fun, friends, and a great cause!

Profits to benefit the Breast Cancer Research Foundation & The Family Life Fund

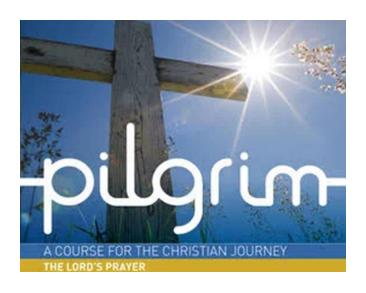
Electric or pull cart rentals are available but are an extra cost to the golfer.

Prizes: Low gross Team * Closest to the Pin * Closest to the Line * Longest Drive

GOLFERS Team Member 1 Name: _	cell #
Team Member 2 Name: Team Member 4 Name:	Team Member 3 Name:
HOLE SPONSOR (\$30.00):	
All proceeds from hole sp	onsorships will go to Support Breast Cancer Research
In Memory / Honor of	By:

Checks should be payable to First Congregational Church - Wallingford
Or sign up, sponsor or donate through the church website
Questions (203) 257=6964





Join Us for Fall Bible Study!

On Tuesday evening, October 8 at 7pm, we will begin a course for the Christian Journey. Although titled The Lord's Prayer, this course is "a gateway to the Christian gospel, a guide to our own prayers, and, a way of deepening our relationship with God. "The books are \$11.98, but don't let the cost stop you from attending.



CHRISTMAS CARD CONNECTION 2024 Hello Everyone!!. Our 5th year!!

We will be meeting on the following dates to sign and address Christmas cards to people on our list of those in need of special Christmas greetings and love.

Tues., Oct. 29, 10am -11:30am Tues., Nov. 5, 10am - 11:30am Tues., Nov.12, 10am -11:30am

Please plan on coming to Congregational Hall for this fun, chatty short time and make a difference by addressing and signing some cards. All cards and envelopes, return address stamp, stamps and some pens will be provided.

Sandy Weekes, Questions? Just call 203-233-7269.



Save the Date for a **Women's Fellowship Breakfast** Saturday, October 26, 2024 9-11 AM

Location and presenter TBD. Watch for more details!



The "first run" of the Church Photo Directory is already gone! We will be printing a "second run" in a few months. If you would like to be a part of the next printing, it is not too late. Have your picture taken at church or send a selfie to FCCWDirectory@gmail.com If you did not receive a copy of the directory and would like one, we could send it to you electronically. Please call the church office at (203) 265-1691 or email Pastor Meredith at pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfd.org Many thanks to Lori-Fast Minkema for patiently compiling updated data and entering it into Power Church, Sue Phipps for taking lots and lots of pictures, and Karen Blakeslee for her technological wisdom and attaching pictures to profiles.

Book Club News



Our book for the October 22 meeting is "The River We Remember" by William Kent Krueger. We have enjoyed another book by this same best-selling author.

Please join us at 6:30 in the Guild Room for another rousing discussion!



A new member class is forming! New members will be received into the church Sunday, November 10 at the 10 am service.

In preparation for membership two classes will be offered. The first is September 29 from 11:30-12:30 in the Guild Room. Bob Westervelt will describe the rich history of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford. Ken Minkema will offer an introduction to Congregationalism and the United Church of Christ on October 20, 11:30-12:30. Prospective members, members, and friends of FCCW are cordially invited to attend.



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



"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2).

Worship is one of the core activities of God's church. The Worship Ministry supports the minister with all worship services of the church, both at First Church and at Ashlar Village. These responsibilities include preparing and assisting with the sacraments of Communion and Baptism, coordinating pulpit supply and liturgist recruitment, taking care of and changing the sanctuary paraments and other worship enhancements with each liturgical season, and procuring worship, devotional and sacramental supplies. We also coordinate activities with the Music Ministry. Ministry Teams, including Sacramental Ministers, Music, Flower, Usher, Audio, and Live-Streaming, are part of the overall effort to enhance our worship, make it accessible, and make it meaningful.

Worship Ministry coordinators include Dawn Charron, Sarah Mather, Ken Minkema, Debby Voelker, and Bob Westervelt. The Worship Ministry meets once a month along with the Pastor and the Minister of Music. If you would like to volunteer on any one of our teams, please let one of the coordinators know. You would be most welcome!



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.



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 five 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



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

We are in need of altar flower sponsors for these upcoming dates in 2024. Please sign up in the Narthex or email Lori (lorifolkbarron@gmail.com).

November 3 November 24 December 1 December 15 December 22

The 2025 Flower Calendar will be available for sign ups in early December 2024.

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. Thank you!



Join the 350th "Voices of Devotion" Project!

As one of the many ways we will be celebrating the 350th Anniversary of the First Congregational Church in 2025, the 350th Anniversary Team has proposed a "Voices of Devotion" Project. Modeled after the Upper Room devotionals that so many of us know and use for our daily devotional time, we are seeking devotionals written by past, present and (hopefully) future members and friends of FCC. We have set an ambitious goal of compiling 350 devotionals, one for each year of our anniversary. To achieve this, we need your help and contribution.

We know that 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 and do worship God at First Congregational Church. We are not looking for New York Times bestselling authors to write these pieces. We are looking for YOU, the heart and soul and history of FCC, to lend your voice and offer a devotion that speaks from your heart.

Offering some guidance from *The Upper Room* may be helpful as you consider your involvement in this project. In the July-August 2024 Upper Room (pp. 40-41), Andrew Garland Breeden offers the following advice for writing a devotional:

"If you are concerned that your story isn't exciting, glamorous, or interesting enough, don't worry. Write from your heart. Stories about everyday experiences make wonderful meditations. Some of my most memorable and meaningful spiritual insights have occurred on an afternoon hike, during an interaction with a stranger, or while reading scripture. Here are some questions to help you get started. Can you think of a small, ordinary experience from your life that has ultimately had a significant effect on your spiritual journey and strengthened your relationship with God? What was the experience? How and why did it affect you so profoundly? What story or passage from scripture do you connect with your experience? What did your experience teach you about yourself, and what did it teach you about God? What do you want other people to learn from it? Can you answer these questions?" If you can, YOU are the right contributor to our "Voices of Devotion" project.

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 it relates to the scripture. Describe 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. If you do, please use the attached form to submit your devotion. The "Voices of Devotion" team members will be in touch to confirm the receipt of your submission. If you do not hear from us, please assume we have not received it, and contact us at fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com. We are setting an initial deadline of 12/1/2024 for submissions.

With joyful voices,

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

"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 handwrite or type below or attach separate page.	
Prayer:	

Please submit devotional by email to fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com or mail to "Voices of Devotion" Project, First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492.



Call to a Special Congregational Meeting November 10, 2024

To the members of The First Congregational Church of Wallingford, Connecticut: Notice is hereby given of a Special Congregational Meeting to be held Sunday, November 10, 2024, immediately following the 10:00 AM Worship Service, both in person in the Sanctuary and via Zoom meeting, for the following purpose:

To review and act upon a proposed one-year extension of the existing Meetinghouse lease agreement between First Congregational Church and Attorney Jerry Farrell, Jr.

This is anticipated to be a very brief meeting; however, a quorum of church members is required to act on this proposal. Member attendance is critical! The brief meeting in the Sanctuary will be followed by a coffee hour reception in Congregational Hall to welcome new members

Kathleen Filkins, Church Clerk

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

The next Spire will be published in November 2024. Spire submission deadline for the November Issue is October 15th.

Email the church office at : officemanager@firstchurchwlfd.org

