



COME HOME...

We know you're looking for us.

Follow the country roads...

The ones that wind through the rural beauty of Woodstock.

Maybe passing the local farms with a patchwork quilt of seasonal crops...

Maybe apple orchards or the establishments of local entrepreneurs showcasing the creations of local artisans...we are very talented!

As you travel, remember you'll most likely be traversing the same paths our forefathers did. Being over 300 years old, Woodstock has a lot of history...Roseland Cottage located in the heart of Woodstock has hosted four presidents! Four presidents is pretty impressive, but remember Woodstock was home to Sesame Street's Big Bird, Carol Spinney, actor Brian Dennehy and currently, author Nathaniel Philbrick. Woodstock is a very desirable place to live. But you know that.

COME HOME...

You're getting closer...

Can you hear the melodic chorus of bells ringing throughout the village of East Woodstock? Follow the sound...look for the spire in the acres of lush green rolling hills...yes, do you see it? It's visible!
A steeple, white Tuscan columns, a beautiful, historic New England Church...you're home!

*COME INSIDE...WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU...
THIS IS WHO WE ARE...*

The congregation's life of faith at the East Woodstock Congregational Church (EWCC) flourishes in the knowledge that we are all God's beloved children seeking to walk more closely in the ways of his son, Jesus Christ. We are individuals with different perspectives, backgrounds, talents and gifts to offer. We are individuals who find themselves in a variety of places on life's path. We are individuals who are at different milestones on our journey of faith. Yes, we are individuals, but collectively we ARE the EWCC congregation, an open, loving, welcoming and vibrant family of faith! Together we seek to listen for God's word, to be nurtured and grow to be the people God intends us to be, to be guided by the Holy Spirit and be genuine in our efforts to go into our community and the world beyond responding where there is need.

Our congregation is like a large extended family...we feel connected to one another. We care for one another, pray for each other, and rejoice in our times of fellowship yet we realize there exists a need to know each other on a deeper level. The warmth and loving nature of our congregation provides the fertile ground for others to feel welcome and become part of our family.

Caring...somehow a word this simple can't do justice to the amazing outpouring of care, service and outreach of the EWCC. From wider to local missions and community service, EWCC supports (both financially and "hands-on") over 40 efforts, ranging from food and fuel assistance to disaster relief...and everything in between! The outreach for a Church of our size is amazing, but the care, evident within our congregation, speaks volumes to our sense of "Church family". Where there is need, we respond in a heartbeat. Responses are most often initiated quietly, "behind the scenes" by a wide range of congregants. Actions taken without a lot of fanfare, but with powerful messages of love for the recipient. Many times it's as simple as a meal, a ride, a card, a hug, but other times are a testament to the depth of care our Church is committed to. One night a fire demolished a house across the street from our Church. We provided a place of refuge that night, we housed displaced pets (including a snake!) through the week. But the most amazing display of caring came from an EWCC couple who were away on vacation. They generously offered their home to one of the now homeless

residents. The depth of caring shown to someone they hardly knew exemplifies what is at the heart of our Church...loving our neighbor. Dave is the gentleman who was invited to live in a home, but it was an invitation that welcomed him into our Church and into our lives. Dave is now an integral and much loved member of our Church family. An incredibly caring Church family!

We may not be one of the larger churches located in an affluent community, but you wouldn't know that by the generous spirit of our congregation. Yes, we pledge and give to support our Church but our spirit of generosity goes far beyond our financial stewardship! We give generously with our time...volunteering on a plethora of Church committees, hosting memorial service receptions, creating delicious Church dinners or manning rakes and dust mops for Fall clean up days. We plan, organize and present the Jamboree, our annual July 4th celebration, and the Holly Fair, our annual holiday extravaganza. Both events are successful fundraisers for our Church, but more importantly they bring neighbors and visitors to our Church for days filled with warm welcomes, smiles and the joy of being a part of a larger community. Our congregation responds eagerly and with a joyous sense of giving as additional requests are met throughout the year. We collect, assemble and provide over 30 Thanksgiving baskets each year, fill our food Pantry for those experiencing food insecurity, arm children with back to school supplies in September, provide gift cards, Christmas presents and Easter Baskets for those less fortunate. Our generosity takes a specific shape when the need is made known...from bath towels and new white socks to pajamas and winter coats. The spirit of generosity is multifaceted and abundant at EWCC! It is said "joy is in the giving"...it's evident at EWCC!

Being a good listener is not always easy...sometimes you hear things you'd rather not acknowledge, things that are not always easy to fix, but we recognize the importance of listening. Being good listeners has so many benefits...misunderstandings can be minimized, conflicts can be resolved or at least de-escalated, stronger relationships can be built and ultimately there can be personal growth, allowing us to become the people God intends us to be. The process of defining ourselves for this profile has enhanced our listening skills! Through surveys, conversations and group meetings we have listened to our congregation...90% of reflections about EWCC were incredibly and enthusiastically positive. We love our Church!

But we also realized there are points of disagreement, concerns and challenges we need to address. Some of us are feeling "disconnected" for a variety of reasons. Balancing a desire to be "apolitical", keeping politics out of Church, with the need to recognize social injustices is another. EWCC listens...in fact, we're good listeners...that's the start to finding common ground, opening ourselves to understanding different perspectives, resolving the things that separate us from one

another and ultimately helping us to find places of unity as a Church and as people of God.

There is no limit to the warmth of welcome at EWCC! All have a place at our table. There are no restrictions, no litmus tests, no prerequisites...COME, you are welcome here! We will greet you with a smile and meet you where you are. One member's statement perhaps says it best..."while Open And Affirming was intended to support the LGBTQ community, I love how we are really open and affirming to anyone who believes." No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

The growing edge we are most concerned with, and eager to address, is our ability to attract new members, especially young families to our Church. It is our hope that they will come to experience the love, support and nourishment that comes by joining our family of faith. We want to grow in our youth ministry returning to pre-covid numbers. We envision a robust Sunday school with different age groups, a carefully designed curriculum and a staff of caring, innovative teachers. We need to establish an active youth group to engage and appeal to young teens within our Church and beyond. It's exciting to imagine growing our vacation Bible school...creating a fun-filled summer experience for all the children in our community to join in and feel God's love in action! We recognize today's society has created definite challenges for church participation from limited family time to weekend sport's schedules. But we also know our children are the lifeblood of our Church. There is much we can achieve supported by a dedicated congregation. We look to explore opportunities thinking outside the box and embracing the concept "build it and they will come."

We know that faith formation is ageless...

We embrace the fact that "children are not the future of our Church, they ARE the Church!" We seek ways to gather our children and have them learn about our faith in ways they can embrace. Biblical lessons will provide a strong foundation, but additionally we realize the importance of a warm and nurturing environment. Our children may not remember all the lessons, but they will remember how it felt to be loved, cared for, listened to and valued. We envision our Sunday school experience to be the foundation for a lifetime of faith.

A lifetime of faith means we are always growing, seeking ways to come closer to God and reflecting on His presence in our world. We recognize the importance of faith formation opportunities for the congregants at EWCC, no matter where they are in life or where they are on their individual faith journey. Many of our congregants reflect on God's presence through worship, music and outreach, as well as a variety of additional experiences such as a weekly Bible study, seasonal study groups (i.e. Lenten Learning) and a monthly Potluck Film Series. Spiritual growth comes in myriad ways and we

acknowledge there still remains a need for a variety of additional opportunities for us to grow in our personal faith and spiritually. We need to respond to the needs of our Church members, enabling them to grow in their faith formation, by looking at it from a new perspective and exploring fresh and possibly unconventional ideas.

When our Church gathers, it's like a family reunion. Many of us haven't seen each other all week! Sometimes longer. There is a buzz in our sanctuary created by myriad conversations. On closer inspection you will see smiles and laughter as well as heartfelt embraces and touches of empathy. We are sharing our highs and lows as individuals, but as a deacon welcomes us, with a robust "Good morning", we become a collective family of the faithful. We quiet. We listen for God's word as it comes to us through scripture. Our worship experience is highlighted by the transformative music of our choir, bell choir and talented congregants...music that elevates our souls and stirs our spirit. We focus on how God is speaking to us through our sermons. Sermons that inspire us to take our faith into the world and make a difference. We are drawn together as a united body through our hymns, prayers and sharing of joys and concerns. Our worship service is one that seeks to enlighten, challenge, deepen our faith and renew our spirit so that we can go into the world seeking justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God.

HAVE WE GIVEN YOU A SENSE OF WHO WE ARE?

BUT WAIT!

THERE ARE VOICES YET TO BE HEARD...

*IT'S OUR YOUTH, OUR YOUNGER MEMBERS WHO HAVE THOUGHTS
AND REFLECTIONS THEY WANT YOU TO HEAR...*

We want our Church to be welcoming to everyone.

All ages should feel appreciated in our Church, the very young to the very old.

All races should feel safe and comfortable as part of our Church family.

All genders and people of various sexualities should feel affirmed as beloved children of God, the most Holy, and siblings of our congregation.

We want our Church to take care of our community.

We want to be able to bring friends to our Church for support, when they are struggling to find their own networks.

We want to actively take care of our neighbors.

We know living in a rural location, with limited or difficult access to some resources, is not always easy and we do best by working together to lift up one another.

We want our Church to welcome new voices who will teach us ways to remember that every human is God's creation and we are called to love them.

We want our Church to explore God's word in poetry, drama, and music with every member and neighbor, being invited to share their voices. The variety illuminates the creativity of the Holy and it keeps things interesting and beautiful.

We like the fact that our Church has a history of being active in a wide variety of ways.

Our Sunday school enjoys creating gifts for members of our community who may be isolated; they all appreciate feeling needed and seen.

Our teens value when they are asked to participate in worship, in maintaining the Church, in helping with Sunday school, in traveling to meet and serve the homeless or other communities who need a hand up.

We are proud of how our neighbors appreciate our Church, always ready to fling open its doors whenever there is need...however we can help. It's important that our neighbors know they can count on us! For many, that is not only the Church's tradition, it is the "Woodstock Way".

THE "WOODSTOCK WAY"... A PERFECT SEGUE TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE LARGER COMMUNITY OF WOODSTOCK. CONTRIBUTING TO WOODSTOCK'S POPULATION OF OVER 8,000, THE VILLAGE OF EAST WOODSTOCK PROVIDES A MUCH ENVIED, PEACEFUL LIFESTYLE AND A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

COMMUNITY...

The East Woodstock Congregational Church has a long history of involvement in the overall community of the greater Woodstock Community. These involvements include partnerships with the UCC, other area churches and religious groups as well as numerous affiliations with regional social service agencies and other groups. These relationships are a viable expression of our commitment to serve and to make a difference in the lives of others.

As a member of the Windham Association of the United Church of Christ and the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ our congregation is connected to the wider United Church of Christ in a variety of meaningful ways. We generously support and provide fundraising efforts for UCC activities including disaster relief efforts, One Great Hour of Sharing and Holy Joe's Café. We enjoy the benefits of sending delegates to UCC conferences and training opportunities and especially the support of conference Ministerial assistance during this time of transition.

EWCC engages with the community organizing a multitude of movements throughout Woodstock and its environs. Our Church family is aware of partisanship in today's cultural environment and we remain committed to listening closely to the gospel and to each other. In support of our commitment to being an Open and Affirming Church we joyfully participate in Putnam Pride, an event bringing churches, agencies and a wide variety of groups from the northeast corner of Connecticut together to celebrate diversity, equality, and inclusion. We support The Woodstock Academy Gay Straight Alliance, a collaborative effort with our local high school, in their mission to educate, promote understanding and assist with emotional, as well as financial support.

As a member of the Putnam Refugee Resettlement Group, we joined forces with several area churches and the local synagogue to help relocate families from the Middle East to the United States. Relocation is only the start. Think about learning a new language, setting up a household, transportation without the ability to drive, finding jobs, schooling for children, cultural differences...the list of obstacles to overcome is daunting. But the EWCC helped make it happen, as we did in 1994, when we welcomed our Bosnian family to the United States. It is both empowering and rewarding to know our efforts can change the destiny of family for generations.

We know food insecurity is prevalent in our area especially with today's food prices. EWCC helps this ongoing crisis by aligning with Daily Bread Food Pantry through IHSP (Interfaith Human Services of Putnam) and TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group) by collecting and assisting in the distribution of food so vitally needed. We assist families of Woodstock Middle School children in need of food security with Caring Continues. In alliance with the Evangelical Covenant Church, we collect food items and pack bags for distribution through this program. Bags are filled to the brim with everything from PB and J to pasta and fresh bread to supplement limited food sources. On the first Friday of every month, we welcome neighbors to our Church to "shop" for much needed food items. Our First Friday Food pantry, supported by the donations of food and time by our congregation is yet one more manifestation of showing God's love through our actions.

New England winters are notoriously harsh...staying warm becomes a major concern for many in our area. We support TEEG by contributing to their fuel assistance program and partnering with NU 2 U Clothing through IHSP, to collect, sort and provide clothing to families free of charge.

While most of us thrive in the safety, security and warmth of our homes in Woodstock, we know there are those among us who are homeless or fleeing from a violent or abusive relationship. EWCC is in continuous contact with the Domestic Violence Shelter and the Emergency/No Freeze Shelter. We respond quietly and generously to a variety of their needs from blankets and towels to personal care items and holiday presents for the children of those seeking shelter, hoping our "light" will brighten an unenviable situation.

We continue our support of local social workers through our covenant with Covenant to Care, ready to assist whenever they turn to EWCC for specific needs.

Twice a year, members of our congregation participate in Windham Area Interfaith

Ministry workdays. Volunteers not only sort through generous and copious donations of clothing and goods, but dedicate time and energy to organize and tidy up all areas of the WAIM facility.

EWCC supports KIVA by providing small \$25 microloans to women in third world countries to not only assist in economic stability, but empower their entrepreneurial spirit. An uplifting program that exemplifies how a small gesture can yield powerful results!

We rejoice in the myriad ways our Church participates in Ecumenical and interfaith activities. EWCC partners with the First Congregational Church of Woodstock by providing hot meals through the Community Kitchen. This popular program invites neighbors to come and enjoy a hot meal and a time of fellowship every Monday. Once a month EWCC creates a menu, shops for provisions, prepares a delicious meal and serves food and smiles to between 50 to 100 guests. During the summer we enjoy worshipping with our friends at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock. In July our congregants and minister travel to “the Hill Church” for worship and then in August we reverse the process, welcoming Pastor Kevin and the Hill congregants to our Church. It's a wonderful time to gather, experiencing differences in our services while uniting in our shared faith. We participate in interfaith events with other Congregational churches, the local synagogue and the local Baptist and Methodist churches as well as the Interfaith Services of Putnam. EWCC is an active member of Day Kimball Hospital Pastoral Care Program and its board of directors. This program ensures that anyone hospitalized and their loved ones will always be offered the comfort and spiritual support they may need to face difficult times and health crises.

The ministry and pastoral services of EWCC continue to flow generously into our community through additional organizations. The Muddy Brook Fire Department is only a half mile down the road from our Church. Our close proximity mirrors the close relationship we have with our active volunteer fire department. In the past, our pastor has been an associate member serving as the Muddy Brook Chaplain, a relationship the department and our congregation wish to continue. Pastoring to firefighters and emergency responders is vital, providing debriefing, counseling and support. We pray emergency calls have positive outcomes, but we know there are many difficult calls that end with traumatic results. Our pastor is there ministering to those in need!

Visitation is a priority for members of the EWCC...feeling connected, knowing you're not forgotten is vital. Residents of Westview Rehab and Nursing Care Facility, Westview Commons and those who are housebound are recipients of our commitment to provide visitation services to the residents of these facilities.

We recognize the importance of our place in the community by participating in meaningful events such as celebrating Memorial Day activities with the American Legion Post 111 at our East Woodstock cemetery.

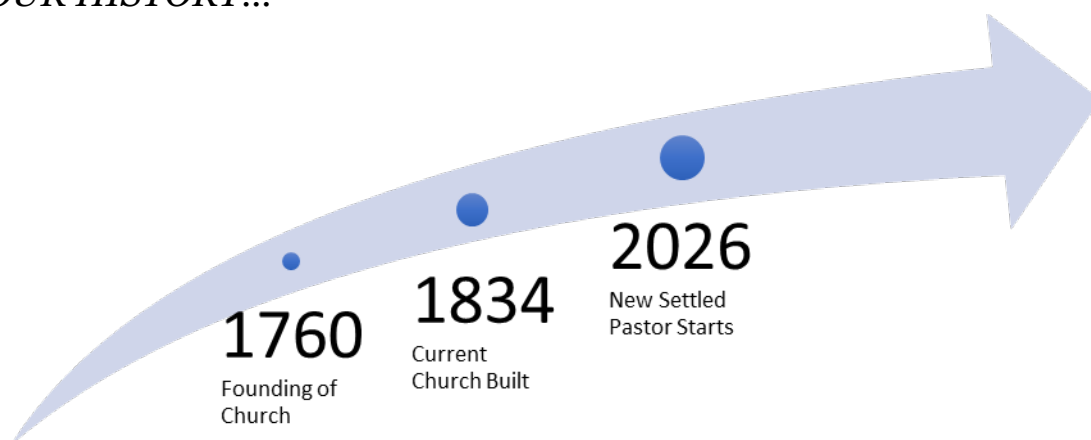
The outreach of EWCC into our community is visible in a multitude of smaller yet significantly important missions. Our Card Ministry sends cards to friends who are unable to attend services, may have lost a loved one, are perhaps sick or hospitalized

so that they are reminded that they are thought of and are important to us! We have a Freezer Meal and Take Them a Meal program in place to always be on the ready to bring a hot meal to those whose lives have been upended in unexpected ways. Cooking is the last thing on their minds, but we know the value of nourishment, both physically and spiritually, that our meals deliver. Our Prayer Shawl Ministry is a tangible expression of our loving care. The talented knitters in our Church create beautiful shawls which are blessed and then gifted to those who are suffering and in need of comfort as well as those who are on the threshold of a new beginning...confirmands, graduates and new parents. Many recipients of our shawls tell us "they experienced the warmth of loving arms embracing them when they wrapped themselves in the shawls". We have a Transportation Support Team staffed by EWCC volunteers to assist individuals with transportation to medical appointments, physical therapy or even to visit a loved one in nursing care or a hospital.

Our mission statement states...*We gather as a people of God to worship and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We strive to carry on his teachings of love through our support and compassion for all people in our community and throughout the world.*

We believe EWCC is the embodiment of this statement. Each day, each week, each month throughout the year our Church activities reflect this mission. We continually strive to go into our community, into the world, as the loving arms of God and follow in the footsteps of His son, Jesus Christ.

*HISTORY IS SAID TO BE A "CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS". AMERICAN HISTORIAN, DAVID McCULLOUGH SAYS "HISTORY IS WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE ARE THE WAY WE ARE".
OUR HISTORY...*



Almost 266 years of history will pass before our new Settled Pastor arrives in 2026. There is a rich story of our predecessors weaving an astonishing tapestry of Christian

love and care. Parishioners have carried the Christian mission of the church forward during feast, famine and calamity...always forward!

The history of the EWCC is a compilation of significant events and milestones that all

1690 First Congregational Church of Woodstock established
1760 Congregation separates, "Northern Parish" located on East common
1798 Brick Schoolhouse constructed
1831 Congregation splits again
1834 Dedication of EWCC sanctuary
1860 Birth of LBS
1890 1st Bandstand erected on common
1897 Chapel with two offices and a meeting room built by Bixby family
1927 Frazee Organ installed
1938 Destructive hurricane of 1938
1939 EWCC repairs completed, except steeple.
1950 Brick schoolhouse to EWCC
1957 EWCC purchases parsonage
1957 The first Jamboree
1958 Fellowship Hall constructed
1961 EWCC joins UCC
1966 A new fiberglass steeple is installed
1987 Sue Foster called as EWCC Settled Pastor, beginning 36 year tenure
1987 New bandstand on the common
1997 Dedication of the Sunday School wing
2002 Pipes of the Frazee Organ renovated
2011 EWCC becomes Open and Affirming
2014 Men's Fellowship/Breakfast group started
2017 EWCC restores Church columns
2020 Begin streaming Sunday services on FB, later YouTube
2022 Sunshine House destroyed by fire
2024 Pastor Sue retires after 36 years
2025 RoJeanne and Jasmin's lives celebrated

began with our Puritan forefathers in 1690 when our congregation was a part of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock. Looking for something more, in 1760 a faction of the congregation set out on their own, forming what would eventually become the EWCC. *Could this be the seeds of our independent thinking?*

Woodstock grew and in 1830, the congregation searched for a place to construct a meeting house. A disagreement arose over the proposed site selection and the congregation split into the North Woodstock (now known as the Crossroads Church) and East Woodstock Congregational Churches. *Clearly this points out that conflict has consequences and we acknowledge the importance of positive conflict resolution in our own lives.*

1860 saw the birth of the Ladies Benevolent Society, whose goal was to "relieve the suffering of the destitute" and in unity, support those who are "laboring to ameliorate the condition of suffering humanity". One of the original committees of the EWCC, the Ladies Benevolent Society (LBS) was the inspiration for our present-day Outreach Committee. The women of our Church gather at monthly LBS meetings to enjoy a time of fellowship, hear guest speakers and discuss their fundraising efforts which assist with unanticipated Church

expenditures and provide for generous gift giving throughout the year. *Our dedication today to the multitude of Outreach missions is clearly rooted in the benevolence demonstrated by the ladies of the EWCC over 150 years ago.*

A little over a hundred years pass, and East Woodstock, along with so many others, is decimated by the infamous hurricane of 1938. Our Church building is horribly damaged with the steeple plummeting right through the roof and destroying everything in its path...miraculously, everything except our Frazee Pipe organ. The organ, one of the finest in the area and installed only 10 years earlier, weathered the elements with only 4 pipes being ripped out of place. The dented pipes, visible to this day, remind us of the resilience of those congregants. The incredible miracle of the organ's survival provided the impetus for our congregation to come together, "dig in" and rebuild the Church building. *There are many forces, including Mother Nature, that can and most likely will, strike without notice, threatening our way of life. It's how we as a congregation, bolstered by God's love and guided by the Holy Spirit, deal with the hardships and obstacles we face, that will be a testament to our faith.*

The era of educating our children in a one-room school house came to an end in 1950, when the Town of Woodstock constructed a single community-wide grade school. The Brick Schoolhouse was returned to the Church. *We know moving into the future often demands change...and change is not always easy. We're proud of our ability to identify specific needs and take action to improve the lives of those in our community and beyond.*

Today the EWCC is known for many things. The Jamboree, our Fourth of July celebration is one of the more popular events. An array of festivities for all ages, delicious food and the warmth of our congregation attract people from near and far. It all started in 1957, when the EWCC welcomed community friends to join in the celebration of our Country's birthday, kicking off the very first Jamboree. *History confirms our love of Country, our deep-seated commitment to be an integral part of our community and our desire to make everyone feel welcomed.*

In 1958, manned only by an army of volunteers, the Church and the "old Brick academy" were connected by construction of Fellowship Hall, providing a spacious and much needed community hall, as well as space for a kitchen and Sunday School classrooms. *It appears our Church has always been blessed with a very generous congregation...giving of their time, talents and assets.*

Pastor Sue Foster was called to be the new EWCC minister in 1987. During her tenure EWCC deepened its commitment to the role of Christians in the community by helping refugees, expanding youth ministry and broadening our reach into the community while intensifying opportunities for strengthening faith within the Church walls, always striving to lead with love. *Sue came to us as a young woman embarking on her new ministerial role...so many possibilities, so much opportunity! In retrospect, we realize how instrumental our beloved Pastor Sue was in helping us become the people and the*

Church we are today. Her voice was soft and comforting, but it belied the power of her messages and the significance of her leadership.

We completed and dedicated the new classic Bandstand structure in 1987, adding to the beauty and charm of the East Woodstock Common. *Yet one more manifestation of “the ties that bind” EWCC and the local community.*

1997 gives witness to the dedication of the beautiful Sunday School Wing, built on the north side of the Sanctuary and west side of Fellowship Hall, providing a vast amount of space for growth. *EWCC continues to prioritize our commitment to our youth and their faith formation.*

In 2011, after completing a year of education and discussion on LGBTQ issues, we voted at a special Church meeting, to adopt a policy of being an “Open and Affirming” Church. *We embrace and rejoice in our commitment to acknowledge ALL people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, race (or any other label) are beloved children of God and are welcomed at EWCC.*

The 1959 award-winning drama, A Raisin in the Sun, comes to Woodstock in 2019. Lorraine Hansberry’s play depicts the struggles of a working class, black family as they pursue the concept of the “American dream”...the struggles of racial strife, identity and family. EWCC hosted both the American Classics Repertory Company's rehearsals and a weekend of performances in our fellowship hall. The importance of this play was underscored by our Church book club's decision to read A Raisin In the Sun in anticipation and in conjunction with the production. *The EWCC recognizes the importance of shedding light on our Country's historic injustices, educating wherever and whenever we can, to eliminate the thought, let alone the possibility, of historic recurrence.*

2023 two EWCC members traveled thousands of miles to Central America to join in the efforts of “Hope for Tomorrow Guatemala”, a humanitarian organization dedicated to improving the lives of a beautiful, but impoverished people. Our generous congregation donated over four thousand dollars enabling our EWCC volunteers to bring school supplies to children who didn't even have pencils, food to malnourished children and hundreds of shoes to youngsters who walked barefooted over miles of rough terrain...we brought hope! *This trip is a clear manifestation of our commitment to be the “hands of God” in the world, regardless of the color, culture or country of those we seek to serve.*

In 2025 our hearts are broken, we grieve...we have lost 2 beloved members of our Church family whose lives were deeply entwined with ours...Jasmin and Rojeanne. In the early 2000's RoJeanne Doege and her daughter Jasmin Floyd joined the Church...RoJeanne, a single parent and Jasmin, a pretty youngster afflicted with a

horrible disease called FOP, Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva. This devastating disease turns muscle and cartilage into bone, forming a second skeleton within the body leading to immobilization. In the early years, we supported Jasmin by helping her sell her artistically self-designed note cards. As early as 2001, support included multiple benefit concerts and a variety of additional fundraising efforts for Jasmin. She and her mother were a powerful team that persevered through decades of tests, hospitalizations, pain and suffering fortified by their unwavering faith. EWCC was there for them throughout their journey with weekly visits and teams of folks who assisted with loving care. RoJeanne was the epitome of a mother's love, dedicating herself to being Jasmin's primary and often sole, caregiver. Ever changing professional health care professionals and Jasmin's diminishing health compounded the pain of their daily existence. The needs for shift coverage, feeding Jasmine and relieving RoJeanne for short periods of time were carried out by the EWCC faithful. And then the unimaginable...RoJeanne was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Our commitment of steadfast care culminated with a massive effort to organize 24/7 care in their apartment as RoJeanne slipped toward death...leaving Jasmin for the first time without her mom. Alone to grieve the loss of her 'sweet angel' mom, Jasmin started showing signs of withdrawal. Just 7 weeks after her mother's death, Jasmin succumbed to her disease on Easter Sunday 2025. But the final chapter of our care was yet to be written. Church members organized a memorial service for both Jasmin and RoJeanne, communicated with family and friends, dismantled their home, packed and made arrangements for the dispersal of their belongings and closed out their affairs. The memorial service was a beautiful tribute to two amazing women, who faced the insurmountable challenges of their lives with grace and abiding faith. *We have entered the story of Jasmin and RoJeanne into the annals of our history because it reveals the depth of limitless love and care we have to share. Through Jasmin and Rojeanne, we have witnessed an amazing faith in the face of unparalleled adversity. When we questioned how and what we were going to do...God answered. We take comfort knowing mother and daughter are once again together, wrapped in God's Eternal care. YES, GOD IS STILL SPEAKING!*

*WE HAVE SHARED IN COUNTLESS WAYS ALL THAT DESCRIBES
WHO WE ARE...
WE HAVE LOOKED CLOSELY AND WITH HONESTY.
WE HAVE LOOKED AT OUR PAST, OUR PRESENT AND NOW...
WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE...*

WHO WE ARE CALLING?

We are a loving, vibrant congregation with individual and collective strengths and gifts capable of accomplishing great things. We want a minister to walk beside us, work with us, partner with us in faith as we strive to achieve even greater goals. We want to be challenged and motivated to respond to the ever-changing needs in our community and the world beyond. To this end, we envision a minister who is a dynamic, gifted preacher...someone who delivers inspirational, thought provoking, transformative sermons. A consistent request voiced by our congregants? “Sermons that speak directly to me” ... “Sermons that are bridges between scripture and how we lead our lives” ... “A sermon that feels like it was meant just for me”. We appreciate sermons with a natural, authentic delivery that feel like a conversation...ones that leave each of us thinking about ways we can become better people and joyfully share God’s love with others.

We are looking for someone with a strong, deeply spiritual, yet humble moral center to be an inspirational spiritual guide. Our faith formation is important to us...we enjoy traditional faith building opportunities like Bible studies, but look forward to exploring innovative ways to grow our faith with our new settled minister.

It's important for our next settled minister to be a “people person”, to be warm, caring and approachable...someone who is empathetic, compassionate and engaging... gentle and considerate...decidedly pastoral with the ability to understand personal journeys and meet people where they are. Although we are united in our faith, with Christ at our center, we acknowledge our individuality in a variety of ways. We come from different backgrounds and see the world from different perspectives...we are seeking someone who will minister to ALL in an inclusive, nonpartisan way.

Our new settled minister must be a good listener...listening with an open heart and an open mind to both our congregation and to the Holy Spirit. A minister with good listening skills enhances their ability to be an effective communicator, essential for building relationships within our congregation and the wider community. We need a strong “bridge builder” to strengthen us as a congregation, encouraging differing thoughts, but always offering possibilities for compromise when needed. Knowing how to balance the different personalities within the Church and bringing out the best in each of us is an enviable skill set. Maintaining and building relationships within our community is also essential for us. Living within a 30-minute drive of our Church will allow a new settled minister to become an integral member of our local environs. He or she needs to be a “village pastor”...visibly engaging with the community in a variety of religious, civic and educational opportunities in Woodstock. We see that presence and interaction with area residents as an “introduction” to EWCC and a wonderful opportunity for neighbors to come, learn more about us and see our faith in action.

Our congregation has identified enhancing our children and youth ministry as a priority for our Church. Although we are passionate about this endeavor, we know this isn't going to be easy. Our world has and will continue to change, presenting new challenges we need to address. Data reveals the population of our youngsters has dropped by 50%

in the last ten years. Compounding that alarming fact are societal issues young families now face including work schedules, limited family time, and weekend sport's schedules. We envision our plan of action to be one of a united approach...our congregation and our Christian Education Director working creatively with our new pastor to listen for God's word, embrace those words and find innovative ways to move into the future. We envision our new minister to be someone who is not only comfortable around children, but enjoys being in their company and is eager to build authentic relationships which will help us achieve this goal. Whether it's through the children's story during worship service or additional youth activities, our minister needs to connect with our younger members. Connections that will nurture our youngsters as they grow, deepen their Confirmation experience and help create the foundation for a lifetime of faith.

We live in one of the most beautiful places. It is our hope our new settled pastor loves nature and rejoices in the gift of God's creation which we are blessed to live in. Our congregation is blessed to have generational farmers, but also those who just love the feel of soil in their hands, creators of gorgeous flower beds, stunning landscapes and abundant food sources! This "quiet corner" is noisy with bird song and various mammal murmurings...a delight to many of Woodstock's residents who are birders or hikers. Our community is filled with bikers and runners...taking advantage of Woodstock's beautiful scenery while releasing their endorphins. You'll always find a beehive of activity around the Church...those who regularly walk with their friends and neighbors and their dogs, the ever-popular annual marathon route which flanks the church on two sides and always multiple congregants tending to the Church gardens, enhancing the beauty of our Church entry.

We are a very social congregation, gathering in a multitude of ways beyond worship services and committee meetings. Church dinners, coffee hours, pot lucks, game nights, concerts...the list goes on. We look forward to our new pastor joining us in times of fellowship. These fun filled events provide opportunities for us to connect on a more personal level and often include neighbors and family who may not be able to make it to Sunday morning worship. We enjoy these gatherings as times when we connect with one another and also with God. Our God who calls us to love all our neighbors. Our God who is with us whenever we gather together.

HAVING LEARNED WHO WE ARE ON OUR FAITH JOURNEYS...

AND

WHO WE ARE CALLING TO BE OUR SETTLED PASTOR...

*IT'S TIME TO LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE IN THE
CONTEXT OF OUR GREATER COMMUNITY AND REGION.*

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER...

We work together...but let's start by talking about where we work. We are in the “quiet corner” of Connecticut, within easy reach of the 3 major metropolitan areas of Boston, Providence and Hartford, making Woodstock the “bedroom community” for many professionals. The charm of the verdant rolling hills, both forest and farm, combined with easy access to an array of services and cultural events makes Woodstock a most desirable place to live. A recent listing in Home Stratosphere Magazine provides a glimpse of housing including prose about the scenic wonder of East Woodstock. (Listing 2 of 10, <https://www.homestratosphere.com/secluded-neighborhoods-in-connecticuts-rural-communities/>)

Beyond the beautiful, bucolic imagery that truly is Woodstock, there is statistical information and data that must be considered to have a better understanding of the place EWCC has within our environs. Woodstock’s history is primarily agrarian and we hold fast to that lifestyle, eagerly supporting our local farmers... but the fabric of our community comes from the diversity of occupations within our populace. We are civil servants, teachers, medical professionals, entrepreneurs, business people, trades and craftsmen and retirees from many walks of life living in and around our area... the Village of East Woodstock, the Town of Woodstock and surrounding towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. We have both long commutes and short commutes to work or no commutes at all for those fortunate enough to work at home or on their farms. Demographically speaking...Woodstock is the second largest town geographically in CT. Although we have a large land mass, Woodstock has a relatively small population of 8,346 (2023).

The American Community Survey (Census Bureau 2022) reports little ethnic diversity with a population 92% white, 6% Hispanic and 2% multi-racial. Less than 4% of the town did not graduate high school, 31% did graduate high school and 65% have some college, a bachelor’s degree or higher educational achievement. Only 2% are unemployed, with 66% employed and 32% not in the labor force. Owner occupied households are 82% of the population and 22% of the housing stock has been built since 2000. Overall, 23% of the population is 65 and older and the population of young people 0 to 17 has dropped almost 50% since 2015. Approximately 4% of households are classified as living in poverty.

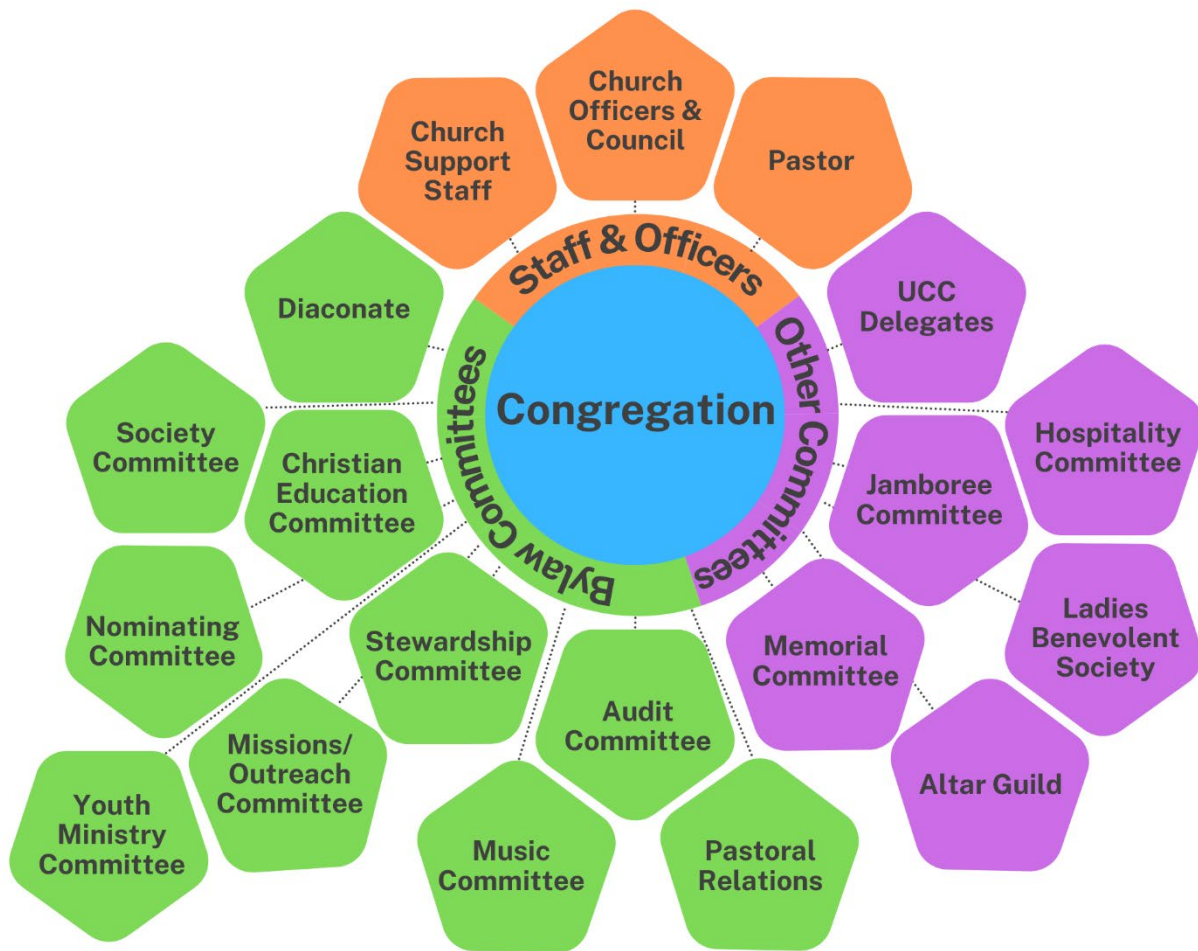
Another perspective about who we are in the aggregate which influences how we work together comes to us as we review religious data in our region.

The religious information portion of the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA www.thearda.com) is limited and contains flawed data concerning our immediate area

of Woodstock. However, the American Community Survey portion of data from ARDA is useful and referenced above. Since we didn't have access to sound religious data from ARDA we decided to construct our own religious information gathering. First, we did a simple search for Woodstock religious institutions and found 7 churches in Woodstock: 3 are active in the UCC, one former UCC church is listed as independent, one Baptist church and two evangelical churches. There is no data about church size or demographic information available, but one can glean from the church websites that 3 of the 7 churches (including EWCC) have online simulcast worship services and two additional churches broadcast recorded services. Rounding out our limited religious information research is the Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study for 2023 (www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/). This interactive website reveals some interesting facts about all Christian religions in CT. Specifically, for Protestants, the UCC population declined from 4% of the CT population in 2007 to 3% in 2023. It's important to note that all Christian churches declined during this same period.

One of the discoveries we made while constructing our profile is that we are not very good at data collection and reporting. In light of that, the American Community Survey demographic information is as close as we can get to describe our Church's demographics. The limited religious information, coupled with the age band trends, indicates we have our work cut out for us to accomplish our primary focus of growing our Church...a goal we have identified as our "growing edge". EWCC statistics that we do have to share...we have 177 Active Members. We average 75 people in Church and another 15-20 online weekly as reported by the Deacons. We can infer an attendance rate of 53% of active members (95/177). Additionally, we have 73 families who pledged in 2024.

We have used statistics and descriptive language to organize information and explore characteristics about our region and our Church to provide context for how we, the EWCC, see our organization.



Our organization is centered on the Congregation. All of our officers, committees and staff are arrayed around the congregation to support and facilitate the mission of the church.

OUR MISSION...*We gather as a people of God to worship and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We strive to carry on His teachings of love through our support and compassion for all people in our community and throughout the world.*

When we gather to do the work of the Church, we are inspired by *Matthew 18:20* "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there...". We gather together to do the good work of the Church and fulfill the tenets of our mission statement guided by the Holy Spirit.

All committees of the Church are important but three stand out for their crucial roles in the ongoing life of the Church...The Church Council, composed of the Pastor, officers and chairs of boards and committees, has the responsibility for the coordination of all program activities of the Church and has the "power of the Church between meetings".

The Diaconate supports and assists the minister in the spiritual leadership of the Church and is responsible for the logistical aspects of worship. The Society Committee is charged with creating, preserving and operating an attractive and durable temple of worship and associated Church holdings for the followers of Jesus Christ who gather together to observe, reflect, and act upon his teachings. Following Church policy, it acts as an administrative body to set rules of use of the Church properties, to propose budgets, manage expenditures and investments and establish personnel policies for the unordained staff.

The Pastor has charge of the worship services of the Church, and carries on a ministry of preaching, pastoral care and leadership. As the ordained leader of the congregation the Pastor will be a member but not chair, of all boards and committees and is entitled to be present at any meeting of any Church sanctioned group; except meetings of the congregation during which the Pastor's term or salary is under discussion, if the Church so votes and/or in executive session of the Church Council. (All descriptions above taken directly from the EWCC Bylaws.)

With this organization in place, we deliver worship, fellowship and community caring. In addition to our Interim Pastor, we are blessed with four additional staff members: Christian Education Director, Music Director/Organist, Handbell Choir Director and Office Assistant. One of our Church members is a retired ordained UCC Pastor. The Church is more than a building, it is the people...we **ALL** make up the Church and together we can attest to a rich array of worship and fellowship activities.

- Weekly Sunday Services throughout the year at 10am. Shared summer services with First Congregational Church of Woodstock (Hill Church) in July and August at 9am whereby EWCC Pastor leads worship at the Hill Church in July and the First Congregational Church Pastor leads worship at EWCC in August. This historic cooperation allows the Pastor of each Church to have a month off in the summer. The Deacons of each Church jointly support services at both Churches.
- Communion is received regularly on the first Sunday of the month.
- Rally Day is held on the Sunday following Labor Day and is the kickoff to our Church calendar. We invite families to register their children for our Christian Education program.
- World Communion Sunday occurs on the first Sunday in October, celebrating cultures and countries around the world.
- Holly Fair is presented on the first Saturday in November with all sorts of offerings from Crafts and baked goods to "New and Like New" gifts and a basket social.

- Jeans Sunday is planned for a Sunday in November after worship service. The Society Committee organizes this event with Church members doing a deep dive cleaning of the sanctuary, fellowship hall, classrooms and church grounds. Then we celebrate our hard work with lunch in fellowship hall. Occasionally we opt to do a spring cleaning as well.
- Thanksgiving Sunday occurs the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day. Church members are invited to bring in non-perishable food donations to support food security. The Outreach Committee assembles bags filled with turkeys and all the fixings for a Thanksgiving feast to be delivered by our social worker partners. The children of the Church create cards and baskets of goodies for special members of the congregation.
- Quiet Christmas Service occurs on a weekday evening several weeks before Christmas Day knowing there are those in our midst who are struggling when the world around them is celebrating with joy.
- Christmas Eve Services are held at 5pm and 11pm celebrating our Savior's birth through scripture, messages of joy and beautiful music.
- Celebration of Epiphany/Star Gift Sunday occurs the first Sunday in January. We all get to select a star gift (no peeking) imprinted with a word...a word to ponder throughout the coming year.
- The Annual Church Breakfast Meeting is held on the last Sunday of January. We gather for a delicious catered breakfast, followed by worship, with our annual meeting immediately afterwards.
- Ash Wednesday Service is an evening service shared with First Congregational Church of Woodstock and Church of the Good Shepherd, all of which are Woodstock UCC churches.
- Devotional study and discussion series throughout the Lenten season.
- Palm Sunday Service is celebrated with palms, the Men's choir singing The Palms (a tradition started in the 1950's) and later in the service reflecting on the final week in Christ's life.
- Maundy Thursday Service, a deeply moving Tenebrae service marks the night of Christ's betrayal.
- Good Friday offers time for reflection.
- Easter Sunrise Service is celebrated on the back lawn of Woodstock Academy with Church of the Good Shepherd, Crossroads Community Church of North Woodstock, Faith Bible Evangelical Free Church, First Congregational Church of

Woodstock, South Woodstock Baptist Church and Woodstock Evangelical Covenant Church.

- Easter Sunday Service celebrated with joyful proclamations of “Christ has risen! Christ has risen indeed!”.
- Music Appreciation Sunday occurs on a Sunday in May in celebration of the gift of music from our many talented church musicians.
- Confirmation Sunday, held on a Sunday in May or June, celebrates our teenagers who have spent a year exploring their faith, participating in various aspects of worship and helping others through several mission-based events.
- Children’s Sunday occurs in early June with the worship service led by the children and young people of the Church.
- Vacation Bible School (VBS) happens in July. In recent years it has met once a week for the four weeks after the Jamboree. VBS has been experiential with art, scavenger hunts, and more, highlighting our Creator, God.
- Fourth of July Jamboree is a day of old-fashioned community celebration with music on the bandstand, book sale, tag sale, food booths, games for children, a parade around the common, fireman’s water polo and a cake walk.
- There are additional opportunities for fellowship and support that are ongoing or are planned during the year including once a month Men’s Sunday breakfast, book discussions, movie reviews, mystery dinners, Bible study, Tai Chi, AA meetings, East Woodstock Cornet Band started by members of EWCC to name a few.
- We have three web addresses
 - <https://www.eastwoodstockchurch.org/> a website offering a wealth of information about our Church including our services, our Christian Education, staff, our newsletter, upcoming events and more
 - <https://www.facebook.com/eastwoodstockchurch.org> Facebook homepage with postings and also church service broadcasts
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@eastwoodstockchurch5503> YouTube station for church service broadcasts

We accomplish a lot...we are able to do so much because of our good stewardship and financial practices. The EWCC has no long-term debt, approximately \$75,000 in reserves and has always met its obligations. Year after year the Church generates a surplus which is then moved into the reserves. Our current budget projections for 2025

are \$196,724.00 in income and \$196,724.00 in expenses. Typically, overall pastoral compensation is about 60% of the Church's income. Our Church Wider World Mission (OCWM) support currently budgeted at \$4,000 or approximately 2% of our budget is only a portion of our total mission-based giving of \$16,000 or 8%. The income of the Church is made up of collections, both pledges and loose offering and fundraising efforts like the July 4th Jamboree, a Craft ^sShow or an occasional Ham and Bean dinner. Additionally, The Ladies Benevolent Society (LBS) operates the annual Holly Fair resulting in undesignated financial support to the Church.

The Church's most recent capital campaign was a three-year campaign from 2014-2016, which raised \$275,000 for multiple projects including the much-needed organ maintenance, building of an accessible ramp, painting the Church and parsonage, seed funding for a youth scholarship program, installation of energy efficient windows and restoration of Church columns (supplemented by a State Historical grant). The Church is currently engaged in an extensive renovation of the parsonage kitchen (parsonage located around the corner from the Church) and the installation of an upgraded fire alarm system in the Church all from existing funds and/or special fundraising. Our Refurbishing Committee has been working for over 5 years identifying ways to upgrade and refresh the interior of the Church buildings. Although the full Refurbishing plan and the associated costs have not yet been completed, several low-cost solutions have already been implemented.

Not reflected in the Church finances are the many opportunities and ways our Church members take to donate generously to the various drives we organize in support of those in need.

The fact that the EWCC is in good financial shape is a credit to many. Our Pastor, staff, committees and congregation work together, diligently and continuously to strengthen our Church and live the life of a faithful community always striving to fulfill the principles of our Mission statement.



Photo credit: Brenda Orłowski

OUR INTROSPECTION HAS REVEALED SO MUCH...

We have taken a long and hard look inwardly, in an effort to define ourselves and then share with you, the essence of EWCC and the people who make it the amazing Church it is. The process has been a journey of faith for us. We have gathered our self-reflections and transposed them into the words you have read...words that felt like a prayer as we wrote them...a prayer for our future. And so with the blessing of God, we pray our next settled minister will come to know that the EWCC is where they are called to be and then guided by the Holy Spirit, we will know when they have truly come home...

Amen

Attachments

Consensus document plus congregational charge to committees

References - Three

CONSENSUS

Nominating Committee Report on Special Committees - January 10, 2025 Revised 1/26/2025 at the Annual Meeting

The Nominating Committee (Bob Rath, Dorrie Scranton, Jess Reed and Val Law) began work in November 2024 and solicited volunteers and a representative mix of people for both committees with an emphasis on Transition #2 since its work would start in February. Happily, EWCC Members stepped up and volunteered.

Transition #2 Committee (T2) - 10-12 people

Bob Rath
Jess Reed
Anthony Reed
Kaylyn Converse
Phil Parizeau
Tom Stokes
Pam Brown
Lynn Hescheles
Peter Green
Jessica Weaver-Boose

Search and Call Committee (SCC) - 7-9 people

Denise Eslinger
Sherry Magnan
Jaime Boisvert
Marilyn Rath
John Davis
Pam Brown
Jeff Wong
Emily Hayden

Transition #2 and Search and Call Committees Expectations

The Transition #2 (T2) Committee of EWCC will take the hand-off from the Transition #1 (T1) Committee. The T1 Committee orchestrated the search and selection of the Interim Minister, Pastor Gary Shahinian. The T1 Committee will continue as the Pastoral Relations Committee for the Interim Pastor for the length of his ministry at EWCC. The T2 Committee will be the bridge with the T1 Committee and produce the Church Profile. The T2 Committee will be the bridge with the Search and Call Committee (SCC) who will identify and present the Settled Pastor candidate to the EWCC Congregation. Both Committees were approved at the January 26, 2025 EWCC Annual Meeting.

The T2 Committee will develop the EWCC Profile which is a high stakes document for EWCC and will make our community of faith come to life for prospective pastors. The T2 Committee (10-12 members) will divide itself into teams to develop multiple perspectives on EWCC. Possible perspectives include: The Village of East Woodstock, Life of the Church, Youth, Online and Remote Congregants, Visitation and Institutional Knowledge, Community Connections. The committee membership and teams will engage Pastor Gary and others in the church and community with knowledge of these areas. Information will be gathered by 1:1 or group conversations, surveys, or other means of gaining details, so that the development of each perspective is thorough. The EWCC Profile must be approved by the Congregation by June 30, 2025 and the Area UCC Conference and the UCC National by September 15, 2025. The Profile will be posted by October 1, 2025 within the UCC communication framework for review by UCC sanctioned pastors.

The SCC (7-9 members) will start their review following a handoff meeting with T2 in the fall of 2025. Pastors who are interested in EWCC will notify us through the UCC communication framework and then the SCC will review those pastors' profiles to identify candidates for further consideration. It is anticipated that the optimum time for the widest choice of candidates will occur between January and May 2026. The SCC will periodically report status to the congregation while maintaining candidate confidentiality. The SCC will narrow the search to one candidate and then orchestrate a "candidating" weekend for the candidate and their family including a social opportunity with the congregation, a worship leadership opportunity and vote on the Settled Pastor by the EWCC Congregation before the end of June 2026. The SCC will coordinate with Society to finalize the call agreement, compensation package and contract for the Settled Pastor plus congregational vote (as required by IRS) before the end of June 2026. The SCC will orchestrate the onboarding of the new Settled Pastor beginning in late August 2026.

TEEG

Community * Faith * Business

May 22, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

The Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG) is a 38-year-old non-profit agency that provides safety net programs and services to residents of Thompson, Pomfret and Woodstock. We help people with energy assistance, emergency and ongoing food assistance, and applications to Medicare and Medicaid. We also operate as the Youth Service Bureau for our towns (plus Putnam) and have active and vibrant playgroups for kids and on-going support for new and expectant parents through a home visiting program called Hand-in-Hand. Our goal is to support families in crises with wrap-around services that address needs and barriers they are experiencing.

TEEG has had a wonderful working relationship with the East Woodstock Congregational Church. Each year, the church provides outreach services to our agency as well as:

- Financial support
- Support for multiple food drives
- Back to School supplies
- Gifts for families for Holiday Giving

We are grateful for the history of support from EWCC and look forward to continuing our work responding to our community needs together.

Sincerely,



Carl Asikainen
Executive Director

Interfaith Human Services of Putnam

AN ALL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION



May 22, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

Our Board of Directors:

Karen Osbrey, President
Lori Carminati, Vice President
Jaclyn Thurlow, Secretary
Ann Kathi Peterson, Treasurer
Emily Barnes
Shawn Johnston
Pat Harrington
Marge Guerin
Holly Gilbert
Eileen Piotroski
Bill Guillot
Paul Pikora
Peter Battye
Cheryl Guillot

Our Mission:

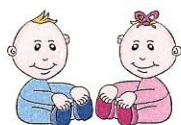
Interfaith Human
Services Of Putnam
R.E.A.C.H.'s out to
Restore lives through
Education and Empowerment
Of individuals, to
Actively respond
to the needs in our
Community, to be
Compassionate toward
others, and to
Help those around
us who are in need
or in transition by
sponsoring, funding
and facilitating programs
and projects that address
these needs in Northeastern
Connecticut.

On behalf of Interfaith Human Services of Putnam, we would like to express our gratitude for all that the East Woodstock Congregational Church has done for our organization. IHSP has had a wonderful and productive working relationship with the East Woodstock Congregational Church for many years. East Woodstock Congregational Church and its members provide outreach services to IHSP, as well as: financial support, food drives and school supply drives. As a 100 percent volunteer organization, IHSP truly relies on these working relationships to provide services to our community.

IHSP is a 501c3 charity whose programs include the Daily Bread Food Pantry, NU2U Clothing Closet, Diaper Bank of NECT, Emergency Fuel and Housing Assistance, Summer Meal Program for Families with Children, Pathways 2 Success, Putnam Municipal Agent for the Elderly and more. IHSP supports families in need in the greater Putnam, CT area, including Woodstock, CT.

Sincerely,

Karen Osbrey
Interfaith Human Services of Putnam
President



IHSP-Diaper Bank of NECT



IHSP-NU 2 U Clothing Closet



Putnam Agent for the Elderly



Pathways 2 Success



IHSP-Daily Bread Food Pantry

Corner of 51 Grove Street & 6 Bradley Street, P.O. Box 281, Putnam, CT 06260

A 501c3 Non Profit Charitable Organization No. 06-1587623

Tel: 860-928-0169 • Fax: 860-963-7602 • www.ihspputnam.org • Email: ihspputnam2005@gmail.com • Facebook/[putnamdailybread](https://www.facebook.com/putnamdailybread)



DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Jodi Hill-Lilly, MSW
Commissioner Designate

Ned Lamont
Governor

Date May 22, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

Department of Children and Families has had a wonderful working relationship with the East Woodstock Congregational Church, through Covenant to Care “Adopt a Social Worker” initiative for many years. I am currently the liaison between the Church and the CT State Department of Children and Families.

Part of the Covenant to Care is to assist designated social workers when they have situations arise with their families that they do not have the resources to resolve. These situations include providing furniture to foster families, helping provide clothing to new foster children, helping with gift cards to families who are waiting for their first financial reimbursement after becoming foster parents, etc.

The East Woodstock Congregational Church also has three major events for foster children and parents:

- **Thanksgiving Baskets:** The church community members donate turkeys and all the fixings to make a full Thanksgiving meal. These include stuffing, bags of potatoes, carrots, onions, winter squash, canned peas, apples, rolls, and other items as needed for families. These baskets are created based on the needs of the individual families from family size of two to family size of up to 10.
- **Christmas/Holiday Gifts:** One of the activities that the congregation participates in is providing gifts to children for the holiday. Our social workers provide first names, age, gift suggestions, and gender of children that are then placed on tags and taken by members of the church.
- **Easter Buckets:** The church provides buckets full of spring and summer items and some traditional easter fillers (chocolate) to children under foster care.

DCF is very fortunate to have this wonderful relationship with the East Woodstock Congregational Church, and we look forward to this partnership continuing for years to come.

Sincerely,

Ana Rodríguez SW
DCF Foster Care Division
860-213-2418

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

www.ct.gov/dcf

An Equal Opportunity Employer
Phone (860) 450-2000 Fax (860) 450-1051
322 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226