Gary’s layout No content

**Home yes**

**About yes**

Who we are (yes)

United Church of Christ (UCC) (yes)

History (yes)

Architecture (yes)

Contact Us (yes)

Join First Church (yes)

Committees (yes)

Staff (yes)

**Worship (yes)**

No matter where we are…

Timeless Worship each Sunday (yes)

(see website for different services)

**Music (yes)**

Music Ministry (yes)

Ensembles (yes)

Vocal Choir (yes)

Youth Choir (yes

Hand Bells (yes

History (yes

Pipe Organ (yes

Tower (yes

Music Staff (yes

Music Recordings (yes

Special Guests (yes

**Children, Youth & Family Events (yes**

2017/2018 Confirmation Registration (yes

High School Youth (yes

Grades K5 (yes

Grades 6-8 (yes

Our Mission for Children & Youth (yes

Calendar of Events (yes

**Get Involved (yes**

First Church Ministries & Fellowship Groups (yes

Outreach (yes

Singles (yes

Volunteer (yes

Sustainable Ministry (yes

Woman’s Ministries (yes

First Church Pride (yes

Animal Ministry (yes

Spiritual Direction (yes

Programs & Activities (yes

**Chapel (yes**

**Give Back (yes**

Ways to Give (yes

Pledging (yes

Ways to pay your pledge (cash or checks) (yes

Online using secure paypal

Endowment Funds (yes

**Join First Church (yes**

Welcome (yes

Join Online (yes

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|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Media | Events Calendar | Contact Us |  |
|  | Blog/Beacon | Building Calendar | First Church Congregational 26 Pleasant Street Metuen, MA 01844 (978) 687-1240 |  |
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Gary’s layout with content

**Home**

(pictures of the church in background)

Love. First Church Congregational

Sunday’s 10:AM

We are glad and grateful that you are with us, and we hope that your experience here enriches your life.

Over the decades, First Church has been known as the “friendly church on the hill”. Rich in tradition and history, First Church is also importantly aware that we, the people, need to be rich in the “gifts of the spirit” – “love, joy, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

We invite you to journey with our church family in ways of your choosing in order to share in the life of the Spirit, and to co-create with the Head of First Church, Jesus Christ, a spirited and spiritual future.

As you explore this web site, you will find many opportunities for Christian ministry and fellowship which combine to make us who we are. Both members and friends participate in the life of the church as we minister to the local community and beyond.

**About**

Who we are – Pastor’s Welcome

On behalf of our entire congregation, I warmly welcome you to First Church Congregational! Worship with us on Sunday mornings at 10 AM, bring your children to the renowned non-denominational Chapel Pre-School during the week, enjoy a delicious homemade turkey dinner at our annual community George Washington Birthday Dinner or simply stop by to say “Hello.” Whatever God has in store for you, know that whoever you are . . . or wherever you are . . . on your journey of life, you are always welcomed here!

FCC is the beautiful and majestic stone church you see on the hill in the heart of Methuen. Our sanctuary houses the famous LeFarge Resurrection window as well as a James E. Treat organ donated by the estate of Edward F. Searles in 1922. And while our church is old, dating back to 1729, our thinking is not. As a member church of the United Church of Christ, we believe and expect that God is still-speaking and is actively leading us into today’s world to live out the good news of Jesus Christ.

We are a mainstream Protestant church in the reformed tradition and are intentionally inclusive. Our congregation is very active and opens its arms –wide! – to anyone who yearns to grow in faith, enjoy warm fellowship and serve our neighbors, near and afar. We celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month. Also, Christian Education classes are offered each Sunday for ages 3 through High School!

If inspirational music, an outstanding youth program and an emphasis on making a difference in the world appeal to you, pay us a visit. Come and see what God is doing here at 26 Pleasant St!

Faithfully,

Pastor Bill Ingraham

**United Church of Christ**

The United Church of Christ (UCC) is a distinct and diverse community of Christians that come together as one church to join faith and action. With over 5,000 churches and nearly one million members across the U.S., the UCC serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world. The UCC is a church of firsts, a church of extravagant welcome, and a church where "…they may all be one" (John 17:21).

The Church of Firsts

Since 1957, the United Church of Christ has been the church of firsts, weaving God’s message of hope and extravagant welcome with action for justice and peace. Together, we live out our faith in ways that effect change in our communities. The UCC's many "firsts" mean that we have inherited a tradition of acting upon the demands of our faith. When we read in Galatians: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"—a demand is made upon us. And so we were the first historically white denomination to ordain an African-American, the first to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly gay man, and the first Christian church to affirm the right of same-gender couples to marry. We were in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement and the Civil Rights movement. Our response to the demands of our faith is woven into the history of our country.

A Church of Extravagant Welcome

Today, we continue to change lives throughout the world. We work alongside more than 200 mission partners. We labor ceaselessly to fight injustice, in the United States and abroad. We instill our vision into our youth and young adults, forging leaders who will imagine new dreams. And we sustain and develop church leaders, pastors, and our local churches to live their faith in exciting new ways. We believe in a God that is still speaking, a God that is all-loving and inclusive. We are a church that welcomes and accepts everyone as they are, where your mind is nourished as much as your soul.

We are a church where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary, and where together, we grow a just and peaceful world.

For more information, click here to visit the U.C.C. website <www.ucc.org>

**History of First Church in Methuen**

First Church Congregational, UCC was organized on October 28, 1729 and has enjoyed a continuous existence since then.

The first meetinghouse was erected by the Town and dedicated on August 29, 1728, near the burial ground on Meeting House Hill (opposite Holy Family Hospital). The second meetinghouse was dedicated for public worship on November 5, 1796 and moved to the site of the present church in 1832. The present edifice, built of Pelham granite and hand-hewn timbers from the 1796 building supporting the floor, was dedicated on October 3, 1855.

First Church is home of the beautiful “Resurrection Window” by the artist, John LaFarge. Fashioned of opalescent glass, this window is well known far a field for its special beauty. The apse was designed by the artist’s son to complement the window.

The 1866 James E. Treat (opus 1) pipe organ was built for E. Searle’s Great Barrington, MA residence and relocated to the church in 1924. The case and console are constructed of solid, carved English oak. The organ contains 40 ranks of pipes distributed over three manuals (keyboards) and pedal.

Our Parish House, erected by the parishioners grateful of their heritage, was dedicated on May 24, 1964. This building is the scene of great activity for both church and community.

Since its beginning, our church has witnessed many changes. It has evolved from a small meetinghouse to membership in the United Church of Christ; from parish of a few to a parish of several hundred. Now, under the pastoral leadership of Pastor Bill Ingraham, or church will continue it’s important mission to put God first, and to be God’s servant in the service of all people.

The First Church unique gothic architecture has historical significance and is thus listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

First Church is home to The Chapel School, a non-denominational preschool.

**Architecture**

**Contact Us**

**Join First Church**

**Committees**

First Church Board - Oversee all church committees and activities of the congregation

Behavioral Safety - Ensure all activities at the church are safe and secure, fair, current and operate in the best interest of all parishioners.

Christian Education - Plan, execute, and evaluate all aspects of youth Christian education

Diaconate - Oversee all aspects of the worship and spiritual life of the congregation

Finance - Direct all financial aspects of the church, including budgets, endowments, and expenses

Membership Development. & Communications - Foster church membership through special events, exciting programs, and targeted communications

Nominating - Identify the best qualified people to serve the parish, including leadership

Outreach - Develop and execute charitable programs for the greater community and church surroundings

Pastor/Parish Relations - Ensure the communication between the pastor and the congregation is positive and beneficial

Stewardship - Foster congregational pledging and giving for the wide ministries of the church

Trustees - In charge of all physical assets, buildings and facilities of the church

Chancel and Children’s Choir - Enhance worship services through their gift of song to the congregation

Adult and youth Hand-bell Choirs - Play moving and spiritual songs, approximately once a month, for the service as well as outside groups

**Staff**

**Staff Members**

Pastor Bill Ingraham, Senior Pastor

Paul Webster-Greene, Director of Music

Lori Bennett, Director of Christian Education

Alisa Bucchiere, Organist/Pianist

Terry Myers, Treasurer

Roberta Jurovich, Administrative Assistant

**Church Board Members**

Deb Maue Sprague, Chairperson

Steve Boyko, Vice Chairperson

Glenda Schubert, Secretary

Scott Sanborn, Diaconate Chairperson

Beth Buck, Christian Education Chairperson

Rick Buck, Trustees of Properties Chairperson

Pat Romano, Finance Chairperson

Marilyn Peck, Stewardship Chairperson

Sue Michaels, Member-At-Large

Cynthia Causbie, Outreach Chairperson

Gary Dockham, Membership Development Chairperson

The Chapel School

Cindy Mazella, Director

Sue Donohue, Office Manager

**Worship**

Always remember; Whatever God has in store for you, know that whoever you are or wherever you are on your journey of life, you are always welcomed here!

Timeless Worship each Sunday

What to expect

Sunday morning worship is the center of our life together. Each Sunday morning, at 10:00 am, we offer vibrant worship that speaks to our hearts as well as our minds, with preaching that connects scripture to our lives and the world in which we live today.

Children spend the first fifteen minutes of the service in worship with their parents. The “Childrens Message” is a special time when the pastor speaks directly with the children, including the congregation. At the end of the message, children depart worship for Sunday School.

Our Sunday morning worship bulletin is user-friendly with all responses and prayers printed in the bulletin, along with directions on when to stand. This enables even first-time worshipers to feel at ease during our worship. For those with hearing difficulties, special amplified headsets are available.

Worship & Sunday School is followed by Coffee & Fellowship in the Parish Hall or (weather permitting) on the front lawn.

Other items of note:

* Communion is received on the first Sunday of each month. Our Communion table is open to all. We encourage all to join us in partaking in bread and the cup. For our services, grape juice is used, but water is also provided for those sensitive to sugar. For the bread, both regular and gluten-free crackers are available.
* We have no dress code, so please come as you are. While some parishioners have old habits of putting on their “Sunday best”, please come in what you’re comfortable in.

(see website for different services)

**Music**

**Music Ministry**

Music has always held a special place in the life of First Church. Even under the strict disciplines of its Puritan founders, the singing of hymns by the congregation was considered an integral part of the worship service. Our Director of Music, Paul Webster-Greene oversees the various choirs and works closely with the Senior Pastor to provide a cohesive worship service.

Vocal Choir: The Chancel Choir, comprised of vocalists from high school through adult, is a very dedicated group, which enjoys singing a variety of musical selections and styles from simple hymns to cantatas. Additional voices are always welcome. Rehearsals are Sundays after worship.

Children’s Choir: The WOW choir is our youth-based group that let’s our children sing to the entire congregation. Performing a few times a year, this group helps build our youths’ confidence while entertaining the congregation.

Handbell Choirs: We have 2 Handbell Choirs: Chapel Bells (for beginners, Grade 3 – adult) & First Church Bells (for music readers, Grade 8 – adult) which practice regularly. There are opportunities for any one interested in learning the techniques of playing handbells. Rehearsals: Thursdays at 6:30 – 7:30 pm & 7:45 – 9:00 pm

**Ensembles**

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**History**

**Pipe Organ**

**Searles Pipe Organ James E. Treat Opus 1: 1886**

* Original Cost: $50,000.00+
* Case designed by famous architect Henry Vaughan Case and built by Hurder Bros. of Somerville, MA
* Case design patterned after the current Walker/Aeolian-Skinner/Andover organ at the Methuen Music Hall, while it was still in Boston, which Mr. Searles eventually purchased.
* The organ was originally built for Edwared Searles’ Great Barrington home. It was moved to his home in Methuen. Upon his death, it was given to First Church.
* Currently 44 ranks, the organ was installed by William Laws of Beverly, MA in 1924. Mr. Laws eliminated the Tracker-pneumatic action and installed electro-pneumatic pull down actions on the original slider chests. Mr. Laws also incorporated a console chasis from the Austin Organ Company into the Original console shell.
* During the 1930s, two stops (Mixture V ranks and Clarion 4′) were removed and substituted with two stops of string tone. Other than that the organ was totally intact.
* Organ Restoration Phase I Restoration of the organ included rebuilding the console in the style of James Treat which includes new drawknobs. All switching was converted over to a solid state system. Once Phase II is completed this organ will be the largest extant instrument of this builder.

**Tower**

**Music Staff**

**Music Recordings**

**Special Guests**

**Children, Youth & Family Events**

For the very young, First Church Congregational offer a pre Nursery room for children up to age 4.

For older children, we offer lesson instruction for ages 4-18. Our weekly lessons for our youth are based on relating today’s issues to the lessons that Jesus is teaching us from the bible. Each lesson focuses on a Scripture Reading, a relatable story, prayer and a craft, cooking opportunity, or drama relating to the weeks lesson. On the first Sunday of the month the children to go back into service and join the congregation for Holy Communion.

Christian Education is led by our certified Christian Education Director and Senior Minister. The curriculum is a lectionary, story based curriculum that is aligned with the weekly sermons. A variety of different resources are used, and some of the most popular have been the use of movies as a backdrop for the lessons. Along with the weekly lessons, each week the grade level teachers are also given a variety of activities to choose from that correspond with the lessons and that are most appropriate for their classes. The activities incorporate the use of the five senses so that all learners will be engaged.

For all children, we have specialized Christian education for those with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental and emotional needs. Additionally, several of the Sunday school teachers are also public school certified teachers, and they can meet the varying needs of the congregation.

**2017/2018 Confirmation Registration**

**High School Youth**

The youth in the church are given several opportunities to get involved in various areas of the church. We encourage them to participate in areas they are interested in, as well as to try new things that may come up.

Junior Adventurers (5th – 8th grade)

This middle school age group meets once a month at various times to help out with outreach activities as well as fun activities.

Pilgrim Fellowship (9th – 12th grade)

Sundays from 6pm – 8pm

This high school group meets on Sundays, as well as other various times to help out with outreach activities. Throughout the year the youth participate in a number of activities that are both fun and educational, providing opportunities for fellowship as well as reaching out to help others.

Mission

A group of our high school students along with their leaders go on a week long mission trip every other year, while doing 2-3 local Mission events every year as well. Some previous trips include New Orleans and New York City.

**Grades K5**

**Grades 6-8**

Junior Adventurers (5th – 8th grade)

This middle school age group meets once a month at various times to help out with outreach activities as well as fun activities.

**Our Mission for Children & Youth**

**Calendar of Events**

**Get Involved**

**First Church Ministries & Fellowship Groups**

**Outreach**

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.

~ Matthew 25:35

Outreach is a large part of what we do at First Church Congregational, and we always have many opportunities available for all ages. We strive to offer our time, talent and treasures to many people in our surrounding communities who are less fortunate and could benefit from a little extra help.

**Back to School Clothes:** Working with Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, Inc. (MAN), we help children in need providing sneakers, socks, T shirts, hoodies, underwear, jeans, baseball caps, and backpacks filled with required school supplies.

**Bread & Roses:** We provide a monthly meal to this soup kitchen in Lawrence. First Church members gather monthly to cook a meal to be delivered to Bread & Roses. All our welcome!

**Habitat for Humanity:** Two Saturdays, annually, in April and September, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, we assist Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity. A non-profit homebuilder located in Lawrence, MA, it builds simple, affordable, comfortable homes in partnership with people who need them.

**Hike for Hope:** Each year First Church Congregational walks as a team to put our faith into action by helping poor and homeless people in our community. The Hike for Hope is a 1 to 5-mile walk through Andover that raises money for Capernaum Place, a 20-unit transitional housing facility for families.

**Lazarus House Ministries:** First Church Congregational has been actively involved with Lazarus House for many years. We have made sandwiches for the soup truck, sponsored Hike for Hope teams, collected winter coats and clothing, worked at the food pantry, cooked meals at the emergency shelter, organized food drives, cleaned up the parking lot, painted the garage doors, and organized the office area at the Good Shepherd Center. Volunteers are welcome. If interested in participating, contact Team Leader, Sue Newton.

**Neighbors in Need:** Neighbors in Need serves 500 families per week from seven food pantries strategically located throughout the neighborhoods of Lawrence and Methuen. First Church Congregational has a collection bin that accepts donations on a continuous basis with special emphasis on the first Sunday of the month.

**Project Bread** - The Walk for Hunger: Through its Walk for Hunger, the oldest continual pledge walk in the country (44 years), Project Bread provides millions of dollars each year in privately donated funds to more than 450 emergency food programs in 130 communities statewide, including local organizations Bread and Roses, Lazarus House, and Neighbors-In-Need.

**Relay For Life (**sponsored by the American Cancer Society): At Relay For Life, teams camp out at the High School track, and for 24 hours members of each team walk or run around the track. Relay happens overnight, because Cancer Never Sleeps! Each team member raises money, and the funds raised through Relay help to create a world with more cancer survivors.

**Souper Bowl of Caring:** First Church Congregational donations of cash and soup are given to Neighbors-In-Need for distribution to families in Lawrence and Methuen.

**Thanksgiving Meals:** For this outreach effort, all members and friends of the church are invited to donate items which are boxed and distributed to needy families through Neighbors in Need. Between 50-75 boxes have been collected each time in recent years. A list of items to fill a box containing a complete meal is published, and families are encouraged to fill a box with a complete dinner.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

**Mitten and Hat Tree:** Mittens and hats are collected during November and December for Neighbors in Need.

**Gifts from the Sunday School Classrooms:** Annually each classroom buys gifts for a local child from a working poor family, usually a single parent home, located in Methuen or Lawrence.

**Gifts to the Manger:** On the 2nd Sunday of Advent, the Christian Education program invites the entire church to provide gifts that go to DCF in Lawrence and are distributed to local children.

**Heifer International:** This ‘Pay it Forward’ program raises money to buy animals to help people and villages in need.

**M&M’s for Missions:** Our High School youth provide participants with a tube of M&M’s. Once all the candy is eaten, the participant then fills the empty tube with quarters over the next 4-5 weeks and returns the tube to the HS youth at church. All money collected goes toward the High School Youth Mission Trip.

Other Programs Canned food drives, Cereal drive, Fundraisers for Youth Mission Trips; Youth helping at Lazarus House, Youth working for Methuen Clean-up; Youth visiting Nursing Homes, providing toiletry bags to Neighbors in Need; Christian Education has also participated in kits being made when disasters

**Singles**

**Volunteer**

**Sustainable Ministry**

**Woman’s Ministries**

**First Church Pride**

Where can you find a dynamic gathering of the LGBTQ community?  
Where can you find a spiritual home which strengthens and nurtures your soul?  
Where can you safely ask questions about faith and God without judgement?

Your questions (and pizza), can be explored at the next meeting of First Church Pride Fellowship.

Visit again for more details about our meetings

ALL are welcome, including allies.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about First Church Pride stay tuned as we announce our First Church Pride Coordinator (FCPC).

FCP Fellowship is a gathering of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) community members and their friends, in the midst of a loving inclusive spiritual family at First Church. The group, interested guests and allies will begin to meet on regular basis for fellowship, programs of interest, dinner, entertainment, outings and special events. The Fellowship is inclusive of a diversity of persons and ideas. Church membership is not required nor promoted. All are welcome.

**Animal Ministry**

**Spiritual Direction**

**Programs & Activities**

Organ Restoration Oversee the restoration of the church organ

Prayer shawl group Creation of artisanal blankets and shawls for the elderly, children, and all those in need.

**Chapel**

The Chapel School is committed to providing a warm and caring environment where children grow while developing self-confidence and self-expression while in preschool. Our primary goal is to supply each child with the strong foundation needed to encourage a positive attitude toward school and to generate excitement for a lifetime of learning.

At Chapel School we promise to meet and exceed the following standards of excellence for early childhood education:

1. Children spend the majority of their time playing and working with materials or other children.
2. Children have access to various activities throughout the day. Students are always provided with:
   * + assorted building blocks and other construction materials
     + props for pretend play
     + picture books
     + paints and other art materials
     + table toys such as matching games, pegboards, and puzzles
3. Our teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day. They do not spend all their time with the whole group.
4. Our classrooms are decorated with children’s original artwork, their own writing, and stories dictated by children to teachers.
5. Children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences.
6. Children work on projects and have long periods of time (at least one hour) to play and explore.
7. Children have an opportunity to play outside every day.
8. Our teachers read books to children individually or in small groups throughout the day, not just at group story time.
9. Our classroom curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help.
10. Children and their parents look forward to school.

**[Visit us at www.chapelkids.com](http://www.chapelkids.com/" \o "Chapel School" \t "_blank)**

**Give Back**

Ways to Give

Pledging

Ways to pay your pledge (cash or checks)

Online using secure paypal (yes

Endowment Funds

**Join First Church**

Welcome

Here at First Church Congregational, we strive to be a welcoming pillar of the community. We are a self-governing church, which means only the members determine our path.

However, we are not just a church, but a church within our community. Throughout the year, First Church Congregational performs numerous outreach activities. For more information please click here <Link to Outreach page>

Join Online

**Contact Form**

Thank you for your interest in First Church – we would love to hear from you! If you are thinking about Sunday Service, please consider joining us at 10am and then staying for coffee hour after service in Parish Hall.

If you have children, Christian Education classes are offered each Sunday for ages 3 through High School starting at 10am. Daycare is available for those under three. We are a mainstream Protestant church in the reformed tradition and are intentionally inclusive.

Whatever God has in store for you, know that whoever you are or wherever you are on your journey of life, you are always welcomed here!

Your Name (required)

Your Email

Phone

Your Message

How did you hear about us?

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|  | Blog/Beacon | | Building Calendar | | First Church Congregational 26 Pleasant Street Metuen, MA 01844 (978) 687-1240  Directions | |  |
|  | Podcasts | | Baptisms\* | |  |
|  | Lectionary Readings | | Weddings\*  Funerals\*  Special Events Rental | |  | |  |
|  |  | | Join First Church\* | |  | |  |
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**\*Baptisms**

At First Church Congregational, UCC, we welcome all persons, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances, into the full life and ministry of this church.

Baptism is one of two sacraments we celebrate in the United Church of Christ. Our understanding of baptism comes out of our mainline Protestant tradition. In our Congregational and UCC tradition people are baptized once, either as children or adults. Our UCC Book of Worship states, “Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ’s church, the sign and seal of their participation in God’s forgiveness, and the beginning of their new life into full Christian faith and life.”

“Marriage is a covenant founded in God’s love.” At First Church, Congregational, UCC, we affirm that view of marriage. We welcome couples who approach First Church for their wedding because of their own sense that, “marriage is a covenant founded in God’s love.”

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship appropriately celebrated in the Sanctuary. This, then, is a worship service. The pastor, deacons, and members of First Church join in wanting to offer a caring worship experience to couples who desire to become united in marriage. The pastor of First Church is responsible for the conduct of weddings in the church.

We invite couples to worship with us before and after their wedding to become familiar with our congregation and worship service. The pastor will briefly discuss the life and history of First Church and the United Church of Christ with all couples.

If you are seeking a funeral or memorial service, First Church Congregational can assist you in your time of need. Please contact the pastor and discuss any requests you may have.

**\*Weddings**

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The wedding ceremony is a service of worship appropriately celebrated in the Sanctuary. This, then, is a worship service. The pastor, deacons, and members of First Church join in wanting to offer a caring worship experience to couples who desire to become united in marriage. The pastor of First Church is responsible for the conduct of weddings in the church.

We invite couples to worship with us before and after their wedding to become familiar with our congregation and worship service. The pastor will briefly discuss the life and history of First Church and the United Church of Christ with all couples.

If you are seeking a funeral or memorial service, First Church Congregational can assist you in your time of need. Please contact the pastor and discuss any requests you may have.

**\*Join First Church**

**Whatever link that people click on, can they be directed to a consolidate link to get them to the form?**