



**2025-2026**

# Proposed Budget



IGNITING  
A PASSION  
FOR JESUS IN  
CONNECTICUT,  
NEW ENGLAND  
AND AROUND  
THE WORLD.



# As you prepare to vote on the proposed budget for 2025-2026,

## THERE ARE SIX THINGS WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW.

1

### People's lives are changing because of God's work through Walnut Hill.

#### Celebrating God's Work at Walnut Hill

Our Annual Report is filled with powerful stories and facts that highlight the life-changing work God is doing across our campuses. Take time to read through it and join us in celebrating all God has done!

#### The Power of Invitation

As you share your stories of what God is doing at Walnut Hill, friends and family are responding — they're showing up, asking questions and joining in. Over the past year, we welcomed 1,228 newcomers, averaging more than 100 new guests each month — a 7% increase! We praise God for the way He is building His Church through your invitations and faithful witness.

2

### We are thankful for God's provision through your faithful giving.

We praise God for your faithful giving, which is truly igniting a passion for Jesus in Connecticut, New England and around the world.

#### Did you know?

- 1,255 families gave to God's work at Walnut Hill this past year, representing a 10% increase in the number of giving families.
- It's especially encouraging to see faithful giving across all generations — from children and teenagers to adults and seniors

Through your giving, lives are being changed for eternity!

3

### Walnut Hill is a good steward.

God calls each of us, including His Church, to be good stewards of the resources He provides. We take this calling seriously, focusing on doing both the little things and the big things with excellence and care.

#### Loving Our Volunteers

We are deeply grateful for the countless volunteers who generously give their time and energy to enable ministry and help keep our campuses operational, beautiful and safe. Your service has a tremendous impact both measurably and immeasurably. For example, our Food Pantry volunteers alone served more than 20,000 hours this past year!

This year, we especially want to recognize the incredible number of behind-the-scenes hours that not only make ministry possible but also save the church significant financial resources. These areas include:

- Planning, setting up and breaking down campus events
- Outdoor cleanup and maintenance
- Interior cleaning, organization and repairs
- Interior and exterior seasonal decorating
- Painting and construction

Thank you for being an essential part of God's work at Walnut Hill!

#### Proactively Saving

Our Property Management Director, Nick Barnett, has created a 30-year maintenance plan that outlines major property repairs and related costs across all our campuses. Each year, we aim to save \$150,000 to responsibly maintain our properties and grow our facilities reserve fund for the future.

This past year, your generosity supported general maintenance across all our campuses and funded important updates, including the renovation and maintenance of parking lots in Bethel, Derby and New Milford. Through the Ignite Legacy Fund, we are also completing construction on a new parking lot at our Waterbury Campus. In addition, new carpet was installed at the Bethel Campus, helping to create a fresh, welcoming environment.



In 2025-2026, your giving will enable projects such as:

- Replacement of boilers at the Waterbury Campus
- Potential replacement of sections of roof at the Bethel Campus
- General maintenance across all campuses

4

### **Many factors are considered in Walnut Hill's budget.**

#### **Monitoring Trends**

We trust God and remain attentive to the world around us. Ongoing economic changes have led to rising costs in utilities, benefits, maintenance and supplies. This year's budget reflects these economic shifts with wisdom and care.

#### **Building Upon Momentum**

Over the past year, God has been moving powerfully at Walnut Hill! We've seen a steady rise in new attendees, meaningful momentum across all ministry areas and increased in-person attendance. This year's budget is designed to support the needs of our growing congregation.

#### **Preparing the Way**

Anticipating continued growth, several families stepped forward last year with a two-year commitment to give above and beyond their regular support. Their generosity helped make the 2024 budget increase possible and is helping to carry the increase through the 2025-2026 fiscal year. We're deeply grateful for their generosity and partnership.

5

### **Walnut Hill is setting a fiscally responsible 2025-2026 budget.**

Our Finance Team and Elders have spent considerable time in prayer and believe it is wise to maintain a flat budget for the coming year.

As we continue to welcome many new families to Walnut Hill, we're also saying goodbye to long-time members who are retiring and moving out of state. We're deeply grateful for the ways they've invested in the church through their time, treasure and talents.

As committed members move away, we recognize the need to fill important gaps in both volunteer roles and giving. We invite everyone to prayerfully consider how God may be leading them — whether by stepping into a new area of service or by beginning or increasing their financial giving.

6

### **Walnut Hill is stepping out in faith.**

As we recognize the many factors impacting today's economy, we believe God is calling us not to shrink back, but to press forward in faith — sharing Jesus, raising up the next generation, and discipling Christ-followers here in our communities and around the world.

#### **Praying for a 5% Increase in Giving**

To support our budget and expanding ministries, we've set a prayerful goal of seeing a 5% increase in giving this coming year. Would you pray and ask God how you may be able to help?

#### **Biblical Stewardship and Financial Freedom**

In response to the financial pressures many are facing, we're excited to offer Financial Peace University this fall. This proven course teaches individuals and families how to apply biblical principles to budgeting, eliminating debt, saving and giving — ultimately bringing about greater financial freedom and joy.

#### **Alternative Income and Creative Cost Savings**

Looking to the future, we've formed a team of experienced business and nonprofit leaders to prayerfully explore alternative income streams and cost-saving strategies. Areas of focus include grant opportunities, income-generating rentals, solar energy solutions, innovative efficiencies and more.

**God has given Walnut Hill a great vision to ignite a passion for Jesus in Connecticut, New England and around the world. It's an honor to do this together as a family. Thank you!**

#### **DID YOU KNOW...**

Walnut Hill is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) by representing the highest standards of financial stewardship and integrity.



# 2025-2026 Church Budget Framework

This year, our total annual Church Budget is \$4,764,000, reflecting no increase from last year. As growth continues across our campuses and ministry and operational costs rise, we were able to identify savings in several areas, allowing us to move forward without increasing the overall budget. We remain committed to stewarding your gifts with care, reviewing our finances each month to ensure that what is given and what is spent remain aligned.

The Church Budget is made up of three components.

### 1. Operating Budget

The proposed 2025-2026 Operating Budget is \$4,124,000, reflecting no increase from last year. Please note: Church in Action and Benevolence are funded separately and are not included in the Operating Budget.

### 2. Programs, Trips and Retreats

Each year, the ministry of Walnut Hill includes individually funded youth retreats as well as ministry events, programs and trips. These activities pay for themselves.

### 3. Use of Facility Reserves

Our Property Management Director, Nick Barnett, has created a 30-year maintenance strategy that outlines the large property repairs and costs that will be incurred each year at all church properties. We have budgeted up to \$400,000 to allow for both planned and emergency facility costs.

### Total Proposed 2025-2026 Church Budget

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Operating Budget .....             | \$4,124,000 |
| 2. Programs, Trips and Retreats ..... | \$240,000   |
| 3. Use of Facility Reserves .....     | \$400,000   |

**Total: \$4,764,000**

### Operation Budget Insights

- While the total Operating Budget remains the same, we praise God for the 13% growth in attendance across our campuses over the past year and have made strategic adjustments to support this momentum. This year's budget accounts for increased costs in electricity, health insurance, supplies and food. It also covers expanded ministry efforts such as broadcasting and translation — expenses previously supported through the Ignite Legacy Fund.
- At the same time, we identified savings in facility contracts, a modest reduction in our advertising budget, and temporary savings in staffing.

## 2025-2026 OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed budget includes ministry and staffing costs by ministry area.

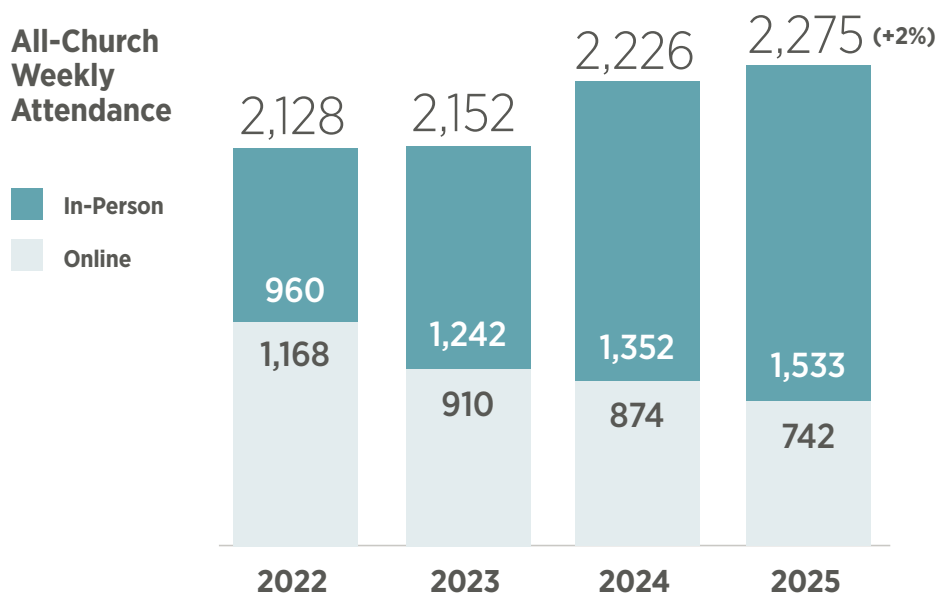
| Operating Expenses             | 2024-2025<br>Approved<br>Budget | 2025-2026<br>Proposed<br>Budget | Ministry<br>\$ Change |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Weekend Services               | 725,000                         | 735,000                         | 10,000                |
| Children's Ministry            | 325,000                         | 325,000                         | -                     |
| Youth Ministry                 | 300,000                         | 300,000                         | -                     |
| Adult Ministry                 | 347,000                         | 338,000                         | (9,000)               |
| Prayer Ministry                | 135,000                         | 135,000                         | -                     |
| Care and Connection            | 362,000                         | 352,000                         | (10,000)              |
| Evangelism and Local Outreach  | 311,000                         | 299,000                         | (12,000)              |
| Communication and Marketing    | 240,000                         | 237,000                         | (3,000)               |
| Campus and Facilities          | 983,000                         | 1,007,000                       | 24,000                |
| General and Administrative     | 396,000                         | 396,000                         | -                     |
| <b>Total Operating Expense</b> | <b>4,124,000</b>                | <b>4,124,000</b>                | <b>-</b>              |

2024-2025

# Campus Attendance Averages

We praise God for the growing number of people who call Walnut Hill home! Our campuses saw healthy growth as engagement increased and newcomers connected into the life of the church. We are grateful for our Online Campus, which often serves as the entry point for newcomers.

## All-Church Weekly Attendance

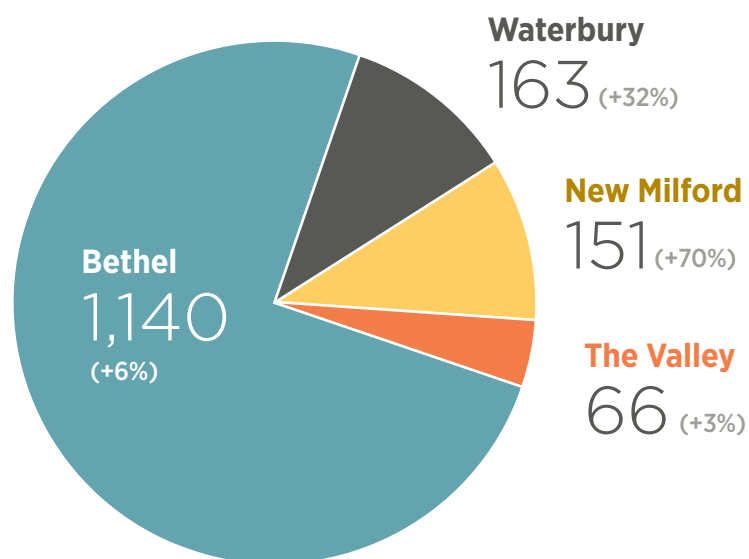


## DID YOU KNOW?

- Over the past year, we have welcomed **1,228** newcomers to weekend services, ministries and events!
- This past year, each of our physical campuses reached a **five-year** record high in attendance!
- Our in-person attendance has increased by **13%** this year!

Below is the average weekend attendance at our physical campuses over the past year. Praise God for the growth taking place at every campus, including both New Milford and Waterbury launching second services!

## Average In-Person Attendance



## Online Campus Insights

- On average, **742** people joined us online each weekend.
- People joined us from **39** different states and at least **20** nations!
- Videos on our YouTube Channel were watched **42,900** times this past year.
- Greenwoods Community Church in MA utilized our online sermon **20** weekends.

# Financial Oversight

In accordance with Walnut Hill's bylaws, an annual church budget must be submitted to the congregation for approval. This member-approved budget supports our mission of "igniting a passion for Jesus in Connecticut, New England and around the world."

The budget funds ministry across all areas of church life, including children, youth, adults, prayer, pastoral care, worship services, evangelism and more. It also covers the upkeep of our campuses and the operational support (administration, finance, communications and IT) necessary to sustain ministry across our five campuses.

Please note: The annual operating budget does not include funds raised for Church in Action, Benevolence or special campaigns.

Our congregants' generous giving of their tithes and offerings to the Operating Fund allows Walnut Hill Community Church, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to engage in ministry and steward all that He has given us.

The finance office is accountable to the Finance and Operations Team and the Elder Board. Each month, reports summarizing the general Operating Fund contributions and expenses are presented to the Finance and Operations Team and the Elder Board. In addition, reports summarizing the financial assets, liabilities and fund balance are also presented.

In alignment with our bylaws, an independent CPA firm conducts an annual audit of our financial statements at the end of each fiscal year (June 30). Copies of the audited financial statements are available at [www.walnuthillcc.org/give](http://www.walnuthillcc.org/give).

## HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BUDGET?

Please send questions directly to our Finance Director, Doug Palmer, at [dpalmer@walnuthillcc.org](mailto:dpalmer@walnuthillcc.org).



### CENTRAL OFFICE

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