



2026 Annual Report



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

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SEEKING GOD



**CARING FOR
ONE ANOTHER**



SERVING TOGETHER



REACHING OUT



LETTER FROM LEAD PASTORS/ ELDER CHAIRMAN

Dear Walnut Hill Family,

As we reflect on this past year and look ahead to all that God has in store, we are filled with deep gratitude for you. It is a joy to walk in unity as followers of Jesus, living out our faith and revealing His love to a world in need.

As you read this Annual Report, our prayer is that you will be encouraged by all that God is doing in our midst and inspired to go further with Him than ever before.

We can clearly testify to God's faithfulness.

First, **God is at work in our lives.** We have walked together through both joys and challenges — celebrating new life, grieving loss and experiencing fresh freedom as we continue to surrender more fully to Jesus. We are reminded that it is by His grace and through the gift of community that we experience the abundant life He offers.

Second, **God is working through His Church.** People of all ages are meeting Jesus and being baptized. New individuals and families are finding connection and hope each week. We celebrate 10 years of our food pantry and the thousands of families served, and we are continually amazed by how God is moving across every campus.

And finally, **God is calling us to follow Him.** As we step into a new year, we remain committed to seeking Him together — asking how we can best respond to the needs around us, reflect His love and share the Good News of Jesus. In a changing world, we seek to remain faithful, adaptable and open to where He leads.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead. God is opening new doors for ministry, and we are expectant for all He will do in and through our church family.

Thank you for your faith, your prayers and your generosity. It is a privilege to serve the Lord together.

With gratitude and love,

Bryan Nazworth

Chairman of the Elder Board

Adam DePasquale

Lead Pastor – Executive

Shawn Winters

Lead Pastor – Teaching



A YEAR OF ABIDING

Throughout this past year, we have learned to abide in Christ as we know, follow, serve and proclaim Jesus!

“Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.” John 15:4 (ESV)





RENEWED VISION FOR WALNUT HILL

As we abide in Jesus and live as people deeply rooted in Him, God calls us to step out in faith and do His work in the power of the Holy Spirit. As a church family, united as one body with many parts, we serve together on a mission to ignite a passion for Jesus in Connecticut, New England and around the world.

This mission flows from Scripture and the values that have been at the heart of Walnut Hill since its beginning in 1982: to teach the Bible, invest in the next generation, welcome people from every background and walk of life, and be the hands and feet of Jesus in our communities and around the world.

Building upon this mission, on Sunday, January 11, Pastors Adam and Shawn shared a fresh vision with the church. In this next season of ministry, God is calling Walnut Hill to grow as a **house of worship**, a **spiritual hospital**, an **equipping center** for all generations, and a **lighthouse** in our region and beyond.

With this vision comes exciting strategic initiatives and a renewed passion to protect, nurture, advance and contend for the unique calling God has placed on Walnut Hill. We look forward with great anticipation to the Kingdom impact that will unfold as God's people live out His mission. Read more on the following pages.



...a church family for every generation, background and ability, **seeking God** wholeheartedly.

We gather with holy anticipation to encounter His presence, hear His Word and exalt Jesus with one voice — offering Him our very best in gratitude and love.

Stepping into the campus pastor role in Waterbury has truly been a blessing for my wife Diana and me. Honestly, it has been more fulfilling than we could have imagined.

We sense that something special is happening in Waterbury, and we're grateful to be a part of what God is doing.

Every Sunday morning there is a genuine excitement in the air as we come together to worship God. There is a sincere hunger for God, a genuine love for one another and the sense of God's presence. Seeing everyone come together to lift up the name of Jesus and worship as one body is encouraging and inspiring.

We are privileged to serve alongside some incredible leaders and team members who commit themselves faithfully to God's work in Waterbury. Their heart for God and this community is clear in everything they do. Because of their support, we've been able to introduce new things with excitement. Our intentional focus has been to create an environment that is warm, welcoming and inviting. This has led to us refreshing and redecorating our space with an emphasis on improving the service experience for everyone who walks through our doors.

We are seeing fresh faces each week, getting people connected to the life of our church and even seeing some step into serving, all while helping our members find their place in the body of Christ. These truly are exciting times.

As we look ahead, we know God is on the move in Waterbury, and we're thankful to be part of a house of worship where His presence is felt and we can see lives changed for the glory of God.



We are becoming even more intentional in how we approach our services.

We are remaining committed to preaching God's Word, challenging the congregation and helping to relate it to daily life.

We are continuing to strengthen our Prayer Servant Ministry.

We are refreshing our worship environment at the Bethel Campus to bring natural light into worship services and more.

We are going to start an Arts Academy.



MINISTRY IMPACT

God continues to move across our campuses as people take meaningful steps in their faith and connect with our church community.

- **1,046** newcomers across all campuses
- **62** baptisms across our campuses
- **34** new members
- **2,024** weekend service attendance

Join the Vision – If you have an interest in getting involved in any of the initiatives we've shared, email us at serve@walnuthillcc.org.

...caring for one another with honesty, compassion and grace.

We bear each other's burdens and invite everyone to meet Jesus, the One who heals the brokenhearted and restores the wounded, so all may experience the abundant life He offers.



As my husband's Alzheimer's disease progressed, we sold our home and moved into a facility that provided long-term care. At that point, Walnut Hill showed us in practical terms what it means to be a spiritual hospital.

When Len and I could no longer worship together in person at church each week, Walnut Hill's Online Campus stepped in. We tuned in each Sunday and adjusted our worship to the limitations that Alzheimer's imposed. One of my favorite photos is of Len with his head bowed in prayer while Pastor Adam led the worship online. Len's laptop screen became a holy place. Thank you, Pastor Crystal and Pastor Adam. Pastor Jim was faithful with calls and visits. Friends at church supported us with their prayers.

Len stepped into the arms of Jesus last January, and Walnut Hill Community Church stepped further into my family's life by helping us plan his celebration of life service. Staff who we had never met personally (office, maintenance, technology) met our needs with excellence and compassion. Pastor Clay led the memorial service. **Our family was embraced by the love of Christ.**

We experienced the care of our local church from cradle to grave. All praise to God for the gift of His Church — His instrument of blessing until we worship Him face to face.

Thank you Walnut Hill Community Church!

Gail Russell
Bethel Campus

We are going to build greater caring capacity so we can help more people.

We are going to equip each of our campuses as they seek to grow their care ministries to best support their communities.

We are going to launch a support ministry for families that foster or adopt and help provide connections for those who want to take the next steps.

We are partnering with Hopeline to support special retreats and will be facilitating support groups for women and men who have experienced the trauma of an abortion.



MINISTRY IMPACT

Through our care ministries, our church continues to walk alongside people in some of life's most difficult moments.

- **250+** care conversations
- **104** ministered through care ministries (Celebrate Recovery, DivorceCare, GriefShare, Cancer Support Group, Mental Health Drop-In)
- **38** families helped through benevolence
- **50** hospital, nursing home and home visits
- **5** weddings and **12** funerals

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WE ARE AN EQUIPPING CENTER
FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Matthew 28:19-20

...committed to helping people grow in a vibrant,
abiding relationship with Jesus.

Through intentional discipleship, teaching and practice, we equip children,
students and adults to live out their faith and follow Christ for a lifetime.



Over the past year, Walnut Hill's Youth Ministry has had a profound impact on me, helping me navigate challenging times in wrestling, Scouts and running, while continuing to grow in my faith. Even something as simple as a Wednesday night Youth Group with a short message played a huge role in keeping me on track and Spirit-filled.

Hearing God's Word in a straightforward and relatable way gave me something to hold on to throughout the week, especially on the toughest days. Youth Group also pushed me to go beyond just attending. It led me to complete my Eagle Scout project at the church, where I built birdhouses and a bench. This gave me the opportunity to give back to a community that has supported me, while also teaching me responsibility and leadership outside of school.

Without Youth Group, my weeks would have often felt lost by Wednesday. Instead, it became something that reset my focus and helped me grow not only in my faith but also as a person. Overall, Youth Group has kept me on the right path during a challenging year, while also giving me a place to enjoy and be part of something meaningful.

Brady Cerra
New Milford Campus

We are creating online and in-person classes to equip everyone to read their Bibles, have dynamic times with God and identify how they are created and gifted to serve and disciple new and maturing believers.

We are exploring best practices for midweek discipleship gatherings of all ages.

We are praying and working to see our ministries double in size.

We are finding new ways to reach and include more Special Needs families.



MINISTRY IMPACT

Discipleship is happening across our church as people gather to study, fellowship with one another and follow Jesus more deeply.

- **821** involved in adult discipleship groups and classes (Men's, Women's, Thrive 65+, Community Groups, Young Adults, Bible studies, classes/trainings)
- **200** individuals from our church and community attended our Special Needs Ministry Happy Hearts Lunch
- **129** new believers (signified as Yellow Flowers)

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reaching out as the hands and feet of Jesus wherever God sends us.

We shine His light in our homes, workplaces, schools and neighborhoods, **serving together** with compassion, sharing the Good News of Jesus and standing together with the global Church in action.



I've been coming to Walnut Hill since the fall. I first got involved with the food pantry, helping a couple of friends who are handicapped and couldn't make it there themselves. I would pick up the food and bring it to their home. After 35 years as a firefighter, serving others has always been a big part of who I am, so it just felt natural to step in.

The first time I came to the pantry, I was blown away. The teamwork, energy and organization were incredible. Everyone knew their role, and they worked together so efficiently to serve so many people. I had never seen anything like it before. That experience stuck with me.

What really impacted me, though, was the heart behind it all. The people here are kind and welcoming, and they genuinely care about others. **By serving the community, you can feel a shared purpose and a focus on serving God in everything they do.**

Being part of the pantry has been meaningful for me. Even with some physical limitations from a back injury, it's given me a way to stay connected to serving others, which has always been important in my life. It has also given me a sense of belonging and purpose.

I feel blessed to be part of something like this.

Kevin Miller

Bethel Campus

We are continuing to encourage Renaissance Church, which we helped launch in Great Barrington, MA.

We are going to regularly share faith stories from across our campuses to give God glory and inspire each of us to go further with the Lord.

We are shining a light at each of our campuses through our food pantries in Bethel and Derby, the pickleball ministry in New Milford, a newly launched afterschool program in Derby and new opportunities in Waterbury.

We are partnering more deeply with Hopeline to help them expand their work to new cities.

We are creating tools, seminars and other training on sharing your faith.

We support Gospel ministry across the world in 30 nations through 37 strategic partnerships.



MINISTRY IMPACT

Together we're reaching outward, serving our communities, strengthening ministry partnerships and supporting God's work here and around the world.

- Approximately **859,252** pounds of food given out to nearly **1,160** families a month (about **4,280** individuals) during **35** pantries at our Bethel and Valley Campuses.
- **301** kids participated in **6** camps/trips
- **422** families giving **\$1,006,699** to support our local and global Church in Action partners reaching **5 million** people with the love of Jesus (Church in Action is a separate fund supported by donations above and beyond regular giving.)
- **989** unique number of individuals serving at Walnut Hill across **9** ministry areas

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2026-27 ANNUAL THEME

Igniting a Passion for Jesus in Connecticut, New England and Around the World

The Invitation

As Walnut Hill approaches its 45th anniversary in 2027, we sense God inviting us into a renewed passion for Jesus — one that transforms our lives, our families, our communities, our region and our world. As we have learned to abide in Christ this past year, we trust that He is producing fruit in us through His Holy Spirit. From this work of the Spirit flows a growing passion for Jesus that moves outward into every area of life.

This is not a new mission, but a call to unite around who we are and move forward boldly in the love of Jesus. Grounded in the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:19-20**), we are reminded that to “go” is to live with a passion for Jesus that moves outward and awakens that same passion in others. As **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** says, “For Christ’s love compels us... that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.”

This passion is more than emotion. It is a Spirit-filled life marked by devotion, surrender, obedience, courageous faith and bold witness. Throughout Scripture, we see this kind of passion — a wholehearted love for God, a zeal that fuels our lives, and a love for Christ that compels us to live for Him.

THE HEARTBEAT

This year, we will live out this calling through our four vision pillars:

House of Worship — Passion Stirred

We want to increasingly encounter God together and see our hearts drawn toward Him.

Equipping Center — Passion Formed

We want to grow as disciples through God’s Word and in community.

Spiritual Hospital — Passion Restored

We want to experience healing, freedom and transformation in Christ.

Lighthouse — Passion Shared

We want to live as sent people, shining the light of Jesus in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Road Ahead

This year, we will move outward — personally, locally, regionally and globally — as we live out our faith in everyday life. **Personally**, we will deepen our passion for Jesus and grow in understanding what we believe through prayer, devotion, community and obedience. **Locally**, we will reach our neighbors and communities. **Regionally**, we will strengthen partnerships and expand our impact across New England. **Globally**, we will invest in and learn from our mission partners.

This is the invitation before us — not just to hold on to faith in Jesus, but to see life with Him flourish and to carry His love into our homes, communities and world.

Together, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we believe God will ignite a passion for Jesus in us. And through us, He will ignite that same passion in others to a world that desperately needs Jesus.



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A PRAYER OF BLESSING

As we reflect on the past year,
We are humbled and thankful
For all God has accomplished through Walnut Hill.

As we have sought to abide in Christ,
Rooted in Him and dependent on His grace,
We have seen His faithfulness again and again.

Thank you to every volunteer and staff member
Who has invested time, energy and resources,
Who has prayed and sought the Lord's guidance
For how we might live and serve together.

We are a family,
A family that abides in Jesus,
Seeks God, reaches out,
Serves together and cares for one another.

With great expectation and anticipation,
We offer ourselves anew,
Remaining in Him
And ready to receive all that God has in store
For the year to come.

May we hear His voice clearly
As He guides us through the days ahead,
Confident in His promise
That as we abide in Him and He in us,
He will continue to bear fruit through our lives
And that the best is yet to come.

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