

Why Church?

Why WCUC?



Susan, a retired French teacher, found WCUC in 2010 after many discouraging months of looking for a church home. "By the time I came to West Concord I had almost given up," she remembers. "But the first Sunday I was there, I thought, 'This really feels like home.' It just did. I felt very welcomed right from the beginning."

Susan also likes the music, the beautiful sanctuary, the inclusion of people with disabilities, and having a young woman as the minister. "I get a message from Hannah's sermon that I can carry around for the week and think about. I find that very nurturing," she says.

In 2011, Susan joined the church and became a trustee. She quickly initiated and oversaw the renovation of North Hall. "What was thrilling to me was there was never an attitude of 'Who does she think she is? She just got here!'"

"People arrive as they are and they're accepted for who they are," Susan says. "I've never felt I had to change anything or really verbalize a set of beliefs that I'm not comfortable with."

Susan – Mother, grandmother, retired teacher, avid reader, lifelong learner

Mary, a retired preschool teacher and daycare owner, and her late husband Mark found West Concord Union Church shortly after moving to town in 1972. They chose it because "it seemed to have the nicest people," Mary recalls. But over the years it has provided so many things she values — an excellent music program where Mary shares her beautiful voice, an "open and affirming" policy toward people of all sexual orientations, and regular Bible studies that give her the spiritual education she craves. "I'm grateful for all the knowledge that comes from all the Bible courses," she says.

Now Mary treasures the elevator that provides access to all three levels of the church and the garden that offers her such peace. "Every time I go over to the church, I have to walk in that garden and ease up my mind."

Mary – Retired preschool teacher and daycare owner



New members Jessica and Josh, who have three young children, say WCUC is a place where they all feel welcome and loved. "We noticed right away that the church embraced our children 100 percent, and there's nothing more satisfying than that," says Jessica.

Jessica and Josh cherish the worship hour. "I love the way Hannah preaches – during worship, Josh and I feel fulfilled, and we know that our children's spiritual journeys are being nurtured in Sunday School," says Jessica. For this family, "church is about building your relationship with God and building your relationships with other people." In fact, they are making so many friends at church that Luke, age 4, has announced his desire to spend some vacation time at the home of a longtime church member who has done some babysitting for the family. His older brother Jacob enthusiastically agrees!

Jessica – Mother, preschool teacher

Josh – Father, aerospace engineer, Air Force reservist



"Open hearts and open minds," is how Andrew, a new member, describes the church. "Now that my two sons are in college and my parental responsibilities move away from the day-to-day concerns," says the Ayer resident, "I have a strong need to express, explore and deepen my spirituality in a community of open minded and good-hearted persons. I have found that community here at the West Concord Union Church."

Andrew says he values "how we are encouraged to question and explore personally difficult scriptural passages through open, honest and compassionate dialogue, both during Bible study and even in the main Sunday services themselves." He calls his recent baptism "a weighty leap of faith, but one made with the assurance and comfort of abundant support from Rev. Hannah Brown, the Deacons, my sponsor, and the whole of the congregation. I am very grateful!"

Andrew – New member, Canadian native, muscle therapist



Mark, a high-school freshman, treasures West Concord Union Church because of "its culture of openness and tolerance and because my family can be accepted." Mark's two mothers were married two years ago by the Rev. Hannah Brown, and his mother Sharon is a deacon in the church.

Sharon values the church for its small size and concern for social justice. She traveled with other members to New Orleans in 2007 to do hurricane relief and recalls, "There was one moment of sheer joy when we were working on a rooftop and we burst out singing. It could have been so discouraging to look out at a sea of blue tarps and damaged homes. But instead, to be part of a group of people doing something to make it better, there was so much hope. It was one time when I felt this is absolutely where I was meant to be."

Sharon also finds WCUC to be a place where "we can share the raw and messy edges of life. That's what life is, and you can share that and not be judged." She finds the time in worship when people offer up their own personal joys and concerns to be deeply moving.

Sharon's wife, Ellen, had a difficult time with church when she was growing up, so she says she is always surprised by the warm welcome she receives when she comes to church with Mark and Sharon. "This church is wonderful. I'm glad Mark is having a completely different experience than I had growing up in the church."

Sharon – Mother, pharmaceutical company scientist

Ellen – Hospital IT specialist

Mark – High school student, Boy Scout

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