



Welcome! Please join us after the service for refreshments & conversation in the church parlor.

Pack your sunscreen and bring your summer spirit — our **Annual Park Church Picnic** is this **Thursday, June 25**, at the beautiful **Odetah Camping Resort in Bozrah, CT**. We'll gather from **12:30 PM to 8:00 PM** for a full afternoon of food, fellowship, swimming, games, and relaxation by the water.

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with one another and enjoy God's creation in community. **All are welcome — families, friends, and guests.**

**Please RSVP to Karen or Jerin** so we can plan food and activities.

We look forward to a joyful day together!

Subscribe to our weekly email, 'Park Bench' by filling out a welcome card or by emailing the office [officemanager@parkchurchnorwich1874.org](mailto:officemanager@parkchurchnorwich1874.org)

The ministries of Park Congregational Church are supported by the generosity of our members and friends. You can make a secure online donation here:



Park Congregational Church, 283 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360  
(860) 887-3747 ~ [www.parkchurchnorwich.org](http://www.parkchurchnorwich.org)  
The office is open Monday 9AM-4PM, Tuesday 1PM-4:30PM,  
Thursday 2PM-5:30PM, and by appointment.

# PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ --An Open and Affirming Congregation

Sunday, June 21, 2026



Song Sparrow, John James Audubon; 1827 print

Reverend Erica Wimber Avena, Interim Minister  
Dr. Laura Hibbard, Music Director  
Karen Redanz, Religious Education Director

*Please make your offering at the giving table at the door or use the QR code for online giving. Thank you for joining us!*

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

Mark Mikkelson, lay reader

Welcome, beloved of God. We gather in a world full of competing voices, competing loyalties, and competing claims on our hearts.

**We come seeking the voice of Christ, who calls us to a deeper way.**

Jesus reminds us that disciples are not above their teacher, but are called to follow in the path of love, justice, and truth.

**We come to return again to worship and to celebrate our belonging to God.**

On this Father's Day, we give thanks for those who have nurtured, guided, protected, and encouraged us. And we acknowledge that every earthly authority ultimately fails us.

**When the world demands our allegiance, Christ calls us to faithfulness.**

When power is used to divide, God's love calls us to justice and reconciliation.

**We choose to follow the One whose authority is rooted in compassion and grace.**

Come, let us worship the God who knows us completely, loves us unconditionally, and calls us courageously.

**We lift our hearts in praise and commit our lives again this morning to the way of Christ. Alleluia! Amen.**

\*Hymn God of Abraham and Sarah NCH 20

\*Opening Prayer

\*Gloria Patri Pilgrim hymnal 513

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Special Music Anthem of Rejoicing Joseph Martin

A unison prayer for fathers

**Today we give thanks for all who are called to fatherhood. We celebrate those who have nurtured us, encouraged us, protected us, and helped us grow into the people you created us to be.**

**We pray for fathers who seek to lead with compassion, patience, and integrity. Strengthen them when the burdens of responsibility feel heavy.**

**Grant them wisdom when difficult decisions must be made, humility when they make mistakes, and joy in the relationships they cherish.**

**We remember and pray for those for whom this day brings mixed emotions. We lift up all those who mourn fathers no longer with us, for those whose relationships with their fathers are strained or broken, for fathers separated from their children, and for those who long to be fathers. Surround all who carry grief, disappointment, or longing with your healing love.**

**Help us to honor one another with kindness and respect, remembering that our ultimate identity is found in you, our loving Parent, whose mercy never fails and whose care embraces all your children.**

**May we reflect your love in our homes and in our community, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Teacher and Savior. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading Psalm 84 Pew Bible p. 531

\*Hymn Dear God, Embracing Humankind NCH 502

*During the music, prayer cards will be collected.*

New Testament Reading Matthew 10:24-39 Pew Bible p. 886

Sermon Authority Issues

Special Music His Eye is on the Sparrow Mark Hayes

Sharing Joys and Concerns, and Pastoral Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

\*Doxology Pilgrim Hymnal 514

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

\*Hymn Congregation's Choice! New Century Hymnal

\*Benediction

Postlude

*\* Please rise, if you are able.*