

# FIC History

The Franklin Interfaith Council grew out of relationships that long predate its official name. For decades, Franklin clergy and congregations worked together across denominational lines—sharing summer worship, collaborating in times of fuel shortages, hosting joint educational programs, and partnering in community service. By the late twentieth century, these friendships had matured into the Franklin Ecumenical Council, where churches met regularly, prayed together, and took common action to serve local needs.

A major turning point came around 1990–1991, when Jewish leaders from Temple Etz Chaim joined the conversation. Their presence helped the council recognize that Franklin’s religious life was broader than Christian cooperation alone. The organization formally became the Franklin Interfaith Council, widening its table while keeping its original spirit of friendship, learning, and shared responsibility for the town.

From that foundation, the council helped launch and nurture important community efforts. It provided early oversight and support for what became the independent Franklin Food Pantry, promoted fuel and emergency assistance funded by shared worship offerings, and responded publicly whenever hatred or violence threatened neighbors. Members stood together during moments such as incidents of antisemitic vandalism, the Boston Marathon bombing, the Tree of Life tragedy, and other times when Franklin needed visible solidarity.

The council has also gathered people for interfaith Thanksgiving services, memorial events, conversations on world crises, and cooperative service projects—from supporting refugees to strengthening local responses to hunger. Throughout its history, participants have worked to balance two commitments: each tradition speaks in its own voice, and the community also finds language it can share.

Today the Franklin Interfaith Council continues this legacy by building trust among faith communities, encouraging understanding, and mobilizing collective care for the wider town. What began as cooperation among neighbors has become a durable witness that Franklin is strongest when people of different beliefs stand together.