

## Open, Welcoming, and Affirming Statement

The First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, Connecticut

Of all the commandments, which is the most important? The most important one, answered Jesus, is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

As members of The First Church of Christ, Woodbridge we invite all to join us with these words: "No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome." As Jesus taught his followers to love and accept all people regardless of their differences and diversity, we affirm and celebrate all who choose to join with us. Each one of us is unique in the eyes of God.

In that we have been embraced by this church community and have experienced a belonging that has brought us all such joy, we extend our welcome to others to share our blessings. There is a place for everyone in the life of this church. Therefore, we welcome people of any age, race, gender, nationality, religious background, sexual orientation, economic status, marital status, physical, emotional, and mental capacity, and those in traditional and non-traditional families.

We invite all to participate in the full life of this church: to share in the sacraments of baptism and communion, the covenants of confirmation and marriage, in membership, and in leadership. We will continue to put our beliefs into action as we work to become faithful followers of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who commanded us to love one another.

With this statement, we join our brothers and sisters in the United Church of Christ who are like-minded in this declaration of love, justice, and mutual respect, with the example of Jesus' love as our guide.

**Adopted at the January 30, 2011 Congregational Meeting.**