



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

VOLUME 69 NUMBER 02

February 2024



Upcoming Events



Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 14 | 7:00 PM

ChristCare

Mondays | February 5 and 9 | 7:00 PM

February Movie Group

Mondays | February 12 and 26 | 7:00 PM via Zoom

Women's Bible Study

Sundays starting February 25 | 7:00 PM

KiSeLo

Wednesday, February 28 | 1:00 PM

Lunch Bunch

Tuesdays | 12:00 PM | Room 202

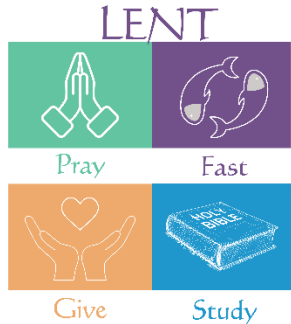
Thursday Morning Bible Study

Thursdays | 11:00 AM | via Zoom

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LENT FOR PROTESTANTS



Lent is a time for devoting ourselves to the classic practices of our faith: prayer/meditation, giving to others (almsgiving), study to grow in the knowledge of our faith, and fasting. One can do intermittent fasting, or giving up a certain food or drink, such as alcohol. One can also fast from the news, from negativity, from complaining, or anything else that might improve your mindset and deepen your joy and spirituality.

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

A Walk through the Bible Jesus Read

To help with the "study" part of Lent we're going to focus on the part of the Bible that many Christians stay away from, the Old Testament. Many people say, "I don't understand much about the Old Testament, and I'm not sure I even want to. God seems so harsh." But the Hebrew Scriptures are worth our consideration and our study for several key reasons. One is, it's the Bible Jesus read! It's the scriptures that laid the foundation for his faith and his relationship with God. It's what he was discussing with the rabbis in the temple when he was only 12 years old, and many of his teachings that are found in the Gospels are first found in the Old Testament.

There's at least one other key reason why the Old Testament is important for us. As Philip Yancy says, "It's a manual for doing life with God." The New Testament covers approximately 90 years of history. And much of that sacred history is filled with high points - the coming of the Messiah, the miracles, the Resurrection, the birth and expansion of the church, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and so on. But the Old Testament covers over 1,500 years of sacred history, and it wasn't all mountaintops. It included such things as exile, captivity, enslavement, and feelings of abandonment. "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Jesus' Bible shows us how.

I've prepared a new Lenten devotional that will take us through the key moments and themes of the Hebrew scriptures. It's called, "A Walk Through the Bible Jesus Read." It was one of the goals of my recent sabbatical to produce such a document. In addition, I'll be preaching on some of the defining moments and turning points in the Old Testament. I hope we'll all gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of this part of OUR Bibles.

Serving God with You,

Pastor Rich

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



February 14 at 7:00 PM

Lent is 40 days long, not counting Sundays, and it all starts on Ash Wednesday. Our service will be held at 7:00 pm. It's a fairly quiet and reflective service and concludes with the imposition of ashes for those who wish to receive them. And, it's a wonderful way to move into Lent and deepen our walk with God.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

March Beacon Article Deadline

The March edition of The Beacon will be published on March 1. If you have information to share, please submit it to Peggy by **Tuesday, February 27**. Thank you.

2023 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

The 2023 calendar year Contribution Statements (Jan. 1, 2023 thru Dec. 31, 2023) were emailed on January 25. If you did not receive yours, or you would like a paper copy mailed to you, or you find an error on your report - please contact Sue Sarafinas, Income Treasurer: 617-480-9130 or email at 4sueth@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL SCOUTS!

Sunday, February 11 is Scout Sunday and we need your help. Any Scout BSA, Cub Scout, Girl Scout, Brownie, or Daisy interested in being part of the church service, please contact Gwen Bottomley at gwen.bottomley@gmail.com. Positions available include: ushers, readers, front and back door greeters, and offering ushers.

CHRISTCARE

Mondays | February 5 and 19 | 7:00 PM | via Zoom



The Monday evening ChristCare small group will meet via Zoom on February 5 and 19. At our last meeting in January, we started talking about scripture verses that we turn to over and over again. Everyone is asked to think about that before February 5 and come prepared to share.

Please contact Deb Lyons if you would like to join: dlyons@dandelyons.net

KiSeLo -- KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

Wednesday, February 28 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall



We invite all women of the church to join us on Wednesday, February 28th, for our monthly KiSeLo meeting. Our meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. with dessert offered by our hostesses, Shirley Zachry and Judith Barnes.

Our program will be "Music for Life" presented by our own Barbara Reilly. She'll be telling us about her adventures with her French horn from high school and beyond. Jeanne Paella, a friend of Barbara's and former member of the Boston Pops Orchestra will join Barbara. Hopefully we can coax them into playing a duet! They both are members of the Chelmsford Community band.

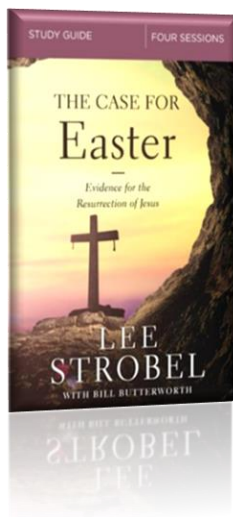
KiSeLo Open Pantry Suggestion



The KiSeLo Open Pantry suggestion for February is **peanut butter and jelly**; but, as usual, any non-perishable is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Papenfuss (603-577-1497). Hope to see YOU on February 28!

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Starts February 25 | 7:00 PM | via Zoom



The Case for Easter Study Guide: Investigating the Evidence for the Resurrection

The Women's Bible Study group will be doing the study guide by Lee Strobel regarding Easter and the resurrection. The Case for Easter Study Guide examines how we can know the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection are accurate by objectively looking at the evidence surrounding Jesus' death, the evidence of the empty tomb, and the evidence of the many witnesses who saw him alive after his crucifixion.

The group will meet via Zoom on Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM starting February 25.

If you want more information, please contact Margie Dissinger at margie228@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY MOVIE GROUP

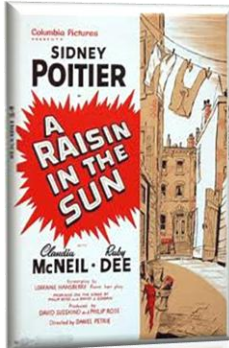
Mondays | Feb 12 and 26 | 7:00 PM | Zoom

The CCC Movie Group is open to all! Watch the movie(s) on your own, then join the group on Zoom at 7:00 pm on “Movie Mondays” to discuss. Please contact Lynn Horton for the Zoom link, if you have questions, or if you have difficulty accessing the movie!



Monday, 2/12 – “A Patch of Blue” (1965). Accidentally blinded by her prostitute mother Rose-Ann when she was 5, Selina D'Arcey (Elizabeth Hartman in her film debut) spends the next 13 years confined in the tiny Los Angeles apartment that they share with "Ole Pa," Selina's grandfather. One afternoon at the local park, Selina meets Gordon Ralfe (Sidney Poitier), a thoughtful young office worker whose kind-hearted treatment of her results in her falling in love with him, unaware that he is Black. They continue to meet in the park every afternoon and he teaches her how to get along in the city. But when cruel, domineering Rose-Ann learns of their relationship, she forbids her to have anything more to do with him because he is Black, but Selina continues to meet Gordon, despite Rose-Ann's furious determination to end the relationship for good. It is reported that Shelley Winters hated her role as Rose-Ann, primarily because, as a supporter of the Civil Rights Movement, she was very

uncomfortable playing a racist. Winters was overwhelmed and speechless the night she won an Oscar for Best Actress in a Supporting Role.



Monday, 2/26 – “A Raisin in the Sun” (1961) was originally a play by Lorraine Hansberry that debuted on Broadway in 1959. The title comes from the poem "Harlem" (also known as "A Dream Deferred") by Langston Hughes. The story tells of a black family's experiences in south Chicago, as they attempt to improve their financial circumstances with an insurance payout following the death of the father, and deals with matters of housing discrimination, racism, and assimilation. The New York Drama Critics' Circle named it the best play of 1959, and in recent years it has been listed among the best plays ever written. In 1961, a film version of A Raisin in the Sun was released featuring its original Broadway cast of Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee, Claudia McNeil, Diana Sands, Ivan Dixon, Louis Gossett Jr., and John Fiedler. Hansberry wrote the screenplay, and the film was directed by Daniel Petrie.

Harlem

By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

UPDATES

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Stewardship is what we do to manage something that has been placed under our responsibility. Stewardship includes wise management of our treasure, time, and talents so that we can use these things in service of the Lord for the benefit of others.

February is when CCC's Stewardship Committee finalizes the annual Stewardship Campaign by choosing a theme and writing the letter that will be sent to the congregation to solicit financial pledges for the next fiscal year. The Campaign and resulting pledge commitments are vitally important because they allow the Church Council, Treasurer, and other church committees to plan and budget for the year ahead. We are a strong, active congregation that responds generously with pledges of support, which is truly appreciated by all who benefit. This has been a constant, even with the challenges we have faced through the pandemic. So, this year, let's keep the ball rolling!



This year's Stewardship Campaign will start in February with online pledging and will run through mid-March. Letters will be mailed to members and friends of CCC the first week of March and we ask that pledge cards be returned by March 17. During the campaign we will be sharing more about stewardship and how the church's many activities and programs impact both our congregation and our larger community. You won't want to miss this!

In thinking about stewardship, it is more than just financial support; it is about sharing our time and talents as well. It is through all these gifts, that we can make a real difference in the world.

Thank you for your consideration and God Bless,

Stewardship Committee - Cynthia Dorman, Sherman Horton, Becky Wisniewski, Lindsey Moore, Mark Timmins, and Dick Papenfuss

THANK YOU, CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BUILDING COMMITTEE!



We've been blessed by a wonderful, dedicated, hardworking Capital Campaign Building Committee. You've already seen their great work in the sanctuary renovation. Wait until you see the kitchen!

Please thank these folks next time you see them:

Christine Williams, chair, Shirley Zachry, Val King, Jim Clark, and Kenny Pantuso.

Thanks from all of us!

SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Open Pantry says, “Thanks CCC!”

CCC never ceases to amaze! On hearing of the plight of Open Pantry it was as if the church just kicked into high gear.

- In October, \$1,100 in cash donations was raised.
- In November, Christian Education, spearheaded by Samantha Shields, raised \$631 with bracelets, tree decorations, and cards at our Holiday Fair. Oh, and those children’s smiles at the table helped, too.
- Then \$2,300 was collected at Christmas Eve service.

That is a total of **\$4,031**. *Thank you, thank you, thank You!*

In addition, the recent Can Tree collection filled **two car loads of donated food** for the Pantry.

But that is not all! After Open Pantry’s landlord stopped allowing clients to wait inside in the hallway, a deal was negotiated to allow clients to wait inside if the hallway was painted. **Alan and Becky Wisniewski** started by mudding the corners and filling scrapes etc. Then **Kelly, Will, Sam and Jeremy Hargett** painted the entire hallway. So now clients can continue to be sheltered from rain, wind and snow while they wait their turn.

CCC’s giving is extraordinary!

THANK YOU, KITCHEN PAINTERS!



In my (Pastor Rich) opinion, painting should be one of the “spiritual gifts” listed in I Corinthians 12. It’s a great benefit to the church and saves the church lots of money. Plus, it shows ownership in our projects. An excellent group of painters have been working practically non-stop to complete the kitchen walls and cabinets, preparing for the new equipment to be installed. It looks beautiful!

Please thank these folks, too, next time you see them:

Val King, Coordinator, Margie Dissinger, Amy McGuigan, Curtis Bates, John Carson, Dick Papenfuss, and Peter White.

Many Thanks from All of Us!

PRAYER MINISTRY

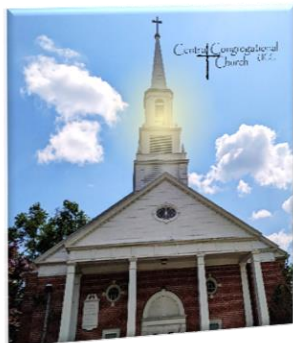
"Our Father in heaven, thank you for the privilege of prayer. May we never miss an opportunity to pray for others. Amen" -Leigh Sayers



The CCC Prayer Ministry is a dedicated group of fellow church members who want to pray for you. We welcome requests and want you to reach out to us whenever you have a concern or worry. Knowing others are praying is comforting, especially when we find it hard to pray by ourselves.

If you wish to be a part of the Prayer Ministry or have prayer requests for yourself or others, please contact: Wendy Perry: wperry39@comcast.net or Daphne Freeman: uklady446@yahoo.com

STEEPLE LIGHTING INFORMATION



I always light the Steeple for the week of January 1 in memory of my grandson, Alex, and in honor of Brandon. I try to bring Brandon down from New Hampshire to see the light reaching skyward for his twin and he's always happy to have another present-day acknowledgement of Alex. Last month the Bates were lighting the steeple to honor people in their lives. What a wonderful way to remember those who are a light in our memories and our lives, and to share it with others in the church family.

If you would like to recognize a special person, a special day, a memory, consider the Steeple Lighting. There is a \$5 donation to the church and you just need to call Peggy in the office and arrange it.

And the next time you pass the church in the evening, remember to look up and see our light shining for all to see (and perhaps say a prayer for someone who is a beacon in someone else's life, or your own).

~Sue Sarafinas

CCC RIDE MINISTRY

The Deacons of Central Congregational Church wish to know.... Would you like a ride to church? Can you ***offer*** a ride to church?? We are seeking both passengers who need a ride to CCC to attend worship services and special events AND additional drivers who can add their name to the roster of potential "CCC chauffeurs!"

- If you would like to **request a ride**, call the church office (978) 256-5931 and Peggy will notify the Diaconate. A Deacon will then contact you to make ride arrangements.
- If you can serve as a Ride Ministry driver, please contact Lynn Horton:
Lynn@terpsoft.com (978) 256-8524

Thanks! I hope "wheel" be hearing from you! 😊

~Lynn Horton

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Happy February from your CE Committee!

As we celebrate midwinter the best we can, we are also preparing for the Lenten season which begins on February 14. What a way to ring in Valentines Day! Lent is an important time in our Sunday School program, a time for prayer and contemplation. The students usually prepare for a larger project to be completed by Palm Sunday.

In our Sunday School we have been talking about prayer and the role that it can play in our lives and relationship with God.

For our Christmas mission, our students voted to spend their Sunday School contributions to the Food Pantry, a new playground being constructed at Friendship Park in Chelmsford, and the Jimmy Fund to support cancer research. The kids took the voting seriously and there was vigorous discussion and compromise. They are passionate about making the world a better place and spoke with great sincerity about why they supported these causes.

This month also brings “**Souper Bowl**” Sunday, when the youth ask for donations to help the Open Pantry of Greater Lowell.

Thank you for all you do to support our missions and to make God’s love actionable in our community.

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

January always seems like a catch your breath month after the birth of Jesus, I always wonder what it was like for Mary and Joseph after Jesus’ arrival into their family. Did Mary keep a baby book of his first smile, when he slept through the night, when he rolled from belly to back?

Our Sunday School Students are learning about Jesus’ ministry, many years after his baby book milestones. I think of this time for Sunday School lessons as the fun times, the miracles of two fish and five loaves of bread for 5000 people needing food; Mary asking Jesus to get more wine for a wedding celebration; and the stories that Jesus used to pass on God’s message of love and other lessons.

The Holy Cows are working on the Souper Bowl skit and collection. Please remember to donate to this important ministry as our youth help spread the Good News of Jesus's work and God's love.

~Jennifer Hart

THE FONTANINI NATIVITY

When I was on the Diaconate in 2014, I expressed surprise and disappointment that our church did not have a nativity set. We began researching and found The Fontanini Company in Bagni di Lucca, Italy. It was founded in 1908 by Emanuele Fontanini and is now being run by the fourth generation of Fontaninis.

Fontanini began his career of figurine crafting in 1893 as a talented 13-year-old apprentice to an artist in Bagni di Lucca. When he began his own company, he stated that its production must have the characteristics of warmth, sincerity, love and passion.

Each piece is hand painted. They aren't painted completely from top to bottom by one painter, but rather they are painted section by section by a painting group.... sort of like an assembly line. Everything is painted by these artisans except for the eyes and other detailed facial features, which are left to be painted by master painters who can capture the essence and bring them to life.



What is nice about these nativity pieces is that you can buy pieces separately and in different sizes. We chose to purchase the 12" pieces, buying the beginning pieces in October of 2014 from a distributor here in the United States. In 2015 we purchased more pieces and got the last two pieces in 2016. Several pieces were purchased with contributions from church members.

You'll notice that we start on the first Sunday of Advent with just the stable, a couple animals, the manger (minus Jesus) and the shepherd and sheep. Pieces are added as the story progresses towards Christmas. Feel free next Advent to experience the nativity, up close and personal.

~Karen Papenfuss

COUNCIL CORNER

A Monthly Update on the Activity of the CCC Council

News from the January 10, 2024, meeting:

We are halfway (50%) through the fiscal year! Budgeted income and expenses are in great shape, with Total Income at 55% of budget and Total Expenses at 51%, year-to-date. Pledged giving is on target at 51%, Unpledged giving continues to lag behind anticipated figures (40%). The Holiday Fair and Christmas Trees & Wreaths fundraisers brought in \$14,375.03, exceeding budget expectations by \$875.03! The offerings collected at the Christmas Eve services were donated to the Open Pantry and totaled \$2300, which was slightly below the budgeted amount of \$2400.

The Capital Campaign Building Committee reported that the kitchen project has made great progress! Stainless steel cabinets and sinks have been delivered and will be installed. A new center island and the coordinating quartz counter surface for the pass-through window area will be ordered. CCC volunteers are helping the Committee with painting the existing wooden cabinets inside and out. Please note that no access to the kitchen is allowed until further notice. Thank you!

The Fellowship Hall renovation project is beginning to be planned. The Capital Campaign Committee has received bids from three contractors for the ceiling tiles replacement job. A flooring company has assessed the current Fellowship Hall floors tiles and determined that they do not contain asbestos. The most cost-effective plan will be to lay a subfloor over the existing tiles and use a high-quality floor planking product that will withstand the heavy use that the Hall sustains. Installation of the ceiling and the flooring each need to take place when the Co-Op Nursery School is not in session; February and April school vacation weeks are being targeted.

Revisions to update and clarify the Sanctuary Committee section of the CCC OPM (Organizational Practices Manual) were approved.

Volunteers for hosting Coffee Hour on Sunday mornings after worship services are still needed! Please note that the current lack of an operating church kitchen should not deter you for signing up! Kelly Hargett, Coffee Hour Coordinator, is very willing to help by preparing the coffee next door in the 9 Worthen kitchen. If you have questions, ask Kelly! Thank you!

Excerpts from the CCC Constitution – Article VII - Council

The Council shall be the executive body of this church. It shall be composed of the Ordained Minister(s), two members of the Board of Trustees elected by that Board, Clerk, Moderator, two Deacons elected by the Diaconate, Treasurer, three Members-at-Large, and one member from each of the following committees, elected by that committee: Christian Education, Communications, Finance, House, John R. Carson Memorial Park, Music, Nominating, Pastor/Parish Relations, Sanctuary, Social Action and Missions, Stewardship, and Technology. The Council shall be the policy-making body and shall be responsible for directing and coordinating all affairs, activities, responsibilities, and interests of the Church.





Planning Ahead



LENT, HOLY WEEK, EASTER

WED
Feb 14

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday Service | 7:00 PM | Sanctuary

THUR
Mar 28

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday Service | 7:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

FRI
Mar 29

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday Service | 7:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

SUN
Mar 31

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Easter Service | 10:00 AM | Sanctuary



Women's Bible Study: Starts Feb 25 | Sundays @ 7:00 PM

"The Case for Easter" by Lee Strobel. Contact: Margie Dissinger: margie228@gmail.com



Central Congregational Church UCC

1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824

United Church of Christ

An Open & Affirming Congregation

"A Community of Faith, Hope, and Love, Growing through Worship and Service"

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

Worship is on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Richard B. Knight	978-256-5931 cell:978-684-2031	pastor-rich@cccchelmsford.org
Director of Music:	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	tudorbota@gmail.com
Office Administrator:	Peggy Kelly	978-256-5931	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org
Nursery & Sun School Coord.:	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	5ofharts@chrisjenn.net
Custodian:	Juarez Gomes		
Church Location:	One Worthen Street	Chelmsford, MA 01824	
Church Mailing Address:	PO Box 339	Chelmsford, MA 01824-0339	
Church Phone:	978-256-5931	Church e-mail:	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org
Church Fax:	978-250-3565	Church Website:	www.cccchelmsford.org
Conference Website:	www.sneucc.org		

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