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## CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

VOLUME 70 NUMBER 04

April 2025

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

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#### *Holy Week and Easter*



##### **Palm Sunday Service**

Sunday, April 13 | 10:00 AM

##### **Maundy Thursday Service**

Thursday, April 17 | 6:30 PM

##### **Good Friday Service**

Friday, April 18 | 6:30 PM

##### **Prayer Vigil with Pastor Lee via Zoom**

Saturday, April 19 | 5:30 PM

##### **Easter Vigil Prayer Vigil in the Sanctuary**

Sat, April 19, 6:00 PM until 6:00 AM Easter morning

##### **Easter Sunrise Service**

Sunday, April 20 | 6:30 AM Carson Park

##### **Easter Celebration**

Sunday, April 20 | 10:00 AM



#### *April Events*

##### **Lunch with Lee**

Sun, April 6 | 11:30 AM | The Java Room

##### **ChristCare**

Mondays, April 7 & 21 | 7:00 PM Zoom

##### **Easter Egg Hunt**

Sunday, April 13 | after worship

##### **Easter Concert**

Sunday, April 13 | 3:00 PM | Sanctuary

##### **CCC Movie Group**

Mondays, April 14 & 28 | 7:00 PM Zoom

##### **KiSeLo – Kindness, Service, Love**

Wed, April 23 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

##### **Lunch Bunch**

Tuesdays | 11:45 AM | Room 202

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# FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

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## FROM DUSK TO DAWN: WALKING THE LENTEN ROAD TOGETHER

I don't know about you, but it still feels like Easter is rushing toward us at full speed. Maybe it's the early signs of spring—the warmer air, the longer days, the crocuses pushing up through the soil. Or maybe it's just that life keeps moving full speed ahead.

And yet... Lent calls us to slow down. To remember. To make space in the whirlwind of daily life for a sacred story that still has the power to reshape our hearts. Lent isn't a sprint to resurrection. It's a journey to a deeper relationship with God, the Holy Spirit, and our life-saving Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

From the dust of Ash Wednesday to the dawn of Easter morning, Lent invites us to take stock and to turn inward—not in isolation, but in honesty. It asks us to seek God in prayer, not just recited words, but real conversation with God in all the small daily choices that shape who we are becoming.

The ancient words of Ash Wednesday, **“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,”** remind us that life is fragile and holy all at once. They remind us that we are human, and that we are God's beloved. Lent invites us into that sacred tension: the brokenness of the world and the beauty of God's grace, held side by side.

Some of us give something up for Lent —sweets, social media, distractions—hoping to clear space. Others take something on—daily prayer, journaling, acts of kindness—as a way of drawing closer. Whatever form your Lenten practice takes, the invitation is the same: **Make room for God.**

A couple of weekends ago, eight women joined me for a Lenten Retreat. We carved out space in our busy lives to reflect, pray, rest, and listen. We gathered around Scripture, around the table, and around one another. We laughed. We were honest. We opened ourselves to what God might be doing—not just out there in the world, but right here, in us. We reflected on Lent's journey and preparation for the joyous day of the Resurrection Celebration.

One group of retreat participants came up with a skit that still has me smiling. With humor and creativity, they offered a glimpse into what it means to journey through Lent and celebrate Christ's resurrection, not just on a holiday but in our everyday lives. With an abundance of laughter and truth, they pointed us toward the deeper meaning of Lent and Easter.

*Continued →*



[You can watch the skit here](#) or scan the QR code with your phone's camera. (And if you're reading this in print, let me know—I'll make sure you get to see it too.)



The Lenten road doesn't promise answers. But it does promise presence—God's presence with us in the questions, the quiet, the aching, the longing. And as we draw near to Holy Week, we remember that Jesus didn't skip over the hard parts of the journey. He walked straight through them. He wept. He prayed. He stayed.

That's our invitation, too.

So as Easter approaches, I encourage you to linger in the in-between. Dance and wave palms on Palm Sunday. Join the disciples at the table of Christ on Maundy Thursday. Enter the depths of pain and sacrifice on Good Friday. Sit in the silence of Holy Saturday. Don't be afraid of the "in-between" - it's where so much of the transformation happens.

And then, when the dawn breaks, let the joy of resurrection rise up in you—not as something distant or abstract, but as something deeply personal and profoundly real.

### *Join us on Easter Sunday:*



**Sunrise Service** – Carson Park, 6:30 AM



**Easter Celebration** – In the Sanctuary, 10:00 AM

Come celebrate the Risen Christ. Bring your whole self—your weariness and wonder, your questions and your faith. There is room here. There is grace here. There is life rising again.

*Pastor Lee*

***Rev. Lee Atherton***



# FOR YOUR CALENDAR

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## OFFICE UPDATE

April promises to be a busy month in the church office as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter in addition to the usual Sunday preparations, report compilations, and ...

### *Beacon Articles*

The next submission deadline is **Wednesday, April 23** for the May edition. If you have photos of church events, please include them.

- Please upload your article to the Google folder (link sent via email)
- OR email to me with the subject, "Mayl Beacon [and your committee's name]."



### *Annual Reports*

Committee reports are due no later than **Friday, April 11.**

- Please submit your report by uploading it to the [designated Google folder](#) (the link will be in the Tuesday e-announcements)
- OR email it to me with the subject, "Annual Report [and your committee name]."

Thanks for helping me stay organized!

### *Thank you*



Thank you to **Jim Clark** for purchasing and installing a new key lock box in the church office! The old one wasn't locking properly (the irony). I will be reorganizing the church keys over the next week. Jim is always noticing (and fixing) *so many* things at CCC!

*Peggy Kelly*  
*Office Administrator*

## PRAYER VIGIL WITH PASTOR LEE

**Saturday, April 19 | 5:30 PM via Zoom**

Join Pastor Lee at 5:30 to pray for each other and bless those who will be praying throughout the Easter Vigil. The Zoom link will be available in upcoming Tuesday e-announcements.

## EASTER VIGIL

**Sat, April 19, 6:00 PM until 6:00 AM Easter Morning**

Shirley Zachry is organizing an Easter Vigil that will begin on Saturday at 6:00 PM and end Easter Sunday at 6:00 AM. There will be options to pray at the church or at home. She will have sign-ups at coffee hour and an online option. More information will be available in upcoming e-announcements.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

**Sunday, April 27**

Please plan to join in the fun and effort of making a difference in our community on Sunday, April 27! We will focus all our energy on two service projects - Litter Clean Up on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and “Pulling, Prepping, and Painting” at the Community Garden. Volunteers are needed for each of these service projects!

### *Details:*



### **Rail Trail Clean Up**

Meet at the Route 110 ball fields parking lot (end of Fletcher Street) at 1:00 PM. Bring gloves and wear good walking shoes. Trash bags and “grabbers” will be provided.

### **Community Garden Clean Up**

Meet at Sunny Meadow Farm, Walter Lewis Community Garden near 158 Robin Hill Road at 1:30 PM. Bring gardening gloves and trowels for weeding. Larger tools (spades and rakes) will be provided. Spring season tasks include weeding, spreading newspaper for ground cover, and painting fences.

Your help is key to the success of these community service projects! Thank you for participating! Contact Lynn Horton if you have questions! [Lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:Lynn@terpsoft.com) (978) 256-8524



## EASTER FLOWERS

We will be taking orders for Easter lilies and tulips on April 6 & 13 in Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$15 each.



Flowers may be dedicated in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person in your life. You can ask to have them delivered to a church member, or you may choose to take them after the Easter service.

If you won't be able to order them in person, please contact Sue Sarafinas to place your order: [4sueth@gmail.com](mailto:4sueth@gmail.com) | 617-480-9130. We look forward to a beautifully decorated sanctuary for Easter morning!

*~Sue Sarafinas, Sanctuary Committee*

## EASTER CONCERT

**Sunday, April 13 | 3:00 PM | Sanctuary**

Please join us for the annual Easter Concert which will be held on Sunday, April 13, 2025 at 3:00 PM in the church sanctuary.

Tudor Bota has planned a wonderful concert with a variety of music from the classical music of Mozart and Mendelssohn, for example, to more contemporary pieces like "Throw Open the Gates." Choirs will be singing, bells will be ringing, Sonlight will be playing, and we will be joined by soloists Katrina Holden-Buckley and Phillip Lima.

A free-will offering will be received and a reception in Fellowship Hall will follow the concert. Invite friends and relatives to this lovely event. As you know, the church is fully accessible.

*~Beth Jarok*

Central Congregational Church, UCC  
presents  
an Easter Concert

**"Precious Lord,  
Take My Hand"**

featuring

Katrina Holden, soprano  
Philip Lima, baritone  
Tudor Bota, pianist & director

with  
Concert Choir, Sonlight Band,  
CCC Bell ringers & Children's Choir

**Sunday, April 13, 2025  
3:00PM**

Freewill offering

Central Congregational Church, UCC  
1 Worthen St, Chelmsford, MA  
[www.cccchelmsford.org](http://www.cccchelmsford.org)  
978-256-5931

## CHRISTCARE SMALL GROUPS

*Mondays, April 7 & 21 / 7:00 PM*



The Monday night ChristCare group will meet via Zoom at 7:00 on April 7 and 21. We will be finishing our discussion of the book “Six New Gospels” and continuing to get inspiration from the book “Simple Abundance.” We will also be sharing our experiences of Lent.

*Deb Lyons | deb@dandelyons.net*

## KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

*Wed, April 23 / 1:00 PM / Fellowship Hall*



Lately, have you gals read an inspirational book that gave you comfort, peace, and/or joy ? If so, come share your thoughts and review of the book at our KiSeLo meeting on April 23 at 1:00 PM. We meet in the Fellowship Hall and will share dessert provided by our hostesses Merri and myself.

KiSeLo meets every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday from September to May and all are welcome to join us. You don’t have to be a member to come enjoy the fellowship and program. However, if you would like to join, dues are \$10 a year and are due in September. The dues are used for any needed service that we choose to help.

**A monthly service we provide is our donations to the Open Pantry of Greater Lowell.** Each month we ask the members to donate certain food items. For April we ask that you donate non-sugary cereal or any non-perishable food item.



**Here is a KiSeLo fun fact:** In 1949 KiSeLo held a cake sale at the Bon Marche in Lowell and netted \$77.50 which, in today's dollars is equivalent to \$897.42. Now we have to admit, that’s a lot of cakes!

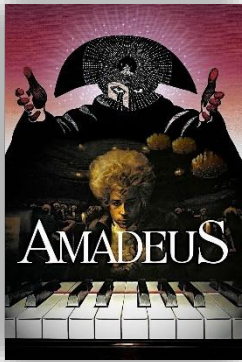
**Need more information, have questions or comments?** Text or call Karen Banakos at 603-686-2026.



## APRIL MOVIE GROUP

*Mondays / April 14 & 28 / 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 ([lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:lynn@terpsoft.com)) for the Zoom link, if you have questions, or if you have difficulty accessing the movies!



### **Monday, 4/14 – “Amadeus” (1984)**

An American period biographical drama film directed by Miloš Forman, starring F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce. Peter Shaffer adapted it from his 1979 stage play “Amadeus”, originally inspired by Alexander Pushkin's 1830 play “Mozart and Salieri.” Shaffer described it as a “fantasia on [a real-life] theme”, as it imagines a rivalry between two 18th century Vienna composers, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Hulce) and Antonio Salieri (Abraham). Salieri struggles to reconcile his professional admiration and jealous hatred for Mozart and resolves to ruin Mozart's career as his vengeance against God.



### **Monday, 4/28 – “Michael” (1996)**

An American fantasy comedy film directed by Nora Ephron. The film stars John Travolta as the Archangel Michael, who is sent to Earth to do various tasks, including mending some wounded hearts. The story follows jaded journalists Frank and Huey, along with “angel expert” Dorothy, who travel to a small town in Iowa to investigate a story, where they find Michael, a disheveled man claiming to be an angel. Michael is portrayed as an unorthodox Archangel enjoying his last mission to Earth. The cast includes Jean Stapleton, Andie MacDowell, William Hurt, Bob Hoskins, Joey Lauren Adams, and Robert Pastorelli as people who cross Michael's path.



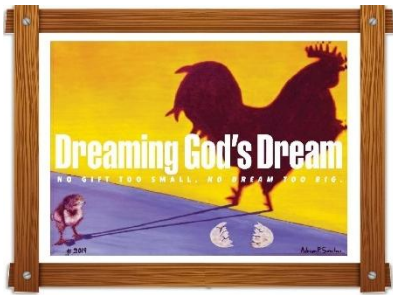
# UPDATES

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## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

### *April is for Stewardship Pledges!*

*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.*



The theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is "Dreaming God's Dream." On March 9, Cynthia Dorman presented the Stewardship Campaign for this year to the congregation. We asked the congregation how they dream that CCC uses its facilities and people for its ministry and mission to spread God's love. On March 16, Steve Hartigan presented the results of our "dream" cards and on March 23 presented the top five reasons to pledge. Our annual Stewardship Campaign commitments (i.e. pledges) help fund not only the ongoing church operations and missions but also what we can dream as a congregation for the coming year.

Our dream is to fully fund both the Music and Christian Educations committees in the coming year. The bottom line is that we are still BEHIND where we should be (and need to be) to cover the annual budget for the church, let alone imagine our future. Inflation, along with fewer new pledges and the loss of long-time pledges continues to exert even more pressure on attempting to keep our budget balanced. Therefore, we have challenged everyone who is able to increase your pledge by \$5 per week - the cost of a large tea or coffee. Can we count on you to increase your pledge this year and help us "Dream God's Dream"?

CCC has many beautiful spaces today - a new gleaming kitchen and refreshed Fellowship Hall for example. We can dream of other ways to use these spaces for the community and for CCC - such as a spaghetti supper or pancake breakfast fundraiser for Scouts...the possibilities are endless. In order to maintain and make continued use of these spaces, we need your support and dreams about what these spaces can become!

In mid-March letters and pledge cards were mailed. If you did not receive a letter please reach out to the office. Please bring your pledge card to Stewardship Sunday on April 6. We ask you to please give prayerful consideration to increasing your pledge.

Thank you for your consideration and God Bless,

*CCC Stewardship Committee:*

*Cynthia Dorman, Becky Wisniewski, Mark Timmins, Wim Nijenberg, Stephen Hartigan and Dick Papenfuss*

## GIFT CARD MINISTRY



Some of my favorite discussions with Pastor Rich during my first few months of working with him were about the church's grocery store gift card ministry. As various folks would come to the church to pick up a Market Basket gift card, he would talk with them, giving them his full attention, making sure they felt seen and heard. His kindness and compassion made such an impression on me.

When discussing how to know whether a person was truly in need of groceries or if they would use the card for other purposes, Pastor Rich said, "I like to err on the side of compassion." Those nine words have been engraved on my heart ever since. He told me this was an important ministry to him, as evidenced by his funeral wishes for memorial donations made to Central Congregational Church to be used for the church's grocery store gift card ministry.

How appropriate for this ministry to be named in honor of Pastor Rich as it serves to address food insecurity within the community, demonstrating Christian charity, and providing tangible support for folks in need. Handing out the gift cards and talking with the recipients is one of my favorite things about my job.

Each month, CCC provides Market Basket gift cards to several folks within and around Chelmsford and Lowell. Recipients receive an envelope that includes a \$50 gift card, food resource listings, information about local services, and various writings created by Pastor Rich, such as 'How to Reconnect with God,' and 'Scripture Readings for Comfort,' among others. I also like to include a small Bible verse card that I created for my home church's care card ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Richard B. Knight Gift Card Ministry exists because of your kindness and generosity. Donations can be made by cash or check payable to CCC with 'Gift Card Ministry' on the memo line.

In upcoming Beacon newsletters, I hope to share with you about the folks (concealing their identity for privacy) who are being helped by this ministry.

Thank you for continuing to support the Pastor Rich Gift Card Ministry. ❤️

~Peggy Kelly

*"You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate."*

*Luke 6:36 (NLT)*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

### *What is your “Dream Job”?*

This year the Stewardship Campaign theme is “Dreaming God’s Dream – No Gift Too Small, No Dream Too Big,” and members of the Stewardship Committee have asked the congregation to answer the question, “What are your dreams for CCC?” My response is, I dream of a church family that continues to grow in faith and action!

As a member of the Nominating Committee, I take to heart my role in helping to grow a strong, engaged, enthusiastic congregation through effective and rewarding church committee participation of as many individuals as possible. Serving on a committee is a benefit to both CCC and yourself! The church keeps running smoothly and expanding our ability to help others when the various committees are filled, and you get to share your time and talents while getting connected to a small, cohesive group of great CCC people!

What task or role at CCC is waiting for you? What committee would be your Dream Job? If you are handy but spend your time in an office, perhaps you would enjoy joining the House Committee and working on projects around the church and 9 Worthen? If your passion is music but you don’t currently participate in one of the church choirs, you could participate in the oversight of the musical activities at CCC by joining the Music Committee.

Do you enjoy planning social activities and helping to welcome visitors and new members? Members At Large is the committee that helps the congregation have fun and get to know each other better! Do you value faith formation in our children and youth? The Christian Education Committee plans all Sunday School programming. What skills would you like to learn and put to good use? The Communications Committee needs a Social Media person – bring your skills or try out something new and “learn as you go!” There is no safer place to expand your capabilities than at CCC where everyone is ready to support you!

Your Nominating Committee members work diligently to match CCC volunteers with open committee positions. Each spring we bring to Annual Meeting a slate of officers and committee members for the new church year. Now is the time for us to ask – have you considered serving on a CCC committee? We have many areas to suit your interests and skill sets!

Consider your options by talking to us or sending an e-mail. We are here to help you grow in your commitment to CCC and in the joy of working side by side with fellow members of the CCC church family! Together we can ensure that the future of CCC is all that we dream it can be!

*~Lynn Horton, on behalf of Your Nominating Committee,*

*Deb Lyons, Elizabeth Hartigan, Dory Toppan, and Lynn Horton, chair, [Lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:Lynn@terpsoft.com)*

## PRAYER MINISTRY



I've been a member of the Prayer Ministry for several years. It means a great deal to me to set aside time to talk with God as I pray for people in our church community, in the larger community, as well as offering my personal prayers. However, there's a small, nagging part of me that always wonders....am I doing this right? Do all those other people do a better job...a more faith-filled job...of talking with God?

I read an international daily devotional, The Upper Room, which is translated into 33 languages. Each day has a Bible quote and a short message by someone in one of the countries. One day I read a piece by a woman who said she would sometimes get overwhelmed by all the things she wanted to pray for, and couldn't decide what to do...pray for everyone by name each day? For each situation? This woman turned to God in prayer, to ask how she should pray. In time, God's answer came to her...."First, pour out in prayer what is most on your heart." Now this thought helps me open my conversation with God.



Being part of Prayer Ministry is a peaceful, meaningful way to minister to others in our extended church community...and your conversations may lead you closer to God as well. Do you have a care you'd like to bring to the Prayer Ministry, in confidence? Please contact Wendy Perry, who is listed in the church directory.

*~Submitted by Dory Toppan*

## NEW MEMBERS CLASSES

Central Congregational Church welcomes new members to officially join the church's membership each spring and fall. If you have been attending worship services and activities at CCC and are interested in learning more about our church family, the wider denomination UCC (United Church of Christ), and what membership involves, you are invited to attend a New Members class, date to be determined by the participants' availability. There is no requirement to join the church if you take the class. We think you will enjoy meeting and getting to know members of the church Diaconate (the Deacons of CCC), church leaders, other newer attendees of Sunday services, and Pastor Lee. Please contact Lynn Horton [Lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:Lynn@terpsoft.com) or Pastor Lee Atherton [pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org](mailto:pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org) to let us know you are interested!



## SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSIONS COMMITTEE (SAM)

At this time of year when we are considering our pledges to the church, SAM wants to remind people of the impact we can have on neighbors in our local community. In February, we received a thank you letter from the executive director of House of Hope in Lowell, which stated that CCC is one of their major donors. SAM's mission funds are primarily used to provide consistent donations of \$500 each to ten different non-profit organizations in Lowell that serve people who are food and/or housing insecure. Consistent donations are very helpful for non-profits to budget and provide consistent services to their clients each year.

In March, SAM member Julie Carney attended a conference entitled "Building Partnerships to Address Food Insecurity" that was organized by the Chelmsford non-profit, Table of Plenty. This was a three-hour event that involved a keynote speaker from the Greater Lowell Health Alliance about food insecurity trends and data; a speed networking session that had participants meeting each other for short introductions and discussions, and a panel discussion with speakers from Table of Plenty, The Chelmsford Community Exchange Food Pantry, and a social worker from Chelmsford High School. Julie was representing Central Congregational Church's SAM Ministry and the Open Pantry. During the speed networking event she met two people from the Chelmsford Housing Authority, who were thrilled to meet someone from CCC, as we are the major participant of the Secret Santa Program! CCC provided presents for 28 out of the 50 children that the Housing Authority collected for in 2024

And of course, the Open Pantry is extremely grateful for the generosity of CCC in providing donations of both money and food items, as well as the use of our facility for the recent and very successful dinner and dance fundraiser.

These are tangible examples of CCC carrying out God's word: "If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:10.

*Your Social Action and Missions Committee,  
Jennifer Bellissimo, Diane Blair, Carol Boucek, Julie Carney, Kathy Gaphardt, Kathy Lueck,  
Wendy Piacenza, Dale Williams, Becky Wisniewski*





## WORSHIPPER PRIVACY

Since we livestream our services and other events on Facebook Live and YouTube, there are some attendees that may not wish to be seen during those events.

If you have concerns about being recognized during the livestreaming, you should not volunteer to be the liturgist, make an announcement, or sing in the choir. All of these activities will definitely make you visible during the broadcast. Also, sitting in certain areas of the pews could also expose you to being seen. If you do not wish to be seen, you should sit in the balcony, which is behind the cameras used during the service.

Also, if you do not wish your children to be identified, they should sit in the balcony with you and not participate in the children's message before leaving for Sunday school. They should leave for Sunday school by going from the balcony through Fellowship Hall to the education wing.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

*Dick Papenfuss*  
*Council President*

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Happy spring from your CE committee! One fine element of life in New England is the wonder that one feels when the warmer days come with a bit more frequency, and suddenly it becomes apparent that, despite the inevitable late snowfall or sleet storm, spring really has arrived and will eventually prevail. In our faith, the season of Lent gives way to Easter, mirroring that same amazing process of the return to life and hope.

- This year, our elementary students have been working on their drama skills - reenacting stories from the New Testament and Holy Week. They have been active in Kids Club once a month and, with their Sunday School funds, have voted to support the Jimmy Fund and an organization that supports seeing eye dogs.
- The high school students have helped with the Open Pantry Dance, the Ice Cream Social, and have traveled to Boston to spend time with Common Cathedral and their outreach to the unhoused. They are planning a game night.
- The middle school students have been active in raising money for the Open Pantry and are preparing lessons on Holy Week.

*Continued →*

- The older youth will be helping facilitate the Easter Egg Hunt for the younger youth on Palm Sunday.
- We all look forward to our Spring Hike at Stony Brook in Westford on May 4 at 10:00 AM.

We are looking for ways to facilitate more relationships between the youth and our larger congregation so if you have ideas about how you might want to be involved, please reach out to a CE member.

*Submitted by Kristin Strobel*

## FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Welcome to April. The Sunday School Program is as busy as ever. Spring ramps up the outdoor spring sports and we welcome the warmer weather and bright blooms that have been hiding away all winter long. Boston has the marathon that brings elite runners into the state along with tons of people raising money for different non-profit organizations to help others. This month is also the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution with many activities in the area of Minute Man National Historical Park. We achieved this by ending the mistreatment of others, safeguarding the vulnerable, loving our neighbors, and sharing the good news of Jesus, who died on the cross for teaching kindness and embodying God's hope for the world. His resurrection inspires his followers to continue his teachings, especially the call to love one another as you would want to be loved.

- The younger classes have been enjoying a skit-based curriculum for the season of Lent, acting out stories about Jesus and activities in his ministry. The Holy Cows will be sharing their knowledge of Holy Week this month.
- Sunday School classes are full of exciting activities for students 3½ years old through high school seniors. We try to build on the scripture that is talked about during the Children's Message with hands-on activities and acting.

**Have you noticed the sanctuary art?** For those online, we hope to be able to share its completion. Thank you for your help in putting together the paper chains.



**Mark your calendars:** The Easter Egg Hunt will happen after the service on Palm Sunday, April 13, this year instead of Easter Sunday.

*Continued →*

I want to share with the Congregation that, while we won't be holding Make a Difference Week this summer, we are actively working to lay the groundwork for future summer activities. Our goal is to create meaningful opportunities for connection and service, and I am hopeful that by the summer of 2026, we will see something exciting take shape. One of the challenges we're navigating is coordinating dates before community summer camp schedules are announced. If you're interested in helping shape these future activities or have ideas to contribute, please reach out—your involvement is key to making these opportunities a reality!

The Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ has a camp and retreat center in Sharon, CT called Silver Lake. They have resident camp for youth entering 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, some summer three-day family camps for all ages, and weekend retreats throughout the year. Visit Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center's website for information: [silverlakeect.org](http://silverlakeect.org). They have a sliding pay schedule and scholarships are available.

*Jennifer Hart*  
*Sunday School Coordinator*

## FROM THE NURSERY COORDINATOR

We are always looking for volunteers to help in the nursery.

Please feel free to email me directly, [kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org](mailto:kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org) or you can sign up by scanning this QR code or on this google sheet: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UmjuG7rF5SJ6IlG692D5R0UI59UwO-anxT2pID6Y\\_1E/edit?gid=0#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UmjuG7rF5SJ6IlG692D5R0UI59UwO-anxT2pID6Y_1E/edit?gid=0#gid=0).

Also, if you know of any families who are looking to bring their children to the nursery, please direct them my way as I would like to make this space as welcoming and nurturing as possible.

Thank you!

*Kelsey Hartigan*



## DON HARBISON'S PAN MASS CHALLENGE



I'm excited to announce the start of my PMC 2025 campaign! Thanks to everyone here, we raised \$13,020.83 in 2024! The total gift from the PMC to Dana-Farber was \$75,000,000. But the most amazing achievement is we smashed the \$1,000,000,000...ONE BILLION DOLLARS milestone since the start of the PMC in 1980!

For 2025, I will be riding the historic 186 mile two-day route from [Sturbridge to Provincetown](#). I have started my training, which is a good thing since I have not ridden this route since 2016. I know what I'm in for.

I've updated my [Profile Page](https://profile.pmc.org/dh0129) [https://profile.pmc.org/dh0129] with all the great news that Kit and Jenna are both doing very well! From stage IV cancers to 'no cancer present' in Jenna's case! And in Kit's case her oncologist stopped her immunotherapy treatments since he believes her cancer cells are dead. They will both be monitored by quarterly scans for the next several years, otherwise it feels like a huge success.

[Learn how your donations impact the quality of care and research and development](https://www.pmc.org/impact) [https://www.pmc.org/impact] at Dana-Farber. All of this made it possible for my wife and daughter to survive and thrive after the harrowing experiences of metastatic cancers.

Thank you!

*Don Harbison*



## COUNCIL CORNER

### *A Monthly Update on the Activity of the CCC Council*

#### *News from the March 12, 2025, meeting:*

- Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of February 28 we are 67% of the way through Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Pledged income continues to run a bit behind budget, currently at 64% Year-To-Date, and total income YTD is on target at 67%. Total Expenses are at 66% YTD. Some line items such as copier expenses for color copying are significantly over budget and we will have to make some modifications in our usage of color ink in some of our materials. The heavy snow layer on the roofs resulted in reduced generation of solar energy from our panels in February and a correspondingly high electric bill. We have recently changed our electrical provider to East Coast Renewable Energy, and we will now be using all solar-generated electricity going forward with an expected savings compared to National Grid pricing.
- Further discussion was held on how to respond to a visit from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) if it should occur at our church. Council President Dick Papenfuss has spoken with the Co-Op Nursery School's Director and their information aligns with the CCC's guidance from the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC). The church is locked during the day, and the Office Administrator must call the Chair of Trustees or Council President before letting anyone from ICE to enter. If you have concerns about this issue, please speak to Pastor Lee.
- Worshipper Privacy - The viewable areas of our sanctuary (that are seen on livestreamed services) were reviewed. Anyone who desires to eliminate the risk of being seen on any of our online media should understand that the only area that is not visible to online viewers is the balcony. Parents who do not want their children to be seen on the internet need to refrain from sending the children to the front of the church and any other live performances involving the children. This information has also been communicated in CCC announcements.
- Annual Meeting Warrant - The proposed warrant was reviewed by Council members and approved. The date of the Annual Meeting will be Sunday May 18, 2025, immediately following the worship service. Article 3 on the warrant involves updating our CCC Constitution by replacing the title of "Massachusetts Conference" with "Southern New England Conference of the UCC." This correction would be inserted in all relevant areas of our church Constitution.
- The due date for Annual Reports of committees and other CCC annual reports to be uploaded to Google document folder is April 11, 2025.

- All Committees should submit final copies of their approved meeting minutes to Church Office Administrator Peggy Kelly for our church records. Chairs of committees should submit minutes dating from May 2023 to present. Private material should be redacted. Peggy has set up Google Drive folders for these reports, contact her for the link.
- The CCC Open and Affirming (ONA) committee has been reactivated following Coach Becky's recommendation, as we are soon to undergo a Pastoral Search. (Note - CCC voted to be Open and Affirming in December 2018). The renewed committee has the following members: Deb Lyons, Alisa Knight, Jody Cross-Hansen, Margie Dissinger, Cindy Bruetsch, Emmett Lyons, Madison Lauricella, and Mary Horne. The committee's goals include bringing educational projects and initiatives re: gender issues. There will be a celebratory anniversary event with additional information, and plans for community events.
- Any individual or group that has an announcement or activity to share during a Sunday worship service is asked to make an appropriate request to Pastor Lee regarding the scope and length of the announcement. The Pastor needs this information at least 2 weeks before your proposed announcement. Having this information in advance allows for optimal planning of elements of the worship service to allow for continuity and flow.
- CE Chair Sam Shields discussed Safe Church Training and Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Training. This is required by conference guidelines and Massachusetts Law. The individuals or groups that should receive this yearly training are Deacons, Sunday School teachers and Youth Group Leaders, Mission trip chaperones and volunteers over the age of 18, Music Committee (to supervise Junior choir rehearsals), and Christ Care Leaders.

### *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.

The next Council Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 7:30 PM, via Zoom**. Anyone from CCC is welcome to attend! Contact Lynn Horton if you would like the Zoom link information. [Lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:Lynn@terpsoft.com) (978) 256-8524





Central Congregational  
Church UCC



## Holy Week

**SUN**  
**April 13**

### **PALM SUNDAY**

Palm Sunday Service | 10:00 AM | Sanctuary

### **EASTER CONCERT**

*"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"* | 3:00 PM | Sanctuary

**THUR**  
**April 17**

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

Maundy Thursday Service | 6:30 PM | Sanctuary

**FRI**  
**April 18**

### **GOOD FRIDAY**

Good Friday Service | 6:30 PM | Sanctuary

**SAT**  
**April 19**

### **PRAYER VIGIL WITH PASTOR LEE**

Saturday, April 19, 5:30 PM via Zoom

**SAT**  
**April 19**

### **PRAYER VIGIL**

Saturday, April 19, 6:00 PM to Easter Sunday, 6:00 AM

**SUN**  
**April 20**

### **EASTER SERVICES**

Easter Sunrise Service | 6:30 AM | Carson Park

Easter Service | 10:00 AM | Sanctuary



# Central Congregational Church UCC

*United Church of Christ*

1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

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

## WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

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

<b>Pastor Pro Tem:</b>	Rev. Lee Atherton	508-308-7116	<a href="mailto:pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org">pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Director of Music:</b>	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	<a href="mailto:tudorbota@gmail.com">tudorbota@gmail.com</a>
<b>Office Administrator:</b>	Peggy Kelly	978-256-5931	<a href="mailto:office.admin@cccchelmsford.org">office.admin@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Sunday School Coordinator:</b>	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	<a href="mailto:5ofharts@chrisjenn.net">5ofharts@chrisjenn.net</a>
<b>Nursery Coordinator</b>	Kelsey Hartigan	978-770-8984	<a href="mailto:kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org">kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Custodian:</b>	Juarez Gomes		
<b>Church Address:</b>	One Worthen Street	Chelmsford, MA	01824
<b>Church Phone:</b>	978-256-5931		
<b>Church e-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:Office.admin@cccchelmsford.org">Office.admin@cccchelmsford.org</a>		
<b>Church Website:</b>	<a href="http://cccchelmsford.org">cccchelmsford.org</a>		
<b>Church Fax:</b>	978-250-3565		
<b>Conference Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.sneucc.org">www.sneucc.org</a>		
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