

RESPONDING IN FAITH AND ACTION

Prayer for Transformation (based on Psalm 23)

Pastor Lee

God who shepherds us, you must wonder how long we will continue to live the way we do. We snatch hope out of the grasp of those who need it most. Our acts of kindness are offered only to those we think to be deserving of our generosity. We gather around to watch endless reality shows, while those whose real lives are filled with struggle and loss are ignored. Yet you refuse to keep forgiveness a mystery, Gracious God, but offer it to us without any hesitation. You gather us in the green pastures of mercy, so we might find hope; you offer us a drink of the living waters so we might become still enough to listen to your heart; you send the Spirit to take us by the hand to lead us on the paths of justice; the goodness and mercy of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, follow us all the days as we seek to be faithful in our calling to serve him. Amen.

Words of Grace

Affirmation of Faith

We are God's work of art—each one of us a precious gem, a marvelous melody, a potter's delight. We are God's handiwork– woven together in love, shaped with infinite compassion, painted with incredible beauty. We are the church of Jesus Christ— diverse in human qualities, but united in our call to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are the Body of Christ—living in his truth, sharing his peace, carrying his hope, embodying his love, throughout the world he loved so much. We are here to be reminded once more who we are, whose we are and what our lives are about. We are here to be uplifted, renewed and empowered to live out the miracle of who we are, by the power of God working in and among us. We open ourselves to God, who makes all things new.

Invitation to Generosity

Dory

Offertory

"I Will Sing and Not Be Silent," by Pote

Chancel Choir

I will sing and not be silent I will sing and not be silent for God has given me a song.
I will sing and make a melody, I will sing with joy in my heart for God has given me a song.
I will rejoice! New every morning are your mercies, oh God, you turned my sorrow into dancing,
into dancing, you took away my sins and clothe me with joy that I may sing your praises.
I will sing and not be silent I will sing with the joy in my heart for God has given me a song.
God's anger is only for a moment but God's kindness will last a lifetime.
Weeping may stay for a night but in the morning will come rejoicing.

*Doxology

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

#46

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Pastor Lee

SENDING FORTH

*Sending Hymn

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

#560

*Commissioning and Benediction

*Three-Fold Amen

Postlude

"Adagio," by Handel

Tudor

Central Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

Chelmsford, Massachusetts

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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

Sunday, May 11, 2025

Festival of the Christian Home

10 o'clock a.m.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" Psalm 19:1



Welcome to Central Congregational Church, where no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome. If you are visiting us today, know that we are glad to have you. As we worship together, please note that an * indicates a time to stand as you are able. Sentences in **bold** are to be spoken by the congregation.

GATHERING		
Prelude	“Glorify Thy Name,” arr. by Hayes	Tudor Bota, Music Director
Welcome and Announcements		Lillian Beean
Reading of the Warrant		Val King
Poem		Pastor Lee
*Opening Hymn	“Gather Us In”	#284
Call to Worship		Dory Toppan, Liturgist
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.		
For what shall we be thankful? All we need to do to see God’s blessings is to look around us.		
If we listed all our blessings – friends, family, food, shelter, security – the list would go on and on. And though it is good to be thankful for the things of this world – the things that do not last, the things that will eventually fade away – there is so much more for which we can be thankful.		
How do you thank someone who has given you everything?		
What words can we use to express our gratitude to the Lord? No matter how we say it, it is insufficient.		
What do we say to the one who created words, sounds, phrases, and stories?		
How do we relate what is on our hearts when we cannot even comprehend what our hearts are telling us?		
All the languages in the world cannot contain our God. Mere words cannot describe God or God’s love for us. Let us join our hearts and our voices to worship our awesome God! Amen.		
Prayer of Invocation and the Lord’s Prayer		
Holy One of the morning, we come together to remember who we are and whose we are. We give you thanks and praise for being with us today and always. You have gathered us here to celebrate you—our Creator. Open our hearts to the nudging of your Spirit that moves among us, empowering us to listen, to nurture, and to care for all your people. Give us eyes to see when you break into our lives through all you have made. Let our worship be all about you as we humbly pray for the Holy Spirit to keep our hearts, minds, and souls in tune with the Risen Lord Jesus Christ whose words we now pray, “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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”		
Sharing Christ’s Peace		
The peace of Christ be with you all.		
And also with you.		
PROCLAIMING		
Prayer for Illumination		Pastor Lee
Scripture Lesson	Psalms 23	Pew Bible p. 435

Response		
This is the Word of God for the people of God.		
Thanks be to God.		
Pastor’s Message		Pastor Lee
*Hymn		#78
Prayers of the People		
Litany for Mother’s Day		Written by Rev. Patty Lawrence
We remember Sarai who was taunted by others in the household because of her inability to have children. All-encompassing God,		
we pray for those who feel excluded when we emphasis one kind of family as normal.		
We remember Esther, who was adopted and raised by her cousin. God who embraces us all,		
we pray for those who cannot be raised by their parents, for a short time or permanently.		
We remember Jochebed, the mother of Moses, who placed him into a raft on the river. Saving God,		
we pray for parents who struggle to raise their children in oppressive circumstances.		
We remember Hannah, who loved her child so much she handed him over to another to raise. Loving God,		
we pray for parents who have placed their child in another family.		
We remember Naomi, who grieved the death of her sons. God, who grieves with us,		
we pray for parents who mourn the death of a child.		
We remember Ruth, who gave up her family to be family to another. Inclusive God,		
we pray for those who choose to be family to those isolated by culture or language or distance.		
We remember Elizabeth, who had a child in old age and we remember Mary, who had a child as a teenager. Ageless God,		
we pray that as a community we accept people of varying life stages and responsibilities and relationships.		
We remember Rachel, crying for her children God of justice and hope,		
we pray for those whose children are killed, and look to a time when children can live safely in their communities.		
We remember Lois and Eunice, who taught Timothy faith by example. Faithful God,		
we pray for those who teach us faith by their lives, may we remember that we also teach about you in the way we live.		
We remember other people not named in the Scriptures, like the mother of the prodigal son. Companion God,		
we pray for those who wait for a phone call or a visit, cut off from family and friends by distance and disagreement.		
Nurturing God,		
we give thanks for those who enrich our lives by their presence who teach us about your abundant love who encourage us to journey in faith.		



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

Pastor Pro Tem	Rev. Lee Atherton	508-308-7116	Pastor-Lee@cccchelmsford.org
Director of Music	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	tudorbota@gmail.com
Office Administrator	Peggy Kelly	978-256-5931	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org
Sunday School Coord.	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	5ofHarts@chris-jenn.net
Nursery Coordinator	Kelsey Hartigan	978-770-8984	kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org
Custodian	Juarez Gomes	978-957-5075	
Council President	Dick Papenfuss	603-577-1497	dickandkarenp@verizon.net
Church Phone & Email	978-256-5931	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org	
Church Address	1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824		
U.C.C. Website	ucc.org (United Church of Christ)		

Transition Team Contact Information

Feel free to contact a team member anytime with thoughts, questions, or concerns.

- **John Lamplough, Chair** | 978-200-8844 | LMPL78@verizon.net
- **Judith Barnes** | 978-376-1687 | judithbarnes1621@gmail.com
- **Glenn Dissinger** | 978-387-2090 | glenn_dissinger@uml.edu
- **Kelsey Hartigan** | 978-770-8984 | kelsey.hartigan@cccchelmsford.org
- **Shaleena Pulliam** | 702-556-8304 | tkeyssdreamo@gmail.com
- **Peter White** | 978-407-4913 | peter.c.white@comcast.net



Scan the QR code to give your offering electronically and support our ministry.
Thank you for your generosity!



Welcome to Central Congregational Church!

No matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you’re welcome here!

Good morning and welcome to Sunday morning worship!

We are glad you are here to worship together! Please join in Fellowship Hall after the service for food and fellowship. This service of worship is being livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. If you do not wish to be visible on the internet, please choose a seat in the balcony.

Children

- ☺ Children are always welcome in our services of worship.
- ☺ Busy Bags for kids are available in the narthex (lobby).

Deacons are available during Sunday services. Reach out to any of them with questions or concerns. You can spot them wearing a blue name tag.

Greeter(s): KiSeLo

Liturgist: Dory Toppan

Acolyte: Nora Marcsisin

Worship Service Flowers: Today’s worship arrangement is given by KiSeLo in celebration of mothers who love, care, and guide, including those who have filled the role when it mattered most.

Nursery Care Coordinator: Kelsey Hartigan


Many thanks to all who enrich our morning together.

Announcements and Events – Sunday, May 11, 2025


Annual Church Meeting | Sunday, May 18 | After Worship - All members and friends of Central Congregational Church are invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the church, to be held in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, May 18, 2025, immediately after the worship service. We will again have a family potluck to enjoy during the meeting. Please bring a main dish or dessert to share. **Please label any food with the name of the food and any known allergens such as nuts, soy, milk, etc.** The dishes can be placed in the kitchen before church. Beverages will be provided. Childcare will be available. We look forward to seeing you there.
~Dick Papenfuss, Council President

Nominating Committee – Seeking candidates for the Slate of Nominees that will be presented at the Annual Church Meeting on May 18. **There are currently vacancies on the following committees:** Communications, Stewardship, and Members-At-Large. Other opportunities to serve include Northeast Association representatives. Please speak with a Nominating Committee member: Lynn Horton, Chair, Deb Lyons, Dory Toppan, Elizabeth Hartigan.

Considering Membership Class | Tues, May 13 | 6:30 PM via Zoom - Pastor Lee will be leading a "Considering Membership" class on May 13 on Zoom. Anyone interested in learning more about CCC and our denomination, the United Church of Christ, is welcome to join. All are welcome to then join CCC on June 1 (tentative date) yet, there is no requirement to join. If you would like to participate on May 13, please contact Pastor Lee (pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org) or Peggy in the church office (office.admin@cccchelmsford.org) and you will be provided with the Zoom link.


 **CCC Movie Group** - 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) for the Zoom link, if you have questions, or if you have difficulty accessing the movies! This month’s selections: **May 12:** “Conclave” (2024) and **May 26:** “Hacksaw Ridge” (2016)

Downeast Maine Mission - An important part of the DEMM tradition is the sponsoring of meals. We are looking for some CCC folks to sponsor a few meals during our week in Maine. For \$50 you can sponsor breakfast, \$75 for lunch, or \$100 for dinner. We would also love to have people include a prayer so we can introduce them and read their prayer before we eat. Prayer writing assistance is available. Overall, there are 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 6 dinners. Please speak with Kristin Strobel if you would like to sponsor a meal and a prayer. Thank you.

 **Locking the Church Back Door** – The backdoor has been left unlocked (overnight) recently, which is of considerable concern regrading building security. The hex key should NOT be used to keep the door unlocked since anyone can walk in if no one is at the door. Committees should station someone at the door until the meeting begins or call or text someone to let you in. Each committee chairperson or leader of a group is responsible for ensuring that the door is locked when the last person in your group has left the building. ~John Carson, Trustees Chair

A Make A Difference Day Thank You! A huge thank you to Central Congregational Church and Boy Scout Troop 75 for their help on Sunday, April 27 at Sunny Meadow. So many projects were worked on including help with the food pantry plot, cutting chicken wire along the fence line in the garden, picking up trash, and helping Mike and Jim after they removed the water tanks at the entry of garden B. We live in a great community! Cindy Hughes, Community Garden Co-Manager

Sponsor a Bulletin Cover – Share Beauty and Inspiration! Art is a sacred language—one that can stir the soul, spark wonder, and help us connect with God in new ways. Each Sunday, our bulletin cover features artwork paired with reflection questions to deepen your spiritual journey, not just during worship, but throughout the week. Would you like to help bring that experience to life? **You’re invited to sponsor a bulletin cover for any week of the year.** With a gift of \$20, you can dedicate the artwork in honor of someone special, or celebrate a meaningful occasion. Pastor Lee is happy to collaborate with you in choosing the art. To sign up or learn more, contact the church office or reach out directly to Pastor Lee. Let’s turn each bulletin into a doorway to deeper reflection, beauty, and praise.

 **Cards for ‘Mrs. P.’** – Longtime Central Co-Op Nursery School Teacher, Lynn Piecewicz is currently undergoing treatments for breast cancer. Due to her treatment schedule, Lynn has recently stepped away from teaching to focus on her health. Lynn and her husband have two daughters and two new grandbabies to enjoy! Would you be willing to send Lynn a note of encouragement? If so, please mail to: Lynn Piecewicz, 15 Anna St, N. Chelmsford, MA 01863 (She has given Co-Op Director, Suzanne Dionne permission to share her address.)

Upcoming May Events:

- **Monday Evening ChristCare Group** – May 19 7:00 PM on Zoom | Contact: Deb Lyons
- **Men’s ChristCare Group** – Sundays at 8:00 AM | 9 Worthen | Contact: Glenn Dissinger
- **KiSeLo (Kindness, Service, Love)** – Annual Banquet | May 28 | 12:30 PM at Princeton Station | Contact: Karen Banakos

This Week at CCC

Mon, May 12	7:00 PM	CCC Movie Group	Zoom
Tues, May 13	11:45 AM	Lunch Bunch	Room 202
	6:30 PM	Considering Membership Class	Zoom
	7:30 PM	Sonlight Band Rehearsal	Sanctuary
Wed, May 14	1:00 PM	Craft Meeting	9 Worthen
	7:30 PM	Council Meeting	Zoom
Thurs, May 15	6:45 PM	Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Sanctuary

Pastor Lee’s Office hours: Thursdays and by appointment.
Please contact Pastor Lee directly: pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org | 508-308-7116

**Warrant for the Annual Meeting on May 18, 2025
of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford,
United Church of Christ**

To the Members and Friends of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford:

The Annual Meeting of the Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford,
United Church of Christ, will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2025, at 11:30 a.m.
in Fellowship Hall to act upon the following articles:

- Article 1 To elect a Moderator.
- Article 2 To celebrate the events of the past year.
- Article 3 To amend the CCC Constitution by removing references to the
 “Massachusetts Conference” and replacing with the “Southern
 New England Conference of the UCC.”
- Article 4 To act upon the recommendations of the Nominating Committee
 to elect the officers of the church.
- Article 5 To receive the reports of all committees.
- Article 6 To approve the budget for the fiscal year 2025 – 2026.
- Article 7 To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the
 meeting.

(signed)
Val King, Clerk

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Annual All Church Picnic- Volunteers Needed

CE will be hosting the Annual All Church Picnic on Sunday, June 8th, and we need your help! We are looking for some volunteers to help us before, during, and after the picnic. Please scan the code below for the volunteer sign-up sheet.



Church Picnic Volunteers
docs.google.com

We are looking for volunteers to help with:

- Set-up
- During the picnic (grilling and keeping food stocked)
- Games
- Clean-up after the picnic

Annual All Church Picnic- RSVP

The annual church picnic is a celebration of the church year, with fun, food, and fellowship for all. We will be providing the burgers and hot dogs, please be sure to note if you need gluten-free buns - vegetarian or vegan food options, and have watermelon, condiments, drinks, and paper products.

We hope that you will join us and bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share. Please remember to bring your favorite camping chairs or picnic blanket as well.

If you plan to join us please scan the QR code to register so we know how many burgers and hot dogs to buy. We will also have a sign-up table in Fellowship Hall during Coffee Hour the next few weekends. The cost is \$2 per person and \$8 per family.

We look forward to spending this time with all of you!



2025 All Church Picnic
docs.google.com

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docs.google.com

Hymn Lyrics

Opening Hymn

“Gather Us In”

Here in this place, the new light is streaming, shadows of doubt are vanished away. See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day. Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in; our spirits inflame. Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young – our lives are a mystery; we are the old, who yearn for your face. We have been sung throughout all of history, called to be light to the whole human race. Gather us in – the rich and the haughty; gather us I – the proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we receive new life in the waters; here we receive the bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth. Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give to eat the bread that is you; nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven light years away, here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day. Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own; gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Hymn

“The Lord’s My Shepherd”

The Lord’s my shepherd; I’ll not want. God makes me down to lie in pastures green, and leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul thou dost restore again and me to walk dost make within the paths of righteousness e’en for thin own name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk in death’s deep vale, yet I will fear no ill. For thou art with me and thy rod and staff me comfort still.

My table thou has furnished in presence of my foes; my head thou dost anoint with oil and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God’s house forever more my dwelling place shall be.

Sending Hymn

“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms; what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms; O how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms? I have blessed peace with my Lord so near leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.