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## CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

VOLUME 70 NUMBER 08

September 2025

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Church Special Meeting**

September 7 | 10:00 AM

#### **Welcome Sunday – September 7**

Commissioning Volunteers, Sunday School Starts,  
Church Picnic after Worship

#### **Crocheters & Knitters**

Tuesday, September 9 | 10:30 AM | Room 202

#### **CCC Movie Group**

Mondays, Sept 11 & 25  
7:00 PM | on Zoom

#### **Contemplative/Lectio Divina Gatherings**

Sundays before Worship  
8:45 – 9:30 AM | Room 302

#### **Adult Education Class**

*Simplicity*, with Jody Cross-Hansen  
Tuesdays - Starts Tuesday, September 9  
7:00 PM | Room 202 and Zoom

#### **Confirmation Exploration Group**

Sunday, September 14  
11:30 AM | Room 302

#### **Save the Dates:**

- **Campfire:** Sun, Sept 14 | 6:00 PM
- **Women's Retreat:** Oct 3-5
- **Capital Campaign Celebration:** Sat, Oct 25 | 6:00 PM



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# WARRANT FOR A SPECIAL CHURCH MEETING

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## Warrant for a Special Meeting on September 7, 2025 of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford, United Church of Christ

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

A Special Meeting of the Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford, United Church of Christ, will be held on Sunday, September 7, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary to act upon the following article:

Article 1 To elect the members of the Pastoral Search Committee

(signed) *Val King, Clerk*



## FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

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Rev. Lee Atherton

### *Homecoming*

**September is often called the church's "homecoming season."** After the slower pace of summer, vacations, and days of rest and renewal, we gather again as a family of faith. Homecoming is more than just a date on the calendar — it's a reminder that God is always calling us back: back to worship, back to community, back to the center of who we are.

This year's Homecoming Sunday on **September 7** is an invitation to remember that church is not only a place we attend, but a community where we belong. No matter where life has taken us over these past months, God is here in our midst, ready to meet us again. When we walk through the doors, we are saying: *this is home*.

Homecoming is not just about returning — it's also about *growing*. Just as school and programs begin again in the fall, our church steps into a new season of worship, service, and learning. We are rooted in the love of God that never fails, and because of those strong roots, we are able to branch out in new directions. Together, we will nurture one another's faith and offer God's love in ways that reach beyond our walls.

Being part of a church community is not a spectator sport. Each of us is called to bring our presence, our prayers, our gifts, and our service. When we commit ourselves to the life of the church, we discover that our faith deepens, our spirits are strengthened, and our world is changed. Homecoming is the perfect time to ask: *How is God calling me to be part of this community?*

So let's come home — to God, to one another, to the life we share in this place. Let's be rooted in Christ's love, ready to grow in faith, and committed to walking together in hope. And may September be not only a return to familiar rhythms, but the start of a new season filled with God's presence, God's call, and God's joy.

### *What Would You Like to See?*

As we begin a new season in the life of our church, I am filled with gratitude and anticipation. One of the blessings of this fall is that I am now serving full-time with you — which means there is more room to dream, to plan, and to grow together in faith.

So I'd like to ask: ***What would you like to see planned?***

Would you be interested in a Bible study, where we can dive deeply into Scripture and listen for God's word together? How about a book study, exploring faith, hope, and discipleship through the wisdom of Christian authors and thinkers? Are there topics you've always wanted to learn about, or spiritual practices you'd like to try together?

This is your church — a place for worship, fellowship, learning, and service. Your voice matters in shaping our shared ministry. As we look ahead, I'd love to hear what would help you grow in faith and strengthen your connection with God and with one another.

Please share your ideas with me, whether it's over coffee, after worship, or in a quick email. Let's create opportunities that bring us closer to God, nurture our community, and help us live our call as disciples of Christ.

With joy in the journey,

*Pastor Lee*



# OFFICE UPDATE

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## BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Tuesday, September 23** for the October edition.

*Peggy Kelly*  
*Office Administrator*

## PASTOR LEE'S OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Lee will be in the office Sundays, 8:15 – 1:00; Tuesdays, 9:00 – 2:00; and Wednesdays 9:00 – 12:00. She is also available by appointment.

## NEW CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Beginning September 1, Peggy Kelly will be in the office Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The church office will be closed on Mondays and Fridays.

## SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Sept 7 Welcome Home!**

We have a very full worship as we welcome each other home from summer vacations. Teachers, Deacons, and Search Committee members will be commissioned.

**Sept 14 Growing In God's Love – DownEast Maine Mission Presentation**

**Sept 21 Just Peace Sunday and Prayerful Living** - The Thirtieth General Synod called on the congregations of the United Church of Christ to mark the Sunday preceding September 21 (which the United Nation recognizes as the "International Day of Prayer for Peace") as Just Peace Sunday.

**Sept 28 Surprising Investment**



# FOR YOUR CALENDAR

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## WELCOME SUNDAY

### *You're Invited!*

The Christian Education Committee cordially invites you to join us on Sunday, September 7 for our Welcome Sunday service and picnic.



Now that summer is winding down we are inviting everyone to join us for our annual Welcome Sunday service and picnic happening immediately following worship. We will start in worship with a busy and joyous service when we will commission our Sunday School teachers, Bible Study Leaders, ChristCare leaders, Deacons, and Pastoral Search Committee. As we prepare to begin another faith filled year of learning and growing spiritually in Sunday School and beyond, we will continue our beloved tradition of Blessing the Backpacks during the service to remind our youth that God is always with them. Children are encouraged to bring their backpacks to worship to participate.

Weather permitting, we will host the picnic outside so don't forget your blanket and/or folding chairs. This year the Christian Education Committee has added a few extra events and activities to the picnic. We will have a bounce house for kids of all ages to enjoy as well as a petting zoo! It is sure to be a fun time for all, we hope you will join us!

*Samantha Shields*

## KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS



There has been some interest in starting a group of people who knit, crochet or other handwork. This group would meet to socialize while working on their own projects. If you would like to learn one of these crafts you are also invited to join the group. An organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9th at 10:30 am in room 202. The meeting will be about an hour and then one can stay for Lunch Bunch (bring your own lunch if you plan to stay) or leave at that time. If you have any questions, please contact Margie Dissinger at [margie228@gmail.com](mailto:margie228@gmail.com) or 978-256-3707.

## ADULT EDUCATION CLASS FOR FALL 2025

Starts Tuesday, September 9 | 7:00 PM | Room 202 and on Zoom

***“Tis a Gift to be Simple’—Gaining Control Over Your Attention, Time, and Stuff to Make Room for What Is Really Important”***

- Do you find yourself feeling stressed a great deal of the time, or overwhelmed?
- Too much on your plate and too much to process?
- Not feeling in control of your own life or feeling like your daily life is reflecting your values and aspirations for your day?

**Come and brainstorm how we can begin to simplify.** What can we begin to let go of (versus what can I take up next)? Come discuss the values and theology of *simplicity*.

Books provided. No tests or papers!

- Led by Jody Cross-Hansen
- Meets weekly at church and on Zoom
- Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM
- Begins September 9 for 8 weeks

If interested, please contact Jody Cross-Hansen: [jody.crosshansen@gmail.com](mailto:jody.crosshansen@gmail.com) Or at 978 256 1249.

## SAVE THE DATES!

The Fall **“Make a Difference Day”** will be held on **Sunday, October 26 at 1:00 pm**. Projects will include a litter clean up along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and closing the Community Garden at Sunny Meadow for the season. Suggestions for other service projects are welcome! Please contact Lynn Horton.

The Annual **CCC Holiday Fair** will be held on **Saturday, November 22 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm**. Volunteers will be needed for all aspects of this major fundraiser for our church! Contact Lynn Horton with any questions or offers of help. Thank you!

Lynn Horton [Lynn@terpsoft.com](mailto:Lynn@terpsoft.com) (978) 256-8524

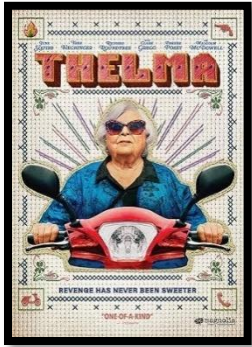




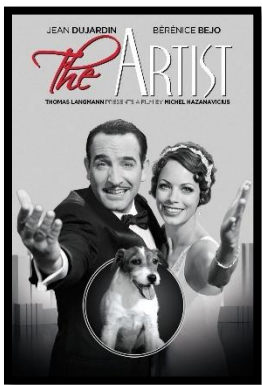
## CCC MOVIE GROUP

**Mondays | September 8 & 22 | 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) for the Zoom link, if you have questions, or if you have difficulty accessing the movies!



**Monday, 9/8 – “Thelma” (2024)** When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her. She gets the help from her reluctant friend Ben to find and confront her swindlers. Written and directed by Josh Margolin, the movie’s story was inspired by Margolin’s 103-year-old grandma named Thelma, who was almost tricked into giving thousands of dollars to scammers pretending to be Josh. The film establishes the uniquely strong bond between 93-year-old Thelma (June Squibb) and her Gen Z grandson Daniel (Fred Hechinger), an affable slacker. Their relationship is a heartwarming and believably deep intergenerational bond. About the film, critics have written, “At 94, screen veteran June Squibb gets her first leading role and carries the movie with style.” (Richard Roeper, Chicago Sun Times) “If it weren’t for casting a bona fide nonagenarian in the title role, ‘Thelma’ might not work at all. But it doesn’t pander to its audience and treats its characters with dignity and a dash of comic exaggeration.” (Leonard Maltin) Actor Richard Roundtree (Ben) passed away before the release of ‘Thelma.’ This film marks his final performance after a long career in movies and television, most notably as the 1970s New York private detective, John Shaft.



**Monday, 9/22 – “The Artist” (2011)** In 1927, silent films are all the rage. The films use title cards to communicate with the audience and are played in a concert hall where a live orchestra provides the mood for the scene being projected on the screen. Silent film star George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) poses for pictures outside the premiere of his latest hit film, A Russian Affair, with his co-star Constance (Missi Pyle). However, Valentin gives more importance to his dog Jack, than to Constance, infuriating her. It is evident that Valentin is an attention seeker and a darling of the audience. People line up across the block to get a glimpse of him and hang on his every word. When enthusiastic fan Peppy Miller (Bérénice Bejo) literally bumps into the swashbuckling hero of the silent film, the star reacts graciously and Peppy plants a kiss on his cheek as they are surrounded by photographers. The headlines demand: "Who's That Girl?" and Peppy is inspired to audition for a dancing bit-part at the studio. However, as Peppy slowly rises through the industry, the introduction of talking pictures turns Valentin's world upside-down. A faithful 21<sup>st</sup> century homage to the silent film era and a credit to the vision and talents of Director Michel Hazanavicius and his star-studded cast. Winner of multiple awards at the 2012 Oscars – Best Actor in a Leading Role - Jean Dujardin (the first Frenchman to win an Academy Award in this category), Best Costume Design, Best Music (Original Score), Best Director - Michel Hazanavicius, and Best Picture!



## CONFIRMATION EXPLORATION GROUP

**Sunday, September 14 | 11:30 AM in Room 302**

One of the first things we'll kick off the year with is getting the Confirmation Exploration Group started. Traditionally, this has been something that starts in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and the last class we had was a group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Among many other things, we'll look at how the UCC is different from other Christian denominations, explore other non-Christian traditions, and what it means to be a member of the United Church of Christ and of the Central Congregational Church.

If you have (or are!) a youth in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, or anyone older who hasn't yet explored Christianity and what it means to follow Christ, please join our Q&A session on September 14. We'll meet in Room 302 at 11:30. Bring your coffee and your curiosity.

*Rev. Lee Atherton*

## KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

**Wednesday, September 24 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall**



Soon we will be saying goodbye to the warm, sunny days of summer, and be welcoming the crisp, cool air of autumn. With the beginning of autumn, comes the beginning of a new KiSeLo season.

Ladies of CCC, come join us on September 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM in the Fellowship Hall. Following tradition, we will be holding a pot luck luncheon. Please bring your favorite appetizer, or a main dish, either hot or cold, or a dessert to share with all.



We will continue to donate to the Open Pantry every month as part of the Se (Service) in the word KiSeLo. **September's donation will be non-perishable juice**, either canned or bottled, or any other non-perishable food.

**A huge thank you goes to Lillian Began for running the Backpack Attack.** Because of your generosity and her hard work, KiSeLo was able to donate 92 filled backpacks and 10 calculators to the Wish Project! We appreciate you and all your hard work, Lillian.



**September 14<sup>th</sup> is a big day for a very special, lovely lady, and a long time CCC parishioner.** Our beloved Mary Harrison will be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!! Let's make sure she feels loved!!!!

Do you need more information, have questions, or want to make a comment?

Please text me at (603)686-2026.

*Karen Banakos*

## WOMEN'S FALL RETREAT

October 3-5, 2025



Dear Friends,

Join us for "Roots and Branches: Reflecting on Our Past, Preparing for Our Future," a transformative women's retreat led by Pastor Lee, October 3-5, 2025.

This rich retreat will celebrate images of seeds, gardens, nature, and creation as we explore our past and look toward our future, all while giving thanks for those who have offered us help and support along the way (the gardeners of our lives). Connect through engaging workshops, rest and relaxation, and time in nature.

Foster meaningful friendships, and enjoy delicious dining. Set in the serene surroundings of the Barbara Harris Retreat Center in NH, this retreat promises to nourish your spirit and visualize your tomorrows with the hope provided by the God of new life.

Come be a part of a community of amazing and beautiful women - and bring your friends. All women are welcome to attend, knowing that the content is Christ-centered. Reach out to Pastor Lee ([pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org](mailto:pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org)) or Val King ([valking@comcast.net](mailto:valking@comcast.net)) if you have any questions. Registration can be found on the church website: [cccchelmsford.org/womens-fall-retreat](http://cccchelmsford.org/womens-fall-retreat).

*Pastor Lee Atherton*

## UPDATES

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### YARD SALE THANK YOU!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the first CCC Community Yard Sale a success! We raised **\$798.25** for our church missions and budget! Thank you to the sellers who had tables filled with interesting items and to the many CCC members who came by to shop! Our new format of this fundraiser would not have happened without our sellers - the Lyons Family, the Bellissimo Family, Pat Vondal, Sue Sarafinas, Carol and Bernie Boucek, with help from Barbara Reilly, Margie and Glenn Dissinger, the "Book Group Ladies" Dory Toppan, Kathy Gaphardt, Kathy Lueck, and Judy Buswick, and our two community participants, Donna Barbosa and Alex Dowson. Thank you to Lillian Beean who organized and ran the Café with assistance from Cindy Bruetsch; to Amy Provencal for her time and expertise pricing and selling CCC items on the stage; to the Naish Family for their great bake sale to raise money for the Jimmy Fund; our PR team - Margie, Sam, Emmett, and Maddie L.; and to the 9 Worthen "haulers" - Margie, Glenn, Walker, Maddie K., Abby, and Bill.

It was a great event - let's do it again next year!

*Lynn Horton*

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HYMN?

Now that we are blessed with *both* the Pilgrim (red) hymnal and the Chalice (blue) hymnal, our musical well is deeper and richer than ever. With so many beloved hymns to choose from, each of us likely has one or two that stir our hearts in a special way.



**Pastor Lee would love to know your favorite hymn!** Each week, she prayerfully selects hymns that connect with the theme of the service, and—like many of us—she often gravitates toward the familiar favorites. By sharing your own cherished hymns, you can help shape our worship together, introducing treasured songs that may be new to others and weaving more voices into our Sunday music.

What hymn lifts your spirit, strengthens your faith, or brings back a meaningful memory? Let Pastor Lee know, and together we'll make our song of praise even more joyful.

## MUSIC NOTES

**The Chancel Choir always welcomes new members**, and September is a good time to start. Our first rehearsal will be on **Thursday, Sept 4 at 6:45**. Come sing with us!

**Junior Choir will also be starting in September after church in the sanctuary.** Tudor Bota will be sending an e-mail to the CE parents about performances and the December concert.

**The Bell Choir needs some ringers.** If you have wanted to try bells and can read music, this group might be for you. Look for a notice soon about a bell workshop to learn some of the playing techniques. Junior high schoolers and high schoolers are welcome. Talk to Amy Provencal if you are interested.

## TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE

After an 11-month journey beginning in October 2024, the Transition Team has submitted the Church Profile to our conference for Validation. The Team has met weekly by Zoom or in person and assisted Coach Becky David in facilitating three church meetings.

We began August by emailing a draft Profile to all committee chairs and encouraged them to forward it to their members and anyone else who may want to review it. We received feedback from eight members with over 100 different recommendations, many of which we were able to implement. We also presented a Profile Overview to the Council at their scheduled August meeting.

The Transition Team was made up of a cross-section of members ranging from Gen Z to Baby Boomers and from newer members of CCC to longtime members with a tremendous amount of historical knowledge. The Team would like to thank all those who volunteered to be Appreciative Inquiry Interviewers, plus everyone who was willing to be interviewed.

*Continued →*

We want to thank Coach Becky for her training and guidance and recognize her for developing exercises for the membership which allowed us to answer the three questions:

Who Are We Now?

Who Are Our Neighbors?

What is God Calling Us to do?

We also want to thank our Area Conference Minister Rev. Katie Omberg for her quick responses to our numerous questions, plus Shep Peterson from the Conference Search and Call office.

The Transition Team wishes the Pastoral Search Committee the best of luck and is available to answer any questions on the Profile.

Respectfully Submitted by the Transition Team,

*John Lamplough, Judith Barnes, Glenn Dissinger, Shaleena Pulliam, Peter White, and Kelsey Hartigan*

## HOUSE COMMITTEE

- There has been a problem with a puddle in Fellowship Hall, back where the tables and chairs are. Jim moved a hose for the perimeter drain and we think the problem is solved.
- The broken pipe underneath the front walk was replaced.
- A faulty smoke detector went off on August 1 and the Fire Department came out; the detector has been replaced. The Knox box was moved from the side door to the left of the front door at the Fire Department's request so that they can access the key in the event of a fire.
- The annual Fire Department walk through was completed, and they were very complimentary about the cleanliness and organization of our church.
- The sandwich boards for special events have been moved to the second shed (formerly the Boy Scouts shed).
- The bees at the back door have been dispatched to a "better place."
- We will be adding new shades to the windows in Room 302.
- New foot /leg covers will be replaced on tables and chairs that need them to prevent damage to the new floor in Fellowship Hall.
- The paint stored under the stage is going to be thrown away.
- The deep sink in the school needs to be fixed, which will be done when Jim returns.

*Mary Horne*

## CE COMMITTEE

Happy Fall from your CE Committee!

### *Welcome Back Sunday*

As I write this, we are enthusiastically planning for **Welcome Back Sunday on September 7th!** We hope you will join us after the worship service for hot dogs on the grill and dessert as we celebrate the beginning of the Sunday School year.

Our Sunday School program welcomes children from pre-K through high school, and we especially invite newcomers and families considering Sunday School to join us and learn more about our program.

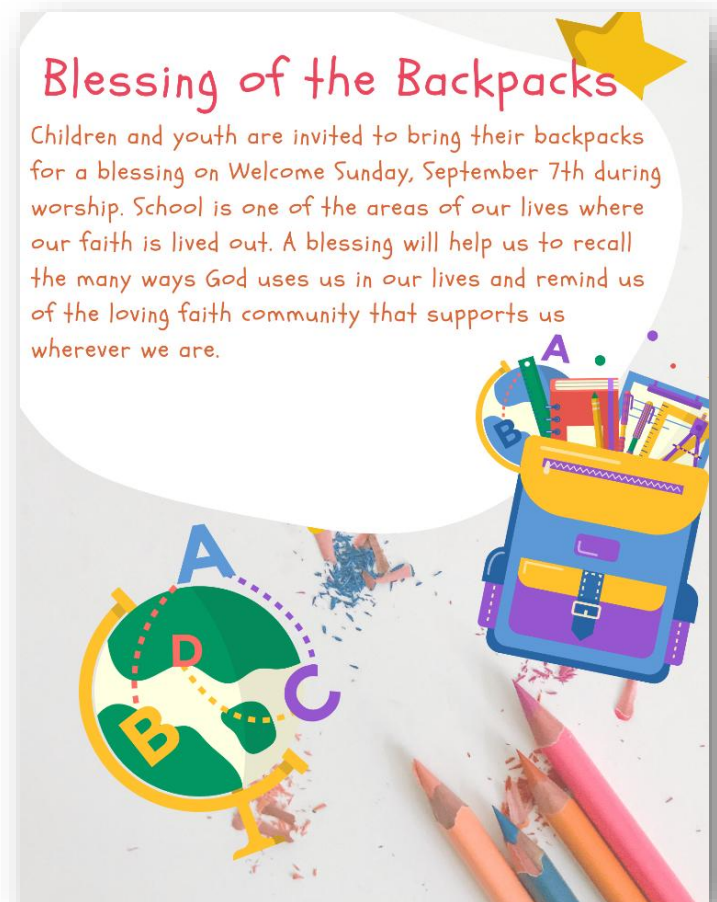
### **Bring Your Backpacks!**

On September 7, we encourage students to bring their backpacks for the annual "**Blessing of the Backpacks**" - a light-hearted tradition that helps us send them into the new school year with our prayers.

As the year begins, we are looking for ways to continue and broaden the connection between our larger church congregation and the Sunday School program. If you would like to visit a Sunday School class or be involved in a partnership, we'd love to hear from you! There are many ways to get involved, such as reading to younger classes, sharing career experiences, helping with crafts, or assisting with special projects or events.

Looking forward to seeing you all on September 7!

*Kristin Strobel on behalf of Your CE Committee: Becky Acheson, Steve Hartigan, Elmer Lyons, April McCarthy, Meghan Naish, Shaleena Pulliam, Samantha Shields*



## FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

**What a great summer!** I hope you all had fun and explored other churches when you were not with us. It is time to come back to Central Congregational Church at 1 Worthen and park in the nice smooth parking lot!

### *Sunday School Registration*

**CCC Sunday School Registration is Open.** Sign up today so we can prepare!

Please click here to access the registration form: [2025-2026 Sunday School](#).

### *Help Wanted*

**CCC needs at least two new Sunday School Teachers - you can set your schedule with your grade level team members. Openings are:**



**PreK-Kindergarten** - This lovely group of 3.5 year olds to 6 year olds is a fun group of active Children of God who like to move and explore the area around them as they learn new things. Samantha Shields is one of the team members; you could be the other.

**3rd - 4th Grade** - These Children of God are looking to do more exploring of the Bible and how the lessons fit into their world. Hands on learning is best for them with skits and games that help them explore the scripture. Kristin Strobel is one of the team members; you could be the other.

Please reach out to me at [Sofharts@chris-jenn.net](mailto:Sofharts@chris-jenn.net) or call/text 610-781-2074.

- ▶ Training and all the help you want will be given to you free of charge.
- ▶ CORI background checks need to be completed so please volunteer now to allow processing time.
- ▶ The Safe Church Policy is always followed in our Sunday School and Youth Program!

### *Welcome Back Sunday*

**Welcome back Sunday is September 7.** Please see the CE Committee article for all the details.

### *Celebrating Communion*

We will take time to explore why we share communion at church, make bread, and maybe even have a lesson in wine (grape juice) making or squishing grapes. This is traditionally for 4th Grade students - although Communion can be received by anyone at any age. If you have a child in 4th grade or older who is interested in the **Communion class on Saturday, November 1** and sharing Communion during the service on November 2, please reach out to Pastor Lee, Jennifer Hart, or any of the CE members, (they have the red name tags) with your young person's name and grade so that we can plan accordingly.

*Continued →*



If you have a younger child who is asking a lot of questions that you are not sure how to answer, maybe the two of you would also like to join us for the class or if you are young at heart and wonder please let us know.

For both of these exploration times, talk to your child about when and if they want to learn more. You can be in 12th grade, but still not have explored what it means for you to be a Christian or maybe you are the only 9th grader and want to ask someone younger to explore this with you, or 7th grade and feel like you are ready to look into this exploration time.

For the Communion Celebration, I know that we have a lot of boys in the age group that this church usually offers this class to, but maybe you did not have your child do it last year, it is not too late or maybe your child is younger, but is ready to know why we have grape juice and bread once a month. ***Please sign up.*** Once people are signed up we will plan times for these Exploration Opportunities.

I am so excited about the prospects of a new year of Faith Formation. I hope you want to be part of the fun and help “create faith-filled disciples, centered in God’s love!”



I look forward to seeing everyone on Welcome Back Sunday, September 7! It promises to be a packed day of fun new things!!

Blessings to each and every one of you,  
*Jennifer Hart*  
Sunday School Coordinator



## PRAYER MINISTRY



The CCC Prayer Ministry is here to walk alongside you in both joys and struggles, offering comfort and strength through the power of prayer.

When you share a request, our team of 20 prayer partners lifts it up to God with care and confidentiality; only those in the ministry and God know the details. Whether you’re facing illness, loss, a personal challenge, or simply need strength for the week ahead, know that you are not alone—your church family is praying with you.

If you would like prayer for yourself or a loved one, please contact Marcia Cassidy: [marciacassidy@comcast.net](mailto:marciacassidy@comcast.net). It is our privilege to hold you in prayer and remind you of God’s constant presence.

*Marcia Cassidy*



## CCC GIFT CARD MINISTRY



**The first time I met Roberta (not her real name)** was with Pastor Rich. She rang the church doorbell, and since I was still within my first two weeks of working here, Pastor Rich and I both went down to speak with her and offer a Market Basket gift card. Afterward, Pastor Rich shared some of the church's history with Roberta—a connection that goes back several years.

Since then, I've had the opportunity to speak with Roberta several times. She reminds me a bit of my eldest sister, who had a learning disability. Roberta often shares extreme stories—about hospitalizations, cancer diagnoses, muggings—though it's not always clear how much is fact and how much is fiction. Each time, she's accompanied by a man in a truck, though the nature of their relationship remains uncertain. I often leave these encounters with a lingering feeling that Roberta may be under someone's control or manipulation.

One morning, Roberta called tearfully, asking for a gift card. She told me it was her birthday and that no one had acknowledged it. As I prepared an envelope with the store card and a few inserts, I quickly made a birthday card and added a couple of puffy, soft felt hearts that were on my desk. When she received it, she was visibly pleased. A few weeks later, she called again—this time simply to say she was feeling sad and a bit scared about an upcoming doctor's appointment. I hope that my words that day brought her some comfort.

This ministry is about so much more than handing someone a \$50 gift card. Often, it's about offering a heart connection—an acknowledgment of someone's humanity, a reminder that they are not alone, and that God loves them.

**Thank you for continuing to support the Pastor Rich Gift Card Ministry. Many are being blessed through your generosity.**

*Peggy Kelly*

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

*Save the Date!*



We are planning an all-church dinner to celebrate the successful completion of the Capital Campaign building projects on **Saturday, October 25 starting at 6 pm.**

More details and a sign-up will follow. We hope to see you there!

*Christine Williams, chair; Val King, secretary, Jim Clark, Shirley Zachry and Kenny Pantuso*

## COUNCIL CORNER

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

#### *News from the August 13, 2025, Meeting*

- Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of June 30, the close of our fiscal year, the 2024-2025 total Income ended at 94% of budget. The pledge income shortfall was \$17,118 and the unpledged income ended at \$4234 below budgeted expectations, for a total of a \$21,352 pledge income shortage. Dick noted that this is unprecedented, and he hopes that 2025-2026 Stewardship pledges will reverse the troubling new trend. Total Expenses ended at 93% of the year's budget, so we do not have the surplus that we had expected and designated for the 2025-2026 budget, although some funds are expected to be incoming that will ameliorate this specific issue.
- Capital Campaign update: \$430,000 of the pledged \$443,000 has been collected so far, and the treasurers hope to receive the remaining Capital pledge fulfillments by the end of 2025.
- Dick Papenfuss recommended transferring the funds in several special accounts that have been inactive or have small balances. The Council approved moving the following: Benevolent Beaders Group (\$123), Confirmation Class Special Account (\$2.87), Pastor's Discretionary Fund (\$.64), and the Make a Difference Week Program (\$2.38) to the Rev. Richard Knight Gift Card Ministry. Also approved was the transfer of the Prayer Shawl Ministry Special Account (\$150.79) to the Women's Retreats Special Account; the Lewis Community Garden Account (\$423.26) to SAM for Open Pantry; and the Jean Neal Special Account (\$1100) to the Diaconate Good Samaritan Fund.
- The Technology Committee made a presentation to show the benefits of using Google Meet in place of Zoom for church meeting that are held virtually. Training in the use of Google Meet will be provided by members of the Tech Team in the coming months. The CCC license for a paid Zoom account is still active for the coming year and both platforms may be used by the church committees and boards for the time being. The Council approved the proposal to work toward transitioning from the use of the church Zoom account to the use of the free Google Meet service.
- The eight nominees to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee were unanimously approved by the Council. A Special Meeting of the Church Membership will be called to elect the following members of CCC to serve on this committee: April McCarthy, Barbara Reilly, Dorinda Toppan, Emmett Lyons, Glenn Dissinger, John Lamplough, Martha Chenault, and Susan Houde. A Warrant for the Special Meeting to be held on September 7, 2025, will be distributed to the congregation in the weeks between the Council meeting and September 7. The Pastoral Search Committee will be commissioned during the worship service on September 7, 2025.
- An electronic vote was held on June 26, 2025 (by email) to support Maddie Knight's request to use CCC facilities and grounds for a film project. The motion was approved by electronic voting with no objections.
- An electronic vote was held on June 29, 2025 (by email) to support the ONA Ministry Team request to sell refreshments at the 4th of July parade. The motion was approved by electronic voting with no objections.

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- The 150th anniversary of the founding of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford is upcoming in 2026! The official date of our organization is April 13, 1876. Events and celebrations will be held throughout the year. Council will create a special CCC 150 Committee; volunteers are invited to contact Lynn Horton.
- John Lamplough, Chair of the Transition Team, and Glenn Dissinger, made presentations of the Church Profile of CCC that will be submitted to the UCC to launch our public search for our next Pastor. A presentation will also be made by the Transition Team to the congregation in September. The draft of the Church Profile and/or the PowerPoint presentation are available from the Transition Team.
- The Capital Campaign committee would like to schedule a celebratory event this Fall to recognize the completion of the four Capital Campaign projects. A date will be set, and invitations will be sent. Volunteers are requested to help plan the event, please contact Christine Williams.
- A Community Yard Sale will be held as a fundraiser for CCC on Saturday, August 16 in Fellowship Hall. Thirteen tables have been reserved by sellers. The Naish Family will hold a bake sale to raise money for the Jimmy Fund, as previously approved by Council.
- A reminder to all committees to post their committee meeting dates and other activities on the church calendar.
- John Carson has learned from the Co-Op Director, Suzanne Dionne, that the preschool currently has seven openings in their Fall enrollment. Please spread the word to young families you know!

*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, September 10, 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



# WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

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

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<b>Conference Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.sneucc.org">www.sneucc.org</a>		



*The Beacon Newsletter, is prepared by and for the membership of Central Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. It is published monthly except for July and is distributed to members and friends of Central Congregational Church. This issue was emailed/mailed September 1, 2025.*