



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

VOLUME 70 NUMBER 10

November 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE



Lowell Transitional Living Center Donations

Throughout the month of November

Lunch with Lee

Sunday, November 2

11:30 AM | Java Room, 14 Little Rd, Chelmsford

CCC Movie Group

Mondays, November 10 & 24

7:00 PM | on Zoom

Gobble & Gratitude Potluck

Saturday, November 15

5:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

Interfaith Thanksgiving

Sunday, November 16

4:00 PM | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

421 Princeton Blvd, Lowell

KiSeLo (Kindness, Service, Love)

Wednesday, November 19

1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

CCC Holiday Fair

Saturday, November 22

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

Pub Theology

Sunday, November 23

7:00 PM – 110 Grill, 116 Chelmsford St, Chelmsford

Christmas Trees & Wreaths Sales

November 24: Delivery & unloading

Nov 28 Stand set up 9AM | Sales begin at noon

Secret Santa

Final Gift Collection: Dec 15

Lectio Divina Contemplative Gatherings

Sundays

8:45 AM | Room 302

Crocheters & Knitters

Tuesdays

10:30 AM | Parlor

Lunch Bunch

Tuesdays

11:45 AM | Room 202

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FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

Grateful Hearts and Open Hands

Dear friends,

As we move into November, our hearts turn naturally toward gratitude and preparation—toward Thanksgiving and the sacred season of Advent that follows. These weeks invite us to pause, to count our blessings, and to prepare room in our hearts for the One who comes among us as Emmanuel, “God with us.” But gratitude is not always easy. Around us, many neighbors are struggling—families facing rising costs, individuals uncertain about their next meal, elders feeling the chill of loneliness, and others who wonder how to keep hope alive in a difficult season. It can be hard to rejoice when we know that not everyone shares equally in life’s abundance.

And yet, this is exactly where our faith meets real life. Gratitude, at its truest, does not ignore pain—it transforms it. When we give thanks, we remember that all we have is a gift from God. And when we act out of that gratitude, we become part of God’s gift to the world. Scripture reminds us that thanksgiving and generosity are deeply intertwined:

“You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God.”

(2 CORINTHIANS 9:11)

As disciples of Christ, our call is not only to give thanks *for* blessings but to share them—so that others, too, may have reason to give thanks. When we offer food to the hungry, kindness to the lonely, and compassion to those who suffer, we reflect the heart of the One who came among us in humility and love.

As we prepare our homes and hearts for Thanksgiving, and as Advent approaches with its promise of hope and light, may we live with *grateful hearts and open hands*. Set an extra place at your table. Donate to the food pantry. Offer a listening ear or a prayer. Each small act of kindness becomes a candle of hope in someone’s darkness.

May this season draw us deeper into the spirit of Christ—the One who came to feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowing, and remind us that love is never meant to be hoarded, but shared.

With gratitude and grace,



Rev. Lee Atherton



OFFICE UPDATE

BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Thursday, November 20** for the December 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.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- Nov 2** Searching and Being Found and Communion Sunday
- Nov 9** The Dark Night of the Soul
- Nov 16** Infinite Possibilities
- Nov 23** Giving Thanks Together in Christ
- Nov 30** Sacred Time and First Sunday of Advent

SEEKING CREATIVE HELP

Visual Arts for Advent and Christmas

Do you enjoy decorating? Does our worship space nourish your heart, mind, and soul? Would you like to see our sanctuary come to life as we *Reflect the Sacred*?

Worship Design Studio offers wonderful ideas and resources for bringing this theme to life in and around our sanctuary. We just need someone to help implement them. Please let Pastor Lee know you'd like to help.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

LOWELL TRANSITIONAL LIVING CENTER

SAM will be sponsoring the Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC) for the month of November 2025.

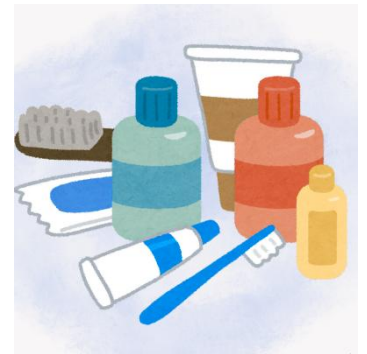


LTLC, located on Middlesex Street in Lowell, is an emergency shelter that provides 24-hour staff support for unaccompanied adults experiencing homelessness. In addition to emergency shelter, LTLC provides meals, showers, clothing, personal hygiene items, and case management with referrals to community-based resources including medical and behavioral health services. Case managers work with clients to develop a housing plan to identify housing opportunities, employment placement, access to benefits and crisis intervention.

The Winter Emergency Bed Program (WEBP) which operates solely on donations is an additional LTLC program that runs from November to April and provides additional capacity during the coldest months of the year with 30 cots, access to showers, laundry, and meals, as well as outreach and engagement services.

There will be a donation box in the church narthex for the month of November. Please consider donating some of these much-needed items:

- **Hygiene items:**
deodorant, razors, shaving cream, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, body lotion, shampoo, conditioner, feminine hygiene products, alcohol-free wipes/sanitizers, and ChapStick.
- **Adult sized clothing: new socks/underwear**
- **New or gently used, sizes XL- XXXL clean winter clothing:** gloves, mittens, hats, jackets, sweatshirts and sweatpants. Jackets and sweatshirts are the most needed items and are claimed as soon as they are donated. (Unfortunately, LTLC has very little storage space and they cannot accept warm weather clothing at this time.)
- **Bedding and towels:** new or gently used wash cloths, bath and hand towels, twin sheets and light weight blankets.



Thank you for your continued support!

Wendy Piacenza

winstlex@comcast.net

CCC MOVIE GROUP

Mondays | November 10 & 24 | 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, 11/10 – “Sergeant York” (1941) The film follows the true life of Alvin Callum York. Born in rural Tennessee and raised in the mountains, Alvin learned to shoot guns when he was a boy, becoming an expert with both a pistol and rifle before his teens. Influenced by his high school girlfriend (and future wife) Gracie Williams, he also became a devout born-again Christian and gave up the drinking, brawling, smoking, gambling, and bare-knuckle fighting that marked his early days. When the US declared war on Germany

in April 1917, York was drafted into the army where he sought exemption as a conscientious objector but was turned down. Inducted into the 328th Infantry Regiment on November 24, 1917, he distinguished himself in basic training until he was ordered to shoot at human forms on the target range. After days of soul-searching, York reconciled himself to military service and completed his training, and his unit sailed to France the following spring. His regiment was assigned to the Meuse-Argonne salient during the final great Allied offensive from September to the war's end on November 11, 1918. On October 8, 1918, York, then a corporal, was part of a company assigned to attack a heavily defended hill near Chatel-Chehery. Pinned down by intense machine-gun fire, York joined a squad of 17 men that attempted to outflank the German position from the rear of the hill. After capturing 20 German soldiers, the Americans were discovered by other German troops in neighboring trenches, who opened fire on them. Within minutes the squad was down to seven unwounded men, York included. The squad's officers and NCOs had all been killed or wounded, meaning that York was now in charge of the squad's survivors. With a rifle and pistol, he reached a point near the occupied German trenches that were firing on his squad and subdued them. The surviving Germans surrendered to York. He was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his amazing feat. At the end of the war he returned to Tennessee, married Gracie, and settled on a farm presented to him by his home state. The modest hero turned down many offers for endorsements, claiming "this uniform ain't for sale," and used the proceeds from the book and movie of his life to establish schools for poor mountain children. Directed by Howard Hawks, the movie stars Gary Cooper as Alvin C. York, Joan Leslie as Gracie Williams, Walter Brennan as Pastor Rosier Pile, and as Rosie York, June Lockhart, who died October 23 at the age of 100.



Monday, 11/24 – “Something’s Gotta Give” (2003) American romantic comedy-drama film written, produced, and directed by Nancy Meyers that explores themes of love and relationships, particularly a love triangle involving a wealthy music executive and his younger girlfriend's mother. It stars Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton as professionals who find love for each other in later life, despite being complete opposites. Keanu Reeves and Amanda Peet co-star, with Frances McDormand and Jon Favreau playing key supporting roles. The film received

positive reviews for its humor and performances; Diane Keaton was nominated for her 4th Best Actress Academy Award and won the Golden Globe award for that category. Keaton, who died October 11 at the age of

79, revealed in her 2011 memoir “Then Again” which film from her decades-long career held the top spot in her heart – “Something’s Gotta Give.” She admitted she initially believed the movie was destined to fail, but it ultimately became “my favorite film.” She explained the reason why, citing a happy memory of shooting a love scene with Nicholson on the film and the great surprise she got when a check "with a lot of zeros arrived in the mail for my back-end percentage." She later found out that the extra money came courtesy of Nicholson, who had given her a piece of his percentage from the movie's gross. Keaton had a soft spot for the “Father of the Bride” movies as well, which were also written and directed by Nancy Meyers.

KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

Wednesday, November 19 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall



Now that all the ghosts and goblins are done collecting their candy, and we have all finished eating the extra candy, we can look forward to the approaching holiday season.

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, KiSeLo will be meeting on the third Wednesday, November 19 at 1:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

After the business meeting and refreshments served by the hostesses, the program will include making a holiday craft and/or writing special messages in Christmas cards to be sent to the troops overseas.

Open Pantry Support

The monthly donation for the Open Pantry is canned meat or any other non-perishable food.



Toys for Tots has distributed 708 million toys to 314 million children since 1947. KiSeLo is proud to have donated to Toys for Tots for several years. Once again, we are asking members to bring in new unwrapped toys on **November 19**.

*“Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things”*

PSALM 107:8-9

Wishing you all a very happy Thanksgiving.

Karen Banakos



CHRISTMAS TREE SEASON...

is right around the corner!



It is hard to believe that we are just a few weeks away from the Christmas trees and wreaths arriving. Christmas trees are scheduled to be delivered before Thanksgiving, on **Monday, November 24**. We will be looking for many people to help unload the truck. We will keep you informed of more details of the delivery time when it is firmed up.

We will set up the stand on **Friday, November 28** at 9:00 a.m. Sales will begin at noon that day and continue through December 23 or until we are sold out.

We will need people to help unload the trees when they arrive, to set up the stand, and especially volunteers to take shifts to sell the trees and wreaths. A sign-up will be available online (it will be published in the weekly emails soon), a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall starting Sunday, November 2, or you can talk to Glenn or Margie Dissinger (or email margie228@gmail.com). Please check your calendars now and plan to sign up for a couple of shifts to sell trees!

As you all know this is a major fundraiser for the church and ***we need everyone to help*** to make this a successful one! Watch your weekly emails for information and updates.

Glenn & Margie Dissinger, Co-chairs

LECTIO DIVINA: QUIET SCRIPTURE, DEEP PEACE

Sundays | 8:45-9:30 AM | Room 302

Before worship each Sunday, join us for a gentle time of prayerful Bible reading. In this simple practice, we read a short passage several times, listen for how God is speaking, and—only if you wish—share a few words with the group. Come as you are, come when you can. Coffee welcome, materials provided. *Call Pastor Lee for more information.*



ROOTED IN BECOMING

Friday, November 14 | 5:30 PM

Come Hungry, Leave Grateful

You're invited to our next *Rooted in Becoming* community event—**Gobble and Gratitude**—on **Friday, November 14 at 5:30 PM**.

Bring any dish to share and bring a friend for an evening of food, laughter, and thankfulness. Whether you're known for a family recipe or simply love to sample what others bring, everyone belongs at this table of gratitude.

Our last gathering around the campfire—with baked apples, cheese s'mores, and the classic CCC s'mores—sparked warmth and connection. Now we're keeping that spirit alive as *Rooted in Becoming* continues to grow beyond Sunday mornings into shared moments of community. As Psalm 100 reminds us, *"Serve God with gladness; come into God's presence with singing."*

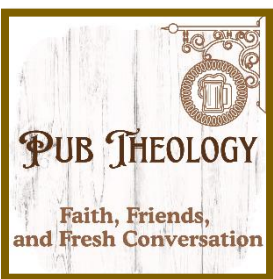


If you'd like to help plan this or future events, come see me or Pastor Lee. Your ideas and energy help this ministry keep growing strong.

Jennifer Hart

PUB THEOLOGY

Where Faith Meets Conversation



Our first **Pub Theology** gathering was a wonderful success! Eight folks came together for great conversation, laughter, and a refreshing time of honest sharing about life and faith. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped create such a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Pub Theology is a relaxed space to explore meaningful questions about life, faith, and community—no preaching, no pressure, just good conversation over good food and drink. Everyone is welcome, whether you're a church member, a member of the community, or simply curious about how faith connects with everyday life.

Our next gathering will be **Sunday, November 23, 7:00 PM at the 110 Grille in Chelmsford** - and we'd love to see even more folks join us. Bring a friend, bring your questions, and bring your open mind! Come ready for a conversation that's both thought-provoking and fun.

All are welcome—really!

ANNUAL CCC HOLIDAY FAIR

Saturday, November 22 | Fellowship Hall | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

This is it! The BIG DAY is coming up in just a few weeks! Our major church fundraiser needs YOU!!

There are may be ways you can participate in the Fair – before, during, and after November 22!

Before the Fair:

Donations are requested for every area of the Fair!



Silent Auction – Gift Baskets, art pieces, unique items, gifts cards to restaurants/museums/stores, sports memorabilia, theater tickets, goods and services – the sky's the limit on ideas for this year's Silent Auction! Contact Lynn Horton or Marcia Cassidy to arrange for your auction donation before November 19, if possible, so we can prepare the bid sheets! Sign-ups will be in Coffee Hour on November 2, 9, and 16.

Bake Sale Table – Homemade baked goods and sweet treats are always a favorite at the Fair! Brownies, cookies, breads, bars, muffins, cupcakes, Chex mix, sugared pecans, dipped pretzels, caramel popcorn, candied apples, and pies! Bring to the church on Friday, November 21 or before 9:00 am on Saturday. Please mark with allergens (nuts, etc.) or a note if gluten-free. Contact Dory Toppan or sign up in Coffee Hour on Sundays in November!

CCC Apple Pies! Hurray! The delicious smell of apple and cinnamon will return to CCC when we bake pies in our new kitchen! You can volunteer to help peel, pare, chop, and mix the apples! Roll out pie crust! Use the new church oven to bake the pies! Clean up the shiny new counters and wash the utensils! It's a great morning of fun and fellowship – Friday, September 21 at 9:00 am in the kitchen. Feel free to bring your favorite knife! Contact Therese Burdo or Christine McNamara or sign up in Coffee Hour!

Jewelry Table – Beth, Merri, and Judith, the vintage jewelry table workers, are ready to polish and price

your jewelry donations! As you clean out your jewelry box, please remember to donate unbroken treasures to the ladies at Coffee Hour, or leave them in the church office by November 16. Thank you very much! This table is the first one the “early birds” flock to when the doors open on Fair day!

Craft Table – The CCC Crafters Group has been meeting all year to create craft items to sell at the Fair. Perhaps you have been crafting, too, at home! Please bring your crafts to church by November 15 so the Crafters can organize and price the items. Knitted pieces, Christmas ornaments, playthings, woodcrafts, etc. – your hand-crafted creations will be a welcome addition to the Fair! Please bring your items to Karen Papenfuss by November 15, thank you!

Media and More Room – This is the area of the Fair that offers books (children's books are especially wanted!), puzzles, games, and current movie and music formats – no VHS tapes or music cassettes, please. Also, no toys or ride-on vehicles – Save these items for the next CCC Yard Sale. The God Squad has traditionally run this room – thanks for donating great items for them to sell! Please bring your donations to the church stage between Sunday, November 16 and Friday, November 21.

Christmas Room – If it's “Christmasy,” this is the room for it! Please bring Christmas items in good condition to the church and leave on the stage

between Sunday, November 16 and Friday, November 21.

Bags – We always need bags for shoppers to carry home their Fair purchases! Please leave shopping bags on the stage during the week of November 16-21.

During the Fair



Come shop!! You are our most reliable customer base! Bring a friend! A neighbor! Your family! This is a wonderful event for the community! Bring others and let them experience the warm CCC welcome!

Work at a Table! Each area of the Fair needs volunteers to smile and sell goods! You can staff a table or room of your choice, or you can volunteer to be assigned to a location. Sign-ups for Fair workers will be held in Fellowship Hall during the month of November during Coffee Hour or contact Lynn Horton.

Have Lunch! Hopefully, we will have a Lunch Café this year. (See below.) Come to shop, stay for lunch, then shop some more!

After the Fair

Bonus Shopping Day! Sunday, November 23 during Coffee Hour will be your extra chance to shop! No promises as to what the selection will be, but there are often Baked Goods, Crafts, and some Silent Auction items that did not receive bids during the Fair on Saturday. A few of the Specialty Vendors may be available as well!

Clean Up Crew – On both days, clean up teams are needed to help pack up and put away the Fair tables, chairs, and various bins and boxes. Sign up during November during Sunday Coffee Hour or just show up at 2:00 on Saturday and/or noon on Sunday!

Set Up Crew – The transformation of Fellowship Hall into a Holiday Fair showplace begins at 6:00 pm on Thursday, November 20. We will set up tables, hang signs, and bring stored bins over from 9 Worthen. Sign up during Coffee Hour!

Visit a Specialty Vendor! We will have Dick Papenfuss and his “Pappy’s Pens,” Amy Provencal with her charming vintage collection, Paul Sampson’s “Wooden It Be Nice” pieces, and Keith Moore’s leather goods.

Support the Sunday School Kids! The small ones of CCC have big hearts! Proceeds from their table of hand-painted pottery Christmas ornaments and other kid-made crafts will be 50% donated to Heifer International and 50% to The Open Pantry.

Fun Activities for the Kids, too! There will be a table for activities to entertain the children while their adults shop. Look for the special area at the back of Fellowship Hall.



Holiday Fair Special Request

Are you the person who will organize and run our **Lunch Café** this year? Past menus have included (but are not limited) to sandwiches, chowder, chili, hot dogs, chips, and beverages. You may be the “kitchen magician” we are looking for! Please contact Lynn Horton ASAP! Thank you!

Can't come to the Fair?

Can't come to the Fair and want to support our goal to raise \$6500 for the church budget? Cash donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated! Checks may be made out to CCC with “Fair Donation” in the memo line. Mail to the church office (1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA, 01824) or give to Lynn Horton. Thank you!!

Questions? Ready to sign up? Have a donation that needs to be picked up?

Contact Lynn Horton, Your Fair Chair, at Lynn@terpsoft.com (978) 256-8524.
THANK YOU!!!!



SECRET SANTA 2025



Hello from your Social Action & Mission Committee! We are happy to report that the 2025 Secret Santa Mission is underway.

The Chelmsford Housing Authority families are working on their wish lists. Once received, they will be converted onto the church website's online sign up page. We hope to have that working around mid-November. In-person sign up help at coffee hour will be offered in late November and early December.

Final gift collection is tentatively December 15. Thank you for providing holiday joy to 28 local children. More updates to follow.

Sincerely,

Your Social Action & Mission Committee with Cindy Bruetsch & Julie Carney



The poster is framed by a decorative border of autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red. At the top, a horizontal branch with leaves spans the width. The main title is centered in red, with 'ANNUAL INTERFAITH' and 'THANKSGIVING' in a bold, sans-serif font, and 'Gathering' in a large, elegant script font. Two single leaves flank the word 'Gathering'. Below this, the theme is written in a black serif font. A central illustration shows three pumpkins of various sizes surrounded by autumn leaves and small berries. The date and time are printed in a bold, black sans-serif font. Below that, a line of text mentions donations for the Open Pantry with a URL. The location is listed under the heading 'In Person:'. The Zoom information is under 'Via Zoom:'. The sponsor is at the bottom. A circular logo for GLILA is at the bottom center, featuring various religious symbols.

**ANNUAL INTERFAITH
THANKSGIVING
*Gathering***

Theme: "...and yet we will give thanks."



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025
4:00 PM**

Donations for the Open Pantry will be gratefully accepted
<https://theopenpantry.org/>

In Person: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:
421 Princeton Blvd, Lowell, MA 01851
(Accessible Venue)

Via Zoom: For the Zoom link, contact: Imogene_Stulken@uml.edu

Sponsored by GLILA (Greater Lowell Interfaith Leadership Alliance)



UPDATES

PASTOR RICH GIFT CARD MINISTRY

Funds are Running Low



Central Congregational Church has always supported people in need. One of the ways the congregation has directly helped individuals with food insecurity is through the giving of Market Basket gift cards. Over the years, Pastor John, Pastor Rich, and now Pastor Lee, have met with people who come to our church door seeking help. When a pastor is not available, Peggy Kelly or Linn Flint have handed the gift cards to the person. In all cases, a face-to-face interaction and a warm, understanding contact is made.

The gift cards are purchased through the Diaconate Good Samaritan Fund and more recently through the Pastor Rich Gift Card Ministry, which was established to honor his wish that any memorial gifts in excess of those needed to purchase the bench in his memory be used toward providing gift cards to persons in need. **Currently, the balance in the fund is only enough to last through December.** Without your continued donations, CCC will be unable to assist others through this vital ministry.

In the spirit of gratitude for all that we have as a congregation, will you please consider a Thanksgiving season donation to ensure the continued availability of gift cards for people who need to buy food? Checks can be made payable to CCC, with “RK Gift Card Ministry” in the memo line and placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office, 1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA, 01824.

Thank you for your generosity.

Lynn Horton, CCC Deacon



RENTAL SPACES AVAILABLE AT CCC

CCC has a variety of spaces that are available to rent. Our facilities are perfect for music or dance recitals, hobby group meetings, classes, community group meetings, weddings, birthday parties, large family gatherings, and memorial services.

For-profit, non-profit, and member rates are available. More information may be found on our website: <https://www.cccchelmsford.org/about-us/renting-our-facilities/>. There is also an online Rental Inquiry Form on the website page.

Please contact the church office (office.admin@cccchelmsford.org or call 978-256-5931) for more information or [click here complete the online Rental Inquiry Form](#).

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

November seems to be the beginning of outreach - we think about reaching out to family and friends with holiday greetings, getting cards and stamps ready to go. Organizations and groups start collecting food to put together meal baskets and toys so that children have gifts. The children and youth of Central Congregational Church love to give to others as they learn about God and Jesus and who they want to be. This is all part of the journey to be Rooted in Becoming, to become the best person God knows we can each be as beloved children of God.

- **We will have a Communion Celebration on November 2.** A lot of children will stay in worship that day to take part.
- **November 9 is our Fall Hike at the Thanksgiving Forest.** Families will gather at 40 Janet Road in Chelmsford at 10:00 AM to hike, have a snack, and be done around 11:00 AM.
- **November 30 is the Advent Festival** – This is an all-church potluck with crafts galore! It is always fun to see new crafts and know that we can create our advent wreath for home and create a new orange and clove.



Help Wanted

CCC needs at least one new Sunday School Teacher. You can set your schedule with your grade level team members.

Openings are:

- **Nursery Coordinator** - be a welcoming face for our youngest friends!
- **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 another.
- **People willing to substitute** or be a floater are always welcome!

Please reach out to me at 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 will need to be completed, so please volunteer NOW!!! The Safe Church Policy is always followed in our Sunday School and Youth Program.

Jennifer Hart

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS FOR “REFLECTING THE SACRED”

As we journey through this holy season, we invite you to help our church family connect in meaningful ways. We’re forming small groups for Advent and Christmas — gatherings where we can share stories, reflect on scripture, and discover the sacred in our everyday lives. We’d love to have a handful of groups meeting at different days and times — some in homes, others at the church. No experience is needed! A simple leadership guide is provided, so anyone can host or facilitate.

If you’re interested in leading or opening your home for a group, please reach out to Pastor Lee. Together, let’s make this a season of connection, reflection, and sacred wonder.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BUILDING COMMITTEE

We now have completed everything on the long list of Campaign building projects for inside and outside the church, as well as others necessitated by additional Board of Health requirements, unforeseen broken or rusted and leaking pipes, plus inconveniently located ledge and huge boulders.

Thanks to generous gifts from the Buchanan family and our next-door neighbor the Chelmsford Dental Associates, we were able to undertake numerous additional projects: refurbishing the pews in the sanctuary (a major one), recarpeting the parlor, new shades for the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, new quartz countertops and stainless cabinets, and granite curbing along Carson Park and the Central Co-Op Nursery School playground.

We held an all-church dinner on October 25 to celebrate these achievements and thank all of you for helping with your time and labor, monetary contributions, patience, and support. The Capital Campaign Committee that Council appointed had an excellent combination of skills and rapport to pull off a long and complicated undertaking. Many thanks to team members Val King, Jim Clark, Shirley Zachry, and Kenny Pantuso.

Please note that we still have a few bills to pay and a project wish list that includes suggestions from some of you to recarpet the Fellowship Hall ramp to the back door and to replace the kitchen freezer unit. Thus, the pledges that finish up December 31 are much needed. Sue Sarafinas will be following up with folks so that we can balance and close the books - and hope we’re finished for another 10 or 15 years!

Christine Williams, Chair



FALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Make A Difference Day – Fall 2025

Sunny Sunday, October 26 was a beautiful day to be outdoors making a difference in God's world! Our volunteer crews were small but mighty for this year's fall clean ups.

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was cleared of litter from Golden Cove Road to the Chelmsford Center for the Arts by Lisa Gibson and Lynn Horton. Grabbers in hand, they snagged bottles and cans that were clean enough to be recycled, and various pieces of trash and debris that marred the view along the trail. Many cyclists and passersby said, "Thank You!" as well as a man who called out from his balcony!

The Walter F. Lewis Community Garden at Sunny Meadow Farm was "put to bed" for the winter by five able-bodied CCC volunteers. There was no mulch or hay to spread this year, but there were plenty of weeds to pull! Community Garden organizer Lee Williams shared this message:

Thank you to Arthur, Will, Steve, Maddie, and Sabina for helping to clean up the "food pantry plot" at the Community Garden! They cleared out the old plants, stacked up the tomato cages, and dug up many weeds. They are such cheerful and willing workers! They made a big job go quickly and a lot more fun! We are so grateful to the Central Congregational Church for starting this garden ministry and for continuing to support the effort to provide fresh vegetables for our neighbors in need.

- The gardeners at Sunny Meadow Community Garden



Thank you for continuing the MADD tradition that Pastor Rich Knight began at CCC in his first months with us! It is good to be out and visible in Chelmsford, and to Make a Difference in these two treasured town assets that originated with CCC members Bruce and Daphne Freeman and Walter and Betty Lewis. We are proud to maintain their legacy. Join us for the next Make A Difference Day in the Spring!

~Lynn Horton

ADVENT

reflecting the sacred

“The Christ mirror fully knows and loves us from all eternity, and reflects that image back to us.”
— Richard Rohr, The Universal Christ

PREPARING FOR THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Introducing Our Advent/Christmas theme, “*Reflecting the Sacred*” by Worship Design Studio

As we look ahead to the season of Advent and the celebration of Christmas, we are invited to embark on a rich and deep journey of reflection as we join with Worship Design Studio worshippers around the world, “**Reflecting the Sacred.**” Drawing on this new series we are encouraged to see, in unexpected places and everyday moments, the presence of God — the sacred hidden within the ordinary, the holy embedded in the mundane.

In a world that often divides life into the “sacred” and the “secular,” this Advent/Christmas season invites us to blur that boundary. Worship Design Studio description puts it this way: “*The Christmas season is a time when the juxtaposition of the sacred and secular feels sometimes blatantly opposed, and sometimes quite blurred. This year, you are invited to a spiritual journey of seeing ALL things pregnant with the Holy.*”

Our theme invites us to notice that the sacred is not only found in our worship services, but also in our kitchens, in our gatherings, in our waiting and anticipating, in our brokenness, and in our celebrations. For our congregation, this is particularly resonant: the big and small moments of our lives — the grief and hope, the service and rest, the waiting of Advent and the joy of Christmas — all hold space for God’s presence.

What This Will Look Like in Our Life Together

Here’s how “Reflecting the Sacred” will guide our journey this season:

- **Weekly focus:** During each week of Advent, we will explore a different way the “sacred” shows up in our lives. We’ll weave scripture, reflective practices, and community conversation into our time together.
- **Worship experience:** Our liturgy, music, visuals (we hope!), children’s message, and even our gathering spaces will invite a fresh awareness of the everyday as holy.
- **Personal reflection:** We will encourage everyone — children, youth, adults — to practice noticing sacredness in daily life. Perhaps it’s a moment of breath, a tree in winter, a conversation with a neighbor, a memory of longing, or a flash of joy. These all become doorways to the Divine.

- **Community and individual engagement:** There are many ways we will gather as a community and ways you are invited to reflect as a family or on your own as we ponder the sacred in our lives.

See other articles in this edition of the Beacon for ways to be involved; and watch the Tuesday announcements for ongoing updates and opportunities to prepare and celebrate the Birth of Jesus.

Reach out to Pastor Lee with any questions, reflections, and thoughts you have along our journey together.

As we light the first Advent candle, may we open ourselves to the holy in the hum of life. As we sing the carols and hear the story of the Christ-child, may we remember that the sacred didn't just arrive once in history — it quietly arrives again each moment, each day, when we turn our attention and our hearts. Let us journey together this season, marked by wonder and awareness, service and stillness, expectation and encounter.

May we *reflect the sacred* in what we do, what we are, and who we become.

Blessings on this Advent season of transformation and hope!

With gratitude and anticipation.

ANOINTING: A SACRED BEGINNING TO ADVENT

On the **first Sunday of Advent**, we will begin our season of *Reflecting the Sacred* with a simple **ritual of anointing**. Throughout scripture, anointing with oil marks holy moments—times of healing, calling, blessing, and preparation. It is a reminder that God's presence is not distant, but close and tender; that we are set apart for love, service, and hope. As we light the first candle of Advent, this anointing will help us open our hearts to God's renewing Spirit, readying us to notice the sacred that shimmers in our ordinary lives.

If you are **worshipping from home or unable to join us in person**, please let us know so that we may **include you in this blessing**—whether with oil or lotion you have at home, a vial of oil you may pick up from the office, or a prayer shared from afar.

Let this Advent begin with the gentle touch of grace and the assurance that we all belong to the sacred story unfolding among us.



WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

In a season that often races toward consumption, perfection, and surface-hustle, “Reflecting the Sacred” offers a counter-rhythm. It invites us to **pause**, to **see**, to **be present** — to glimpse Emmanuel, “God with us,” not just in the manger, but in every breath, every waiting space, every ordinary encounter.

Especially considering our community’s mission — rooted in healing, hope, service — this theme aligns beautifully. We know that transformation happens when the sacred meets the everyday — when service dogs offer presence, when stories of grief become stories of resurrection, when we hold hands in brokenness and rise together in hope.

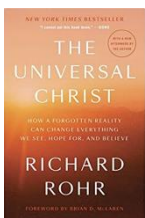
OTHER WAYS YOU CAN BRING MEANING TO THE ADVENT SEASON

Reflecting the Sacred, A Companion Journal for Advent

As we enter this season of *Reflecting the Sacred*, we invite you to take time each week to pause, pray, and notice God’s presence in your everyday life. We’ve created a **Printable Advent Devotional Journal** — a companion for your personal reflections throughout the season. The journal includes thoughtful prompts for each week of Advent, as well as **Christmas Day** and **New Year’s Day**, guiding you to explore where the sacred is shimmering in your own story. You may **request a PDF copy** by emailing **Peggy**, or **ask for a printed version** if you prefer. We kindly encourage you to consider our environmental footprint and printing costs when making your choice. May this simple tool help you slow down, breathe deeply, and reflect on the sacredness that surrounds us this Advent and Christmas season.

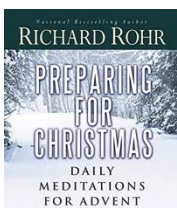
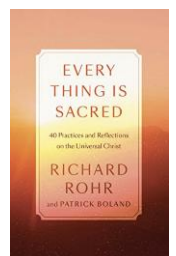
PERSONAL DEVOTIONS AND REFLECTION

As a companion to *Reflecting the Sacred*, you might choose to read one of the following books.



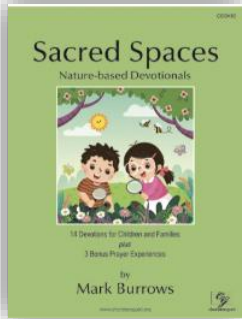
The Universal Christ is Rohr’s theology steeped in an incarnational worldview. Drawing on scripture, history, and spiritual practice, Rohr articulates a transformative view of Jesus Christ as a portrait of God’s constant, unfolding work in the world.

Every Thing is Sacred, is a companion to *The Universal Christ*. Richard Rohr and Patrick Boland, offer 40 reflections and practices exploring what it means to live “In Christ.”



For daily reading, Richard Rohr wrote a book of devotions for Advent and Christmas several years ago called *Preparing for Christmas*. Concepts of his book *The Universal Christ* are evident in this book.

For Our Children



Children's expert, Mark Burrows, wrote a resource called Sacred Spaces that invites children to connect with treasures of nature to experience a sense of the sacred reflected there. The theme of "Time, People, Space, Knowing, Being, and Doing" will offer wonderful ways for children to engage their natural "wonderer" skills for seeing ordinary things as extraordinary reflections.

PRAYER MINISTRY



If you believe in the power of prayer and would like to participate in this ministry of our church, or if you would like to offer up a person or situation about which you would like for members to join you in prayer, please contact Marcia Cassidy: marciacassidy@comcast.net.

Submitted by Shirley Zachry

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

COUNCIL CORNER

A Monthly Update on the Activity of the CCC Council

News from the October 8, 2025 Meeting:

- Assistant Treasurer Margie Dissinger reported that our budget year-to-date benchmark is 25%. September pledge income is close to budget at 23%. Unpledged income remains below prediction. Co-Op rent payments have resumed after their summer break and that will improve our income line. Expenditures are mostly in line with budget expectations. Payroll is on target. Boiler maintenance bills were higher than expected due to repairs and maintenance tasks. It is suggested that we increase our boiler expense line for next year. Electricity costs are 51%, which is significantly higher than projected but it may be due to some unusual accounting practices. Dick has been communicating with the new electricity company, Perch Energy. In summary, our total expenses to date are 23% (\$84,913) and our total income is 21% (\$77,808). The upcoming Holiday Fair and Christmas trees sales should help strengthen the income balance.
- Our Safe Church Policies and Procedures document has been reviewed by the Trustees. They have made some changes based on insurance company requirements. The Council voted unanimously to adopt these updates, effective immediately.
- A Safe Church Task Force has been formed to further review the Safe Church Policies and Procedures: Bonnie McGrath, Safe Church Advocate, Jennifer Delikat, Trustee and past Safe Church Advocate, Jennifer Hart, Sunday School Coordinator, and Lynn Horton, Council Chair and Deacon, with input from Pastor Lee Atherton and Samantha Shields, Christian Education Committee Chair.
- The Trustees and Council continue to work toward establishing cost-saving measures and practices for copier use. Please minimize use of color copying whenever possible.
- Cynthia Dorman from the Sanctuary Committee discussed the challenges with arranging greeters every week for church services. She asked committee representatives to speak to their respective committees to ask for volunteers for greeters. It would be nice to have a variety of new and long-term church members serve as greeters. Members of the congregation are invited to sign up to be Sunday greeters as well.
- Council Vice President Glenn Dissinger will follow through on a recommendation that came out of the meetings with Coach Becky. To enhance communication between the church committees and the Council, Glenn will visit one committee a month at their regularly scheduled meeting. This will include Trustees, Diaconate, CE, Music, SAM, and House. He will be reaching out to chairs to learn when would be a good time to attend each committee.
- Christine Williams reported that the RSVPs for the Capital Campaign Celebration Dinner on October 25 have been slow. She has responses from about 50 people. This event will be catered by Bianco Catering and there will be no cost to attendees.
- 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. Pat Vondal, Church Historian, is working on a theatrical presentation of highlights of our church history. Volunteers are invited to join a special CCC 150 Committee: contact Lynn Horton or Val King.

- John Carson reported there was a fuel leak from the Open Pantry truck parked in our lot. It was cleaned up but the resulting soft spot in the pavement will need to be patched. Please keep an eye on the parking lot and notify the Trustees or the House Committee of any issues so they can be addressed immediately.
- A reminder to all committees to post their committee meeting dates and other activities on the church calendar, and to submit Council reports to Peggy no later than 8:00 am on the Tuesday before the Council Zoom. Thank you!

Excerpts from the CCC Constitution – Article VII - Council

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

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 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 (978) 256-8524

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

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

Interim Pastor:	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 Coordinator:	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	jennifer.hart@cccchelmsford.org
Custodian:	Juarez Gomes		
Church Address:	One Worthen Street	Chelmsford, MA	01824
Church Phone:	978-256-5931		
Church e-mail:	Office.admin@cccchelmsford.org		
Church Website:	cccchelmsford.org		
Conference Website:	www.sneucc.org		

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