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## CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in CHELMSFORD

United Church of Christ

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

VOLUME 71 NUMBER 2

February 2026

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### COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

#### **Lunch with Lee**

Sunday, February 1

12:00 PM | Java Room, 14 Littleton Rd, Chelmsford

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

Sundays

8:45 AM | Room 302

#### **A Bead & A Prayer Workshop**

Saturday, February 7

12:00-3:00 PM | Room 302

#### **Crocheters & Knitters**

Tuesdays

10:30 AM | Parlor

#### **Slurp & Slam**

Saturday, February 7

5:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

#### **Lunch Bunch**

Tuesdays

11:45 AM | Room 202

#### **Open Pantry Fundraiser – Valentine’s Dinner Dance**

Saturday, February 14

6:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

#### **CCC Movie Group**

Mondays, February 9 & 23

7:00 PM | on Zoom

#### **Ash Wednesday Service**

Wed. Feb. 18 | 6:00 PM

#### **Special Concert – Philip Lima & Tudor Bota**

Sunday, February 22

3:00 PM | Sanctuary

#### **KiSeLo (Kindness, Service, Love)**

Wednesday, February 25

12:30 PM | Fellowship Hall



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# FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

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It's Sunday morning. The snow has started, and already my road is covered. Everything looks new and fresh; quieter somehow. Hopefully by the time you read this, you and I will be all shoveled out and safely on the other side of the storm.

I heard someone call this "the storm of the century" and another person "a once-in-a-lifetime storm."

It stretches more than 2000 miles and covers close to two-thirds of the country. I'm not sure what it will turn out to be, but it sure is BIG!

BIG – much like the headlines of Greenland, Gaza, ICE actions in Minneapolis, acts of violence and loss that stop us in our tracks.

BIG – like the feelings swirling among us; hope and fear, conviction and confusion rallying cries and deep longing for justice and peace.

BIG – like the response of clergy, some of whom I know and love, who dropped everything to go stand with colleagues in Minneapolis, compelled by conscience and care.

BIG – like the prayers on our hearts.

The United Church of Christ has long understood faith not as something we keep private, but as something we live out — together. We are a covenantal church, bound not by uniformity of belief, but by a shared commitment to love, justice, and the ongoing work of God in the world. Our history reminds us that when the world feels heavy, the church does not retreat — it shows up.

Now, I am not here to be political, though our faith has never been a quiet bystander. I am here to ask for your BIGness.

BIG hearts that make room for one another.

BIG listening in a time of loud voices.

BIG courage to speak up when silence would wound.

BIG compassion for neighbors we know — and those we may never meet.

When the storms around us feel overwhelming, our faith reminds us that we do not stand alone. We stand in covenant — with God, with one another, and with a wider church committed to being a witness for hope, justice, and peace.

May we continue to be the church — open and affirming, rooted in love, and willing to show up, even when it's uncomfortable.

Even — and especially — when the storm is BIG.

With hope and gratitude,



Rev. Lee Atherton



# OFFICE UPDATE

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## BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Monday, February 23** for the March edition.

*Margie Dissinger*  
*Interim 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.

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

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## 2025 CALENDAR YEAR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

The 2025 Contribution Statements are being sent out via email. Click on the pdf file. If you don't see one this week, or if you would like a paper copy, please contact Sue Sarafinas at 617-480-9130 (leave a message if I don't recognize your number) or [4sueth@gmail.com](mailto:4sueth@gmail.com).

## LUNCH WITH LEE!: PULL UP A CHAIR

Ever wish there were time to just talk—about faith, life, the news, questions you're carrying, or whatever's been sitting in the back of your mind?

Lunch With Lee is exactly that. No agenda. No prep. No pressure. Just a relaxed, come-as-you-are conversation over lunch with Pastor Lee and others from our church community.

We gather at noon on the first Sunday of each month (this month at the Java Room), and the conversation goes wherever the people at the table take it. Some months it's thoughtful. Some months it's light and laughter-filled.

Often it's a little of both. You're welcome to bring your questions, your stories, or simply yourself. If you've never come before—or if it's been a while—consider this your invitation to pull up a chair. Even one lunch can be a meaningful way to connect.

We'd love to see you.




## LENT & HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### Lent & Holy Week 2026: Journey to the Cross



**Our Lenten Journey Begins**

 Feb 7: Prayer Bead Workshop | 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
Feb 18: Ash Wednesday Service | 6:00 PM  
Followed by our weekly Lenten Prayer Group

Date	The Lenten Sundays	Service & Events
Feb 22	Mar 1  10:00 AM Worship	  10:00 AM Worship
Mar 1	Mar 8 11:30 AM Prayer Group	11:30 AM Prayer Group
Mar 8	Mar 15  3:00 PM Concert	  3:00 PM Concert
Mar 22	Mar 22	

### Holy Week & Easter Celebration

 **March 29: Palm Sunday**  
10:00 AM: Worship & Palm Parade  
11:15: Easter Egg Hunt (Carson Park)  
3:00: Easter Concert

April 2: Maundy Thursday | 6:00 PM  
 6:00 PM: Passover Dinner  
Worship Service 

**April 5: EASTER SUNDAY!**  
*Christ the Lord is Risen!*

 6:00 AM **SUNRISE SERVICE** (Carson Park)  
10:00 AM **EASTER CELEBRATION** (Sanctuary) 

## A BEAD & A PRAYER: A LENTEN WORKSHOP & RETREAT

Lent invites us to slow down, to notice, and to make space for prayer that reaches not just our minds, but our hearts and bodies as well.

On Saturday, February 7th from noon–4:00 p.m. in Room 302, you are invited to A Bead and a Prayer, a hands-on workshop/retreat exploring the practice of Protestant prayer beads. This gentle Lenten experience combines reflection, creativity, and prayer as participants learn about the meaning behind the beads—and then create their own set to use throughout Lent and beyond.

Prayer beads offer a simple, tactile way to stay present in prayer, especially for those who find their minds wander or who long for a quieter, more embodied spiritual practice. Using color, touch, and repetition, prayer becomes something we can hold, return to, and carry with us.

This retreat will include time for learning, making, silence, guided prayer, and shared reflection.

Whether you are seeking a deeper Lenten practice, a creative spiritual experience, or a peaceful afternoon set apart, *A Bead and a Prayer* offers a meaningful way to listen for God's presence—one bead, one breath, one prayer at a time.

Cost is \$10; sign up [here](#).



## LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES: OUR LENTEN THEME

Lent begins with an honest question: Where are we looking for love?

This year, our Lenten worship theme—Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places, from Worship Design Studio—invites us to examine the places we turn when we are longing for meaning, security, belonging, or worth. Too often, we search for love in approval, productivity, certainty, power, or perfection—only to find ourselves still restless, still wanting more.

Throughout Lent, we'll explore scripture stories that gently (and sometimes uncomfortably) reveal our misplaced hopes, while also pointing us back to a deeper truth: God's love is already present, already offered, already enough. This is not a season for shame, but for clarity. Not a journey of self-punishment, but an invitation to reorient our hearts.

Week by week, worship will help us name what distracts us, drains us, or promises more than it can give—and to rediscover the steady, grounding love of God that meets us exactly where we are. If you've ever felt worn out from striving, unsure where to turn, or quietly wondering if there's more than this, Lent offers a path forward. Come walk with us this season as we release what cannot hold us and learn, again and again, where love truly lives.

## EXPLORING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: COME, LEARN, CONNECT



What does it really mean to belong to a church community?

If you're curious about church membership—or simply want to learn more about Central Congregational Church—you're invited to join us for two informal sessions exploring what it means to become a member and a voting participant in the life of our church.

Together, we'll talk about who we are as a congregation, what we believe, and how decisions are made. You'll learn about our groups, committees, and activities, and discover the many ways people share their gifts and passions here. Just as importantly, we'll spend time building fellowship and community—getting to know one another and asking honest questions in a relaxed setting.

These sessions are for anyone who is new, anyone who's been around for a while but never formally joined, or anyone who simply wants a deeper connection to this community. There's no pressure to join—just an open invitation to explore, learn, and connect.

Come see if this might be the place you want to call your spiritual home.

12:45 on Sunday February 8th & 15th (hybrid).

Folks will formally be welcomed into the church on Sunday, March 1st during worship.



## SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSION (SAM)

Each February, SAM brings attention to the ongoing crisis of food insecurity. The safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community continues to weaken. The recent government shutdown and loss of SNAP benefits highlighted just how fragile food access has become for thousands of families.

While the immediate crisis has eased in recent weeks, the need remains urgent:

- The Brown Bag program, which delivered food to elderly and disabled neighbors, has been lost.
- Grant funding is more competitive than ever.
- Private donations must now fill the gap left by reduced federal support.
- Over the next year, an estimated 10,000 people in Massachusetts will lose SNAP benefits, along with HIP and fuel assistance, while thousands more will see their benefits reduced.
- Food pantries are deeply concerned about their ability to meet this growing demand.
- Another government shutdown remains a very real possibility.

Thank You for all your support!

## PRAYING TOGETHER THIS LENT: A PRAYER BEADS GROUP PRAYING TOGETHER THIS LENT: A PRAYER BEADS GROUP

This Lent, you are invited to continue the journey begun in *A Bead and a Prayer* through a weekly prayer group grounded in simplicity, reflection, and shared practice.

Using the prayer beads we created together, this group will gather for gentle, guided prayer shaped by the book *'We Are Beloved: A Lenten Journey'* by Kristen Vincent. Each week, we'll move slowly through prayer, scripture, and reflection—listening for God's presence and reminding one another of a truth we often forget: we are beloved.

Prayer beads offer a tactile, calming way to stay present, especially when words feel hard to find or minds tend to wander. Combined with the reflections from *We Are Beloved*, this practice creates space for quiet, honesty, and grace in the midst of a busy season.

You don't need to be an expert in prayer, and you don't need to speak unless you wish to. Come as you are—curious, tired, hopeful, or unsure. This group is meant to be a place of grounding, connection, and gentle companionship on the Lenten path.

If you are longing for a deeper prayer practice, a steady rhythm during Lent, or simply a place to breathe and be reminded that you are not alone, you are warmly invited to join us. Cost is \$14; sign up [HERE](#).



## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

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

February is when CCC's Stewardship Committee develops the annual Stewardship Campaign by choosing a theme and writing a letter that will be sent to the congregation to solicit financial pledges for the next fiscal year. The Campaign and resulting pledge commitments are vitally important because they allow the Church Council, Treasurer, and other church committees to plan and budget for the year ahead. We are a strong, active congregation that responds generously with pledges of support, which is truly appreciated by all who benefit. This has been a constant, especially with the challenges we have faced over the past year. So, this year, let's be thoughtful and act prayerfully for 2026-2027!

This year's Stewardship Campaign will start in February with online pledging and will run through late March. Letters will be mailed to members and friends of CCC by early March and we ask that pledge cards be returned not later than the end of March. During the Campaign we will be sharing more about stewardship and how the church's many activities and programs impact both our congregation and our larger community. Stay tuned - you won't want to miss it!

In thinking about stewardship, while it is financial support; it is also about sharing our time and talents. Through all the gifts that we give to CCC, we can make a real difference in the world.

Thank you for your consideration and God Bless,

*Stewardship Committee - Cynthia Dorman, Becky Wisniewski, Wim Nijenberg, Steve Hartigan, Sandy Lamplough, and Dick Papenfuss*

## BUILDING COMMUNITY – ROOTED IN BECOMING

**Saturday, February 7 | 5:30 PM**

### ***Slurp & Slam***

In February we will have a "Slurp and Slam" (Slurp - I need some volunteers to make and bring some soup and/or chili to share, and Slam as in a poetry Slam.) Please bring an original or a favorite poem to share with the group. These activities are Welcoming Events for Everyone!

If you can bring a soup or chili please call or text Jennifer Hart at 610-781-2074 or email me at [SofHarts@chris-jenn.net](mailto:SofHarts@chris-jenn.net)

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*



## VALENTINE'S DINNER DANCE 2026



Join Us for the 2026 Open Your Hearts Valentine's Dinner & Dance!

The Open Pantry of Greater Lowell, a long-standing community organization dedicated to relieving hunger and providing vital food assistance to individuals and families in our region, is excited to announce its 2026 Open Your Hearts Dinner & Dance! The Open Pantry has been serving the Greater Lowell community since 1981, helping neighbors access nutritious food and essential support with dignity and care.

**Date: February 14, 2026**

**Time: 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM**

**Location: Central Congregational Church,  
1 Worthen St, Chelmsford, MA**

This special Valentine's Day fundraiser is open to everyone—singles, couples, families, and friends—and will feature:

A delicious dinner, music and dancing, raffle prizes, a silent auction,  
a chance to support a meaningful cause!

All proceeds help support The Open Pantry's mission to relieve hunger and strengthen food security in our community. Your participation not only promises a fun and festive evening, but also directly contributes to feeding neighbors in need throughout Greater Lowell.

To purchase tickets scan the QR Code or go to the website <https://theopenpantry.org/2026-open-your-hearts/>



Tickets are \$45/person or Table of 4/\$175 or Table of 6/\$260

On the website you will find the menu and auction item and other information.



## CONCERT: WINTERREISE | FEB 22 | 3:00 PM



"I like these songs better than all the (600!) others I've written, and someday you will too." This is how Franz Schubert—composer of the wedding- and funeral-favorite *Ave Maria*—described his *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*) to his closest friends.

Through 24 hauntingly beautiful songs, *Winterreise* follows a broken-hearted wanderer across a bleak winter landscape, witnessing a cathartic emotional journey of rejection, illusion, and isolation, arriving at a fragile recognition of the human need for connection.

Join baritone Philip Lima and pianist Tudor Bota for a performance of Schubert's *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*) on February 22nd at 3 p.m. at Central Congregational Church of Chelmsford.

A freewill offering will be taken, benefitting The Open Pantry of Greater Lowell. A reception in Fellowship Hall follows the concert.

## CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP IN CHELMSFORD!

On January 26, 1876, a resolute group of 20 Chelmsford Center residents got together to bring back Congregational worship with these words:

*"That after careful thought and consideration, we, who are shut out of certain church privileges, do now deem it expedient to send for letters of dismissal and recommendation to the several churches of which we are now members, for the purpose of forming ourselves into a church to be called the Central Congregational Church of Chelmsford."*

**Who were these 20 people that were responsible for building a community of fellow worshippers that grew and grew into the church we treasure today?** They were farmers, a general store proprietor, a civil war veteran, community volunteers, husbands, wives, daughters, single people....united by a common faith and determination. And they succeeded! To celebrate our church and honor these founders CCC will hold a series of events between now through the month of April. Everyone will have a chance to meet the "gang of 20" in Fellowship Hall this April during a reenactment of events 150 years ago.

**Please** join our **very small** committee to help us plan these events, offer ideas for events we haven't thought of, and to stage our reenactment! We seek people from the Holy Cows, the God Squad, as well as adults to have fun playing small roles for this capstone event. The reenactment will also serve as the kickoff event to bring back the CCC Players! Please contact **Val King** (valking@comcast.net) or **Pat Vondal** (pvondal32@gmail.com). **Thank you!**



## KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

**Wednesday, February 25 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall**



KiSeLo meets for 9 months of the year and here we are already at month 6 with only 2 months left until May when we end our year with our banquet. As the author and happiness expert Gretchen Rubin popularized “the days are long, but the years are short”. Gosh, don’t we find that true?

February gives us Groundhog Day, Valentine’s Day, President’s Day, and our trip to the Butterfly Place!



We will meet February 25th in the Fellowship Hall at 12:30 pm. After a short business meeting we will carpool over to the Butterfly Place in Westford. Senior (65+) rate is \$9.00 per person and non-senior rate is \$15.00 per person. All ladies of the church are welcome.

We continue our service with our Open Pantry donation of non-sugared cereal.

On a sad note, we are all mourning the loss of our Vice-President, Beth Jarok. Beth was a KiSeLo member for many years and her loss is felt by each and every one of us. May she find peace in knowing how much she is loved and missed.

In honor of Valentine’s Day, I share the following Bible verse: “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Wishing you peace and joy this February.

Karen Banakos

## LISTENING FOR THE WORD: LECTIO DIVINA ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

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

What if we slowed down long enough to listen—really listen—to the scripture for the day?

Each Sunday at 8:45 a.m., a small group gathers for Lectio Divina, an ancient and gentle practice of praying with scripture. Together, we read the day’s passage slowly, listen for a word or phrase that catches our attention, and share what we’re hearing and wondering—without debate, pressure, or the need to have the “right” answer.

Week after week, these quiet moments have led to unexpected ah-ha moments: a familiar passage sounding new, a phrase speaking directly to something happening in our lives, a deeper sense that God is still speaking in the midst of our everyday stories.

You don’t need any experience, preparation, or biblical expertise—just a willingness to pause and be present. Come for one week or make it part of your rhythm. Whether you’re seeking depth, calm, or fresh insight before worship, you are warmly invited.

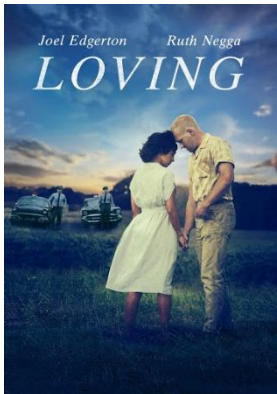
Join us Sundays at 8:45 a.m. and see what the Word might have to say—just for you.



## CCC MOVIE GROUP

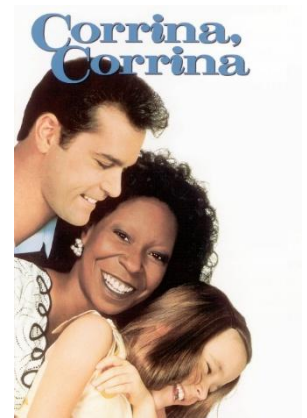
**Mondays | February 9 & 23 | 7:00 PM | Zoom**

### February Movie Group



**Monday, 2/9 – “Loving” (2016)** A biographical romantic drama film inspired by the documentary “The Loving Story” about Richard and Mildred Loving, the plaintiffs in the 1967 US case decision *Loving v. Virginia*, which invalidated state laws prohibiting interracial marriage. Ruth Negga and Joel Edgerton co-star as Mildred and Richard Loving, with Marton Csokas, Nick Kroll, and Michael Shannon in supporting roles. Following a screening of “Loving”, producer Peter Saraf held an open Q&A discussion with the audience, in which he touched on such topics as the film's historical authenticity, in which he described the film as true to life: “Richard Loving was indeed as stoic as Edgerton portrays him; the small rural Virginia community in which they lived was (and is) highly racially integrated; Mildred Loving really did write directly to Robert Kennedy, and her letter is still in the Kennedy collection; and the Lovings' lawyer really did, per Richard's request, relay his words before the Supreme Court that “I love my wife.”

**Monday, 2/23 – “Corrina, Corrina” (1994)** American comedy-drama film set in the Los Angeles suburbs of the 1950s about a widower (Ray Liotta) who hires a housekeeper/nanny (Whoopi Goldberg) to care for his daughter (Tina Majorino). When Manny Singer's wife dies, his young daughter Molly becomes mute and withdrawn. To help cope with looking after her, he hires sassy housekeeper Corrina Washington, who coaxes Molly out of her shell and shows father and daughter a whole new way of life. Manny and Corrina's friendship delights Molly but the interracial relationship troubles other townspeople. This was Don Ameche's final film before his death on December 6, 1993, at age 85. He completed his scenes as Grandpa Harry Singer shortly before he died.



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.

Contact Lynn Horton for the Zoom link, if you have questions, or if you have difficulty accessing the movies!

## WHAT I WISH....

Recently, Pastor Lee guided several of us through the often tender—but deeply meaningful—work of planning our own funerals. While that may sound daunting at first, the experience opened space for thoughtful reflection, honest conversation, and even a sense of peace.

Following that gathering, Pastor Lee has continued to lead us through conversations around the *Five Wishes*—a comprehensive, easy-to-use advance directive. *Five Wishes* helps individuals express not only their medical preferences, but also their personal, emotional, and spiritual wishes for the end of life.

Together, we’ve been exploring each of the five wishes, creating space to ask questions, share stories, and reflect on what matters most to us and to those we love. These conversations are not about fear or finality,



but about love, clarity, and care—offering a gift to ourselves and to those who may one day walk alongside us in vulnerable moments.

If you were not able to participate in these conversations—or if this is something you would like to do on your own—you can still do yours. Pastor Lee welcomes meeting with anyone who would like help thinking through their own unique wishes and documenting them clearly for loved ones.

Planning ahead can be an act of grace. It allows our values to be known, our voices to be heard, and our loved ones to be spared uncertainty. We are grateful for the thoughtful guidance and compassionate leadership that has made these conversations possible.

## UPDATES

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### PRAYER MINISTRY

The CCC Prayer Ministry is here to walk with you through every season of life—celebrating moments of joy and offering comfort and strength during times of struggle. When you share a prayer request, it is held with care, respect, and confidentiality and lifted to God by our dedicated team of 20 prayer partners. Only the prayer ministry and God know the details.



Whether you are facing illness, grief, uncertainty, or simply seeking strength for the days ahead, you don't have to carry it alone. Your church family is praying alongside you.

If you would like prayer for yourself or someone you love, please contact Marcia Cassidy at [marciacassidy@comcast.net](mailto:marciacassidy@comcast.net). It is truly our privilege to pray for you and to remind you of God's constant, loving presence.

### GINNIE HALL MEAL MINISTRY

To request a meal, or to offer to make and deliver a meal, please contact Merri Robison, 978-937-5403 or [meredithrobison@comcast.net](mailto:meredithrobison@comcast.net). The Ginnie Hall Meal Ministry is a service of KiSeLo.

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



## COUNCIL CORNER

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

#### *News from the January 14, 2026, meeting:*

- Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of December 31 we are 50% of the way through our fiscal year. Total pledge income year-to-date is still right on target at 51%. Unpledged income is at 44%. Our total income as of December 31 is ahead of budget at 53%. The Holiday Fair income (\$6723) has exceeded the \$6000 budgeted, the new Winter Craft Fair and Festival raised \$627, and the Christmas trees and wreaths fundraiser came in close to the \$8000 budgeted at \$7850. Margie Dissinger highlighted the generous gift from Boyle Electric that allowed members of the community to receive a free tree. Total expenditures YTD are at 46%. We are in a good fiscal position as we head into the new year.
- Two additional financial reports: The Capital Campaign has come to the conclusion of pledge payments. Of the \$292,500 originally pledged, \$278,000 has been submitted. In addition, we received extra gifts that brought the Campaign total to \$439,000. Social Action and Missions (SAM) will receive 15% of the funds over \$300,000, as we planned at the beginning of the Campaign. Secondly, there has been an increase in the number of people using PayPal for CCC fundraisers, and some church members use this payment method to submit their stewardship pledge. There was discussion by the Council regarding the fees that are deducted from the payments by PayPal. It can be a significant amount for a large transaction.
- Pastor Lee was notified by a local clergy member that Level 3 sex offender had been attending their Chelmsford house of worship without identifying his status and had exhibited behavior that made an adult female uncomfortable. Pastor Lee brought this matter to the attention of CCC leaders immediately. The members of Council voted to prioritize keeping our congregation safe and will ask the individual to leave if he comes to worship services or other activities. A new task force will draft a section for the Safe Church Policy that addresses this kind of issue. Members of the task force are Deacon Joe Chapman, chair, Pastor Lee, Bonnie McGrath, Safe Church Advocate, Sam Shields, CE chair, and Peter White, Moderator and DEMM leader.
- Dick Papenfuss and Lynn Horton are updating the Church Cancellation Policy. Input will be sought from the people who are involved with making the decision to cancel worship due to weather or other reasons.
- The members of Council voted unanimously to support Lucas Hart in his application to attend the UCC and Disciples of Christ Youth Leadership Symposium. Council Chair Lynn Horton will write a letter of recommendation to the Symposium organizers.
- Kelly Hargett, Coffee Hour coordinator, has requested that a team be organized to share the responsibility of overseeing coffee hour each Sunday. This will allow the members of the congregation to focus their hosting duties on the food for coffee hour; the new team will be in charge of making coffee. Council voted unanimously in favor of establishing the new Coffee Hour Team.
- In addition to allowing the Open Pantry to park their truck in our lot, CCC will be providing storage space for overflow quantities of donated food items. There is space for temporary storage of canned goods in the closet at the back of Fellowship Hall.
- Interim Office Administrator Margie Dissinger has created unique codes for copier use by individual church committees. This new practice will begin in February and will help track color copying usage.

#### ***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*



*Diakonate, 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, February 11, 2026, 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.**

<b>Interim Pastor:</b>	Rev. Lee Atherton	508-308-7116	<a href="mailto:pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org">pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Director of Music:</b>	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	<a href="mailto:tudorbota@gmail.com">tudorbota@gmail.com</a>
<b>Interim Office Administrator:</b>	Margie Dissinger	978-256-5931	<a href="mailto:office.admin@cccchelmsford.org">office.admin@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Sunday School Coordinator:</b>	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	<a href="mailto:jennifer.hart@cccchelmsford.org">jennifer.hart@cccchelmsford.org</a>
<b>Custodian:</b>	Juarez Gomes		
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<b>Church Website:</b>	<a href="http://cccchelmsford.org">cccchelmsford.org</a>		
<b>Conference Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.sneucc.org">www.sneucc.org</a>		

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