



THE BEACON

CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*A worshiping, praying, learning,
caring, outreaching community*

CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in CHELMSFORD

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

VOLUME 71 NUMBER 3

March 2026

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Potluck & Game Night

Saturday, March 7
5:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

Holy Week Walk

Sunday, March 22
11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

KiSeLo (Kindness, Service, Love)

Wednesday, March 25
1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

Kids Club

Friday, March 28
6:30-7:30 PM | Fellowship Hall

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, March 29
11:30 AM | Carson Park

Easter Concert

Sunday, March 29
3:00 PM | Sanctuary

A Feast of Love Dinner

Mar 30 | 12:00 PM
Mar 30 | 6:00 PM
Mar 31 | 6:00 PM

Easter Vigil

Sat Apr 4 | 6:00 PM – Sun Apr 5 | 6:00 AM

Lectio Divina Contemplative Gatherings

Sundays
8:45 AM | Room 302

We Are Beloved – A Lenten Journey

Sundays during Lent
11:30 AM | Room 202 & Zoom

Crocheters & Knitters

Tuesdays
10:30 AM | Parlor

Lunch Bunch

Tuesdays
11:45 AM | Room 202

CCC Movie Group

Mondays, March 9 & 23
7:00 PM | on Zoom

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FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

Finding Winter Chills to Spring Brilliance

As I sit at my desk today, the world outside is a canvas of blinding white snow. A February blizzard is in full swing, turning the familiar landscape into a swirling mystery. It's the kind of day that makes you want to hunker down and wait for spring to arrive.

But in the church calendar, we are already deep into Lent, our season of preparation and reflection. This year, we've been playing with the Scrabble theme from Worship Design Studio—looking at how the letters of our lives, often scrambled and confusing, can be rearranged by God into a message of love.

We've all heard that "April showers bring May flowers". But as I watch the snow pile up (in the places I've already shoveled. Twice!), I'm thinking: February blizzards bring March... Brilliance. Think about it. The snow provides the deep moisture the earth needs to wake up; it's a season of hidden preparation—much like Lent itself. While the world outside looks white and cold, God is actually setting the board for what comes next. And in these quiet, frozen moments, the Holy Spirit is busy rearranging the "tiles" of our lives. Just like the Scrabble pieces we've been reflecting on in worship are being gathered and sorted, so too are the individual "flakes" of our individual and community experience. Even when we feel scattered by the wind, God is moving us into place, preparing us to spell out a story of love that the world desperately needs to read.

While it's cold outside, our hearts are warm from the incredible momentum we've shared lately:

- ♥ Love in Action: Our Valentine's Dance wasn't just a night of great music and dancing; it was a wonderful act of service. The funds raised for Open Pantry ensure that our neighbors have food on their tables, proving that love is a verb, not just a feeling.
- ♥ The Beauty of the Journey: We recently hosted a breathtaking performance of Schubert's Die Winterreise (The Winter Journey). On the surface, it's a cycle about a lonely wanderer in the cold. But where is the hope? The hope lies in the persistence of the journey itself. Even in the depths of winter, the singer keeps walking, keeps feeling, and keeps seeking connection.

In Scrabble, a "blank" tile can be anything you need it to be. In Lent, we often feel like that blank tile—unsure of our place or empty of energy. But when placed in the hands of the Creator, we become the crucial link that completes the word L-O-V-E.

The blizzard's snow outside will melt. The "Winter Journey" eventually ends in the warmth of home.

As we move through March, let's look for the ways God is rearranging our "scrambled" moments into a story of hope and love – for ourselves and for the world.

See you in the pews (where it's much warmer!),

With hope and gratitude,



Rev. Lee Atherton

OFFICE UPDATE

BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Monday, March 25** for the April 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

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



SUN Mar 29	PALM SUNDAY Palm Sunday Service 10:00 AM Sanctuary EASTER EGG HUNT 11:45 AM Carson Park EASTER CONCERT When Love Came Down 3:00 PM Sanctuary
MON Mar 30	A FEAST OF LOVE DINNER 12:00 PM Home of Val King 6:00 PM Home of Deb & Elmer Lyons
TUE Mar 31	A FEAST OF LOVE DINNER 6:00 PM Home of Glenn & Margie Dissinger
THURS Apr 3	MAUNDY THURSDAY Maundy Thursday Seder 6:30 PM Fellowship Hall
SAT Apr 4	PRAYER VIGIL Saturday, March 30 6:00 PM to Easter Sunday 6:00 AM
SUN Apr 5	RESURRECTION SUNDAY Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 AM Carson Park Easter Service 10:00 AM Sanctuary

EASTER VIGIL

Sat, April 4, 6:00 PM until 6:00 AM Easter Morning

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

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSION (SAM)

Give with love in your heart!

The month of March has been selected by the UCC to highlight One Great Hour of Sharing. This is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response.

UCC asks its members to send a “love offering to the world” by supporting One Great Hour of Sharing. A love offering is a gift that honors others. The scriptures remind us to honor the blessings we have received from God by giving cheerfully to others in need.

‘Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver’. 2 Corinthians (9:7 (NIV)

EASTER FLOWERS

We will be taking orders for Easter lilies and tulips on March 15 & 22 in Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$20 each.



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

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

~Sue Sarafinas, Sanctuary Committee

WHO TO CALL

A few years ago Pastor Rich and the Deacons started a program called “Who To Call”. This is a list of members who might live alone or don't have family in the area. The list has the phone number of a close friend or family member that the church could contact in case of an emergency. The Deacons will be in Fellowship Hall at Coffee Hour for a couple of Sundays in March so members can check the list to see if it needs to be updated. Also anyone else who would like to be put on the list can fill out an information slip.

Margie Dissinger for the Deacons

MARCH IS STEWARDSHIP MONTH – 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.

Our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is "There Our Hearts Will Be." On Sunday, March 8, Cynthia Dorman will present the Stewardship campaign for this year to the congregation. We will be presenting to the congregation the idea that where your treasure is, your heart will also be there. Think of what we love about CCC - the use of its beautiful facilities for gathering and worship, and its people for our ministry and mission to spread God's love. Our annual Stewardship campaign commitments help fund not only what we love, but the ongoing vital church operations and missions that we support.

Last year's Stewardship campaign was successful, but still had some challenges. Both the Music and Christian Educations (CE) committees were not funded due to the lack of pledge income and were limited to a 2% wage increase for staff. In addition, SAM funding was reduced. We are asking everyone to look into their hearts and consider increasing your pledge, helping us to fund CE, Music and increase our giving to SAM, as well as a 3% wage increase.

Think of all of the times our hearts were at CCC this past year and the recent Valentine Dinner and Dance benefit for Open Pantry. With your generosity we can ensure that we continue to place our hearts in God's hands.

In mid-March you will be receiving this year's Stewardship campaign appeal letter along with a pledge card. Please give prayerful consideration to increasing your pledge and return your pledge card as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration and God Bless,

CCC Stewardship Committee,

Cynthia Dorman, Becky Wisniewski, Wim Nijenberg, Stephen Hartigan, Sandra Lamplough, and Dick Papenfuss

CHRIST IN THE PASSOVER: A MAUNDY THURSDAY SEDER EXPERIENCE



On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus gathered with his disciples in an upper room to celebrate the Passover—a meal steeped in the story of liberation and God's faithfulness. This year, we invite you to step into that story with us. Join us on Maundy Thursday for a unique Seder experience. Together, we will explore the deep connections between the ancient rituals of the Exodus and the life and sacrifice of Jesus.

What to Expect

This will be an interactive journey through history and faith. Our evening will be guided by Pastor Lee, in collaboration with two of our own church members who bring a rich personal and historical understanding of Jewish tradition, Barbara Reilly and Martha Chenault.

- ✠ **The Rituals:** We will engage in the traditional elements of the Seder, exploring the symbolism of the 'Seder plate' and the storytelling (Haggadah) that has sustained the Jewish people for millennia.
- ✠ **The Flavors:** You will have the opportunity to taste the traditional foods—from the bitterness of the herbs to the sweetness of the charoset—and learn the profound meanings behind each one.

- ✝ **The Music:** We will raise our voices in an ancient song of deliverance, connecting us to the generations of faithful who have sung for freedom.
- ✝ **The Table of Grace:** Our meal will culminate in the celebration of Holy Communion, as we transition from the Passover lamb of the Old Testament to the “Lamb of God” who died for us.

Event Details

When: Maundy Thursday, April 2

Time: 6:30pm

Where: Fellowship Hall

RSVP: Please sign up [here](#) or email the office by March 29 so we can prepare enough places at the table.

Whether you have celebrated many Seders or this is your very first time, we welcome you to pull up a chair. Come discover how the “Old, Old Story” continues to speak to us today.

THE DIGITAL SOUL

Subtitle: The Loneliness of the Connected: Why 1,000 Digital Friends Can't Replace One Table

We live in an age of incredible connection. With a tap and a swipe, we can instantly share our lives, celebrate milestones, and commiserate with friends, family, and even strangers across the globe. Our phones have become extensions of ourselves, buzzing with a constant stream of information, entertainment, and affirmation. We have more ‘friends’ and ‘followers’ than ever before, yet beneath the surface, a quiet question often lingers: Are we truly more connected, or just more alone in a crowded digital room?

This isn't an anti-tech rant; it's an invitation to ponder. Our digital lives are rich and often wonderful, but they operate on a different frequency than the real world. A ‘like’ is not a hug. A comment thread is not a heartfelt conversation over a shared meal. Scrolling through a perfectly curated feed, we can sometimes feel a subtle pressure to present an equally perfect life, creating a distance even among those we care about.

There's a unique, irreplaceable magic that happens when people gather around a table. It's in the shared laughter, the spontaneous stories, and the quiet comfort of simply being present with one another. It's in the eye contact that truly listens, the empathy that requires no emoji, and the deep understanding we find when we put our screens down and truly look at the person across from us. This kind of connection nourishes something deep within us – a fundamental human need to belong, to be seen, and to be heard, not just by an avatar, but by a living, breathing soul.

We believe that exploring important questions together can be incredibly enriching for everyone. No matter your beliefs, your background, or what you scroll through on your phone, you have a valuable perspective to share.

PUB THEOLOGY

Join us for Pub Theology on March 21st at 6:30 PM at the 110 Grill. This is an open table for open minds, a chance to swap stories, share thoughts, and connect in a real way over good food and drink.

Bring your friends, bring your questions, and let's explore what it means to truly connect in our wonderfully complex world.

A WORD FROM YOUR CCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As we speed toward the Annual Meeting of Central Congregational Church, to be held following worship on Sunday, May 17, 2026, the members of your friendly CCC Nominating Committee – Lynn, Dory, Deb, and Elizabeth – invite you to consider the many opportunities for committee involvement at CCC! If you are currently serving on a committee, thank you! The terms of service for each committee member are listed in the 2024-2025 Annual Report. If your term of service is ending in 2026, please consider “going around again,” or making a switch to try a different committee! If you have not been a part of a church committee don’t miss out on this great opportunity for working together with others to facilitate and promote the good works of CCC! We can help match you with just the right committee for your skill set and interests! And if you don’t call us, we’ll call you!

Thank you very much!

Lynn Horton, Nominating Chair

HAPPY MARCH FROM YOUR CE COMMITTEE!

Happy March from your CE Committee! It has been a long and cold winter, so any thaw is welcome. March brings us into the season of Lent, something that our Sunday Schools take quite seriously. We usually do a significant project during the month of Lent that is focused on the scriptures that surround the Easter story. As around 1/3 of the Gospels are devoted to the events of Holy Week, we like to dig into the details and the traditions of these scriptures throughout the liturgical season.



This year, the pre-K and early elementary classes will focus on Palm Sunday, and the older elementary classes will focus on the Last Supper. The Middle School class will focus on the other days of Holy Week and will lead the overall vision of the **Holy Week Walk** that we will present at Coffee Hour on **March 22**.

March 29th (Palm Sunday), if the weather allows, will be the **Easter Egg Hunt** in Carson Park, which is led by the High School and Middle Schoolers for the younger students.



In January, the Holy Cows went bowling in Lowell and had a great time. The Confirmand class visited the Chelmsford Unitarian Church on Martin Luther King Day, where they were able to participate in a beautiful **a cappella** gospel singing experience and were allowed to ring the church bells. The Unitarians have an old church bell that requires some real body weight and focus to get going—it was a team effort for our Confirmands. The Unitarians could not have been more welcoming.

The Confirmands have also been meeting with Pastor Lee, Mr. Lyons, and Ms. Bonnie to create an actual cross and discuss our faith tradition and how it connects to their own lives. Much of the Confirmation process has, however, been taking place between the Confirmands and their mentors. What a blessing to have church members who are willing to work with our youth and share their own faith journey. Sadly, we had to postpone the Confirmand trip to Christ Jubilee Church in Lowell, but we are hoping to be able to attend there in the spring.

The Kids Club, the “youth group” for the 4th grade and under, has been active this winter where they have been leaders in collecting food for the food pantry. Kids club will meet on **Friday, March 28th, from 6:30-7:30 in Fellowship Hall**.

The God Squad, the high school youth group, is hoping to make a trip to Boston in the coming weeks.

As you see in Jennifer's letter, we will be hosting a **Make a Difference Week, August 24–28**. It is a very exciting time for the church, and there are many ways for people to get involved. All CORI-checked adults and older youth are encouraged to volunteer to help plan and lead for some or all of the week, and younger youth are encouraged to join and bring their friends. The focus is on service and will be welcoming to all. It should be a fun experience—we have an amazing church, and it is exciting to share that with our community.

Wishing you all a meaningful Lent and joyous Easter.

HAPPY 150TH BIRTHDAY TO CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH!

What were your ancestors doing 150 years ago? Our “church” ancestors were very proudly starting a church here in Chelmsford! It's an exciting story about a group of like-minded men and women who decided that they needed a church for them that followed their religious beliefs and gave them a church home to worship in. In honor of that special date, April 26, 1876, we will celebrate Central Congregational Church's 150th birthday.

There will be two days of activities. On Saturday April 25th 2026 from 3 – 5:30 pm we will have our first celebration in our Fellowship Hall. This will be a theatrical production that depicts highlights of the events leading to the formation of our church.

We need a few more actors (adults and youth for small parts) to help fill out the roster of our theatrical team led by Sandra Gibson and Pat Vondal. We will also provide an opportunity for people to contribute messages or small items to be placed in a time capsule that will be opened at our 175th anniversary 25 years from now ! We will have a display of historical artifacts and documents related to our church history and a timeline project.

On Sunday April 26th there will be special recognition of our anniversary during our church service with a children's message, recognition of important individuals and invited guests, and of course a coffee hour with a really big birthday cake and some balloons for all to celebrate and remember this date.

For additional information please reach out to Val King 978-846-1120 who can answer your questions or put you in contact with another CCC Anniversary committee member.

LOVE LOOKS FOR US: A FEAST OF LOVE

As we move through the season of Lent, we are preparing for the most sacred week of the Christian year. This Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday), we are stepping out of the sanctuary and into one another's lives for “A Feast of Love”.

Inspired by our Lenten theme of Love, these intimate small-group dinners will be a reminder that even in the shadows of the Passion, Love is actively seeking us out. We invite you to pull up a chair, share a meal, and experience the heart of the Gospel in community.

The Details

- ❖ **When:** Various dates and times from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday.
- ❖ **Where:** Church members' homes.
- ❖ **The Experience:** A simple, intimate meal focused on guided reflection and fellowship.

- ❖ **Flexibility:** We have several options to choose from, and more gatherings will be added as needed to ensure there is a seat for everyone.

How to Attend

Please look [here](#) to view the current schedule and let us know which gathering you'd like to join. We want to ensure our hosts will have plenty of time to prepare, so please RSVP as soon as possible! Click [HERE](#) to sign up for a dinner.

Open Your Home: A Call for Hosts

The “Feast of Love” grows as our community opens its doors. If you feel led to host a small gathering at your home during Holy Week, we would love to include your table!

To volunteer as a host, please email Pastor Lee directly at [Insert Email Address].

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” — Matthew 18:20

NEW – COFFEE HOUR TEAM

Mission:

Coffee Hour Fellowship at CCC fosters connections and spiritual growth through conversation and refreshments. This spirit of warmth and shared purpose provide encouragement to one another and together we grow in friendship and faith.

Please join us in welcoming our Coffee Hour Hosts: Dory Toppan, Ray Peterson, Wim Nijenberg, Ana Milena Reatiga, Elmer Lyons, and Kelly Hargett. We also welcome new members to join our team.

This dedicated group has come together to coordinate and serve food and coffee each week during Fellowship.

We are still inviting members to sign up to donate items such as crackers, cheese, fruit, vegetables and baked goods. We invite you to sign up to donate items using the sheet in the Fellowship Hall, or by emailing coffeeshourhosts@cccchelmsford.org.

Thank you for supporting this important time of community and connection!

Kelly Hargett

INDEPENDENT MOVIE PREMIERE AT CCC!



“Trailed”, a two-hour mystery film by Maddie Knight, follows Rosemary Balor, a newly orphaned, awkward teenage girl who has yet to catch a break. As custody of her is transferred to her Aunt, Rosemary must adjust to a family and community she doesn’t know. She attends church with her family, only to find random notes that drag her into a spiraling mystery. These notes, written by a missing boy, send Rosemary and her new friends through a trail of clues to solve the disappearance of Freddy Poe. This mystery film explores an abundance of themes including grief, jealousy, comedy, and how to move on. Join us on March 20th, 21st and 22nd to uncover the mystery, seize your only chance to hear the film with this exclusive soundtrack, and stay until 9pm if you’d like to join our Q&A!

FELLOWSHIP FOR ALL AGES – ROOTED IN BECOMING: COMMUNITY EVENTS

Saturday, March 7 | 5:30 PM

Potluck & Game Night

Thank you to the 15 who came to the *Rooted in Becoming* community event—Slurp and Slam on Saturday February 7. We had a wonderful meal of soups, bread and cupcakes. Thank you for all the delishish soups, I had to try them all and they were all amazing. In February we will be sharing poetry, it can be an original or a favorite.

The Poetry was wonderful - so many poems shared with wonderful stories and the children really enjoyed Shel Silverstein's writing. The original poems were also great blessings.

Our next event will be Saturday March 7 at 5:30 GAME NIGHT!

Bring a dish to share and your favorite board or card games. We will share a meal together and then start playing the games. Expect small groups, playing different games throughout the night. No Cheating.

Our next event will be a Campfire in Carson Park on May 2, Hopefully with music, Definitely with S'mores. I am open to ideas for a meal together.

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



EASTER CONCERT | MARCH 29 | 3:00 PM

Central Congregational Church, UCC
presents

When Love Came Down
an Easter Concert

featuring
Katrina Holden, soprano
Joseph Chapman, Trumpetist
Tudor Bota, pianist & director
Central Congregational Church's
SonLight Band, Bell Choir,
Children & Adult Choirs

Sunday, March 29, 2026
3:00 PM
Freewill Offering

Central Congregational Church, UCC
1 Worthen St. Chelmsford, MA 01824
www.cccchelmsford.org

The Music Committee and Choir of Central Congregational Church invite you to an Easter Concert on March 29, 2026 at 3:00 pm. All musical groups will participate along with a guest soloist.

Come experience, through music, Holy Week culminating with the excitement of Easter! Invite your friends!

A freewill offering will be taken. A reception will follow the concert in Fellowship Hall to enjoy refreshments and conversation with concert participants.

KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

Wednesday, March 25 | 1:00 PM | Fellowship Hall



February has come and gone and it sure seemed to go by quickly. Unfortunately on February 25th, the trip to the Butterfly Place in Westford was due to the weather. So the trip will need to be planned for another time.

Spring will be here in just a few weeks and we can hopefully say goodbye to winter. In January we enjoyed our guest speaker, Lisa Grasso, the president of the Chelmsford Historical Society. Her enthusiasm about the history of our Chelmsford was so addictive that we voted to take a field trip to the Historical Society for our March 25th meeting. We will meet at 12:30 for a short business meeting and then carpool to the Historical Society for our visit. All ladies of the church are invite to join us. Our Open Pantry donation for March is rice, or any non-perishable food.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven"

Happy Spring!

Karen Banakos

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WEEK

Save the Date!

Make A Difference Week Planning

All are Welcome for this gathering to bring back Make A Difference Week.

April 12, 2026 at 11:30 Grab an ice cream sundae and join us in room 203.

Bring your idea of service projects and your calendar.

Jennifer

Sunday School Coordinator

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.

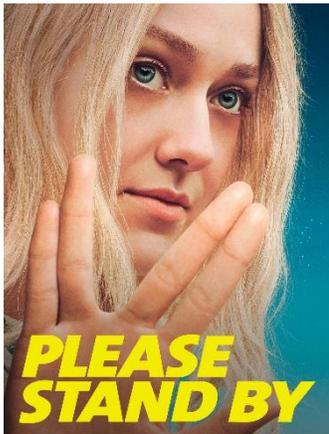
You don't need any experience, preparation, or biblical expertise—just a willingness to pause and be present. Come for one week or make it part of your rhythm. Whether you're seeking depth, calm, or fresh insight before worship, you are warmly invited.

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

CCC MOVIE GROUP

Mondays | March 9 & 23 | 7:00 PM | Zoom

March Movie Group



Monday, 3/9 – “Please Stand By” (2017) The film follows Wendy (Dakota Fanning), a young autistic woman and avid Star Trek fan, who ventures alone to deliver her screenplay to a Hollywood competition, confronting unfamiliar challenges and proving her independence. The film blends road-trip adventure with a heartfelt character study, anchored by Fanning’s nuanced performance. “Please Stand By” is an astutely done and thought-provoking portrayal of autism. One of the film’s significant strides is found in its focus on a strong female autistic protagonist since most movie depictions of autism feature male lead characters on the spectrum. While the film is effective in conveying different aspects of autistic behavior (including certain examples of high anxiety), it would have done well to delve further into this particular symptom as a consistent characteristic that individuals on the spectrum exhibit in various stress-inducing situations rather than a select few in which they can be calmed through their own actions or the intervention of caregivers. Overall, however, “Please Stand By” presents a highly engaging look at the journey of an autistic protagonist seeking self-expression and family acceptance, demonstrating her capacity not only for intellectual brilliance in her particular area of interest but ultimately for reciprocating and providing love and affection toward her neuro-typical family members.

Monday, 3/23 – “Stand By Me” (1986) An American coming-of-age drama film directed by Rob Reiner. Based on Stephen King’s 1982 novella *The Body*, the film is set in the fictional town of Castle Rock, Oregon. In 1985, writer Gordon “Gordie” Lachance (narrated by Richard Dreyfuss) reads a newspaper article about the death of his childhood best friend, Chris Chambers. In an extended flashback, Gordie tells about his experiences on Labor Day weekend in 1959, when he was 12 years old and he and his friends set out on a journey to find the dead body of a missing boy. “Stand by Me” stars Wil Wheaton (Gordie), River Phoenix (Chris), Corey Feldman (Teddy), and Jerry O’Connell (Vern) as the four boys. The film’s title is derived from the 1961 song of the same name by Ben E. King, which plays during the film’s closing credits. In a 2011 interview, Reiner discussed his realization that the film should focus on the character of Gordie: “In the book, it was about four boys, but...once I made Gordie the central focus of the piece then it made sense to me: this movie was all about a kid who didn’t feel good about himself and whose father didn’t love him. And through the experience of going to find the dead body and his friendship with these boys, he began to feel empowered and went on to become a very successful writer. He basically became Stephen King.”



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!

UPDATES

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Oh the challenges of January! January was so challenging that I missed the deadline for the February Beacon! Did you miss me? Not sure what I to hear the answer, but I am back with so much to share!

“Jesus welcomed the children, we teach the children and welcome adults, someone has it wrong and I don’t think it was Jesus.” ~ Marian Plant

I hope that you are part of the Intergenerational Puzzle project happening during coffee hour during Lent, it will be a beautiful creation of our CCC family.

We will have Sunday School every Sunday in March.

We have come into the prayerful time of Lent and the children and youth are preparing for the Holy Week Walk. Don’t miss it! We will be set up in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour on March 22. Each age group has selected one or two stations for a live action retelling of Jesus' experience as told in the book of Matthew. From the parade of palms to the empty tomb. Our children and youth do a lot of learning and work to create this experience. Please take time to observe and talk about it with the children and youth of CCC.

March 29th, Palm Sunday - will be the Easter Egg hunt at CCC, hopefully in Carson park, but in the case of active snow or rain be will move it into the church.

Make a Difference Week is coming back - August 24 - 28 with 4 days of service projects and Fun on Friday! We need your help to make this event successful. It will be an all-day event. 9 - 4 with after care for an extra fee.

Focus age group will be children entering 3rd grade to children entering 5th grade. We will have activities for younger children whose parents are helping with the program. 6th through 8th grade can be helpers. 9th grade and above will be group leaders. We will need drivers and people to prepare snacks and help out with the younger children.

We are in need of in house service projects and funds if these projects require them. Like preparing Hygiene kits, we need the supplies or money to buy the supplies. Build a Bed projects require a set amount for each bed and bedding to go on the bed. Pet toys and treats require the supplies.

Keep an eye out for meetings and events related to Make A Difference Week!

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!
- ♥ 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 need to be completed so please volunteer NOW!!! The Safe Church Policy is always followed in our Sunday School and Youth Program!

If you know of a child 4th grade or younger who would like a church pen-pal please let me know.

Thank you for the Kleenex type boxes.

PRAYER MINISTRY

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

Some seasons of life feel light and full of gratitude. Others feel heavy, uncertain, or quietly overwhelming. In every season, prayer connects us, not only to God, but also to one another. At CCC, our Prayer Ministry exists to stand in that space with you.



Sometimes we hesitate to ask for prayer. We tell ourselves we should handle it on our own. But Scripture reminds us that we are meant to carry one another’s burdens. Whether you are celebrating answered prayers, navigating illness, grieving a loss, facing uncertainty, or simply needing strength for today – for yourself or a loved one – we would be honored to pray for you. When you share a prayer request, a devoted team of twenty prayer partners faithfully lifts each request to God. Your story is not shared beyond the prayer ministry. It is held respectfully, prayerfully, and privately.

If you would like prayer for yourself or someone you love, please reach out to Marcia Cassidy at marciacassidy@comcast.net. It is a sacred privilege to bring your requests before God and to walk beside you in faith.

HOUSE COMMITTEE

The House Committee is getting plenty of practice shoveling snow. Anyone is invited to come help if you want. Scott will give you a tutorial of different techniques (scoop and toss, snow plow, vertical slice).

The boiler at 1 Worthen St passed inspection on 2/21/26. The boiler at 9 Worthen was replaced after a very exciting night for Jim when the boiler quit and all the water pipes needed to be drained in sub-zero temps. A leaky pipe in Fellowship Hall was repaired by Milltown Plumbing on 2/16/26.

The granite post by North Road was replaced. The final Eagle Scout plaque has been finished and is in Fellowship Hall once again.

New door knobs were placed on the doors leading from the chancel to the hall, and from the hall to the second floor corridor; all doors are now ADA compliant.

A new vacuum cleaner has been purchased for the church, which makes Juarez very happy. The roof is being cleared of ice as needed to prevent ice dams and falling icicles.

Fire alarm testing was completed on 2/16/26, and the fire extinguishers and CO2 alarms were tested on the 17th.

Jim Clark will be on vacation for the month of March, and issues involving the boilers should be directed to Tim O’Brien at (802) 238-5469 during that time.

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. 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 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 February 11, 2026, meeting:

Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of January 31 we are 58.3% of the way through our fiscal year. Pledged income is close to budget at 56% and Unpledged income is short of budget at 48%. Our total Income from all sources is right on target at 58%, and total Expenditure is at 54%, so we are in a strong financial position overall. Some notable expenses that have exceeded budget are snowplowing and gas charges. These line items will be considered when setting the new budget for 2026-2027. The Capital Campaign has completed and as reported in the February Council Corner article the remaining \$15,474 from the Campaign is designated for Social Action and Missions (SAM) to use for the needs of our local communities and social service agencies.

Samantha Shields, Chair of the Christian Education Committee, announced an on-line training opportunity being offered through the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. Members of Council, the Diaconate, and others from CCC will attend the “Neurodivergence and Congregational Welcome” training on Tuesday, February 24. Christian Education will offset the cost of registration fees for CCC participants.

A Safe Church task force has been convened to draft a new section to our CCC Safe Church Policies regarding registered sex offenders. The Task Force includes Pastor Lee Atherton, Bonnie McGrath, Safe Church Advocate, Samantha and Patrick Shields, Peter White, and Deacon Joe Chapman, Task Force chair. The task force is reviewing state and federal guidelines, UCC guidelines, and other sources to educate themselves on the issue. The task force also met with a member of the Chelmsford Police Department.

Coffee Hour coordinator Kelly Hargett is working with members of the newly established Coffee Hour Team, Wim Nijenberg, Ana Reatiga and Dory Toppan, to coordinate the purchase of supplies and to train and support coffee hour hosts on procedures for hosting coffee hour and the use of the church kitchen.

Reminder - Access to the office copier for color copying will now require a special code, as approved by Council. Interim Office Administrator Margie Dissinger has assigned each committee an individual codes for color copying. Contact your committee’s chair for the code.

Kitchen Update – The freezer appliance in the kitchen has been functionally problematic and will be replaced. The Trustees have approved the expenditure from the Remembrance Fund.

The CCC 150th Anniversary Committee is planning events for mid-April 2026. Details will be announced in the upcoming weeks. Volunteers are invited to help with all aspects of this milestone occasion in the history of our church! Please contact Val King or CCC Historian Pat Vondal.

Youth Sunday will be held on June 14, 2026. The children and youth of CCC, with the support of their Sunday School teachers and leaders, will conduct the Worship service on this special Sunday.

The CCC “Make a Difference Week” summer program will be held the last week of August. Rising 3rd graders through 8th graders and teen leaders are invited to participate. The program will include service projects around the community. More details will be announced in the coming months. Please contact Jennifer Hart, Sunday School Coordinator, if you have suggestions for possible local service projects!

Excerpts from the CCC Constitution – Article VII – Council

The Council...

The next Council Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 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 (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
Interim Office Administrator:	Margie Dissinger	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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