



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 5

May 2026

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Fellowship Event – Campfire & S'mores

Saturday, May 2 | 5:30 PM | Carson Park

Lunch with Lee

Sunday, May 3 | 12:00 PM | Java Room

Confirmation Dinner & Rehearsal

Saturday, May 16 | 6:00 PM | Fellowship Hall

Annual Meeting

Sunday May 17 | 11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

KiSeLo (Kindness, Service, Love)

Wednesday, May 27

12:30 PM | Princeton Station Restaurant

Pub Theology

Saturday, May 30 | 6:30 PM | 110 Grill, Chelmsford

Free childcare | 6:30-8:30 PM | Room 202

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

CCC Movie Group

Mondays, May 11 & 25

7:00 PM | on Zoom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE.....	1
FROM THE PASTOR’S OFFICE.....	3
The Annual Church Meeting.....	4
OFFICE UPDATE	5
Beacon Articles	5
Pastor Lee’s Office Hours	5
FOR YOUR CALENDAR.....	5
Fellowship for All Ages at CCC.....	5
Calling All Graduates	6
Social Action and Mission (SAM) – Open Pantry Update.....	6
Pub Theology	6
Make A Difference Day – Spring 2026.....	7
CCC’s 150 th Anniversary Celebration.....	8
Nominating Committee.....	8
CE Committee – All Church Picture & Picnic.....	9
CCC Movie Group	10
KiSELO - Kindness, Service, Love	11
SNEUCC Super Saturday	11
Make A Difference Week! August 24-28 9am-4pm	12
SkillSprout America	13
Listening For The Word: Lectio Divina On Sunday Mornings.....	13
UPDATES	14
From The Sunday School Coordinator	14
Prayer Ministry	15
Ginnie Hall Meal Ministry.....	15
Rental Spaces Available At CCC.....	15
Council Corner	15
WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!	17

FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

From Embers to Flames: Navigating the Winds of Change

As we approach the season of Pentecost, our worship will soon be colored in red—a vibrant reminder of the "tongues of fire" that descended upon the first disciples. It is a season of high energy, sacred celebration, and, this year, deep reflection.

This year, in the life of our congregation, Pentecost arrives at a crossroads. We are still basking in the glow of our Anniversary Worship on April 26th—a powerful testament to the generations who have called this place home. We will be celebrating the Confirmation of our young people as they claim their faith with a bold "Yes!" At the same time, we find ourselves looking toward the future, knowing that a season of pastoral transition will come along.

Central Congregational Church's 150th anniversary was more than just a look at the calendar; it was a realization that we stand on the shoulders of the Saints of the Past. Those who laid the bricks and prayed the first prayers here knew all about the "unknown." They stepped out in faith so that we, the Saints of the Present, could have a place to gather, grow, and serve.

Now, as we look toward the Saints of the Future, we realize that the story of this church is a continuous thread. The faces change and the leadership shifts, but we are all part of the same divine tapestry, woven together by the hand of the Creator.

The first Pentecost wasn't a calm, planned board meeting. It was a chaotic, unpredictable explosion of divine energy. The disciples were in an "in-between" space—Jesus had ascended, and they were left waiting in an upper room, likely wondering, "*What now?*"

The unknown can be a frightening place. It's natural to feel a sense of trepidation when the leadership we have come to rely on begins to shift. However, Pentecost reminds us that the "unknown" is exactly where the Holy Spirit does her best work.

As we wonder about what is next for CCC's pastoral leadership, we are invited to lean into three core truths:

- **The Spirit is the Constant:** While the person in the pulpit may change, the Spirit that breathes life into this community remains the same. The "rushing mighty wind" that stirred the early church is blowing through our sanctuary and hallways today.
- **Legacy is Forward-Moving:** Honoring our past saints doesn't mean standing still; it means carrying their courage into the future.
- **Comfort in the Unfolding:** Navigating the unknown doesn't require us to have a map; it requires us to have a Compass. That compass is our shared faith and our trust in God's providence.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

I have been blessed in the more than two years I have spent with you and treasure every continuing week and month as a gift. Yet we must also hold the truth that there will be a change again in our future. New leadership will bring the gift of new perspective. Just as the disciples were empowered to speak in new languages, our time together has allowed you as a congregation and me as a pastor to hear the Gospel in fresh ways and to discover hidden strengths within our own spirits and our pews.

Let's continue our time together not with hearts of anxiety or worry about the future, but with spirits of expectation and hope in God's still small voice leading us into new chapters of ministry. Let us celebrate our confirmands and baptisms, honor our history, and keep our hearts ready to catch whatever wind the Holy Spirit sends next.

The fire isn't going out; it's simply being passed to the next torch.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Lee Atherton

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

Annual Meeting of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford, UCC

All members and friends of Central Congregational Church are invited to attend the **Annual Meeting** of the church, to be held in Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, May 17, 2026**, immediately after the worship service. Please reserve that date on your calendars.

We will again have a **family potluck** to enjoy during the meeting as we conduct our annual business meeting. Please bring a main dish or dessert to share. The dishes can be placed in the church kitchen before worship. Beverages will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Lynn Horton

Council President

Lynn@terpsoft.com

Warrant for the Annual Meeting on May 17, 2026

of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford, United Church of Christ

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

The Annual Meeting of the Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford, United Church of Christ, will be held on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall to act upon the following articles:

- Article 1 To elect a Moderator.
- Article 2 To celebrate the events of the past year.
- Article 3 To act upon the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to elect the officers of the church.
- Article 4 To receive the reports of all committees.
- Article 5 To approve the budget for the fiscal year 2026 – 2027.
- Article 6 To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting

(signed) Valerie King, Clerk

OFFICE UPDATE

BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Tuesday, May 26** for the June/July edition. There will not be a separate July Beacon, so please include any July events in the June 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

FELLOWSHIP FOR ALL AGES AT CCC

Rooting in Becoming: Community Event

Join others on May 2nd at 5:30 pm around the Firepit in Carson Park! It will be a time of singing, enjoying time together and making s'mores.

Pastor Lee will provide roasting sticks, marshmallows, graham crackers.

You provide the chocolate - or whatever you might want with your marshmallow

- Milk chocolate
- Reese's
- Dark chocolate
- Dubai chocolate
- White chocolate

The possibilities are endless!!

Does anyone have a multi-pronged Wolf'em stick? This would be a great time to share! (And if you have one and haven't shared, we need to talk about the importance of sharing!!!)

If the weather is rainy bring board games and card games for Fellowship Hall and we will have a game night. Keep the date, we will have fellowship of some kind on May 2 at 5:30. I would love to hear thoughts on if we should have a potluck for this event as well. Lucas's school has their musical this weekend so I will not make it, I am very sad to not be a part of this event.

This is the last event planned - If you want to plan something for June, July or August I am happy to help! Otherwise watch for more Fellowship events in September! Got some ideas? Please don't keep them to yourself!!!

Jennifer Hart

CALLING ALL GRADUATES

Is a member of your immediate family graduating from high school, college, or a graduate program? Graduation Sunday is Sunday, June 7. All high school seniors are invited to the service for a celebration of their achievement. Graduates from college and graduate school programs will also be recognized in the June 7 bulletin and June Beacon newsletter. Please let the church office know the names of all graduates, the school from which they are graduating, and, if possible, their post-graduation plans. Kindly contact Margie Dissinger (office.admin@cccchelmsford.org) or Lynn Horton (Lynn@terpsoft.com) as soon as possible, and no later than May 20, 2026. Thank you!

SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSION (SAM) – OPEN PANTRY UPDATE

As was previously announced, the Open Pantry received notice On April 1, 2026, that it had 30 days to vacate 13 Hurd Street, the downtown home it has occupied for more than two decades. We are now very pleased and grateful to announce that Open Pantry has found a new home in Lowell, thanks to the heartfelt support of the Lowell non-profit community that began responding to the Pantry's call for help almost immediately when the news went out. The Pantry had several different offers for space, with some options only temporary and some not immediately available. The new location is currently completing renovations, and the formalities are still being worked out, but the Pantry expects to move in by the end of May or early June. Meanwhile, the Pantry on Hurd Street has had to close until the transition can be completed.

While the address is changing, the mission will continue. Beginning May 1, while the new permanent home is being prepared, the Open Pantry will continue food distribution directly from their truck, in partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank and the City of Lowell. Families will receive pre-packed food boxes so as not to let Pantry clients fall through the cracks during this transition.

At this point in time, we ask that people not bring food donations to the church, until the new facility is up and running. Monetary donations continue to be welcome.

Thank you, Becky Wisniewski, SAM member and Board Chair of The Open Pantry

PUB THEOLOGY

Join us for Pub Theology on May 30th 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. Free childcare is available from 6:30-8:30 PM in Fellowship Hall.

CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR
PUB THEOLOGY
Real conversations about faith, life,
and everything in between

25 APRIL 6:30 PM
30 MAY 6:30 PM

Pull up a chair, grab your favorite beverage, and join us for open, honest conversation in a relaxed pub setting. Open to ALL – spiritual but not religious, church-goers, curious minds. Food and drinks available for purchase.
MEETING @ 110 GRILL — 116 CHELMSFORD ST

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY – SPRING 2026

Sunday, April 26, 2026, was a beautiful day to celebrate CCC's 150th Anniversary **and** to Make a Difference in our Chelmsford community! Our outdoor spring projects honor the memory of CCC members Bruce and Daphne Freeman and Walter and Betty Lewis. They each devoted their lives to our town and to Central Congregational Church.

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was cleared of litter from the Route 110 ballfields parking lot to Golden Cove Road by a trash team of four: Lisa Gibson and her co-worker Deb Botker, Walker Horton, and Lynn Horton. It is regrettable that we know there will be ample litter waiting for our attention each clean-up, and this Make a Difference Day was no exception. We filled two large garbage bags with litter that had been left intentionally along the rail trail as well as trash that had blown from roadways or parking lots. If you ever walk on the rail trail, consider taking a small bag with you to help maintain the temporary progress that was made in the fight against litter!



The Walter F. Lewis Community Garden at Sunny Meadow Farm was prepared for planting season by Cynthia and Scott Dorman, with assistance from Troop Scoutmaster Chuck Crannell. Meanwhile, eleven Scouts from Troop 75 painted the garden fencing – a major task! Community Garden organizer Lee Williams shared this message: *Thank you to the volunteers who helped weed and prepare the charity plot at the Sunny Meadow Community Garden. The plot looks great and is now ready for planting! And thank you to the scouts from Troop 75 for*

painting the white fence surrounding the gardens! We so appreciate your cheerful service to the community garden. You all made a difference!

Thank you for continuing the Make a Difference Day 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 either of these projects at the next Make a Difference Day in the Fall!

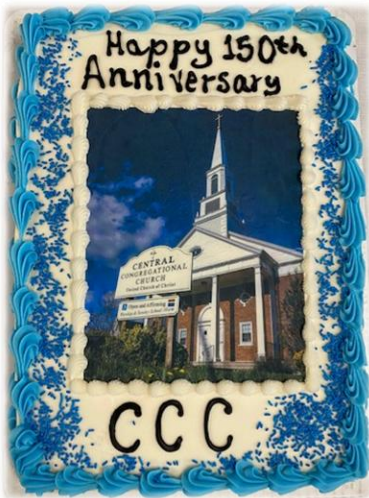
But wait, There's More!

The April 26 Make a Difference Day included two additional activities! The Social Action and Mission Committee (SAM) joined with the Christian Education Committee to guide our Sunday School children in **assembling hygiene kits**. These kits are a mission of Church World Services (CWS), a partner with United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries, and are provided to people who are coping with the aftermath of natural disasters, such as hurricane, wildfires, or floods. Thank you to our Sunday School children for making a difference to help people in need when they truly need it the most.

“Bakery Day” returned as part of Make a Difference Day, too! Baker Jeremy Williams of ‘The Do Good Kitchen’ quickly sold out his selection of baked goods - chocolate-topped macaroons, jalapeño cheddar scones, strawberry “jammie dodger” scones, and blueberry ginger “brumbles”! \$50 of the bake sale proceeds has been donated to the Social Action and Missions Committee. If you missed out on the Bakery Day treats this time, I have good news! Jeremy will be back on May 31 after worship with more freshly prepared food items to sell, and to support SAM!

~Lynn Horton

CCC'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



On Saturday, April 25th 100 people joined together to celebrate CCC's 150th Anniversary. There was plenty of food, wonderful fellowship in looking and adding to the church's timeline and viewing historical artifacts. A play, written by Pat Vondal, church historian, was a reenactment of the 21 people who formed Central Congregational Church in 1876 and was excellently portrayed by a cast of church members. The committee thanks all who helped in any way to create such a wonderful experience.

The timeline will continue to be displayed in Fellowship Hall through May 17 for the Annual Meeting.

There may be other

historical artifacts displayed in the upcoming weeks and it is planned to 'bury' the Time Capsule on June 14th at the church picnic!



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It is the goal of the Nominating Committee to connect individuals with the role or roles within the church where they can best feel the satisfaction of serving. Often this is through committee work, and CCC is blessed with many committees! Thank you to each person who has said “yes” to the opportunity to serve on a committee or in the position of a church officer! Many of you are long time CCC volunteers, and your years of service are invaluable to the stability and smooth operation of our church. To everyone who is newer to the church committees, thank you for being the source of fresh ideas, new perspectives, and an enthusiastic infusion of energy! The work of our committees ensures the success of Central Congregational Church, within and beyond our walls. A special thank you to those who are completing their term of service in 2026; your dedication is recognized and greatly appreciated!

Despite our best efforts, there remain vacancies on the slate of nominees. There are openings on the House, Sanctuary, Communications, Technology, Nominating, and Members-at-Large committees. There is also a delegate position available to the Northeast Association of the Southern New England Conference, UCC. Committees with open positions welcome new members at any time throughout the year! Please contact a member of Nominating if you would like more information about these opportunities. We would be delighted to help you find a committee to match your skills, availability, and interests. You meet some great people at CCC through shared committee work! Give it a try!

Your Nominating Committee,

Lynn Horton, Deb Lyons, Elizabeth Hartigan, Dory Toppan

CE COMMITTEE – ALL CHURCH PICTURE & PICNIC

Church Picture

Come one, come all! On Sunday, June 14th, immediately following the worship service, we will be taking a church picture on the front steps of the church. Please make your way to the front steps after worship and find your picture-perfect spot!

Youth Sunday & All Church Picnic

It's hard to believe but our Sunday School year is quickly coming to a close and with that comes Youth Sunday, the day when kids run the service. Our theme this year is Rooted in Becoming. In lieu of coffee hour we will be having our annual picnic immediately following the service on **Sunday, June 14th**. Please use the sign-up sheet at Coffee Hour to sign-up in person or follow the link below to the electronic sign-up sheet. The cost is \$2 per person or \$8 per family. The CE committee will provide the main meal of hot dogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers but we are asking others to sign-up and bring a favorite side dish or a dessert to share. Please remember to bring your camping chairs and picnic blankets. We hope to see you there! If you have any questions please email Samantha Shields at Samantha.Shields@cccchelmsford.org.

[Sign-up link](#)

All Church Picnic Volunteers

Christian Education could not continue hosting this beloved annual All Church Picnic without the help and support of our congregation. Please be on the lookout for volunteer sign-up sheets, as we can always use extra hands with setting up, cooking, and cleaning up. Thank you for helping make this special annual event possible!

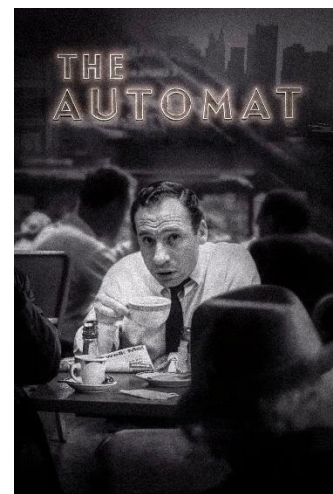
- CE Committee

CCC MOVIE GROUP

Mondays | May 11 & 25 | 7:00 PM | Zoom

May Movie Group

Monday, 5/11 – “The Automat” (2021) Horn & Hardart, founded in 1888 by Joseph Horn and Frank Hardart, was noted for operating the first food service automats in Philadelphia and New York City. The restaurant chain was well known in the U.S. for serving food out of a vending machine for a nickel. The documentary details the rise and fall of the Horn & Hardart automats; the last one, located in New York, closed in April 1991. Director Lisa Hurwitz was inspired to create the documentary because she loved eating in her school cafeteria day after day during her college days. The film features an original song titled "At the Automat" written and performed by Mel Brooks, and stars Brooks, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elliott Gould, Colin Powell, Carl Reiner, and Howard Schultz. The Hollywood Reporter's Stephen Farber wrote, "Hurwitz supplements the talking heads with tasty archival footage and sharp graphics. Her film is sleek and unpretentious. It wins us over with humor and a pointed touch of melancholy." Film critic Rex Reed said the film "gets to the core of the Automat's significance, [and] its social impact on New York and the changing world we live in." A wistful ode to a bygone era, "The Automat" will make viewers nostalgic for America's past – and hungry for a meal at the titular diner.



Monday, 5/25 – “That Touch of Mink” (1962) A classic romantic comedy where a chance encounter between an elegant businessman and a principled young woman sparks a playful battle of wills. He desires a carefree romance, she insists on marriage, leading to witty banter, glamorous dates, and comedic misadventures. Cathy Timberlake (Doris Day) is an old-fashioned country girl who meets the man of her dreams, Philip Shayne (Cary Grant), after his Rolls Royce splashes her with mud on her way to a job interview in New York City. Philip is a romantic businessman who is taken by Cathy's honest heart. There's one problem: he's not interested in marriage, and she has never thought of anything else. Cathy's roommate, Connie Emerson (Audrey Meadows) gives Cathy advice at home and through the serving window at her Automat job. Supporting actors in this romantic comedy include Gig Young as Roger, John Astin as Mr. Beasley, Dick Sargent as Harry Clark, and Richard Deacon as Mr. Miller. The film showcases the Automat's charm and the social dynamics of the time, making it a nostalgic reference for audiences.

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!

KiSeLo – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

Wednesday, May 27 | 12:30 PM | Princeton Station Restaurant



Here we are in beautiful May and before we know it summer will be upon us. April was a somewhat damp month, but as is said –April showers bring May flowers.

Our April meeting had us all enjoying Deb Lyons trip to China. Deb’s narration of the scenery, the people, and the food, oh especially the food, had us all in awe and gave us all a few chuckles. Many thanks to Deb for sharing that part of her life with us. Elections for the year 2026-2027 were held with the following results:

President – Karen Banakos

Vice – president – Barbara Reilly

Secretary – Karen Papenfuss

Treasurer - Merri Robison

Hostess chair – Carol Boucek

Sunshine – Sue Sarafinas

Program committee – Deb Lyons, Judith Barnes, Pat Vondal

We will be honoring all mothers on Mother’s Day, May 10, by donating the altar flowers. May 27th will be our end of the year banquet to be held at the Princeton Station. Kindly meet at the restaurant at 12:30 PM. Each of us will be ordering off the menu and will have separate checks. If you did not sign up at the April meeting and would like to attend, please see our hostess chair, Carol Boucek. All women of the church are welcome to join us, but you must sign up so we can give the restaurant an accurate count.

Proverbs 31:25 “She is clothed with strength and dignity; and she laughs without fear of the future.”

Wishing you all a beautiful May, and may we pay tribute to those who have served our country on Memorial Day.

Karen Banakos

SNEUCC SUPER SATURDAY

The Southern New England Conference of the United Church or Christ (SNEUCC) is hosting Super Saturday in a different format this year:

Super Saturday Comes to You! - Northeast Association

Bound by Story, Sent in Hope: Learning from What’s Working

May 17, 2:00 PM

Central Congregational Church of Newburyport UCC, MA

Stories bind us together—and they also send us forward. We’ll share stories of thriving and innovative ministries from across the Conference, highlighting common threads of faithfulness, courage, and creativity.

[Please use this link](#) to find out more information and register for the event if you are interested. This event is free to attend due to our proportional giving to the SNEUCC.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WEEK! AUGUST 24-28 9AM-4PM

We have a great week planned for Youth 3rd grade through 8th grade.

- An afternoon at Chelmsford Crossing playing Bingo
- An afternoon at Summer Place playing Rummikub
- A morning at Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust property or maybe the Community Garden
- Making Birthday kits and special bags for children for Lowell Open Pantry
- Making treats for dogs and toys for cats and dogs for the Lowell Humane Society
- Making cards for church members and residents at the assisted living centers

We will have projects for children of volunteers who are younger than 3rd grade, Like:

- Helping put together snacks
 - Basket bites
 - Butterfly bags
 - Burning bush cups
 - Kindness cookies
- And STEAM activities
 - A Kindness chain reaction
 - Burning bush without burning
 - Caterpillar to butterfly
 - Gratitude gardens
- They will also help with any of the above projects that are done at the church

Right now I know that I have:

- 1 High school student that will be there all day everyday
- 2 High School students who can do afternoons every day
- myself and one other adult who will be there all day everyday
- one adult who will help with snacks
- one adult who will be around

Required:

- at least 5 High school students
- Two adults at the church all day
- 1 adult for every 4 children and youth required
- Four adults with the youth when they go out in the community

[On-Line Sign-up](#)

Please help ensure we can hold this special summer program! We need volunteers to guarantee we have the number of teens and adults required.

Contact me with any questions you may have!

Thank you!

Jennifer Hart

jennifer.hart@cccchelmsford.org

SKILLSPROUT AMERICA

A summer learning program for 7 to 10-year-olds will be held at our church from July 6 through August 21. It will run Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. Called SkillSprout America, kids will learn skills in logic and problem solving, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, budgeting, leadership, self-discipline, self-awareness and anti-bullying. For more information, contact Jignesh Shah at 201/744-4216, email skillsproutamerica@gmail.com or see their website www.SkillSproutAmerica.com



SKILLSPROUT AMERICA
Plant Courage, Water Curiosity, Harvest Confidence.

Mathematics:
Logic & Problem-Solving

Money: Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship & Budgeting

Mind: Leadership, Self Discipline, Self Awareness & Anti-Bullying

Ages 7-10 | Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM | July 6-Aug 21, 2026
Central Congregational Church, 1 Worthen St, Chelmsford, MA
Jignesh Shah | 201-744-4216 | skillsproutamerica@gmail.com
www.SkillSproutAmerica.com

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.

Pastor Lee

UPDATES

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Creating Faith-filled Disciples Centered in God's Love

As we start wrapping up the Sunday School year at Central Congregational Church, the "Spirit of the Season" curriculum we are using from 2011 has readings from Acts, accounts of the earliest Christian community. This body is formed by Christ and nourished by the Spirit through teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.

During COVID, this church continued to have Sunday School. Children, youth, and teachers sat out in Carson Park or around the little garden on the other side of the church, teaching, praying and having fellowship in a time when people did not get together a lot.

Families decided at the time to take a hike as a way to keep the fellowship, but also keep moving. These hikes have continued, the families still enjoy the time in nature with the Sunday School Community. The next hike is May 3, and families and teachers will meet at East Boston Camp, at 10:00 am. There will be a brief opening prayer and then a hike that is about 2 miles and not stroller friendly. This is a Bring A Friend Event!

Happy Mother's Day to the mothering people in our community, thank you for your mothering love, care, and support. Hope to see you on May 10th!

May 17th is Confirmation Sunday! We have a great group of youth who have been learning, exploring, and teaching since October and will come together with their church community and share some of their discoveries and maybe feel called to join the congregation.

To help celebrate with them let's all wear red and orange and feel the spirit of Pentecost!!

May 24th will be Memorial Day Weekend - there will not be Sunday School, but I will have special activities at the Prayground that can be done in the area or at the pew, wherever people are comfortable.

Help Wanted - We either need a budget that allows us to hire Sunday School Teachers or we need more volunteers!

For the 2026 - 2027 Children's Worship Program:

Nursery Coordinator - be a welcoming face for our youngest friends!

PreK - Kindergarten Teachers- we will have some little boys who really need Bible Stories brought to life. We also want to be ready for new families!

1st and 2nd Grade Teachers

Substitutes for all ages who will be trained and CORIed, plus on the weekly email list so you see the curriculum each week.

People willing to substitute or be a floater are always welcome!

Please reach out to me at 5ofharts@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!

Jennifer Hart

PRAYER MINISTRY

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” — 1 Peter 5:7

At CCC, this promise is at the heart of our Prayer Ministry. Whatever you are carrying—worry, gratitude, grief, or hope—you do not have to carry it alone. Each prayer request is received in confidence and lifted to God by a faithful team who considers it a privilege to pray on your behalf.



If you are in a season that feels uncertain or heavy, or even one filled with quiet gratitude, we invite you to share your request. Prayer is one way we remain connected to God and to one another, no matter the circumstances. To submit a prayer request for yourself or someone you love, please contact Marcia Cassidy at marciacassidy@comcast.net

You are cared for. You are remembered. You are being prayed for.

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 April 8, 2026, meeting:

- Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of March 31 we 75% of the way through our fiscal year. Total pledge income is steady at 73%. Unpledged income is at 69%. Our total income year-to-date is close to target at 72%. Total expenditures are at 71%. Looking ahead to the end of the fiscal year in June, Dick does not expect that we will have a deficit, but he does not anticipate a big surplus, either. Dick had a meeting with our solar and electricity providers. At the end of April, the 9 Worthen property will be taken out of the contract as we had been overpaying for the electricity used there.
- Dick will be holding a budget planning meeting for 2026-2027 on Monday, May 4 at 7:30 PM via Zoom. Contact Dick for the Zoom link and budget materials.

- The members of Council voted unanimously in favor of the Diaconate’s proposal to recategorize some names on the church membership roster to Inactive status. It is the responsibility of the Diaconate to regularly review the accuracy of the church membership rolls and make recommendations as to the status of members and non-members. Any person can be reclassified as Active in the future.
- A request was made by Pastor Lee on March 18 for permission to serve a sipping wine at the Seder meal on April 2. Because this would require approval by Council to allow an exception to CCC Policy 13, Part 4 - Alcohol, which states, “No alcoholic beverages are permitted in the church, Carson Park, or the parking lot, except for a champagne toast on special occasions” and because the event would take place before the next monthly Council meeting on April 8, an electronic vote was taken on March 19. A majority of Council members voted against the motion “to allow a one-time use of sipping wine for the April 2, 2026, Maundy Thursday Seder Meal in Fellowship Hall.”
- John Carson, Chair of the Board of Trustees, recommended that for future e-votes, the Council adopt the voting policy practiced by the Trustees; if there is not a unanimous result, the e-vote will be cancelled and a new vote will be taken either in person or on Zoom at a special meeting of the Board. The members of Council approved this suggested change, and future votes of a time-sensitive matter will be handled accordingly.
- The Safe Church Task Force is continuing their work to draft a new Safe Church Policy regarding sex offenders.
- The church’s 150th Celebration on April 25 and 26 will include a play that reenacts the origins of Central Congregational Church in 1876. Deb Lyons is seeking actors and period costume pieces. Items for the stage set are being borrowed from the Chelmsford Historical Society. Margie Dissinger noted that items from the CCC archives will be on display at coffee hour on Sundays leading up to and including April 26. Congregants are invited to donate items of significance for a time capsule.
- The Deacons have further discussed the ways CCC can support people in need. The Pastor Rich Knight Gift Card Ministry has the potential to benefit more individuals and families through monetary donations to a food pantry, or other methods of food assistance distribution. The Diaconate will be meeting with a Chelmsford police officer who will help us learn how CCC can help community members through CPD services, among other options.
- The Annual Meeting of CCC will be held on Sunday, May 17, following worship.

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, May 13, 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
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