

Central Congregational Church UCC

Central Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Chelmsford, Massachusetts

*An Open and Affirming Congregation
“A Community of Faith, Hope, and Love,
Growing through Worship and Service”*

Ministers: The Congregation Interim Pastor: Rev. Lee Atherton
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. John A. Zachry
Director of Music/Organist: Tudor Bota

Sunday, July 5, 2026 Communion Sunday 10 o'clock a.m.



Welcome to Central Congregational Church, where no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome. If you are visiting us today, know that we are glad to have you.

As we worship together, please note that an * indicates a time to stand as you are able. Sentences in bold are to be spoken by the congregation.

Order of the Service of Worship

WE GATHER

Prelude

"Air in G" by Bach

Tudor Bota

Welcome and Announcements

Lynn Horton

Ringing the Bell

Rev. Lee Atherton

THRESHOLD MOMENT

Reflecting

Pastor Lee

Song "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

#305 Blue

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your spirit in this place; Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

Response

One: Calling all citizens of heaven: exiled dreamers and disciples of love,

All: God is close to the outcast and faithful to all.

One: Calling all pilgrims of the Spirit, carried by the winds of hope,

All: God is everywhere at all times, compassionate to all.

One: Calling all travelers between worlds, who translate compassion into peace,

All: God makes neighbors of strangers and kin of the forgotten.

One: Come to worship and be renewed for this long journey.

All: Strangers in a strange land, we have come to worship the creator of all.

*Hymn

"For This Land In All Its Wonder"

(Tune of "God of Grace and God of Glory")

For this land in all its wonder, for each city, farm and town,
For each mountain filled with splendor,
for each place where love is found,
For the freedoms we enjoy here,
God, may thanks to you abound! God, may thanks to you abound!

For your peace and love unending, breaking barriers that divide;
For the joy of cultures blending as we live here side by side;
God, we thank you and we pray now:
May we all be unified! May we all be unified!

For your hand to lead and guide us, for your work in history,
For your vision born inside us of a just society,
God, we thank you and we pray now:
May this vision come to be! May this vision come to be!

May we be a nation seeking ways that are both wise and fair,
May our living and our speaking serve your purpose everywhere.
May we follow where you lead us;
God, this is our hope and prayer! God, this is our hope and prayer!

Passing the Peace

Pastor Lee

God's Peace be with you. **And also with you.**

WE PROCLAIM

Children's Message

Pastor Lee

Sending Song

Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of God surround you Everywhere, everywhere you may go.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 24:34–38, 42–49, 58–67

Psalms 45:10–17

Philippians 4:8-9

Margie Dissinger

Pew Bible p. 17-18

Pew Bible p. 449

Pew Bible p. 955

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Pastor Lee

*Hymn

“O Beautiful For Spacious Skies” v 1,3

#720 Blue

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Lee

One: Gracious One, where do we begin? You call us to do justice,

All: and we explain that justice is complicated.

One: You ask us to love mercy,

All: and we counter that a show of strength is necessary.

One: You invite us to walk humbly with you,

All: and we struggle to recognize you in our neighbors, in the dispossessed, in the poor and hungry places of our own hearts.

One: We confess we have failed to summon the courage and compassion required by your call.

All: We have treated hospitality as an option, kinship as a choice, instead of as the center of our life together.

One: We have claimed your name, yet rejected your way.

All: Forgive us, we pray.

Assurance of God's Grace

Pastor Lee

Litany “Ring the Bells for Freedom – A July 4th Litany”

by Rev. Dr. Chris S. Davies

One: Ring the Bells for Freedom! Ring for hope, for joy; ring for the dream of our forbearers and the liberation of our children. Ring the Bells!

All: Ring for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells for those that have fallen in the name of the dream. Those who held the candle on the shore, inviting more; the city on the hill built to demonstrate the Way. Ring the Bells!

All: Ring the bells for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells for those who came, and those who come, seeking the dream: The tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Ring the bells!

All: Ring for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells for dreams deferred, placed asunder and left to wander. Ring the bells for when freedom has been distant. Ring to witness the stoney road, the bitter rod, the moments where hope couldn't be. Ring with the harmonies of liberty. Ring the Bells!

All: Ring the bells for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells for those who were here before the colonies.

Ring the bells for the neighbors who were not asked, not invited, not included in the dream. Ring the bells until the dream is wide enough to hold them. Ring the Bells!

All: Ring for Freedom!

One: Ring for those who do not know freedom today. Those incarcerated, in internment camps, or confined without consent. Ring for the hope that there WILL be a day when all people are free!

All: Ring the bells for Freedom!

One: Ring for those who fought and continue to fight for our freedom. Ring for those who paid a price beyond comparison for the lives we lead today. Ring the bells in honor and witness!

All: Ring for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells for those who love this country enough to tell the truth about it. Those who fight for the dignity of all, the future of who we can be, with liberty and justice for all, where all may be free.

All: Ring for Freedom!

One: Ring the bells that we may hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Ring the bells, that we may join together, BECAUSE of our faith, to ring the bells and work for liberation, in the footsteps of those that came before, holding the wide welcome, loving our neighbors, and following Jesus Christ in the best way that we know how. Ring the Bells!

All: Ring the Bells for Freedom!

As the bells continue to echo, let us share a moment of contemplative silence.

Prayer Song “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”

Joys and Concerns

Pastor Lee

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Praise

For each bead: Hallowed Be _____

Invitation to the Offering

Margie

Offertory

“Abide With Me” Glenn & Margie Dissinger

Doxology

Tune: Lasst Uns Erfreun

Like strands of beads, we offer gifts, that one by one, your love will lift. Alleluia, alleluia! That all may have just what they need, by this we're bless'd and truly freed. Hear our prayers, God. Be our guide, Lord. Holy Spirit, come and fill us. Alleluia!

Prayer of Dedication

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

***Communion Hymn** "For Everyone Born"
by The Beyond the Walls Choir

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead.

Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice
and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice and joy.

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free. *Refrain*

The Lord's Prayer

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

Invitation to the Table

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

and also with you.

People of God, lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the One who invites us to rest in the heart of the Trinity.

People of God, give thanks to the One who offers you rest.

We bring our thanksgiving to God, who sings to us of peace.

Words of Institution and Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Breaking the Bread and Pouring the Wine

Call to the Supper

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

The Deacons will distribute the gluten-free bread and the cup.

When all are served, we will partake in unison.

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, God of Rest, for nourishing us at your table. Through this bread and cup, you have lifted our heavy burdens and yoked us to your grace. As we leave this place, fill us with your Holy Spirit. Keep our hearts rested in your peace, yet beautifully restless for justice. Send us out now to feed the hungry, speak for the ignored, and love our neighbors, until we feast together at your heavenly banquet. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**“In This Time of Great Reflection” Tune: HOLY MANNA

In this time of great reflection on two hundred fifty years,
We remember, as a nation, times we've prospered, times of tears.
"We shall be," a preacher told us, "as a city on a hill" —
not to praise us but to warn us: We've a duty to fulfill.

Here is what holds us together: Mercy, love, community.
We're to seek to care for neighbors in a just society.
If we fail to help the needy and to build a land that's just,
we will simply be a by-word as the world looks on at us.

We recall our nation's story. Keep us honest, God above!
In our quest for wealth and glory, we have injured ones you love.
Through enslavement, through displacement, we have chosen ways
of sin.
We've been violent. We've stayed silent. So our light of love stays
dim.

Will we work for racial justice? Will we turn from fear and hate?
What is now the public witness that you call us to create?
As we celebrate our country, help us, Lord, to understand:
All of us must share the bounty and the goodness of the land.

In this time, O God, restore us to the land we're called to be —
where all people here among us know your blest community.
May we seek to be that city, not with pride but as a prayer.
May we love and serve you humbly, in our land and everywhere.

Blessing and Benediction

Three-Fold Amen

Postlude

“Prelude in D” by Bach

Tudor

Announcements and Events – Sunday, July 5, 2026

Our Commitment to the Wider Church

In support of the Association Board of Directors initiative, CCC will hold specific churches and entities in our collective prayers. This week we pray for our country as the USA celebrates 250 years. We invite you to keep our nation in your hearts and prayers throughout the week as we strengthen the bonds of our faith community.

Summer Office Hours

Starting July 1 through August 15, the office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am – 1 pm.

CCC Indoor Community Yard Sale!

Saturday, August 1, 2026

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Fellowship Hall (Rain or Shine event)

Individual Table fee \$30

Or, donate the proceeds from your table to CCC and the fee is waived!

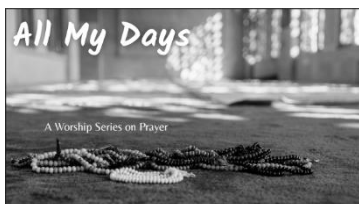
This is a run-your-own-table event. Set up is available from 6:00 - 8:00 pm on Friday, 7/31, or 7:30 - 9:00 am on Saturday, 8/1.

Volunteers are needed to help run a CCC food concession. Contact Lillian Beean <lbeean@verizon.net>.

Questions or to sign up for a table - Contact Lynn Horton <Lynn@terpsoft.com> or Deb Lyons <Deb@dandelyons.net>

DEMM Socks & T-shirts Collecting Through July 31

Socks and T-Shirts for DownEast Maine Mission - There will be a collection box in the Narthex throughout July for donations of new athletic socks and gently used T-shirts. The DownEast Maine Mission group donates these to migrant workers in the area of Maine where they go for their mission trip. Please contact Sue Sarafinas if you need additional information. Monetary donations for meals and construction supplies would be greatly appreciated.



“All My Days”

In Praise and Independence

“Hallowed be thy Name”

Today, Sunday, July 5th we celebrate the Lord’s Supper as we continue our journey of prayer.

On the sixth day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work... So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation. – Genesis 2: 2-3

As we jump into July and the lazy, hazy days of summer, we will look at the intersection of our freedom and our faith. True independence isn’t about isolation; it’s about the freedom to choose love, justice, and community. We will lift our voices in a chorus of praise, celebrating a God who liberates us to love others fully.

****This series includes opportunities to pray with prayer beads both during worship and at home. If you would like to create your own set, please let Pastor Lee know.**

Backpack Attack

KiSeLo will be collecting school supplies now through August 2. We will be working through The Wish Project again this year, which will provide backpacks with supplies to needy children in Lowell and Lawrence. If you would prefer not to provide supplies, a donation of \$50 is suggested or whatever amount you are able to donate. If you would like to provide supplies but again don't want to do the shopping, let me know and I can shop for you. You can also provide some of the supplies from the list and I will fill in the rest. You can return the supplies to me before or after Sunday church services or drop them off at the church office when it's open. Checks can be made out to the church and can be given to me or sent to the church office. For more information about The Wish Project Backpack Attack project, visit thewishproject.org/backpack-attack



Thanks in advance, *Lillian Beean* (lbeean@verizon.net)

Please provide the following:

- 1 new Backpack (17" or larger)
- 3 Spiral Notebooks
- 3 Folders
- 1 pack of 10 #2 Pencils
- 1 Pencil Sharpener
- 2 or more Black Pens
- 1 Pink style or 6 Cap Erasers
- 1 12" Ruler (with inches and centimeters)
- 1 pair of Metal Scissors (kid sized)
- 1 pack of 12 Markers or Colored Pencils
- 2 or 3 Glue Sticks or 1 Bottle of Glue
- 1 pack of 24 Crayons
- Optional: 1 Science Calculator for high school students

Sun, July 5	Worship	10:00 AM	Sanctuary
	Lunch With Lee	12:00 PM	Java Room
Tues, July 6	Knitters & Crocheters	10:30 AM	Parlor
	Lunch Bunch	11:45 AM	Room 202
	SonLight Band	7:30 PM	Sanctuary
Wed, July 8	Pastoral Search	5:30 PM	Room 202

Pastor Lee's Summer Office Hours: Sundays, 8:15–1:30; Tuesdays, 9:00–3:00.
She is also available by appointment.



Welcome to Central Congregational Church!

No matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you're welcome here!

Good morning and welcome to Sunday morning worship!

We are glad you are here to worship together! Please join us in Fellowship Hall after the service for food and fellowship. This service of worship is being livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. If you do not wish to be visible on the internet, please choose a seat in the balcony.

Children

- ☺ Children are always welcome in our services of worship.
- ☺ Busy Bags for kids are available in the narthex (lobby).

Deacons are available during Sunday services. Reach out to any of them with questions or concerns. You can spot them wearing a blue name tag.

Greeter(s): Catherine Loew

Head Usher Sue Sarafinas

Livestream Operator Vivian Hussey

Liturgist: Margie Dissinger

Deacon of the Day: Karen Banakos

Coffee Hour Hosts: Deacons: Lemonade & cookies

Flowers Donated by Jane McKersie in memory of Alan McKersie who was a Chelmsford Minuteman who marched regularly on July 4th.

Many thanks to all who enrich our morning together.



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Pastoral Search Committee:

Martha Chenault
Glenn Dissinger
Sue Houde
John Lamplough
Emmett Lyons
April McCarthy
Barbara Reilly
Dorinda Toppan, Chairperson

We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation, welcoming into the full life and ministry of the church persons of every race, culture, age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, marital status, education, and economic status. We especially and intentionally welcome all who have known the pain of exclusion or discrimination in the church and society.



Scan the QR code to give your offering electronically and support our ministry.
Thank you for your generosity!

Hymn

“O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountains majesties above the fruited plain! America! America! God shed full grace on thee, and crown thy good with servanthood from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears! America! America! God mend thine every flaw, confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law.