



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in CHELMSFORD

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

VOLUME 71 NUMBER 9

October 2026

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Women's Retreat

Saturday, Oct. 3 | 9AM – 5PM | The Sanctuary at Woodville

Celebrating Our Custodians – Potluck Lunch

Sunday, Oct. 4 | 11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

Recycling News – Speaker: Rebecca Gore

Sunday, Oct. 11 | 11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

Open and Affirming- Speaker: Dr. Casey Anne Brimmer

Sunday, Oct. 18 | 11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

Church History Display

Sunday, Oct. 25 | 11:30 AM | Fellowship Hall

Make A Difference Sunday

Sunday, Oct. 25 | 1:00 PM | 110 Ball Field

Sunday, Oct. 25 | 1:30 PM | Community Garden

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, Oct. 12 & 26

7:00 PM | on Zoom

KiSeLo Meeting

Wednesday, Oct. 23 | 12:45 PM | Fellowship Hall

Trip to the Quilt Museum

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FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful moment it was to hear about the unanimous vote to call Rev. Jenna Macy as Central Congregational Church's next settled pastor!

This is a moment worth celebrating—not only because of the excitement of welcoming Pastor Jenna, but because of all that has brought CCC to this point. Our Search Committee has given countless hours to this process: reading profiles, meeting, listening, discerning, praying, asking questions, and trusting the Spirit's guidance. So much of their work has happened quietly and behind the scenes. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude for the care, faithfulness, and love they have given to this search and to the future of our church.

And now we get to look forward. There is excitement and anticipation as we prepare to welcome Pastor Jenna and begin discovering together what this next chapter in the life of Central Congregational Church will hold.

At the same time, I think we are all beginning to realize that this wonderful news is bittersweet.

We knew from the beginning that our time together would end. That is the nature of interim ministry. What we couldn't know was what would happen in the time between hello and goodbye.

We couldn't know how we would grow together, how much we would share, or how deeply we would come to care for one another.

We have worshiped and prayed together. We have laughed—a lot! We have grieved together and celebrated together. We have gathered around tables, asked difficult questions, tried new things, wrestled with change, cared for one another, and sought to listen for where God was leading us. We have shared ordinary Sundays and some extraordinary moments.

Somewhere in the midst of all of that, we grew to love one another.

And that is what makes this moment bittersweet. We can be genuinely excited about Pastor Jenna and the future God is opening before CCC while also feeling the sadness of knowing that something precious to us is coming to an end. We don't have to choose between those feelings. There is room for both.

I know some of you have also been wondering what comes next for me. One of the unexpected gifts of our time together is that CCC has been soul-healing for me and has opened a door I did not expect: I am considering a return to settled parish ministry. On November 8, I will have a Candidating Sunday of my own.

There is something rather beautiful about the timing. As CCC prepares to begin a new chapter with Pastor Jenna, another door may be opening for me as well.

But we aren't at goodbye quite yet.

We still have some time together, and I don't want to rush through it. There will be time to celebrate Pastor Jenna, time to prepare for her arrival, time to give thanks for the journey we have shared, and eventually, time to say goodbye.

For now, I simply want us to recognize this moment for what it is: a milestone in the life of this church, the culmination of an enormous amount of faithful work, and the beginning of something new.

I am so grateful for our Search Committee. I am excited for Pastor Jenna. I am hopeful for CCC. And I am deeply grateful for what we have meant—and continue to mean—to one another.

What a gift this time together has been.

And what a gift that there is still more of it to come.

With much gratitude and peace,



Rev. Lee M. Atherton

OFFICE UPDATE

BEACON ARTICLES

The next submission deadline is **Saturday, October 24** for the November edition.

Margie Dissinger

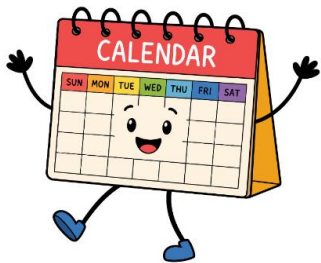
Interim Office Administrator

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



October 3 – Women's Retreat at The Sanctuary at Woodville

October 4 – World Communion Sunday

Celebrating Juaréz and Beth's Years at CCC (See page 6)

October 11 - Recycling Information Seminar (See page 7)

October 17 - Diaconate Retreat

October 18 - DEMM Celebration at worship

Open & Affirming Speaker: Dr. Casey Anne Brimmer (See page 7)

October 23 – KiSeLo – trip to Quilt Museum (See page 8)

October 25 – Church history display (See page 8)

Make A Difference Sunday (See page 9)

GREAT NEWS!



The Pastoral Search Committee is overjoyed that Rev. Jenna Macy has accepted the call to be our pastor at Central Congregational Church, and that the congregation voted unanimously on September 20, 2026 in support of our recommendation. Pastor Jenna will start her ministry with us in mid-January. A brief summary of her background follows, as well as our thoughts that led to her call.

Pastor Jenna (she/her) grew up on the North Shore of Massachusetts before moving to the Merrimack Valley to attend UMass Lowell, where she earned a Bachelor degree in Psychology. She received her Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School and was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 2014, after several years serving as a Christian

Education Director in Lowell and Walpole. Pastor Jenna and her family are residents of Lowell.

After serving in various pastorates and as a consultant in the areas of Christian Education and Family Ministry programs, Pastor Jenna felt a strong tug back to local church ministry which eventually took her to First Church Somerville, where she has served three years as Associate Pastor, and then as Lead Pastor for five years.

As the Search Committee interviewed potential candidates, we kept in mind the four themes from the Appreciative Interviews: Worship, Inclusivity, Fellowship, and Mission, and how they applied to candidates. In Pastor Jenna, we found the compassion and skills to support our church as we seek to play a part in our larger community and the world.

One of the areas we looked at closely is Christian Education, in which she has extensive experience having served as a Christian Educator for eight years and as a consultant to local churches that needed help with their own programs. Pastor Jenna has been a foster parent to numerous children for 18 years, and her knowledge and dedication to children is inspiring. We welcome her expertise and love of children to the congregation.

A question that arose in the Meet and Greet sessions was about church growth, in particular attracting young families. Pastor Jenna agreed young families are vital to growth, but said that growth needs to happen across all age groups. There are older people that may have just moved to town and would like to find a church home, or families that have just moved into the area. Sustainable growth provides a home for all ages.

People of all ages are seeking connection. They may look to a church, not just for Sunday worship, but because they want to be involved in something meaningful. Pastor Jenna has a strong faith foundation and she has the skills to draw out from us that which we would like to do to welcome people who are seeking a church, but not push us in a particular direction.

Intergenerational connection is at the root of Pastor Jenna's ministry, and she will meet us where we are and help us see where we want to go. Her depth of experience in leadership and consulting will strengthen all our practices with our priorities in organizational health, and her knowledge of and deep dedication to the Merrimack Valley will enrich her role with us.

Pastor Jenna is an excellent listener with a group, or in a personal conversation! She reflects back to be sure she understands, and responds in a way that opens up your thinking, rather than telling you what she thinks you should do. She has an excellent sense of humor which brightens many conversations!

Worship was the highest priority that our church sought in a minister. The Search Committee had the opportunity to listen to her sermons, and from her references we learned that she is widely known for her excellent preaching. We look forward to her being part of and leading our worshipping community.

As a committee, we believe that the Holy Spirit has been with us all throughout this search, and has brought Rev. Jenna Macy to us – and us to her. We believe that Pastor Jenna is the right person to be our pastor! We are so excited that the congregation believes this, too!

If you have any questions, please contact Dory Toppan, Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, at dtoppan62@gmail.com, or 508-517-1916.

CELEBRATING OUR CUSTODIANS – OCTOBER 4, 2026

Join in a pot luck luncheon on October 4th, after church, to celebrate the lovely relationship we have had with Juárez and Beth, and to show them our appreciation.

The House Committee will provide sandwich fixings and a cake. The congregation is asked to bring any other items such as chips, salads, appetizers and side dishes.

Mary Horne

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Happy Fall from your Christian Education Committee. We had a wonderful Welcome Back Sunday with the Blessing of the Backpacks and a hot dog and lemonade lunch. It was fantastic to see everyone back together, meeting their new teachers, and catching up on all they did this summer. We have had some great success with our intergenerational pen pal fellowship, and it has been a lovely way for the youth in our church to build relationships with people they wouldn't otherwise meet and to share interests. There were some wonderful stories about pen pals meeting up at a swim meet and a choral concert.

Looking forward, Bible Sunday will be on October 25th, and the Sunday School will have its annual Fall Hike at Thanksgiving Forest on November 15th. The Advent Festival will be on November 29th. More information on all of these events will be forthcoming. Looking forward to an active fall!

Kristin Strobel for Your CE Committee

SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSION (SAM)

Neighbors in Need – Advocating for Change

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us. Ephesians 5: 1-2

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul encourages all of us to be like Christ and “walk in love.” There is an inherent connection between the Gospel call to respond to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, those in prison, the sick and homeless, and also to the policy decisions that determine funding for issues such as school meal programs, standards for clean air, sentencing for nonviolent offenders, and health care access for all. Advocacy is essential to participating in God’s mission in the world.

When we come together as a church to do the work of justice and advocacy, we are acting out of the hope that change in the world is possible.

When you give to Neighbors in Need, you help build a just world for all! Special Neighbors in Need offering envelopes will be available in Sunday bulletins and pew racks during the month of October. Donations may also be sent to the church office with a notation for Neighbors in Need.

Thank you!

Social Action and Mission Committee

Julie Carney

RECYCLING NEWS

Good News! – Recent advances in technology mean that we can now recycle all those coffee cups we’ve long been told not to put in our recycling bins because of their interior plastic lining.



Social Action and Mission has invited Rebecca Gore of the Chelmsford Recycling Committee to visit us in Fellowship Hall after our service on October 11th. Rebecca will provide information and answer questions on what can and cannot be put in the recycle bins. The town’s recycling efforts are constantly evolving and often subject to confusion on the part of residents. So plan to stop by for a chat with her for this chance to learn about what more we can all be doing to recycle and reduce the waste stream.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA)

The Open and Affirming Ministry will be hosting a guest speaker on **October 18th**. It will be at 11:30 after coffee hour. There will be pizza and salad served for lunch, and childcare will be provided.

Bio:

Dr. Casey Anne Brimmer (they/them) has been educating about allyship to LGBTQ+ communities for 20 years. They hold several degrees including a masters in Women’s and Gender Studies and a PhD in Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought, and have been teaching college courses on gender and sexuality for more than 10 years. Their passion is in creating and supporting affirming spaces for all marginalized people utilizing a framework that allows people to bring all parts of themselves into learning, work, educational, and faith communities. They are the founding co-host of the Affirming Practice Podcast with Pastor Bob Ierien to offer everyday actions listeners can pursue to be better allies to different marginalized communities.

Workshop

Title: Welcoming & Affirming LGBTQ+ People In Our Faith Community

Description: What does building an affirming space look like to you? In this community driven workshop we discuss active allyship, inclusion, and everyday actions you can take to welcome LGBTQ+ people into your faith community. We cover the basics of LGBTQ+ identities, acts of institutional accessibility for LGBTQ+ community members, and develop a better understanding of allyship to the LGBTQ+ community members in your lives. This workshop is beginner friendly, and it centers on your questions.

People can submit questions anonymously now [HERE](#).

Mary Horne on behalf of the ONA Ministry

WE CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE CCC'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY! 1876-2026

Following the church service on Sunday, October 25th – the 150th Anniversary Committee invites you to linger in Fellowship Hall to view a fascinating exhibit depicting CCC's amazing history! Covering key events between 1876 to 1960, the exhibit will include historic documents, early gifts to the church from the 1870s, photographs, illustrations, bulletin covers from WW II, and items commemorating the celebration of our "new church" on June 1, 1960. Some of these items have "rested" in huge metal file cabinets in our church archives for over 100 years...but they represent our church's history and we all deserve to see them! Jessie Buchanan and Pat Vondal will be there to help guide you through our history and answer questions.

Pat Vondal, Church Historian

POTLUCK THANK YOU!

A big thank you to all who helped make the Pastoral Candidate Potluck a great success! Thanks to the faithful crew who showed up Saturday morning to set up all the tables and chairs, spread out the tablecloths, and put out the plates and silverware. Multiple people remarked that it looked very nice! Thanks to all the people that brought in the wonderful food. We had a great variety! Thanks to the people who helped put food on the tables and cleared it off after the meal. Thanks to the people that helped make sure food and beverages were refilled during the meal. Thanks to the people who gathered all the tablecloths and made sure the really soiled ones were separated. Thanks to the people who put away all the tables and chairs, also setting up for Sunday. Our pastoral candidate was impressed how fast we are at taking things down. And finally, thanks to all the people who helped clean up, putting things away, and leaving the kitchen clean when we left. I really appreciate all of you!

Lillian Beean

KISELO – KINDNESS, SERVICE, LOVE

The crisp air, the changing leaves, apples, and the ever-present pumpkin spice! Fall is here and with that comes the start of the 2026-2027 KiSeLo year. The gals of KiSeLo met on September 23rd with the annual "welcome back" pot luck. Fellowship and food is what we do best! Our next meeting will be held on October 28th. A fun field trip is planned to the Quilt Museum in Lowell. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 12:45, have a short business meeting, and then carpool to the museum. For those having difficulty walking you will be dropped off at the door. Admission is \$10.00 per person and we will have a guided tour of the museum.

All women of the church are welcome to join us. Have questions or need more info? Text or call Karen Banakos at [\(603\)686-2026](tel:6036862026).

Ok ladies, every month I am going to add quotes from great women. Here is October's:

"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

Jane Goodall

Karen Banakos

SUPPORTING FAITH FORMATION AT CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

At Central Congregational Church, faith formation happens in many different ways—not only through Sunday worship and church programs, but also through opportunities to learn, grow, explore, and develop our gifts for ministry. To help encourage this growth, the Christian Education Committee has developed a new Faith Formation Funding Request process that will provide financial support for active church attendees who participate in educational and faith-building opportunities.

Through this process, active attendees may request financial assistance for Christian education courses, workshops, conferences, retreats, ministry and leadership training, books, curriculum, guest speakers, and other resources that support the mission of our Christian Education ministry. Requests will be reviewed individually by the Christian Education Committee and would need to demonstrate how the opportunity contributes to the applicant's spiritual growth or ability to serve the church, as well as how they plan to share their learning with the Christian Education Committee or the congregation. Funding will be based on how the request aligns with the committee's priorities and available discretionary account budget, and approval will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The goal is to create a meaningful way for the Christian Education Committee to invest in the continued growth, learning, and faith formation development of Central Congregational Church's active attendees—strengthening not only individuals, but the life and ministry of our entire congregation.

For more information about this new Faith Formation funding request process please contact Samantha Shields or April McCarthy, co-Chairs of the Christian Education Committee.

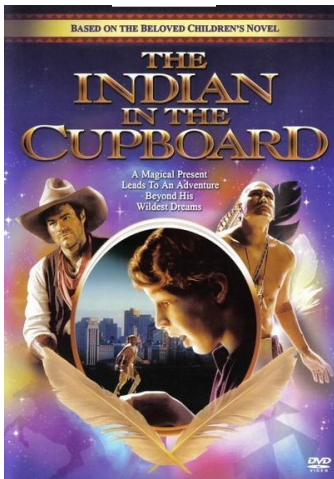
Respectfully Submitted by Samantha Shields on behalf of the CE Committee

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

Join in the fun and effort of making a difference in our community on Sunday, October 25! Volunteers are needed for two service projects: **Rail Trail Clean Up** – Meet at the Route 110 ball fields parking lot (end of Fletcher Street) at 1:00 pm. Bring gloves and wear good walking shoes. Trash bags and “grabbers” will be provided. **Community Garden Clean Up** – Meet at Sunny Meadow Farm, Walter Lewis Community Garden, near 158 Robin Hill Road at 1:30 pm. Bring gardening gloves and trowels for weeding. Larger tools (spades and rakes) will be provided. Fall tasks include “closing the garden for the season.” Invite your friends and neighbors to help alongside CCC volunteers! Volunteers of all ages are encouraged to participate in these CCC community service projects! Thank you for lending a hand! Contact Lynn Horton if you have questions! Lynn@terpsoft.com

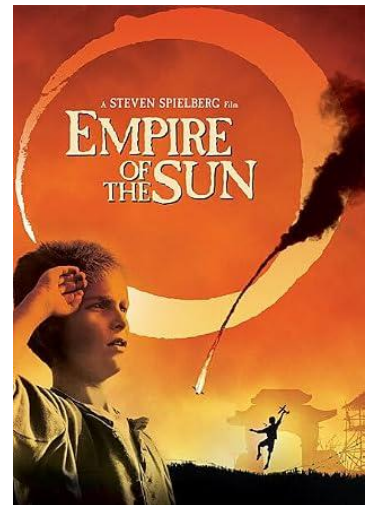
CCC MOVIE GROUP

Mondays | October 12 & 26 | 7:00 PM | Zoom



Monday, 10/12 – “The Indian in the Cupboard” (1995) is an American family fantasy drama film directed by Frank Oz and written by Melissa Mathison, based on the 1980 children's book by Lynne Reid Banks. The story revolves around a New York City boy named Omri who receives an old cupboard from his 14-year-old brother Gillon and a toy Native American from his best friend Patrick. Omri gets a special key from his mom, which she got from her grandmother, and locks the toy in the cupboard. He later discovers that putting toy figures in the cupboard, after locking and unlocking it, brings the toys to life. The film stars Hal Scardino as Omri, Litefoot in his film debut as Little Bear, Lindsay Crouse as Omri's mother, Richard Jenkins as Omri's father, Rishi Bhat in his only film as Omri's friend Patrick, and David Keith as Boone the Cowboy. Litefoot was discovered after performing a rap concert in Rome organized by the American Indian College Fund, who recommended him to the producers. When he joined the film, Litefoot convinced the filmmakers to hire an Onondaga adviser, Jeanne Shenandoah, and the adviser helped make his character Little Bear culturally authentic: "From the bottom of my feet to the top of my bald head, all the tattooing, the dropped earlobes, the leggings, the moccasins, were all Onondaga in 1761." On each day of shooting, it took 3½ to 4½ hours to apply his tattoos with permanent markers.

Monday, 10/26 – “Empire of the Sun” (1987) Directed by Steven Spielberg and written by Tom Stoppard, the film “Empire of the Sun” is based on J. G. Ballard's semi-autobiographical 1984 novel of the same name. The movie tells the story of Jamie "Jim" Graham (Christian Bale), a young British boy whose privileged life is upturned by the Japanese invasion of Shanghai, December 8, 1941. Separated from his parents, he is eventually captured and taken to Soo Chow confinement camp, which is operated by the Japanese next to a captured Chinese airfield. Amidst the sickness and food shortages in the camp, Jim attempts to reconstruct his former life, all the while bringing spirit and dignity to those around him. Spielberg considers the film to be his most profound work on the loss of innocence. The film also stars John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson, Nigel Havers, Joe Pantoliano, Masatō Ibu, Leslie Phillips, Ben Stiller, and Robert Stephens. The musical score is by John Williams. Scenes to note: The shot of Jim's parents tucking him in bed mirrors the Norman Rockwell painting "Freedom from Fear." Jim's father even holds a newspaper like the father in the painting. The painting is also featured when Jim is at a camp - as he rearranges the pin-ups on his wall, Rockwell's painting is one of them.



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!



CCC HOLIDAY FAIR

Saturday, November 21 | Fellowship Hall

Join us for the Annual CCC Holiday Fair – 2026!! Mark the Date and Get Ready!

The CCC Holiday Fair is Coming on Saturday, November 21, 2026! It's not too early to plan for this major fundraiser! Your help is needed to make the event a success!

Set-Up Hours at CCC:

- Thursday, November 19, time TBD (Setting up tables in Fellowship Hall)
- Friday, November 20, 9:00 am until 8:00 pm ("Come and go" set up of various tables' items)

Fair Hours at CCC:

- Saturday, November 21, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Sunday, November 22, beginning after the Worship Service and ending at 12:30 pm

Tables will include:

- Crafts
- Jewelry
- Plants
- Books, Puzzles, Games
- Christmas Room
- Baked Goods
- Vendor Tables
- Silent Auction



Volunteers and donors are crucial! Be thinking now about the ways that you can participate and contribute! **Thank you very much!**

Contact Lynn Horton, your "Fair Chair" at Lynn@terpsoft.com (978) 256-8524

CCC Apple Pie Baking

Mark Your calendars for Friday, November 20 to join in the fun of baking apple pies for the Fair's Bake sale! We will meet in the church kitchen at 9:00 am. Prior to the 20th we will need pie dough for 60 double crusts, so there will be sign-ups after church starting in mid-October, along with the dough recipe. On bake day, we will need volunteers to be dough rollers, apple parers and slicers, and pie fillers – all are welcome, men, too!
Therese Burdo and Christine McNamara

UPDATES

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR



Creating Faith-filled Disciples Centered in God's Love

We started the month of September off with "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds.

Everyone in worship was asked to create a dot on a note card handed to them. At the end of the book Vashti told a possible new artist to sign his work. One person signed their card. You have the opportunity to own your creative start, they are outside of my office in the swirly gold frame.

My interest in sharing this book with all of you was because of International Dot Day, September 15. A day to encourage everyone to be inspired and act on that inspiration. Also for those around others to support the Brave.

It also fits into the theme for the Sunday School Classes this year, Helping Hands, Brave Hearts!

As a Congregation you had a lot of conversation about the next settled Senior Pastor at CCC and voted in favor of a person who is a Beloved Child of God and while well matched for the

Church CCC talks about being will help us as a community live into our starting Dot of a journey to Bravely step into. I can't wait for January!!!!

October is Pastor Appreciation Month - take a moment to send a special note to Pastor Lee.

It might also be a good time to share a special moment with the Sunday School Teachers - A thanks for working with the children so you can worship, or a story your children have shared about their time in Sunday School.

Jennifer Hart

PRAYER MINISTRY

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

Whatever you are carrying in your life—worry, gratitude, grief, or hope—you do not have to carry it alone. At CCC, this promise is at the heart of our Prayer Ministry, a quiet but powerful part of our church. A dedicated team of 20 prayer partners faithfully lifts each request to God with complete confidentiality. Your story remains within the prayer ministry and is treated with great care. To share a request for yourself or someone you love, contact Marcia Cassidy at marciacassidy@comcast.net. It is a blessing and privilege to pray alongside you.



HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

The porch at 9 Worthen has been repaired and will be painted in the spring. The spaces between the granite curbing on the playground side of the parking lot have been filled with caulk. The shed has been cleaned out, and removal of Boy Scout stuff from the basement of 9 Worthen is ongoing. The toilet in room 102 (Co-op) was replaced, but the one installed by All Drain is too small. Jim Clark will install a new one when he returns from Georgia. The small boiler was not functioning on Sunday 9/13/26, and there was no hot water. Nashoba Air was called and came out Sunday night to restore function and hot water.

Still to be done: repair and paint the ceiling near the boiler room, replace flickering hall lights on the third floor, screw down the siding on the dumpster, and repair the emergency lighting for CE rooms 202-204.

Hunter Lyons has taken on the responsibility for lawn care; please thank him when you see him. This is a great savings for the church.

Most of our time has been taken up by the search for a new custodian. The job description has been revised, and ads were placed on Indeed and Facebook. There have been many resumé's submitted. We established a list of Wants and Needs, and started telephone pre-interviews. In person interviews are taking place this week and next, and we hope to have someone new by October 1st.

We will be having a potluck after church on October 4th to celebrate Juarez and Beth's time with us. The House Committee will supply sandwich fixings and a cake, and the congregation is encouraged to bring whatever they wish—appetizers, salads, etc.

Mary Horne

DEEPEN YOUR FAITH: JOIN US FOR WEEKLY LECTIO DIVINA

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

Looking for a peaceful, reflective way to ground your heart before Sunday worship? You are warmly invited to join our weekly Lectio Divina group every Sunday morning from 8:45 AM to 9:30 AM in Room 302.

What is Lectio Divina? Lectio Divina—Latin for “Divine Reading”—is an ancient, contemplative practice of reading scripture. Rather than studying the text academically, we listen with the “ear of the heart” allowing God's Word to speak directly into our daily lives. Each week, we slowly read, meditate on, and discuss the upcoming Sunday scripture passages together in a quiet, supportive environment.

What to Expect

- When: Every Sunday, 8:45 – 9:30 AM
- Where: Room 302
- What to Bring: Just your Bible and an open heart!
- Commitment: Drop in whenever you can—come every week, or just on the Sundays that fit your schedule.

Whether you have practiced contemplative prayer for years or are completely new to scripture discussion, there is a seat saved for you at the table. We look forward to reading, reflecting, and growing alongside you this Sunday!

Pastor Lee

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 and complete the online Rental Inquiry Form](#).

COUNCIL CORNER

A Monthly Update on the Activity of the CCC Council

News from the September 9, 2026, meeting:

- Treasurer Dick Papenfuss reported that as of August 31 we are 16.7% of the way into Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Total pledge income to date is only \$5000 behind budget at 15%. Unpledged income is right on target at 17%. Our total income is 15%. Co-Op Nursery School rental payments will resume in September. Total expenditures are as expected at 17% YTD. The 3% pay increase for all staff is in effect. The church's insurance policy continues to exceed budget. There were no committee expenses over the summer.
- The members of Council voted unanimously to approve the updated 2026-2027 budget which includes the transfer of surplus money from 2025-2026, as voted by Council in August, and the increases staff salaries.
- Board chair John Carson presented the Trustees' written proposal to adjust the wedding coordinator fee structure. While the current flat rate of \$200 typically covers standard service, on occasion ceremonies often require additional preparation, rehearsal, or event-day time. The Trustees proposed keeping the \$200 base fee for up to 5 hours, with additional hours billed at \$40/hour for non-CCC users and \$30/hour for CCC members. Wedding Coordinators Bonnie McGrath and Diane Blair support the proposal. The members of Council voted unanimously to approve wedding coordinator fee structure change.
- Conversation was held by the Council regarding the use of the church parking lot by commercial entities. Current users of the lot (other than parishioners) include the medical building employees next door, for which CCC receives payment, and CCC-supported benevolences such as the Scouts and The

Open Pantry. No action to be taken at this time; the Trustees were interested to have Council's feedback on the subject.

- Dory Toppan, chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, described the planned Meet and Greet events planned for the third week of September, prior to Candidate Sunday on September 20, 2026. Presentation packets with information about the candidate will be distributed at the gatherings.
- Deb Lyons shared that the ONA Ministry team is planning to host a guest speaker on gender identity and pronoun usage on Sunday, October 18, 2026. All members and friends of CCC are invited to attend.
- Mary Horne, House Committee, provided an update on custodian position search. Multiple applications have been received following a posting on the Indeed website. The Communications Committee will help promote the job opening through additional channels. Interviews will be held by members of the House committee, based on a revised job description developed with input from Juarez Gomes. Juarez noted that incorporating lawn mowing to the duties of the custodian position exceeds the work beyond 25 hours per week and recommended considering a third-party lawn service instead.
- CE co-chair Sam Shield provided details about Welcome Sunday, being held on September 13, 2026. The service includes Blessing of the Backpacks, first Sunday School classes of the year, and keychains will be distributed to youngsters. Christian Ed will serve hot dogs and lemonade and ask for additional food items to be donated by the congregation. CE requested that someone not on the committee make the coffee. Wim Nijenberg offered to e-mail the Coffee Hour Committee to ensure someone is available to make coffee for Welcome Sunday.
- Sam Shields also reported the class structure reconfigurations for 2026/2027: combined Pre-K-2nd grades into one class; maintaining structure for grades 3-4, Holy Cows grades 5-8, and God Squad high schoolers.
- Wim Nijenberg will be installed as a Deacon during the Welcome Sunday worship service and Sunday School teachers will be commissioned.
- The Christian Education Committee is developing a new grant proposal process. Sam Shields reported on behalf of the CE Committee that they had approved this process at their September 2, 2026, meeting, with a goal of optimizing the use of CE discretionary funds. Active church attendees may submit proposals for Christian education initiatives for youth or adults, including programs, workshops, retreats, guest speakers, leadership training, courses, and educational materials that align with the ministry's mission. Grant recipients will be asked to share their learnings with the committee or wider congregation (e.g., leading a book study or submitting a summary report demonstrating how the training/program supports the CE ministry mission and how they would use their learning to broaden the church's knowledge.) Grant approvals remain subject to fund availability and alignment with the committee's goals and priorities. Approval will be on a case-by-case basis.
- Also, on behalf of the CE Committee, Sam announced that there is a plan to resume the Make A Difference Week summer program for children in August 2027. Sam requested that the Trustees ensure that use of spaces in the building and grounds will not conflict with the SkillSprout renters.
- Happy Birthday wishes to Pastor Lee! Her September 9th birthday evening was spent on Zoom with the members of Council! :^)

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, October 14, 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 M. Atherton	508-308-7116	pastor-lee@cccchelmsford.org
Director of Music:	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	tudorbota@gmail.com
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