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, November 29, 2026 | The First Sunday of Advent | 10 o'clock a.m.



First Sunday of Advent

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

Prelude "Your Love Never Ends," "Come as You Are" arr. Hayes Tudor Bota
Welcome and Announcements Janet Paton
Centering for Worship and Ringing the Bell Rev. Lee Atherton

Call to Worship Christine Williams

Leader: We enter the season of waiting. The days grow short, and the world longs for shelter.
People: Even the ox knows its master, and the donkey its owner's manger.
Leader: We gather in the stillness to recognize the One who made us, knows us, and prepares a place for us.
People: We place our hope in God, who makes room for salvation to unfold.
Leader: Let us stay awake to the wonder of God's promises and worship together with hopeful hearts!
All: Come, Lord Jesus! Make your home among us!

***Opening Carol** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" v. 1,3 & 4 #119 Blue

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope Hunter, Emmett & Madison Lyons

….In a world that often feels uncertain, we light the first purple candle—the candle of **Hope**.
People: We trust that God is at work, even when the way ahead is unclear.
Reader: We remember God's faithfulness in all that has been, and we look forward with hope to all that is yet to come.
People: Come, Lord Jesus. Make your home among us.
Reader: Will you join me in prayer?
All Together: Faithful God, awaken our hearts to your presence. Just as the animals wait safely in the stable, help us trust that we always belong to you. Open our eyes to the possibilities before us, strengthen our faith in your promises, and fill us with true hope as we prepare once again to welcome Baby Jesus. Amen.

Opening Prayer and The Lord's Prayer Christine

God of long waiting and joyful beginnings, thank you for bringing us together today as we start our countdown to Christmas! As our eyes turn toward humble places—and as we look at the Fontanini stable, the patient ox, and the goat waiting right here on our communion table—we thank you for providing a safe and cozy shelter for your creatures. Open our ears to your Word in Isaiah, open our hearts to see your majesty in the quiet stable, and warm our spirits with true **Hope** as we excitedly wait for the gift of your Son, Baby Jesus—in whose name we pray together, saying, ...

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.

Passing the Peace

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Children's Scripture Isaiah 1:3

The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.

Children's Message Jennifer Hart

Sending Song #437 Blue

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

Scripture Isaiah 1:3 and Mark 13:24-37 Pew Bible p. 548 & 826

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God

All: Thanks be to God

Sermon Pastor Lee

***Advent Carol** "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus" #125 Blue

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Invitation to the Offering Christine

Offertory "Thy Art Worthy" arr. Schrader Chancel Choir

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy; Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, glory and honor, glory and honor and pow'r. For Thou hast created, hast all things created; Thou hast created all things; and for Thy pleasure they are created, for Thou art worthy, O Lord.

***Doxology** **"**Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**"** #46-48 Blue

Prayer of Dedication

***Closing Carol** "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates" #129 Blue

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Postlude "Courante" by Bach Tudor

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):	The McCarthy Family
Head Usher	Curtis Bates
Livestream Operator	Vivian Hussey
Liturgist:	Christine Williams
Deacon of the Day:	Wim Nijenberg
Nursery Coordinator	Hunter Lyons
Coffee Hour Host:	
Flowers	Donated by Jennifer and Don Delikat in memory of loved ones.

Many thanks to all who enrich our morning together.

Central Congregational Church UCC

"A Community of Faith, Hope, and Love, Growing through Worship and Service"

Interim Pastor	Rev. Lee Atherton	508-308-7116	Pastor-Lee@cccchelmsford.org
Director of Music	Tudor Bota	978-772-3173	tudormbota@gmail.com
Interim Office Admin	Margie Dissinger	978-256-5931	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org
Sunday School Coord.	Jennifer Hart	610-781-2074	jennifer.hart@cccchelmsford.org
Custodian	Jose Deleon		j.deleon0922@gmail.com
Council President	Lynn Horton	978-256-8524	lynn@terpsoft.com
Church Phone & Email	978-256-5931	office.admin@cccchelmsford.org	
Church Address	1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824		
U.C.C. Website	ucc.org (United Church of Christ)		

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!

Announcements and Events – Sunday, November 29, 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 the First Congregational Church in Topsfield. We invite you to keep them in your hearts and prayers throughout the week as we strengthen the bonds of our faith community.

2026 Advent Festival TODAY
Please join us TODAY immediately following the worship service for this year's Advent Festival. This is a fun tradition at CCC where everyone in the congregation gets together for fellowship and to bring in the Advent Season together. We will sing carols, enjoy music, and create crafts and Advent wreaths to take home. We also plan to share and enjoy a delicious potluck lunch - with your help! We ask that everyone bring an appetizer, main dish, or side dish to share and join in the festivities.

The Advent Festival is a tradition that our youth look forward to every year. We are very grateful for everyone who makes this day so special for them and all who are young at heart to enjoy!

We suggest a small donation for those who are able to help cover the cost of the event, $2 per person or $8 for the whole family. Sign-ups are just a way to help us plan for the day, but are not required, please attend regardless if you sign-up, donate, or not. All are welcome to celebrate the day together!!

We look forward to ushering in this Advent season with you!! ~*Your Christian Education Committee*

Advent Devotional
The Christian Education Committee has purchased Advent Devotional booklets for all those who want one for the Advent season. The booklets are available in a basket on the table at the elevator or on the table outside the office.

Secret Santa Mission 2026
Members of your Social Action & Mission Committee will be at coffee hour today, Sunday the 29th for second week of in person signups.
Gift collection of your wrapped and labeled presents will start on December 6th. December 13th is the final day of gift collection.
You can also click on the link below for gift selection:
https://www.cccchelmsford.org/secret-santa/
Once you choose a gift, you will receive an email confirmation with a link to print the label.
Thank you for helping with this mission of bringing joy and cheer to 28 local families this holiday season.
Please see any member of SAM if you have any questions.
Thank you so much ! Sincerely, *Your Social Action and Mission Committee with Cindy Bruetsch and Julie Carney*

Christmas Tree Sales
We need your help in selling trees and wreaths! Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or scan this QR Code. Let everyone know we will be selling trees and wreaths.

Christmas Concert
The annual Christmas Concert will be on Sunday, December 13 at 3:00pm. The Music Committee is looking for people to volunteer to help with items for the reception, and to serve as greeters and ushers. (Help with clean up after the reception would be greatly appreciated). Food items such as cookies, fruit or cheese trays would be welcome.
There will be a freewill offering and a reception in Fellowship Hall following the concert. Invite your family and friends to enjoy this musical tradition for the Christmas season.
Contact Val King at valking@comcast.net or 978-846-1120 to volunteer.

Blue Christmas Service: Finding Light in the Quiet Sunday, December 13 at 6:30 PM
The holidays aren't always merry and bright. If you are carrying grief, loneliness, health struggles, or the weight of life's transitions this season, you are not alone. Join us on Sunday, December 13 at 6:30 PM for a gentle, contemplative Blue Christmas service of quiet music, scripture, candle lighting, and prayer—a safe space to acknowledge our sorrow while holding onto the hope that God's light still shines in the darkness.

Resource Available: Copies of Pastor Lee's booklet, *"Blue Holidays: A Guide to Grief at the Holidays,"* are available in the narthex/church office for anyone walking through a difficult season—or to pick up and share with a friend or neighbor who needs comfort this Christmas.

Poinsettia Signup
Starting today, Sunday, November 29, please sign up to purchase a poinsettia plant for $15 each to decorate the sanctuary for the holidays. Your poinsettia plant may be taken home after the last Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24. Questions? Please contact Sue Sarafinas at 4sueth@gmail.com.

Maddie's Movie Night – Sunday, December 6 at 7:00 PM
Come to enjoy a free showing of short movies by Maddie Knight!



Sun, Nov 29	Worship	10:00 AM	Sanctuary
	Concert Choir Rehearsal	11:30 AM	Sanctuary
	CE Advent Festival	11:30 AM	Fellowship Hall
Mon, Nov 30	ChristCare	7:00 PM	Zoom
Tues, Dec 1	Knitters & Crocheters	10:30 AM	Parlor
	Lunch Bunch	11:45 AM	Room 202
	SAM Committee Meeting	7:00 PM	Room 302
	SonLight Band	7:30 PM	Sanctuary
Wed, Dec 2	Trustee's Meeting	7:00 PM	Room 202
Thurs, Dec 3	Bells	5:45 PM	Room 312
	Choir	7:00 PM	Sanctuary

Pastor Lee's Office Hours: Sundays, 8:15–1:00; Tuesdays, 9:00–2:00; Wednesdays 9:00–12:00. She is also available by appointment.

HYMN LYRICS

Opening Hymn **"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go. *Refrain*

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. *Refrain*

Hymn **"Come, O Long-Expected Jesus"**

Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us; Christ in whom our rest shall be.
You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.

Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by your all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Closing Hymn **"Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"**

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold the glorious Ruler waits! The Sovereign One is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! We open wide our hearts to you; here, Christ, abide! Let us your inner presence feel, your grace and love in us reveal.

So come, our Sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin; your Holy spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.