

*Please rise in body or in spirit

Prelude - "The Lord Is My Shepherd"

Ritter

Greeting

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Opening Hymn – "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Call to Worship

Where can we go and seek refuge?

We've taken refuge in you, Lord.

Who can rescue us from the grip of the wrongdoer?

We plead our case to you, Lord.

Is there any place we can run to escape the spiritual dangers that surround us?

The Lord is our rock and our refuge. Let us lift up our praise as we celebrate the deliverance found only in the Lord.

Choral Introit – "Shepherd Me, O God"

Haugen

Opening Prayer

God of creation, your heavens and earth shout out the amazing news of your power and glory. God of justice, your laws of mercy and goodness reveal your vision of harmony for all people. God of love, your Son Jesus Christ proclaims the amazing news of your liberation for all who are hungry, poor, or oppressed. May we join with all of creation to become your message of love to the world. Amen.

Passing of Peace

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Call to Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Offertory Reflection

Offertory Anthem - "Lord, Make Us Worthy"

Sleeth

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

God, we know true joy: when we follow your law, when we share our abundance, when we show your love to others. May these gifts serve as a proclamation of your glory, and may these offerings put our words into action as disciples of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading – Esther 4:1-9**

Hymn - "Step by Step" (sing twice)

Scripture Reading – Esther 4:10-17**

Sermon – "The Next Right Step"

Closing Hymn - "Here I Am, Lord"

Announcements

Benediction

Go forth into this holy day.

To proclaim God's message of peace without fear.

Go forth into this holy day.

To share God's message of justice without shame.

Go forth into this holy day.

To embody God's message of love wherever you go.

And God's people say: **Amen.**

Benediction Response - "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

Anon.

Postlude - "Sinfonia" from Solomon

Handel/arr. Williams

**After the scripture readings, please respond, "Thanks be to God."

We extend a warm greeting to all who are attending our worship service this morning in person or on Zoom or watching later via a video link.

The Flowers on the altar this morning are given to the Glory of God by Margaret Wilkinson in loving memory of her niece, Christine.

Today – Senior Choir

Acolyte – James Ruth

Lay Reader – Roberta Davidson-Stratton

Minister of Music – Karen Leonard

Pastor – Rev. Geisa Matos

THIS WEEK AT WEST CHELMSFORD UMC

Sunday, September 14th, 14th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom

10:00 AM, Sunday School in the Education Wing

10:30 AM, Coffee Hour in the Vestry

3:00 PM, Westford Girl Scout Troop 70533 meeting in the Education Wing

Monday – 6:45 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Bear Den meeting in the Education Wing

7:30 PM, Jubilee Ringers rehearsal in the Sanctuary

Wednesday – **7:30 PM, Staff/Parish meeting via Zoom**

7:30 PM, Festival Ringers rehearsal in the Sanctuary

Thursday – **7:30 PM, Senior Choir rehearsal in the Choir Room**

Saturday – 10:00 AM, MVR Retreat in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall

1:30 PM, Celebration of Life Service for Rev. Mack Hagins at 310 Green Rd., Bolton, MA

Sunday, September 21st, 15th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- Victims and their families of mass shootings in our country
- Victims and their families of plane crashes in our country and around the world
- World peace and conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine
- All that are sick, mourning, and/or lonely

Article Submission Due Dates

- Articles for the **mid-week email** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Monday**.
- Articles for the **church bulletin insert** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Tuesday**.
- Articles for the **October 2025 Newsletter** are due in the church office by **Monday, September 15, 2025**.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Continue to support our Organ Fund – Don't forget to leave your donations in the organ pipe display.

Educational Opportunity - **Confronting White Christian Nationalism with Jim Wallis, on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM EST via ZOOM**

The **Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (CUIR)** invites you to a vital and timely conversation on the rise of **White Christian Nationalism**—an urgent issue facing both the Church and our democracy today.

We are honored to welcome **Jim Wallis** as our featured speaker. A leading voice in public theology and social justice, Wallis serves as the inaugural **Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair in Faith and Justice** at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, where he also directs the new **Center on Faith and Justice**.

Wallis is the founder of *Sojourners*, a bestselling author, and a nationally recognized advocate for faith in action. His latest book, *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy* (April 2024), has sparked widespread discussion on the role of faith in confronting extremism and rebuilding a more just society.

His past leadership includes service on President Obama's first **White House Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships**, and recognition by *Washingtonian* magazine as one of **D.C.'s 500 most influential policy shapers** in both 2022 and 2023.

Join us as we reflect on how Christian communities can respond faithfully, courageously, and prophetically to the growing threat of Christian nationalism.

Save the Date: Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM EST. [Click here to register](#)

Memorial Service for Rev. Mack Hagins – A memorial service for Rev. Mack Hagins will be held on **Saturday, September 20th, at the family farm in Bolton, MA, at 1:30 PM.** Cards and notes can be sent to Whitney at 310 Green Rd., Bolton, MA 01740.

Fundraiser for the St. Paul's Meal – Join us in celebrating 30 years of St. Paul's Soup Kitchen at their 1st Annual Gala on **Saturday, September 20, 2025, at 6:00 PM** at Merrimack Valley Golf Club located at 210 Howe St., Methuen, MA. Enjoy dinner prepared by The Sandtrap Restaurant, music, entertainment, and a specialty raffle – all while supporting St. Paul's mission to feed those in need.

Tickets are \$50 (includes dinner): <https://givebutter.com/ZhnKMi>

Men's Group Study - The 5 Masculine Instincts by Chase Replogle - Last Father's Day, we distributed this book to men who wished to learn more about themselves as they embarked on a summer reading program focused on *The 5 Masculine Instincts*. Through this book, the intent is to discover your instincts and believe that they are neither a curse nor a virtue. They are the experiences by which you develop a new and better instinct - an instinct of faith. Through exploring these five instincts through the lives of Cain, Samson, Moses, David, and Abraham, we will strive to understand our own instincts and how we could step forward on our own faith journeys listening to God's intended message.

For those of you who have books, please continue reading in preparation for our discussion group on **Sunday, September 21st, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM**, following the Sunday Service. We will meet in the Youth Lounge. For those of you who do not have books or would like to invite a friend, please contact Bill Evans, 978-852-1456 or evansl818@verizon.net. An in-person meeting is encouraged, but Zoom attendance will be arranged if needed. A text message will be sent to those who already have books for a 5-minute pre-work assessment.

The sign-up sheet for the St. Paul's Meal is now online. To volunteer, please click on the link below. The St. Paul's Meal will be served on **Wednesday, September 24, 2025**. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448A8AB28AAFF2-58055175-stpauls>

Spooky Messy Church, October 17th, 5:30 PM! - Get your costumes ready for the next Messy Church in October. We are inviting our congregation and the surrounding community to join us at the beginning of our 3rd year of Messy Church! WooHoo! For those who have never been, Messy Church is a fun way to enjoy your faith by joining us for a free dinner, activities for all ages, music, dancing, and a message celebrating our faith. We are sure to have lots of fun. We are celebrating an early Halloween Night on **October 17th, at 5:30 PM**, so wear your costume or spooky Halloween shirts. At this Messy Church, we will be collecting canned goods for the Open Pantry as we continue our offerings to the community to fight food insecurity, so please bring what you can.

Rummage Sale News - One of the suggestions I received stated that maybe we should change the name of the sales. Rummage denotes “old” stuff. However, many people today are thrift-shopping. Here are four suggestions for a new title. ***Fabulous Finds Sale, 2nd Time Around Sale, Thrifty Sale, Hidden Treasures.*** Email me, Holly Cerullo, hbcteach@comcast.net, if you have a favorite.

Here are the places where help is needed. Please email me or see me at church.

- Set-up: Sunday, October 19th, 11:00 AM
- Sorting: Monday – Wednesday, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM
- Donations accepted: Sunday, October 19th, 11:00 AM-2:00 PM, Monday, October 20th-Wednesday, October 22nd, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. (Congregants only. If you can't drop off donations at those times, please contact Holly Cerullo, hbcteach@comcast.net, for an appointment.)

Sales: Friday, October 24th, 3:00-7:00 PM (Fellowship Hall)
Saturday, October 25th, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (Fellowship Hall & Toy Room)
Café/Kitchen: See Sue Loiselle
Advertising: See Roberta Stratton or Bill Evans

Holly Cerullo - hbcteach@comcast.net.

How Can We Help? - The Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC) is an emergency shelter for unaccompanied individuals over 18 years of age who are experiencing homelessness. With winter coming, the LTLC needs specific items for its guests. So how can we help? The easiest and fastest way to help is through the LTLC Amazon Wish List! Just click on the link below, or follow the QR Code, and select the items that you wish to donate. Then, annotate the Amazon Gift Order message box with WCUMC. It couldn't be easier! The items will be shipped directly to the LTLC!

Link for [LTLC Amazon Wish List](#)

LTLC QR Code:



Alternatively, you can bring in any of the following items and leave them in the designated bin in the lobby of the Education Building: Adult-size hats, gloves, mittens, clean, gently used jackets, sweatpants, and sweatshirts (men's & women's all sizes), foot and hand warmers, socks, wash cloths, and bath towels. ***Please note: We will suspend the in-person collection for LTLC from October 18th to October 25th to avoid any possible confusion with the Rummage Sale.***

This campaign will run until Friday, October 31, 2025. The Amazon Wish List will be posted on the WCUMC Website for future reference. If you have any questions, please get in touch with a member of the Missions Committee.

WCUMC Hockey Game Event - UMASS-Lowell hockey marketers reached out to Rev Geisa to have a group event for our church. Let's GOOOO! We have selected Saturday, November 1st, at 6:00 PM. UMASS-Lowell is playing Providence College, and it should be a great game for these two rivals. They are also giving away t-shirts for the first 1500 fans, so get there early. They are also honoring the Manning School of Business this night as well. Doors open at 5:00 PM. Please sign the "I want to GO!" sheet on the table in the Vestry and the number of people in

your party. Bill will reserve seats the week of September 22nd in advance since this is a very popular game. Contact Bill Evans at evans1818@verizon.net or 978-852-1456 if you'd like to be added to the list. Tickets are \$13 and can be paid to Bill when you see him. Let's GOOOOOO Riverhawks!

Open Pantry Donations - What can I put in my Shopping Cart this week that will help someone in need? This month, we are thinking about a healthy breakfast for all! Oatmeal, nutritious cereal, breakfast bars, and non-dairy milk products are some examples. Maybe you can share your favorites! Donations of any unexpired, non-perishable food items are, of course, always welcome, and if you would like to make a monetary donation, please annotate your contribution with the notation "Open Pantry". Your generosity will be appreciated more than you know. If you have any questions, you may contact the Missions Committee.

Joys and Concerns Prayer Cards - These cards are available on the Ushers' table in the Narthex for parishioners to fill out before worship. Please fill them out and give them to the usher before the time of Joys and Concerns.

Prayer Chain Mailing List – If you want to join the prayer chain, update your email address in the prayer chain, or send a prayer request, please contact **Beth Arnald** at barnald@verizon.net. Please do not contact the church office, as Roberta does not have access to the Prayer Chain mailing list.

4 Ways to Give to WCUMC

- **Mobile Giving** – Download the Tithely app. Fill out the Tithely secure donation transfer form. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **QR Giving** – Using your phone's photo app, click the link after hovering over the QR code (see below). Fill out the Tithely secure donation transfer form. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **Click "Give" or "Donate"** – Go to www.wcumc.us. Fill out the secure donation transfer form for PayPal or Tithely. For Tithely, remember the code number assigned for future login. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **Cash or Check** – Place in the offering plate during the Worship Service or send your donation via the US Postal Service to WCUMC, 242 Main Street, North Chelmsford, MA 01863.

QR Giving Code:

