

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Nancy Rottman, Pastor

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Larainne Wilson, Director of Faith Formation, lwilson@centre-church.org

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

January 7, 2018

Blessed New Year, Centre Church!

By the time you read this, you will have received your "Star Words" at our worship on the Feast of the Epiphany. Each of us has the opportunity to choose a word, or more accurately, let a word choose us and then carry that word in our heart for the year. If you were unable to be with us for worship on Sunday but would like your own Star Word, please let me know and I will send you one (pastor@centre-church.org or 781-334-3050). As God would have it, choosing star words dovetails nicely with the message in the final chapter of our Advent study, *Awaiting the Already* (deVega, 2015). The text for this final chapter's reflection is from the Letter of Paul to Titus and deVega describes it as Paul's Christmas Letter. Here are the verses he references from Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of the Bible called *The Message*. As our study groups have discussed these verses, I believe that the contemporary language of Peterson's paraphrase helps us to quickly access the heart of these verses.

God's readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation's available for everyone! We're being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, appears. ~ Titus 2:11-13, The Message deVega goes on to call out the tasks of the spiritual life as Paul has outlined them here. They are, 1) to live in harmony with one's self,

2) to live in harmony with others, and 3) to live in harmony with God. "Paul reminds us that every relationship we have deserves our fullest commitment to love and reconciliation" (deVega, 2015, 86). When one of these relationships is out of balance, the others suffer as well. One of the things that occurred to me was that the simple but profound spiritual practice of gratitude can be a resource for helping us live a God-filled, God-honoring life. When we can recognize our blessings even in the midst of the most challenging moments in life, we are more likely to live in harmony with ourselves, others, and ultimately with God. So, this year, I am challenging myself to be consistent with the practice of gratitude, and seeing where in the midst of being grateful, my Star Word brings revelation or challenge, hope or help, and harmony in my relationships. Will you join me?

In Faith, *Rev. Nancy*

In the Sanctuary

January 13, 2018

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Nursery

Faith Formation classes

January 20, 2018

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Nursery

Faith Formation for Older Children



The next Scrabble Meetup will be held after worship on Sunday, January 13th in the library. If you like Scrabble, meeting new people, or both, the Scrabble Meetup is the place for you. Kate Kielty will be there with two Scrabble boards so you don't need to bring anything but your head for words!

For any questions: reach out to Kate Kielty at tupelo_honey72@yahoo.com or call/text 978-875-0018.

Missions and Outreach



Fair Trade Shopping Thank you to everyone who ordered Equal Exchange goods during our pre-Christmas sale. Hopefully lots of fairly traded and delicious chocolates were enjoyed over the holidays! More than \$500 in profits from this fundraising have gone directly to our Missions and Outreach budget and will be used to fund future outreach activities. We also donated a tree at the church fair which helped to support Centre Church. Did you enjoy these products and the chance to purchase from small farmers around the world at fair prices to support their efforts? Please let Linda Ladd know if you'd be interested in buying these products another time, or even year-round. Thank you.



Heifer Living Gift Market

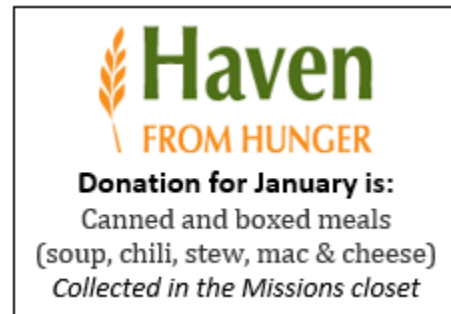
Heifer International has been ending hunger and poverty in 25 countries for over 70 years. Your donations in honor of your loved ones this Christmas, help to make their work possible. As a congregation, we donated almost \$2000 to Heifer in our Living Gift Market "purchases". Soon we'll be adding to that the count of "goat tube" quarters. Every quarter counts in the fight to end poverty! Please remember your quarters on Sundays. You can also make a tribute gift, and receive a card to send (or keep) honoring it, at any time of year – please see Linda Ladd. Thank you.



Angel Tree Wow! As you all saw on December 16th, when we blessed two Green Wagons overflowing with Angel Tree gifts – we helped to brighten Christmas for many families this year. Toys, Winter coats, warm sweaters and socks were gifts from heaven for many who couldn't afford to buy them this year. Add to that the bundle of shopping cards which actually allowed many to experience the joy of shopping for holiday gifts, food and necessities -all free of charge. This is a blessing, not to be taken for granted. Thank you!

Haven From Hunger Our next food donation will be Canned and Boxed meals. These will be blessed in worship and taken to HFH when we serve there on **January 28th**..

Upcoming Donation of the Month:



COATS – ABRIGOS – MANTEAUX

No matter what language you speak, if you don't have a coat, you are cold! Winter Coats for Mission of Deeds are being collected in the Missions closet off of the church's front entryway, until Feb 15th. Needed are: New and Gently Used Warm, Casual Everyday Coats and Gloves, as well as New Hats for both Children and Adults. These will be distributed to MOD clients.

News From Around the Parish

Our love and sympathy go out to the family of Marion Peeke who died December 4 at age 100. Funeral and burial services were private as per her wishes.

We extend our love and sympathy to the family of Marie Vazzana who died December 7. A Celebration of Life was held on Dec 15 in the Seaside United Methodist Church in Sunset Beach, North Carolina.

Our love and sympathy go out to the family of Charles Bosworth who died on Dec. 9. A celebration of life will take place on January 12 from 2-6 pm at the Polish National Alliance located at 14 Mill St. in Amesbury, MA

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Bette Cushman who died on December 24, 2018.

The Great Pie Challenge Sunday, January 27th



Love to make pies? Have you been told you make the best pies ever? Bring your pie/pies and your appetite to The Great Pie Challenge on Sunday, January 27th after the Service. Pies can be dropped off that morning. Signup sheets will be in the Narthex starting on January 6th.

Altar Flowers

Sunday, January 13 and Sunday, January 20 are available, if someone would like to donate Altar Flowers for either of those dates.

If you are interested, contact Margaret Waugh at mcwaugh@aol.com or 781-334-4031.

Faith Formation

Next Faith Formation Team Meeting is on January 15th at 6:30 p.m.

Giv2/Young Families Group Intergenerational Caroling:

Fun was had by all on the afternoon of Sunday, December 9th as we joined with about 20 folks (young and young-at-heart!) from other congregations in Lynnfield and Wakefield to sing joyous Christmas Carols to the residents at Sunrise Senior Center.

Christmas Pageant: The children of Centre Church presented "A Mary Carol" by Katherine Willis Pershey. It was a tender, sweet and funny version of the Christmas Story based on "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. Mary (CC) was accompanied by the angel Gabriel (Kamden) to her past, present and future. Isaiah was played by Henry, Joseph by Cameron, Young Mary by Elizabeth, Young Joseph by Renzo. Our angels were Aiden and Eleanor, our shepherd was Autumn and the Magi were played by Ben, Kyle and Colin. Stable animals were Sage, Sam and Luna. What a GREAT morning!

SAVE THE DATE!



**Trivia Night and
Silent Auction**
Saturday MARCH 2, 2019

**Appetizers, Pizza,
Desserts, Beverages and Coffee**

**Trivia brought to you by
Jason Cotting**

**We are looking for donations to
our Silent Auction and Raffles –**

**Please contact Chuck Cotting at
chuck@thecottings.com or
781-593-3120**

Our Opportunities

Sun. Jan 13	10:00am	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Church School
	11:15am	Scrabble Meet Up- Library
	11:15 am	Fair Wrap Up meeting- counseling
Tues. Jan 15	6:30 pm	Faith Formation Team Meeting
Thurs. Jan.17	1:00 pm	Bible Study- Library
	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal- Choir Room
Sun. Jan. 20	10:00 am	Sunday Worship-Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Church School
Mon. Jan 21		Martin Luther King Jr. Day Church office closed
Thurs. Jan 24	1:00pm	Bible Study- Library
	7:30pm	Choir Rehearsal- Choir Room
Sun. Jan. 27	10:00am	Sunday Worship- Sanctuary Nursery- Nursery/Library Church School- Service Sunday
	11:30 am	Pie Challenge- Richards Hall

In addition to our scheduled church activities, Centre Church hosts Boy Scout Troop #48, Cub Pack #48, Girl Scouts, Alanon, Alateen, Women's AA, and the Essex Society of Genealogists. Please call the church office if you would like more information about any of these groups.

(781-334-3050)

Church Office Hours – 9 am-3 pm Mon.-Fri.

The next issue of Tower Notes – Week of January 22, 2019.
