

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

September 9, 2009

Housecleaning

Cleaning my house is one of my least favorite things to do. I have known some people who love cleaning, not just the floors, the furniture, and such, but also the windows, the walls, and every closet. When it comes to house cleaning, I always find that I have too much work to do, people to visit, phone calls to make, a sermon to write, and, an occasional TV program or two that I just "need" to watch (I mean, we have to find time to relax, don't we?).

My mother taught me how to do housecleaning: dusting the furniture first, then vacuuming. As you know, I'm sure, in the "old days" the women of the house usually did the house cleaning. Well, my mother and father gave life to two boys. No girls. So, Mom needed her two sons to help her with the cleaning of our farm house. I remember running the vacuum cleaner, using furniture cleaner to dust the furniture, taking out the trash, even helping with the laundry. When we moved from the farm to the new house off the farm in 1965 we discovered something new: there was trash pick-up every week! The laundry? Well, I started doing my own laundry out of necessity more than anything. I had an image to maintain, as a young man in my late teens. If I wanted my clothes to look like I wanted them to look, then I best wash and iron them myself. My mother taught me how to do the ironing.

The new house was a lot easier to keep clean than the old house, with the nice hardwood floors, a central vacuum system, and everything on one floor. I think we did a pretty good job, something I didn't realize until I started living in a dorm room in college. Once I was exposed to the living habits of others, I soon learned that cleaning was not a popular part of the college curriculum.

Some of you, who have seen my office, are laughing now, because I've lost my touch, obviously. I would rather work than clean. Visiting people is more important to me than keeping order in my work space. (or at least, that's my excuse!)

I've had to do a lot of housecleaning since moving to Centre Church, in October, 2006. I had to clean the house I sold in Billerica and move to a townhouse. Then, I had to clean the townhouse and move to the house I bought. I had to laugh when I moved from both of those how the realtors said, "You did a great job cleaning the house!"

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In the Sanctuary

September 13, 2009

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Proverbs 1:20-33 James 3:1-12

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Wisdom: A Way of Life"

Children's Message by the Rev. Dr. Calvin B. Kool

"Do You Like Baseball?"

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops.

The Nursery is open in Room 14.

September 20, 2009

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops.

The Nursery is open in Room 14.

Surely, our faith involves occasional, if not regular, acts of "housecleaning." If we want to make room for the presence of God, the work of God, and the service to God in our lives, we must rid ourselves of those things that get in the way. If we have conflicts in our relationships with our loved ones and/or close friends that we keep sweeping under the proverbial carpet or putting in a box in the basement, out of sight, out of mind, we need to find a way of housecleaning these things or they will keep wearing at us. We will keep stumbling over them, running into them, as they will take up unnecessary space in our lives.

Scripture talks about housecleaning. In Leviticus 15:33-49 instructions are given about how to rid a house of mildew, making the unclean house, clean. It is quite the process from scraping the walls, tearing out some or all of the contaminated stones, timbers, and plaster, throwing them into an unclean place outside of town. The repairs are made and, if the inspection by the priest finds all in order, the house is pronounced clean.

Psalms 51 talks about creating a pure or clean heart. The Psalmist pleads for mercy, forgiveness, accomplished through asking the LORD to forgive a person's sins.

As it says, *"Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."* (V. 2, NIV)

And later, the Psalmist prays:

"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (7 & 10, NIV)

A clean house and a clean heart are both important for the health and safety of the members of the household and for the spiritual well-being of the person. Obviously, mildew continues to be a problem for us. Priestly inspectors have been replaced by government appointed health inspectors. Thank goodness that's not part of my responsibilities!

A clean house gives me peace of mind and in doing it an opportunity to reflect on my own spiritual cleansing. What in my life needs cleaning, dusting, tossing away, organizing, and re-ordering in order to help me be right with God and right with my loved ones, close friends, congregation, and other sisters and brothers? What is getting in the way of improving my relationships?

As we approach our end of summer and fall housecleanings, let us consider the status of our spiritual selves. And, as I try to bring cleaning and order to my office, I will have plenty of time to

continue to think about my heart, mind, body, and soul. May the Lord help me repent, work a cleansing, and, therefore, bring joy to my office and life!

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Mission Trip Appreciation Dinner **Sunday, September 13**

The youth who participated in the Mission Trip to New Orleans would like to thank families, friends, and the congregation for their support. Please join us Sunday, September 13 at 6 p.m. for dinner, dessert, and a presentation of our New Orleans experience

Rotation Sensation

Nursery Care: Our Nursery is open and ready to receive infants and children through age 3. Join us each week in Room 14 where our trained staff will be on hand to welcome you and your child(ren). Nursery staff is able to communicate with parents through a paging system and all parents are welcome to take a pager.

Rotation Sensation: We are excited about another year of Rotation Sensation. Our first unit will focus on Daniel in the Lions' Den. We will learn this story through Upper Room (while being in the "Den"), Movie and Art. Rotation Sensation is open to all children and youth PreK-Grade 8. All children and youth should meet in the Chapel after *briefly* worshipping with their families in the Sanctuary.

Registration: All children must be registered for the Rotation Sensation program. We will have a table set up in the Narthex to answer questions and drop off registration forms. Print out your registration form from our website at: www.Centre-Church.org.

Youth Group

Save the date for a tailgate party on Sunday, September 20 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. We will have a youth group kick off party. All youth 5th-12th grade and their families are encouraged to attend. Whether you have come before, want to start coming, or just entered the 5th grade...you are WELCOME! All parents should plan on coming with their calendars. A letter will be sent home soon with details about what you can bring.

Annual Meeting of the Church

The Annual Meeting of the Church will be held following worship on September 27. Reports of Officers and Ministry Teams will be presented and the election of Officers, Ministry Team Chairs and other positions will take place.

Annual Golf Tournament

Save the date of Friday, September 25 for the 7th Annual Centre Church golf tournament. The net proceeds go to support our Missions Ministries program. This will be a best ball tournament with a tee time of 1 PM at Thomson Country Club in North Reading. The cost is \$125 per player and that includes a cookout following the tournament at the Johnson's. Prizes and the chance to have your winning team's names engraved on "*The Unholy Grail*" are but a few of the benefits of playing in this tournament. Players of all skill levels welcomed. Please invite your friends to play, too.

Sign up with Phil Johnson 781-598-5678 or (pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu) no later than Monday September 21st. Checks should be made payable to Centre Congregational Church.

Shopping Cards Return September 13

Starting September 13, we are again taking orders for shopping cards. You can order shopping cards on any Sunday and we will have the cards for you the following Sunday.

Why buy the cards? To support Centre Church! You pay full price to us, we pay a discounted price to Great Lakes Scrip Center, and the difference goes to the church. For example, each time that you buy a \$25.00 card for the 99 Restaurant, the church gets \$3.25. That's money for our church at no additional cost to you!

Do you get coffee at Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks? Do you shop at Barnes and Noble, Macy's, Staples, LL Bean, Stop and Shop, or Home Depot? You can use shopping cards at all these places and a gazillion others. We will have a quick list of last year's most popular cards at our table in the narthex. For a complete list, see <http://www.glscrip.com>.

If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Cotting, Phil Triffletti, or Sandi Watson.

Confirmation

All those youth in Grade 9 or older are invited to contact Rev. Bailey if they are interested in participating in this year's Confirmation Class. Rev. Bailey will be scheduling an Introductory Meeting about the Confirmation Class on a Sunday morning in September, after worship. (781-334-3050 or pastor@centre-church.org)

Holiday Festival in November

Can you believe the summer is over? You know what that means -- the holidays are right around the corner. This year you can start out the holiday season early and help the church by volunteering at and/or attending the Holiday Festival. It will be on Saturday, November 14th from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. We are renting tables to crafters and vendors as well as having our own craft table, white elephant, new gifts, books, movies, music, jewelry, plants and bake sales and a children's room with games and crafts. We need volunteers to help plan the different sales and to help run the festival. Please sign up in the Narthex. We also need things to sell at our tables, so please gather your items or start making new crafts and putting them aside for us.

If you have questions please contact Donna Marino, Kathi Martin, Nancy Miller or Carrie Pericola.

Programs Offered

By the Center for Grief & Healing

Two support groups are being offered by the Center for Grief and Healing, 78 Liberty St., Danvers.

On Thursdays, September 10 – October 29 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. a free, 8-week support group focusing on the Loss of an Adult Child will be held.

On Tuesdays, September 29 – November 27 from 7-8:30 p.m., a free, 8-week support group focusing on Losing a Loved One to Suicide will be offered.

For information about either of these support groups or the ongoing work of the Center for Grief and Healing, call 978-774-5100 or email grief@hns.org. These programs are part of Hospice of the North Shore.

Updates from the Property Committee

If you have questions or comments about any of these updates, please contact Phil Johnson at 781-598-5678 or pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu

Work Day at Church

Your church really needs your help on Saturday September 12th. We will be having a property clean-up day which will involve cleaning of the garden beds, some trimming, sweeping and general pick-up. We want our property to always look its best. Please plan on spending part of the morning with us at Centre Church starting at 8 AM Saturday September 12th.

New Carpet in the Main Hallway

We are pleased to announce that new carpeting has been installed in the hallway of the main level of the church, from the Narthex to the Chapel. We hope you like it, enjoy it, and find it a decor and safety improvement. We would encourage your support of this improvement by making a donation to Centre Church toward the \$3,200.00 cost so that we can work on yet other building improvements, like the heating system which desperately needs replacing. We have received some generous donations toward the heating system to get the project started and repair the components that must urgently be replaced now, but need much more to fully fund this project in order to replace the other worn and inefficient heating systems. We will need somewhere between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to fully update our heating system needs. For more information please contact Phil Johnson.

T-Mobile Antenna

The construction work for the antenna which will be installed by T-Mobile within our steeple has begun.

The initial work of bringing in added power and communication capabilities into the building to support this will largely go unnoticed, but you may see workers on site from time to time starting in the first part of September. The majority of the work will start in late September and continue through October. The contractors are well aware of the heavy use of our building every day and they will make every effort not to disturb these ongoing comings and goings.

Lights Out Program

If you can volunteer some time to help us make sure that the church building is secure every evening please contact Phil Johnson. We have about a dozen faithful souls who volunteer for a week of time to make sure the doors are locked, the heat is set, the windows are closed and all the lights are turned out. But, we are always looking for a few more volunteers as many hands make light work. Please consider signing up.

Engraved Brick Patio

When we built the parking lot early this millennium we also installed an engraved brick patio. I'm sure you have spent some time reading one of the hundreds of bricks that are now installed. Parish Council decided a few years back not to pursue a memorial garden which at one time was under consideration. I've described our patio as a place to have some lasting memory of a loved one, an event, a memory or even a member of the staff. I want to offer again the opportunity to add to this memorial patio. You can order a small brick for \$ 50 and a large brick for \$ 100. These donations help to pay for the mortgage we took out on the property when we built the parking lot. A small brick contains up to 3 lines of 20 characters (including spaces) and a large brick up to 6 lines with 20 characters each.

All you have to do is write out what you want, include that with a check, and send it to the church office in care of me. If you have any questions see me, call me (781-598-5678) or e-mail me (pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu) Thank you for your continuing and ongoing support of the church and this project.

Phil Johnson
Chair, Finance Ministries

Our Opportunities

Saturday - September 12	8am-noon	Clean-up Day
Sunday - September 13	10:00 am	Morning Worship – Sanctuary
	10:20 am	Rotation Sensations Workshops
	6:00 pm	Mission Trip Appreciation Dinner
Tuesday - September 15	7:30 pm	Diaconate – Pastor’s Office
Thursday - September 17	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Friday - September 18	10:30 am	Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office
Sunday - September 20	10:00 am	Morning Worship – Sanctuary
	10:20 am	Rotation Sensation Workshops
	6:00 pm	Youth Groups & Parents
Wednesday - September 23	7:00 pm	Parish Council – Pastor’s Office
Thursday - September 24	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Friday - September 25	10:30 am	Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office
	1:00 pm	Golf Tournament

Thank You To Our Volunteers

September 13: Head Usher and Lay Reader: Jeff Law. Provide Altar Flowers: Edith Wendt. Deliver Flowers: Marjorie Potter and Doreen DiFillippo.

September 20: Head Usher: Michelle Hagerty. Lights Out beginning September 18: Phil Johnson.

Our love and prayers are with Ginnie Davis at Wingate at Reading, 1364 Main St., Reading, 01867; Bud Doremus, Ruth Hyer, Art Foulds, Helen Butcher and Priscilla Hahn at home; Helen Wills at Sunrise at Gardner Park, Peabody; Louise Allen at Beaumont Nursing Home, Westborough; Muriel Badger at Nashoba Valley Life Care Center, Littleton; Marion Barnes, Harborside: Cedar Glen, Danvers; Glady Davis, Haven Health Care, Derry NH; Carolyn Furey, Overlook Masonic Health Ctr., Charlton,; Hal Holappa, Veterans’ Hospital, Bedford,; Helen Miller, at the Meadows, Edgewood; June Rose, 37 Spring St., Lunenburg, MA 01462.

Our prayers are with Andy Gehret in Iraq; George Robinson, III in the United States on medical leave; and James Papagni serving in Afghanistan.
