

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey, Pastor, Pastor@Centre-Church.org

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

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Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

September 23, 2009

Promised Land/Promised Future

Growing up on a farm, knowing how important the land was and is to the farmer and to the well-being of each and every one of us each day has left me sensitive to the continued devouring of our landscape for more and more building for housing, industrial complexes, business complexes and such. I wonder, *"When will we get to the point when we take over too much of our farmland, growing food land, so that there is not enough left for growing our food?"*

Going back to visit the places where I grew up leave me grieving the land that no longer hosts the tractor, plow, the corn fields, wheat fields, the cattle... Occasionally I drive by the once active farms and see a remnant of those farms still standing: a silo, a dilapidated barn, rusting farm equipment and feel the sorrow of what once was a place where a family tilled the soil, grew life-giving food and cattle. Their children once ran the fields and found reward in simply sowing the seeds and trusting God to provide what was needed to grow the harvest.

In some ways, for me, it was easier to understand faith in those days and places. We worked as hard as we could, prayed as hard as we could, and left the rest to God, to provide the water, to transform the small, planted seeds into a great and grand harvest. We trusted God to help us find a way through the droughts, the winds, too much rain, insects, the bills. We trusted God to help us find a way through the challenges even though, quite frankly, we didn't always know if we would survive it, ourselves. My father worked a second job in order to support us because the farm was not enough.

Imagine living in such vulnerability generation after generation. It still happens every day, across our country, and in many thousands of places in our world where modern technology is not accessible, where tractor and plow cannot be afforded, where the earth is toiled by hand. Faith is simple: God will provide. It is believed that when all other efforts fail, God will find a way for us. And so, the people follow, believe, trust, that even in the empty times, God will get them through.

I have been thinking about this faith in which I was grown as I encounter people who are out of work,

now. I think about this faith, now, as I talk with parents who are worried about what kind of "promised future" God will provide for their children. We certainly have access to a lot more tools than did the farmers and families with which I grew up. Education, technology, opportunities, business now offer so much more and so many more opportunities than existed when I was growing among the wheat fields, corn fields, and pasture land. And yet, our faith, in some ways, doesn't seem as strong as it did then.

As we sat around the dinner table each evening my parents, my brother and I, prayed grace, giving thanks for what we had and prayed for a future. We trusted God

(continued on pg. 2)

In the Sanctuary

Sunday, September 27, 2009

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Presentation of Bibles to Children

Numbers 11:24-30 and Mark 9:38-41

Sermon by

The Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Eldad and Medad"

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

The Nursery is open in Room 14.

Sunday, October 4, 2009

10:00 A.M. World Communion Sunday

Luke 14:15-24

Sermon by

The Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Passing on the Stories and the Bread"

Children may worship with their families for the entire
service. The Nursery is open in Room 14.

to give us a future. My parents spoke words to me, "*Have faith, Dennis. God will provide.*" And, we believed it with our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies. And oh, how generous God was when the sweet corn crop came in and we feasted on a dozen ears of corn or more a piece, our faces dripping with the homemade butter! "God is good. God is great!"

And yet, I grew up as a very insecure and uncertain teenager, anxious about how I would find my way, a job, a career, a life. I felt so vulnerable. But, I continued to hear the words of my parents and fellow farmers: "*God will provide. God has provided in the past and God will provide in the future.*" Sometimes, that's all they had.

I imagine, then, how vulnerable were the people of Israel as they ventured through the wilderness trusting in Moses and the promises of God to find them a future, a promised land, trusting solely on a word, the word, of God. No GPS, no weather reports, no grocery stores, no support systems. None. Nothing, except the word of an unseen God, and the history of their traditions, and their own skills about how to survive on very little in the wilderness.

The people of Israel survived because they knew how to pray, how to trust, how to walk believing that God would provide for them a future. I survived, as did my ancestors, believing that God would never leave us and would continue to provide for us a future. And when they were and when we are refugees in the midst of adversity, hopefully we, too, will remember to pray, trust in the word of God, the presence of God, to see us through.

My prayer today is that we will teach our children how to pray, how to trust in the promises of God, how to give thanks to God for all that is good in our lives. Human wisdom, technology, construction, and power, will fade away. But the wisdom of God, the love of God, and the presence of God will remain.

In the words of Jesus, "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" (Matthew 6:19-21, NIV).

In the company of believers, people of faith, I have found my way through the "wilderness" places in my life. The word and presence of God has endured more than anything else. That's why I keep coming back, Sunday after Sunday, because my "farmers" faith endures.

Yours in Christ,

Copies of the 2008-2009 Annual Reports and our newest church directory, The People Book are available on the table in the narthex and in the church office.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, September 27, 2009 at 11:30 a.m. to discuss the following items:

1. Reports of Officers and Ministry Teams
 2. Planned Giving Committee Report
 3. Presentation and Approval of the 2009 to 2010 Budget
 4. Election of Officers, Ministry Team Chairs, and Other Positions
 5. Remembrance of Deceased Members
 6. Recognition of 50 Year Members
- Kim Morrissey, Recording Clerk

Children's Corner

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:

Bible Sunday: Join us this Sunday, Sept. 27 for a special Bible presentation during Children's Time. Rotation Sensation, our Christian education program, is open to all children and youth PreK-Grade 8. Join us this Sunday as we continue to learn about Daniel in the Lions' Den.

Registration: All children must be registered for the Rotation Sensation program. If you have not yet filled out your registration form, kindly see Jill Couillard or Barbara Langill and they would be happy to give you a form or, you may print out your registration form from our website at: www.Centre-Church.org. Return all registration forms to Barbara or Jill as soon as possible.

Confirmation begins October 18th

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. The class will be starting Sunday, October 18th, 11:30 to 1 p.m., immediately following coffee hour. (781-334-3050 or pastor@centre-church.org). **Confirmation Sunday will be on Sunday, May 9th, 2010, Mother's Day.**

Confirmation is an exciting way to learn about our Christian faith, history, church, and what it means to be a member of Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Deacons Do Breakfast – Oct 4th

What better way to start your Sunday than with eggs, bacon, coffee, juice, fruit and...made-to-order pancakes!?! Your opportunity to have such a fine Sunday breakfast happens on Oct. 4th. The Diaconate will be cooking this up for you starting at 8 a.m. and serving until 9:15 a.m. Food will be found in the downstairs kitchen, and dining tables in Richards Hall. All are welcomed!

This will be a Diaconate fundraising event to benefit the repair and maintenance of our church organ. We hope you will come to enjoy a breakfast out, and to support the music portion of our worship services. Suggested donation is: \$10/person, \$25/family. Current pancake plans are: plain, blueberry and chocolate chip. If you have other favorites, please let us know. (Deacons wear red name tags). We're looking forward to seeing you there.
--Your Faithful Diaconate.

Youth Group

What a great night we had. Last Sunday over 50 people enjoyed a tailgate event out in the church parking lot. Games, fellowship and fun were had by all. Both youth groups will meet this coming Sunday, September 27th from 6:00-7:30. High School will be in Richards Hall and Middle School will be in Todd Hall.

Registration Forms must be turned in as soon as possible. No youth will be allowed to participate in off-site programming without a registration form. For your convenience, registration forms are available from our website at: www.Centre-Church.org. Return all registration forms to Barbara Langill or Jill Couillard as soon as possible.

Schedules for the groups may also be found on our website at: www.Centre-Church.org.

It is important to note that this year, because postage is so high, we will not be mailing extra flyers home. We kindly suggest that if you miss a week of youth group to check the website at: www.Centre-Church.org for any material you may have missed. Your cooperation in our efforts to save money would be appreciated.

College Addresses Needed

The High School Youth Group will be making up care packages for our college freshmen. Please call the church office or e-mail christianed@centre-church.org with the information so that we can send our packages off to students.

Yankee Candle Fundraiser

The High School Youth Group will be raising money for next year's mission trip. They will be offering Yankee Candle products. The sale begins October 4 and will run through October 18. Look for members of the HSYG in the Narthex on October 4.

How Can You Help Others in this Congregation?

There are church members who require rides to get to and from church safely. Others who would truly appreciate a helping hand with errands and carrying things. If this sounds like something you could do, even if only once a month, please let the Deacons know by signing our sheet in the Narthex. We'll try to coordinate so that no one is overloaded, but all are fulfilled by being helpful!

MANY HANDS make these tasks easy. Many HELPING HANDS make this congregation what it is – a church family. Thank you for doing your part to help in the ministry of Centre Church.

Holiday Festival – November 15 Jewelry Table

Look through your gems and pick out some things to recycle to someone else's jewelry box. We are ready to accept new, used, and items needing some minor repairs. Antique, costume, precious and semi-precious jewelry pieces are welcome. Items may be dropped off at the church office during the week or brought to church on Sunday and placed in the jewelry box in the narthex. Any questions? Please call Carol MacKendrick 781-334-6765 or Perry Hayden 781-334-6903

Bits 'n Pieces

Special Thanks to Bob Shorey for providing materials and labor for a new handrail in the upstairs stairwell near the church office. It is greatly appreciated!!

If you would like to provide the altar flowers for our service on October 4, please contact Susan Spear in the church office -781-334-3050 or office@centre-church.org

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to Charlotte Carberry upon the recent death of her mother, Marcia Carter Knowland of Woburn, formerly of Lynnfield.

From the Mailbox

To one and all who have remembered me these past few weeks: To Dennis, who surprised me with a very welcome visit. To the flower committee who, via Marjorie Potter, presented me with such pretty flowers. To all my dear friends at church who wrote encouraging notes, some many times over, and whose phone calls cheered my days and nights. Many Thanks!

Gratefully, Ruth Hyer

Thank You To Our Volunteers

September 27:

Head Usher: Linda Ladd
Greeter: Barbara Ericson
Reader: Jeff Langill
Coffee Hour: Kathi Martin
Provide Altar Flowers: Priscilla Hahn
Deliver Flowers: Barbara Ericson & the Holloways
Lights Out beginning September 25: Al Johnson

October 4:

Ushers: Linda Ladd, Carrie Pericola, 2 Confirmands
Greeter: Betty Hayter
Coffee Hour: Jack and Donna Marino
Flower Delivery: Marty and Michelle Hagerty
Lights Out beginning October 2: Steve Furey

Our Broadcast Schedule

We are again broadcasting our Sunday services on Comcast and Verizon Local Access Channels during the week following the service.

Peabody Comcast will show our programs on Thursdays at 7 p.m. on Channel 10.

Lynnfield showing will also be at 7 p.m. on Thursdays on Comcast Channel 10 and on Verizon Channel 28.

North Reading Comcast Channel 10 and their Verizon Channel 26 will show our programs on Saturdays and on Sundays at 9 a.m. and on Sundays again at 3 p.m.

North Reading Comcast and Verizon Public Access Channels can always be viewed by Lynnfield Verizon customers.

In addition, you may always borrow a video tape or DVD of a service from the church office.

- Bruce Gist

Our Opportunities

Sunday - September 27	10:00 am 10:20 am 11:30 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotation Sensation Workshops Annual Meeting – Sanctuary Youth Choir – Choir Room Youth Grps (Gr. 5-12)-Basement
Thursday - October 1	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Friday - October 2	10:30 am	Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office
Sunday - October 4	8:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Deacons Do Breakfast - Richards Holy Communion – Sanctuary Children in Worship Youth Choir – Choir Room Youth Grps (Gr. 5-12)-Basement
Wednesday - October 7	8:30 am	Bread and Roses Meal Prep.
Thursday - October 8	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Friday - October 9	10:30 am	Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office

Our love and prayers are with Cindy Trayers and Carl Wood; Charlotte Orrall - double knee surgery, Sept. 23, Salem Hospital; Mary Ann Parker - outpatient knee surgery, Sept. 24; Betty Campbell, at home receiving chemotherapy; Anne Gist, eye treatments; Ginnie Davis at Wingate at Reading, 1364 Main St., Reading, 01867; Helen Wills in hospice care 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.

*The Church Office is open Monday through Friday from 9-3.
The next Tower Notes will be published the week of October 5.*