

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts 01940 Phone: 781-334-3050 Fax: 781-334-6463

Email: Office@Centre-Church.org Web Site: www.Centre-Church.org

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

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Jill Couillard & Barbara Langill, Co-Directors of Christian Ed & Youth, ChristianEd@Centre-Church.org

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Sally MacDonald, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

November 4, 2009

Addiction

Ever find yourself in an empty place? If so, what do you fill it with?

Sometimes people fill the empty place with service, a career, reading, family time, recreation, and such. Many of us would deny having much of an empty place because we keep ourselves so busy. Yet, even busy people can feel empty.

Sometimes we try to fill the empty place with alcohol, drugs, food, work, sex, or some other substance or behavior until it becomes an addiction. No matter how hard we try, that empty place refuses to be filled. But when we recognize that emptiness is part of being human and offer that emptiness to God, it can become a channel of God's grace.

The empty place in our souls, spirits, lives, can be a spiritual issue. I might go so far as to say that it is a spiritual issue.

I think a lot about addiction. I think about addiction because it causes harm. I think about it because we are all affected by it. Many of us have an addiction. Many of us have family members and/or close friends with an addiction. Addictions cause harm. I'm not talking about an addiction to chocolate. I'm talking about any addiction that causes us to hurt ourselves and/or others. The others may be our family members, strangers, friends, co-workers, the other drivers on the road, anyone.

Denial is a huge part of addiction. I had a parishioner many years ago, early in my ministry, who did not drink hard liquor. He said to me, "*Dennis, I'm not an alcoholic. I only drink beer.*" As far as I could tell, and his family agreed, he only drank beer. And yet, when he drank beer his whole personality changed from being a very nice guy, a loving and caring husband, father, and grandfather, friend, and parishioner, to a very difficult person, lashing out, disagreeable in every way. It only took one beer to cause the change. That is alcoholism. He lost many a friend, ruined many a family special occasion, made his wife, children, and grandchildren cry, heartbroken. "*It's my house. I'll do what I want to,*" he would say. He would sleep it off, and be ready for work the next day. He was smart, a good contractor, builder, and put many a very educated architect in his place, and rightfully so.

I loved my parishioner. He loved me. He came back to church because we connected so well. And, when he was sober, everyone loved him. We worked well together in things related to the church. He was a doer, got things done. "Enough talking," he would say. "Let's get to work and fix those steps, paint that room. How does this Saturday sound?"

But, I remember one special occasion, the baptism of his latest granddaughter. He did not show up for the baptism in church. I was so angry with him! Where was he? He was home, cooking for the post-baptism party. And, he did a great job. The food was fabulous and plentiful. But, he had been drinking beer since the early morning. His personality? Terrible, offensive, hurtful, proud, vain. The party was a disaster, his daughter went home in tears, his wife to bed in tears, and I said nothing to him that day except to look at him in sorrow. He said to me, "I just wanted to do the best for my daughter and granddaughter."

I talked with him a couple of days later, when he was sober. I told him how angry I was and how disappointed I was with him. We had done a lot of great things together and he had become a very positive presence in

In the Sanctuary

Sunday, November 8, 2009

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Mark 12:38-44

Message by the High School Youth Group

"A Look at Homelessness"

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops. The Nursery is open in Room 14.

Sunday, November 15, 2009

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

I Samuel 1:4-20

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Are We Good At Listening?"

Children's Message: "Hannah Prayed"

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops. The Nursery is open in Room 14.

the church and his family spoke of some of the positive changes in his life. And yet, he could not see and would not admit that he was an alcoholic because he "only drank beer." His family felt powerless to do anything because he was such a powerful personality in their family. They refused to attend Al-Anon meetings because they were afraid he would find out and get angry. They didn't want to admit that they were part of the problem by enabling him and by putting up with him.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way! The first three of the **Twelve Steps**: admitting our powerlessness, coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves, and making a decision to turn our lives over to God are, as you can see, spiritual issues.

You can say "no" to addiction and yes to life. But, you should never try to do it alone. It's like playing with a loaded gun which can go off when you least expect it. We love the person and hate the addiction. If the person continues in addiction, it's not right that we let it continue to destroy our lives.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Twelve Step programs, and the Church can be places where companions are found who extend to us the amazing grace of God's love. All you need to do is ask for help, and the grace pours in.

"God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
and Wisdom to know the difference."

(Reinhold Niebuhr)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
And lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him
and he will direct your paths.

(Proverbs 3: 5-6)

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Work Day at Church

We really need your help on Sat. Nov. 7. We have decided to do the fall clean up of the property ourselves to save some expense. Please bring hedge trimmers, brooms, and rakes and join us for a few hours starting at 9 A.M. Questions: Please contact Phil Johnson 781-598-5678 or pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu.

Rotation Sensation

On November 7, Workshops will be held for all children PreK-Grade 8. We will continue to learn about the story of Zacchaeus. **Youth in the PreK/K/1st grade class should plan on bringing their coats as they will be going to visit the Potter-Furey home just as Jesus visited Zacchaeus. Please call Jill Couillard or Barbara Langill in the church office if you have any questions or concerns about the children going off the church grounds for this special workshop.**

Youth Group

Middle School Youth Group Retreat Update

Please be advised that we will NOT be sleeping at the church on Friday night, November 6. We did not meet our minimum of 6 participants to run the overnight program. We will STILL be meeting on Saturday, November 7 in the parking lot at 9:20 a.m. to travel to Cradles to Crayons for our service project. All 5th-8th Grade Youth who are interested in participating on Saturday should arrive by 9:20 with their permission slips! Pick up will be at 12:30. If you have any questions, please contact Jill Couillard.

High School Sleep Out

The High School Youth Group will meet on Saturday, Nov. 7 at 1:15 to travel to Boston for the Immersion Experience. We will return to the church for a light supper. Each youth is requested to bring a can of your favorite vegetables to add to the soup. Be sure to dress in layers and bring a sleeping bag, blankets, and a pillow. Don't forget hats, gloves, a scarf, and anything else you might need to keep you warm as we will be sleeping outside in cardboard boxes. We will end with a hearty breakfast here at the church and plan to share our experience with the congregation during worship.

There will be no evening Youth Group meetings
on November 8th.

Coat Drive

The High School Youth Group will be collecting your gently used jackets and coats at the church between Nov. 8 and Nov. 15. Coats for men and women will be given to Pilgrim Church Outreach program which supplies food and clothing to homeless people on Boston Common. Children's and teen coats will go to Cradles to Crayons in Quincy. Dress coats will go to Solutions Wear who provides appropriate clothing to people for job interviews or court appearances. The coats should be clean, and without holes or tears.

Holiday Festival

Saturday, November 14, 2009 – 9-3

You can help by donating your attic treasures, books, plants, jewelry, new gifts, and crafts of all types. These items may be brought to the stage in Todd Hall any time between now and November 12.

Please let Debbie Cotting know if you can bake something for the Bake Table. (781-593-3120)

Plan to come and have morning coffee, shop at the over 20 crafter/vendor tables, enjoy the crafts & games for children, and join us for soup, hot dogs, and lobster rolls for lunch.

Bring a Turkey to Church Day! – Nov. 15

On Sunday, November 15 the High School Youth Group will be collecting frozen turkeys for Haven from Hunger in Peabody. Youth will be on hand to help carry turkeys from your car to the waiting Haven truck.

Haven from Hunger is in also in need of all types of non-perishable foods. It would be wonderful if during this month of Thanksgiving each family contributed a bag of food that would complement a Thanksgiving dinner or alternatively, any other food items to help stock their pantry. The food will be picked up on Sunday, November 15 in conjunction with the frozen turkeys collected by the Youth Group.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Centre Church is excited to host the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service for the Town of Lynnfield this year: Sunday, November 22, 7:30 p.m. Please be sure to mark your calendar and join us in the sacred act of Thanksgiving to God for our many and countless blessings. Rev. Michael Dangelo, St. Paul's Episcopal Church will be the preacher.

Refreshments: The Youth Groups will organize and make refreshments for the time of fellowship following the service.

Combined Choirs under the direction of Douglas W. Hodgkins will provide the music. They will rehearse on Thursday, November 12 at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, November 22 at 6:30 p.m. Anyone who loves to sing is invited to join the choir for this occasion. The pieces that will be sung are very uplifting and fun to sing. You may contact Mr. Hodgkins at douglashodgkins@yahoo.com.

Giving That Is Making a Difference!

Heifer International: On July 1, 2009, the church raised \$240 due to several Heifer donations. With the help of the Heifer quarter tube donations, the church earned another \$120, totally \$460 so far. Our goal is to reach \$5,000 to receive the Heifer Ark which will be awarded to the church. The Heifer Market Place will be held on December 6, 2009. Please make an effort to attend, for there will be a Heifer Table where you can either donate money or help buy an animal for a family in need. Thanks again to everyone who has helped support Heifer.

- Allie Parker, Coordinator

Thank You! I was very pleased to see the generous donations of towels, etc. for the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem. I am sure the little kitties and doggies and other animals were also happy. One donation bag contained a receipt from Bed, Bath and Beyond in Saugus dated Sept. 30. If that was yours, and you need that receipt, please give me a call. Donations will continue to be appreciated. Thanks again to everyone who has already contributed.
- Donna Marino 781-581-2022

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and prayers to the Hagerty family and the Weaver family who have both recently experience the death of a close family friend.

From the Mail Box

My heartfelt thanks for all the big and little things you have done for me and my family these past couple of weeks. The love and hugs, the calls and visits, the food, the flowers, the flood of cards have all buoyed my spirits and kept me going. Don't ever let anyone tell you Centre Church people are not special! May God bless you all.

- Shirley Orr

Many thanks for sharing your time, energy and love with me. The calls, cards, visits, time for games, chores completed and food for the body and soul have made recovery much easier. I do not have to worry about how things will get done – someone has been stepping in at just the right moment. Perry and I have been blessed many times over by the friendship of our church family. I am getting stronger every day and hope to soon be back with you on Sunday mornings and at other events.

- George Hayden

News from Boy Scout Troop 48

In mid-October, over one hundred scouts and parents met to recognize scouts who had advanced in rank and earned merit badges at Summer Camp. Thirty-two scouts and ten parents spent their Columbus Day weekend cycling on Martha's Vineyard. The Scouts' next trip will be to Mount Osceola in New Hampshire's White Mountains.

- John Walsh

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Sunday, November 8, 2009: Head Usher - Carrie Pericola. Greeter – Ginny Daniels. Coffee – Marian Orfeo and Frank Scott. Provide Altar Flowers – Edith Wendt. Deliver Altar Flowers – Marjorie Potter and Doreen DiFillippo. Lights Out beginning November 6 – Dwight Decker.

Sunday, November 15, 2009: Head Usher – Jeff Law. Greeters and Coffee Hour – Schedin/Caron Family. Lay Reader – Heather Lowe. Deliver Altar Flowers – Chuck Cotting. Lights Out beginning November 13 – George Laing.

**The next issue of *Tower Notes* will be
November 16.**

Our Opportunities

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Saturday - November 7 | 9am-noon 9:20 am 1:15 pm | Clean-up Day - Lawn Middle Sch. To Cradles to Crayons High School to Boston & return to church for Sleep Out |
| Sunday - November 8 | 10:00 am 10:20 am 11:30 am 11:30 am | Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotations & Nursery Youth Choir – Choir Room Confirmation Class – Kitchen |
| Tuesday - November 10 | 10:00 am 7:30 pm | Caregivers – Fireside Room Diaconate – Pastor’s Office |
| Wednesday - November 11 | ----- | Church Office Closed – Veterans’ Day |
| Thursday - November 12 | 6:30 pm 7:30 pm | Outreach Ministries - Fireside Choir - Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service – Choir Room |
| Friday - November 13 | 10:30 am | Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office |
| Saturday - November 14 | 9am – 3 pm | Holiday Festival |
| Sunday - November 15 | 10:00 am 10:20 am 11:30 am 11:30 am | Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotations & Nursery Youth Choir – Choir Room Confirmation - Kitchen |
| Thursday - November 19 | ----- | No Sr. Choir This Week |
| Friday - November 20 | 10:30 am | Scripture Study – Pastor’s Office |

Our love and prayers are with Carol Carter, George Hayden, Charlotte Orrall and Ken Klopfer, Barbara Langill’s brother-in-law recuperating at home; 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 James Papagni serving in Afghanistan.

New Tables at Church

After serving us well for a long time, we had to discard most of our long rectangular tables this summer. Some were damaged, others were dangerous with splintering wood and all were very heavy and bulky to move. So, we recently purchased new plastic folding tables that should last a long time, are lighter and because they fold, can fit in the elevator. We purchased 14 eight foot tables and 6 six foot tables. Even though we got a great price on these, as they were on sale, I’m asking for your support to “donate” one or more of these tables. For \$65 we will record your name on the underside of the table designating your generous support for its purchase. A \$50 donation will earn your name on a six foot table. Thanks for your support in this and if you have any questions please contact me at pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu or at 781-598-5678.

Thanks to Bob MacKendrick for helping me to transport the new tables from Costco to the church.

Please fill out the form below and return it with your check to the church office – 5 Summer St., Lynnfield.

- Phil Johnson

----- **New Tables at Church** -----

I donate \$65.00 and would like the name _____ recorded on an 8-ft. table.

I donate \$65.00 and would like the name _____ recorded on an 8-ft. table.

I donate \$50.00 and would like the name _____ recorded on a 6-ft. table.

I donate \$50.00 and would like the name _____ recorded on a 6-ft. table.

(signed) _____

Checks should be made payable to Centre Congregational Church, with a memo "New Tables"
