

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

December 1, 2010

The Last Leaf

The first Sunday in Advent was a good time for me to mow the yard one more time. I mowed it because there were still some leaves hugging close to the turf. Even though other efforts had been made to sweep it clean before the winter snows, I wanted to get my yard as clean as possible so that the grass will be free to grow to its fullest come spring, unimpaired by blocking forces. I want my lawn and soil to continue to be free to receive water and sunlight now and throughout the winter season.

I once lost 50% of the grass in my yard because I had not been able to rake the leaves before the snowfall, leaving me with a lot of hard work to re-seed my lawn.

As I worked on "cleaning" my yard, I wondered about the forces in my life that might block the growth of God's coming spirit in my life, in this season of Advent.

Is there discouragement in my life, blocking the coming good news in the birth of Jesus? It is easy to understand why. The recent violence in Lynnfield with the double murders and suicide causes such despair and trauma to a family, the life of the surviving 12 year daughter, and so rattles an otherwise quiet neighborhood that "peace on earth" has a very hard time being felt by those nearby. It can also bring back memories of traumas experienced by others.

Are there sins that I commit in my life that need to be cleaned, acknowledged, and forgiven? Have I lied, cheated, stolen, and/or gossiped, causing harm and mistrust? Sin separates us from God, like thatch and leaves separate the sun and water from my lawn.

As I cleaned my lawn I made other observations. There were bare spots that will need attention come spring. In some places I realized that I may need to apply some new top soil, and do some aerating.

This made me ask myself if there are behaviors that I need to change, requiring deeper self-examination. Subtle habits like arrogance, thinking that I always know what's best for me; stubbornness, unwillingness to admit that I need to change, or that my way is not always best; and greed, wanting the next, new, better, more fun material thing. These behaviors have a way of preventing

the Spirit of God from getting into my life and guiding me to grow more fully in the work and love of God.

Lawn care and spiritual care in Advent, do share some common themes. We are to clear the yard, and clear our lives, so that we are able to receive the blessings that are to come and the newborn King, in Jesus, Son of God. If we clutter our lives we will not be able to receive him, his good news, and the new directions that he has for us.

If we are to receive God's coming new thing, we

In the Sanctuary

December 5, 2010

Second Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:26-38

10:00 A.M. Holy Communion

Presentation of Bibles to Confirmands
Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
"Annunciations"

Children may worship with families
before going to prepare for the Heifer Marketplace.
Nursery Open in Room 14.

December 12, 2010

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
"Glory!"

Children's Message – "Those Little Gifts"

Children may worship with families
before going to Rotation Workshops.
Nursery Open in Room 14

will have to clean our lives of the old things that can get in the way. I pray God helps me do that this year, so that I will freely and openly be able to know the ways that Jesus continues to try to enter my life.

Have a blessed and renewing Advent.

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Children's Corner

On December 5, children and youth will worship briefly with their families and then leave to prepare for the Heifer Living Gift Market. On December 12, there will be Rotation Sensation Workshops.

Nursery care is provided each week for infants through age 3.

Youth Notes

On Sunday, December 5 the High School Youth Group will meet at 1 pm to car pool to First Church in Winchester to help set up for City Mission's annual Christmas Shop.

We will return by 4 pm. We will be bringing along the Christmas cards and Share the Joy Bags made at the Advent Workshop. There will be no evening meeting.

The Middle School Youth will meet Sunday, December 5 from 6-7:30 pm in Todd Hall.

Both High School and Middle School youth groups will meet Sunday, December 12 from 6-7:30 pm.

Nine Middle School youth and several adult chaperones volunteered at Cradles to Crayons in Quincy on Saturday, November 20. We brought with us the many donations collected here at Centre Church, including 71 pairs of much needed children's pants. Many thanks to all who contributed clothing and also those who supported our fund raising efforts.

Food Items for Haven from Hunger

Thank you to everyone who brought a frozen turkey to church this past Sunday. In all we collected 27 turkeys for Haven from Hunger in Peabody, along with generous donations of cash and other non-perishable foods.

Please continue to bring non-perishable food to the box in the Missions Pantry during the month of December. Protein based items are greatly appreciated during this time of year – canned ham, tuna, lentils, etc.

Christmas Pageant Plans

It's Pageant time again!

It is hoped that all children in the church school will take part in the pageant as there are small parts requiring only the ringing of an angel's bell, or the ability to "baaa" like a sheep, one line parts, and some roles requiring memorizing lines. Those who are interested in having a speaking role should let me know this Sunday in church school, or by email to ladd@neb.com. On Dec 5th, we will be assigning most of the speaking parts of the pageant while the Rotation Sensation classes are involved in the Heifer Marketplace.

Rehearsals will take place during church on 12/12 and on Saturday 12/18, 10am-12pm.

The Pageant will be presented at the 10am church service on 12/19. -Thank you. -Linda Ladd



Christmas Tree and Gifts

Crombie Street Mission in Salem, MA needs your help. Articles of new, warm clothing in adult sizes are needed. Please place your items such as socks, underwear, sweatshirts and pants, mittens and gloves under the tree in the narthex. They will be delivered after the worship service on Sunday, December 19.



Cookie Bakers Needed

On Sunday, Dec 19, the High School Youth group will be holding its 6th Annual Cookie Swap. We would like to ask everyone to help with this fundraiser by baking 2- 3 dozen cookies and bringing them to the church library on Sunday morning. After worship, you will have the opportunity to purchase a decorated container to fill with your choice of cookies. This is a great way to have a variety of cookies on hand for the holidays, or perhaps even purchase an extra container or two to give away as gifts.

Shopping With Spirit

Now that Thanksgiving is behind us, it's time to think about Christmas shopping. Why not give a gift card to those hard-to-buy-for people on your Christmas list? Or, you could buy a shopping card and use it to make your purchases. Using shopping cards will help you stick to your budget, and you won't be overwhelmed by credit card bills in January.

In order to receive your shopping cards by December 19, you will need to place your order by December 12. Remember that every shopping card you purchase helps Centre Church.

For questions, contact the Shopping Card Coordinators:
Debbie Cotting, Sandi Watson, Phil Triffletti

Christmas Cards

Did you know that Americans produce 5 million tons of trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day? Please consider making a donation instead of sending out many individual Christmas cards. Send a Christmas card to the church (5 Summer Street)) with your donation. The cards will be displayed on the Christmas tree in the narthex and recognized in *Tower Notes*. The proceeds will go to Boston City Mission Society for their continuing work.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

December 5: Head Usher-Jeff Law. Greeter-Shirley Orr. Advent Wreath-Seelig family. Provide Altar Flowers-Charlotte Kilgore. Deliver Altar Flowers-Aslanian family. Lights Out beginning Dec. 3-Phil Johnson.

December 12: Ushers-Carrie Pericola, Karen and Paul Harrington, Al Johnson. Greeters-George and Perry Hayden. Advent Wreath-Sievers family. Coffee Hour-Bjorkman family. Lights Out beginning Dec. 10-Roger Batchelder

Are You Ready For Some Hockey?

Or...is there someone on your Christmas list who might be ready for some hockey? If so, you can take advantage of this chance to win 4 tickets to watch the Boston Bruins take on the Toronto Maple Leafs at the TD Garden on February 15, 2011. The game is at 7:00 p.m. and the seats are great, Loge, Section 16, row 14, seats 7-10. You just need to enter the Centre Church Hockey Raffle. Tickets are \$10 each and there is no limit to the number of tickets that you can purchase. They will be sold beginning Sunday, November 28 before and after the morning service and each Sunday until the Grand Drawing on Sunday, December 19. You can also purchase tickets by contacting the church office during weekday hours.

While the game will be a lot of fun, what is even better will be the feeling you will have knowing that your dollars are supporting the programs that keep Centre Church a vibrant place. Good luck to all!

- Your Stewardship Team

News From Around the Parish

Our congratulations to Cory Johnson who was honored for achieving Eagle Rank, the highest honor in boy scouting on November 21, 2010.

Our love and sympathy are with Phil Johnson and his family upon the death of his father, Carl Johnson. His funeral was held on December 2 in Attleboro.

We extend our love and sympathy to the family and friends of Helen Miller who died on November 26. Private interment will be at a later date.

Our love and sympathy are with Roland Caron and his family upon the death of his father, J. Roland Caron of Salem, MA.

We extend our love and sympathy to Todd Rogers and his family upon the death of his grandmother, Margaret Bienner of Madison, NJ.

Our love and sympathy are with Stan and Roselyn Listernick upon the recent death of their brother-in-law.

Paper Retriever Recycling

The Paper Retriever program is a joint venture between Centre Church and Abitibi-Bowater, North America's largest manufacturer of recycled content newsprint for use in making newspapers. The paper you recycle today may be the newspaper you read in just a few weeks.. and again in two months.. and again. Here's how you can help. Look for the green and yellow Paper Retriever bin located in the church parking lot next to the play ground. Almost any type of paper can be deposited: newspaper, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, soft-cover books, shredded paper (contained in plastic bags),-essentially any paper product. The paper will be 100% recycled and made into newsprint. Please, do not deposit phone books or any type of cardboard. Abitibi pays Centre Church for every ton of paper collected. The more we collect the more we can earn.

Christmas Concert – Sunday, December 19 – 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Don't miss this chance to hear the beautiful music of the season by our Youth and Senior Choirs. There will be a time for refreshments and fellowship after the concert.



Looking Ahead

December 19: Christmas Pageant 10 am
Cookie Swap after Worship
Christmas Concert 6:30 pm

December 24: Family Candlelight Service 5 pm
Chapel Candlelight Service 11 pm

December 26: Morning Worship 10 am



Living Gift Market – Sunday, December 5



What do you buy the person who has everything? How about a goat, a llama or a water buffalo? At this year's Living Gift Market, learn how sponsoring animals like these can provide food and income for hungry families through Heifer International. You get a handsome card to give, and a hungry family gets hope. On Sunday, December 5, we will be holding a Living Gift Market where we will "sell" food and income producing animals like pigs, bees, chicks, and heifers. The animals go to hungry, rural families working to improve their lives, and are delivered with training in animal care and concern for the environment. Choose a meaningful gift to give a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animal gifts that help them become self-reliant. What better way to honor the people close to you this Christmas?

Heifer.....\$500	Sheep.....\$120
Share of a Heifer.....\$50	Share of a Sheep..... \$10
Llama.....\$150	Pig..... \$120
Share of a Llama.....\$20	Share of a Pig..... \$10
Goat.....\$120	Tree Seedling.....\$30
Share of a Goat.....\$10	Honeybees.....\$30
Starter Flock of Chicks.....\$20	

During the month of November, Rotation Sensation workshops focused on learning more about Heifer International and the animals they provide. The children have made posters which will be displayed at the Marketplace. They have also made animal ornaments you will be able to purchase. When you give a share of an animal, why not buy an ornament as well to give the recipient as a permanent reminder of the gift you have purchased in their honor? Your support is needed to reach our goal of \$5,000 which will enable us to purchase our 10th ark.



Lobster Rolls are Back!

Stumped about what to have for lunch after church on Sundays? Good news! On Sunday, December 19th you will be able to order and purchase delicious lobster rolls prepared by our own Bob and Myrna Shorey and their expert crew. You have the option to purchase a roll for \$10 or add a bag of chips and a cookie for just \$12 total. All proceeds go towards closing the gap in the 2010-2011 Church Budget. So order many – and often!

- With thanks from your Stewardship Team

Lobster Roll Order Form

Bob and Myrna's Famous Lobster Rolls. Pre-order lobster rolls by noon on Tuesday December 14 –
Return your form with a check to Centre Congregational Church.

LOBSTER ROLL ORDER: (\$10 each). With chips & cookie (\$12 each)

Pick up on Sunday, December 19th after church.

Name _____ How Many? _____

Poinsettia Order



I would like to order for \$8.50 each: ____ red poinsettia

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ made payable to Centre Congregational Church.

These flowers have been given by _____

in memory of _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

___ I will take my plant(s) home after one of the services on Christmas Eve. (5 pm or 11 pm)

___ I wish to donate my plant(s) to the hospitalized, bereaved or shut-in.

Plants will be displayed in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, December 19.

A list of donors will be printed in the bulletin on that day.

Wednesday, December 8 is the deadline for placing orders.

Our Opportunities

Sun. Dec. 5 2 nd Sunday of Advent	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:30 am 11:30 am 11:30 am 1-4 pm 6:00 pm	Holy Communion - Sanctuary. Nursery – Room 14 Children set up for Heifer Market Heifer Market - Narthex Confirmation/Youth Choir High School Youth - Winchester Middle School Youth – Basement
Mon. Dec. 6	7:30 pm	Alanon & Alateen – FR & Library
Tues. Dec. 7	12:30 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm	Get-Together Wheel – Fireside Education Ministries – Library Senior Choir – Choir Room
Wed. Dec. 8	7:00 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thurs. Dec. 9	10:00 am	Caregivers – Fireside Room
Fri., Dec. 10	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun., Dec. 12 3 rd Sunday of Advent	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6-7:30 pm	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotations/Nursery Confirmation/Youth Choir Youth Groups - Basement
Mon. Dec. 13	7:30 pm	Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Tues. Dec. 14	7:30 pm	Diaconate – Pastor’s Office
Wed. Dec. 15	7:00 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thur. Dec. 16	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri., Dec 17	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our love and prayers are with Barbara Bean at Woodbriar, Wilmington; Abbott Cofran; at Meadowview, N. Reading; Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; John Michael McCarthy; Elaine Levis (Linda Ladd’s mother) at Mt. Auburn Hospital, Cambridge; Elva Batchelder, Art Pyburn at home; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, Glady Davis, Carolyn Furey, Hal Holappa, and Helen Miller. We also remember in our prayers Allan Marshall who is serving in Afghanistan.

The next *Tower Notes* is the week of December 13.

The Church Office is open 9am-3pm Monday-Friday.
