

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

Barbara Langill, Director of Christian Ed & Youth Ministry, 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

December 15, 2010

Christmas

What is Christmas to you? When I think of Christmas I think of the people and places with whom I have spent Christmas throughout my life. I think of my parents, how our father would find our tree in the woods. Our mother would be so busy making homemade cookies (lots of cookies), homemade chocolate candies, and wrapping gifts.

Wow, our mother worked so hard at home to make Christmas so special for us. My very, most favorite thing was the chocolate covered cherries that Mom took great care to make by hand, each one. Making the chocolate covered cherries was a multi-step process, taking great care and patience. My second favorite candy was the chocolate covered peanut butter candies. I can still see her rolling out the chocolate on the waxed paper, spreading the peanut butter, covering the peanut butter with chocolate, and cutting the pieces. Mom would carefully pack each candy into the storage containers, each layer separated by waxed paper, and then store them in a cool place in the house. Can you believe it, layers and layers of chocolate covered cherries and peanut butter candies? I never wanted those layers to end. The last layer at the bottom of the storage container was always the best. The last layer of candy was also very scary. It was scary because as we consumed the last layer of candies, Christmas would come to an end for that year.

I have always wanted to learn how to make those candies that our mother made for us. But, I never have. My appreciation for what she did for us at Christmas has grown over the years given how expensive such candies are now. Every one of those chocolate covered cherries was, to me, like *a taste of heaven!* In reality, they were a gift of pure love from our mother's heart! Why did she do it? She did it for love, for us, while seeking to give us the best that she had to offer. Christmas was not complete without her candies and cookies.

As is written in Psalm 34:8, "*Taste and see that the LORD is good....*"

I think of this every Christmas while thinking about how God comes to us to give us the very best that

he has to offer in the gift of his son, Jesus. His gift is also a gift of pure love from God's heart, "a taste of heaven!"

What I like about my mother's chocolate is that it was a concrete way of bringing Christmas. It was also a very messy process, making those chocolate candies. The whole kitchen would be at work, used up, and a mess with the chocolate drips, the confectioner's sugar everywhere, the layers and rows of waxed paper covered with candies, the kitchen floor left a mess....

In the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 19, 2010

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Christmas Pageant Presented by
the Children of the Church

Nursery will be open in Room 14.

Sunday, December 19, 2010

**6:30 p.m. Christmas Concert by
Youth and Senior Choirs**

Followed by Refreshments.

December 24, 2010

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Family Candlelight Service
in the Sanctuary

Message by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
Special Music by the Youth Choir

11:00 p.m. Chapel Candlelight Service

Message by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
"Christmas is not a Place, But a Person"
Special Music by the Senior Choir
and Instrumentalists

Sunday, December 26, 2010

First Sunday after Christmas

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

A Special Post-Christmas Celebration

When I think about God giving us his son, I also think about the mess. Parents unwed, Mary and Joseph, traveling a great distance to pay the required taxes, sleeping under the stars, trying to find a place to stay, ending up in a stable, with animals, straw, and then giving birth to a child. What a mess!

And yet, out of the mess, comes pure love, a taste of heaven.

Today, I see this in Christmas pageants, homemade apple pies made to be given, homebuilding in New Orleans, gifts to soldiers, teachers and students learning together, medical treatments that bring comfort and healing, tears for those we love, friends who remain friends, even after we move away, and sacrificing of ourselves for the sake of others.

That is the gift of Christmas in the birth of Jesus. This is the gift of Christmas when we receive it and when we give in such a way.

*“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”*
(Isaiah 9:2,6, & 7)

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*
(Luke 2:14)

Merry Christmas to one and all. I pray we find ourselves tasting heaven and the gift of pure love from God, through Jesus.

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Children’s Corner

Nursery Care is provided each week for infants through age 3. Join our trained staff for stories and playtime during the worship service. Pagers are available for parents.

Rotation Sensation

December 18- Saturday, 10-12 noon Pageant Rehearsal
December 19- Sunday, Please arrive by 9:00 to get in costume. All children are welcome to participate. There are many parts without lines. If you are unable to attend rehearsal, just come in the morning and see Linda Ladd.

December 26- Please plan to attend worship with your family.

January 2- Faith In Action Sunday

As we celebrate Epiphany, we are asking that each family bring a toy to donate to Birthday Wishes in honor of Baby Jesus. Birthday Wishes is a local non-profit organization which hosts birthday parties for children living in shelters. After briefly worshipping with their families, children will head to Todd Hall to assemble goody bags to send to Birthday Wishes.

Youth Group

December 19: there will be no evening youth group meetings. Please plan to attend the Christmas Concert with your family. High School Youth are reminded to bring 2-3 dozen cookies(or more) to church and to help at the cookie swap at 11 am after worship.

December 26: There are no evening youth group meetings.

Sunday Morning, December 19

Cookie Swap



After church on Dec 19, the High School Youth group will be holding its 6thth 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 to purchase an extra container or two to give away as gifts. Prices: \$5.00 for decorated bag \$10.00 for box



Bring Your Gifts for Under the Tree

Under the tree in the narthex we are collecting articles of new, warm clothing in adult sizes for the Crombie Street Shelter in Salem, MA. Items such as socks, underwear, sweatshirts, sweatpants, gloves and warm hats are most welcome. They will be delivered after worship on Sunday, December 19.

People Helping People

On Sunday, Dec. 5, three High School youth and 2 adults volunteered their time at First Church in Winchester to help set up for City Mission’s annual Christmas Shop. We brought with us the donations collected for Share the Joy Bags and also over 100 Christmas cards that were made at the Advent Workshop. We put together boxes, carried in bags and bags of donations, and then sorted and arranged items for the Christmas shop.

On Saturday, Jan 15, the High School Youth Group will join with more than 200 other volunteers for a day of service in honor of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The youth will be seeking pledges to support the service projects of City Mission Society of Boston. Please let us know if you plan to participate in this event by returning your permission slip and City Mission waiver to the church office as soon as possible. Additional information and forms can be found on the church website: www.centre-church.org



Christmas Greetings

To All Our Friends at Centre Church From:

Annabel Aldrich, David Balsler, The Becker Family, Chuck and Debbie Cotting, Ginny Daniels, The Decker Family, Ed and Barbara Ericson, Bruce and Anne Gist, Priscilla Hahn, Betty Hayter, Phil and Sue Johnson, Steven, Carrie and Hazel Pericola, The Spear Family, Bradlee and Larry Troy and Shirley Wendel.

Consider making a donation to City Mission Society in Boston instead of sending out individual greetings to your church friends. Send a card to the church with your donation (check made out to the church.) The cards will be displayed on the tree in the narthex. It's not too late! There will be another list of donors in the next *Tower Notes*. Send along your greetings for the new year!



Christmas Concert

All are invited to the Christmas Concert presented by the Youth and Senior Choirs on Sunday, December 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Enjoy the beautiful music of the season with over 30 choristers under the direction of Doug Hodgkins. Refreshments and a time of fellowship will follow the program.

Shopping Card Program

Are you the parent of a college student who buys textbooks through Barnes & Noble? If so, please consider purchasing a **Barnes & Noble College Bookstore** card at our Shopping Card table on Sunday morning. The cards are available in denominations of \$10, \$20, \$25, and \$100. Centre Church will benefit, and your college student will have a convenient way to purchase textbooks

Paper Retriever Recycling

We are off to a great start thanks to everyone who contributed their recyclable paper. Our first bin was filled in less than a month and was emptied last week. The more we collect, the more we earn. What better way to get rid of all those Christmas catalogs and flyers than to deposit them in the large green and yellow bin located in the church parking lot? 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. Let's fill another bin this month!

News From Around the Parish

We are saddened to report to you the death of former long-time member of Centre Church, Jean Lowry of Tempe, Arizona. She is survived by her husband, Pete.

Thank you to our friends at Centre Church for your cards, calls, visits and expressions of sympathy on the loss of Phil's Dad. Although it is difficult to say good bye to him the support of friends makes it easier to bear.

Phil and Sue Johnson

Theater, FUN, and \$\$!

On Jan 30th, we will be holding a fundraiser in conjunction with Quannapowitt Players community theater group in Reading. They will do an extra performance of their upcoming comedy, "Lend Me a Tenor", just for us. We can sell 150 tickets and the more we sell - the more profit goes to Centre Church. We'll have a very fun day of theater and fellowship and help our bottom line!

Many committees are joining in this effort. The Youth Groups will be selling refreshments at intermission, Fellowship is looking into providing a "reasonably priced lunch" between worship and the show and Carpooling is planned. So when you sign up for tickets, please note how many passengers you could take, if you'd appreciate a ride, and if you'd stay for lunch.

The show is on Jan 30th, 2011 at 2pm. Ticket prices are: \$20/adult, \$10/student. Tickets will be available after church services or can be purchased by sending checks to the church office payable to Centre Church, noting "QP play". **Buy your tickets now so you can give them as holiday gifts!!**

All of us are encouraged to invite, or sell tickets to, our friends and neighbors. The more the merrier when watching the wild mishaps this show entails: Can the world's most famous tenor put the Cleveland Opera Company on the operatic map in his greatest role as Othello? Come and see the hilarious series of mishaps with tranquilizers, too many doors and a very reluctant replacement that puts two Othello's on stage - a perfect farce! For more information contact Linda Ladd, ladd@neb.com, 781-334-6170

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Sunday, December 19: Head Usher: Jeff Law. Greeters: Norma and Parker Holloway. Lay Reader: Dave Clough. Advent Wreath: The Martin Family. Coffee Hour: Kathi Martin and Debbie Newman. Lights Out Beginning Dec. 17: Dwight Decker. Lights Out Beginning Dec. 24: Dave Clough.

Christmas Eve: 5:00 p.m.- Sanctuary Head Usher: Linda Ladd. Advent Wreath: The Weaver Family.

Christmas Eve: 11:00 p.m. - Chapel Head Usher: Linda Ladd. Advent Wreath: The White Family.

Our Opportunities

Sun. Dec. 19	10:00 am	Christmas Pageant - Sanctuary
<i>4th Sunday of Advent</i>	10:00 am	Nursery – Room 14
	11:30 am	Confirmation Class
	11:30 am	Cookie Swap - Library
	6:30 pm	Christmas Concert - Sanctuary
Mon. Dec. 20	7:30 pm	Alanon & Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Dec. 22	7:00 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Fri., Dec. 24	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
<i>Christmas Eve</i>	5:00 pm	Family Candlelight Service - In the Sanctuary
	11:00 pm	Candlelight Service - In the Chapel
Sun., Dec. 26	10:00 am	Morning Worship Service
	10:00 am	Children in Church
Mon. Dec. 27	7:30 pm	Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Dec. 29	7:00 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Fri., Dec 31	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our love and prayers are with Bob MacKendrick at Lahey, Burlington; Barbara Bean at Lahey Burlington; Abbott Cofran; at Meadowview, North Reading; Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; 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, and Hal Holappa.

We also remember in our prayers Allan Marshall who is serving in Afghanistan.

The next *Tower Notes* is the week of December 27.

The Church Office will be open 9-12:00 on December 24 and December 27-31
