

# TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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*We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church*

**February 16, 2011**

## Notes...on Grief

It is interesting what triggers our emotions and the grief for those lost to us. I was getting ready to go to church on Sunday morning, this past January 30th when suddenly I found myself overwhelmed with grief, crying. I asked myself, "What is going on here?" I panicked, wondering if I could "pull myself together" before leading the worship service that morning.

I realized that it was triggered by my plans, that day, to fly to visit my Uncle George, who had recently been hospitalized near where he lives in California. Given that he was soon to turn 87 (February 13th), I decided to visit him lest this opportunity pass me by and leave me with regret.

Uncle George is the last of my father's 3 siblings and generation. The anticipation of seeing my uncle brought back memories of and grief for my late father and mother. The thought of losing my uncle made me feel that my family was slipping away.

The Psalmist prayed: "Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to you. Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress (or grief). Incline your ear to me; answer me...when I call" (Psalm 102).

Later, as I was in flight I kept seeing my father's face and his hallmark crew cut hair. I knew I was going to miss calling my mother and telling her about my trip to visit Uncle George and Aunt Claire, and one of my two cousins,

Leanne. She would have been anxious to hear about it.

And yet, as I think of it now, all of the losses, I also think of the richness of my life, the

## In the Sanctuary

**February 20, 2011**

*I Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23*

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Lessons in Building"

Children's Message: "God's Temple"

Nursery open in Room 14.

Older children may worship with their families for the entire service.

**February 27, 2011**

*Matthew 6:24-34*

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Freedom for What?"

Children's Message:

"What Do You Worry About?"

Nursery open in Room 14

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

tremendous depth and breadth that came by means of my parents and family. Not a day goes by in which I don't remember and cherish what my parents gave to me - gifts of faith, perseverance, strength, and determination. I also think of all of the wonderful experiences and memories that I have that bless me.

Such remembrances, such tears, such emotional outpourings are sacred and holy. They are such because they allow us to know and remember that we have been counted as blessed gifts from God in the eyes of others, that we have been unconditionally loved by those who gave us life, instruction, guidance, structure, and a future.

I have been blessed by parents who found hope and excitement in my birth and life. They wanted the best for me. Even though my father died over 46 years ago, I can still hear him telling me that he never wanted me to become dependent on drugs. My mother's worry over me was a deep expression of her love for me.

Do not fear the grief, do not try to stop the tears when they come. Count them as gifts, as reminders of those who have counted you as a gift from God and a joy in their lives.

Remember, also, that God counts you as a gift, as holy. This is confirmed throughout scripture, as per the following:

In the words of Jesus, about your worth: *"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

(Matthew 10:30-31, NIV)

We cannot go back to what once was, but we can remember those sacred places and people that allowed us to know how God counts us as holy and special. God, like our parents, has hope in us that we will use our lives to be a blessing to others, and in so doing, serve the Lord.

Yours in Christ,

Dennis

### **Rotation Sensation**

There will be no Rotation Workshops on Sunday, Feb. 20. Please plan to enjoy worship as a family.

On Sunday, Feb. 27, we will continue our Rotation Workshops and learning about the Greatest Commandment through storytelling, art and cooking.

Our Nursery, located in Room 14, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time and play. Pagers are available for all parents.

### **Youth Groups**

There are no youth group meetings scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 20 as it is the beginning of School Vacation week.

The 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders are reminded to return their permission slips and waivers for My Brother's Table. On Thursday, Feb. 24 we will be volunteering to help prepare, serve and clean up for the luncheon meal. We will meet in the church parking lot at 10:30 a.m. and carpool to Lynn. Please bring along a can or two of soup to donate. Remember to bring your permission slips and RSVP so that the proper number of drivers may be arranged ahead of time.

Both youth groups will meet from 6-7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 27. The High School Youth group will meet in the kitchen and the Middle School in Todd Hall.

### **From the Mailbox**

Dear Friends,

Ollie wishes to thank the Church for the beautiful flowers sent to her at Christmastime and for the many cards she has received from members of the congregation.

-Carl Wood

### **Thanks for Your Generosity**

Souper Bowl of Caring: The Middle School Youth Group collected \$125.00 which will go to My Brother's Table in Lynn where they serve an average of 200 hungry, homeless, or lonely people at lunch and dinner each day.

Subs and Salads: Thank you to all who supported the High School Youth by purchasing subs and salads on Super Bowl Sunday. We were able to raise over \$100.00 to help fund this year's mission trip.



### **Pancake Supper**

Join us Tuesday, March 8 for a church-wide Pancake Supper. In addition to a delicious Pancake Supper, we will have Wii stations set up throughout the church for all ages to participate in games and activities such as Wii Bowling, Jeopardy, Rock Band, and Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

Come join in the fun.

### **We Appreciate Your Help**

#### **February 20:**

Head Usher: Jeff Law.

Greeters: Barkey and Meg Gulezian.

Lay Reader: Sue Gustavsen.

Coffee Hour: Diana, Lauren, Lisa Gerbick and Dominic Donadio.

Lights Out beginning February 18: Al Johnson.

#### **February 27:**

Head Usher: Linda Ladd.

Lay Reader: Randy Russell.

Provide Altar Flowers: Barbara Becker.

Coffee Hour: Judie Potter.

Lights Out beginning February 25: Charlie Wills.

Would you like to provide flowers for the altar on March 20, 27, April 3, or 10? They might be in memory of someone or in honor of someone or to celebrate a special occasion, etc. Please call the church office (781-334-3050) if you are interested. These flowers add so much beauty to our service. You may take them home, take them to someone you know, or if you request, our flower delivery team will deliver them to shut-ins following the service.



### **Women's Bible Study - Monday Evenings During Lent**

Educational Ministries will be offering a Lenten Bible Study using the book "Women of the Bible" by Ann Spangler and Jean E. Syswerda. This will be held on Monday evenings from 7-8:00 beginning March 14 for 6 weeks. Each week we will read about and discuss a different woman from the Bible. It is our hope that participants who might like to will take a turn leading a chapter about their favorite woman in the Bible.

We hope to cap off our Bible Study with a Women's Retreat in the Spring.

Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office by March 1 if you are interested so that we can order the books (approx. \$10.00 each) from Amazon. We encourage you to come and bring a friend! We are happy to arrange rides for those who would appreciate that.

- Carrie Pericola and Barbara Langill

## *Our Opportunities*

Sun. Feb. 20	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary
	10:00 am	Children in Church
	10:00 am	Nursery – Room 14
	-----	Confirmation, Youth Choir, and Youth Groups will resume after vacation week
Mon. Feb. 21	-----	Office Closed for Presidents' Day
	7:30 pm	Alanon & Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Feb. 23	7:00 pm	Women's 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thurs Feb. 24	-----	No Choir Rehearsal this week
Fri., Feb. 25	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office
Sun., Feb. 27	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary
	10:00 am	Nursery/Rotations
	11:30 am	Confirmation/Youth Choir
	6:00 pm	Youth Groups (Gr.5-12)-Basement
Mon. Feb. 28	7:30 pm	Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. March 2	8am-2pm	Bread & Roses Meal Preparation
	7:00 pm	Women's 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thur. March 3	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri., March 4	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office

Our prayers are with Betty Conn at Lahey Clinic, Burlington; Olive Wood at Holy Family Hospital, Methuen; Barbara Bean who will be moving soon to Daniels House, 59 Middlesex Avenue, Reading, 01867; Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Al Farnsworth, and Art Pyburn at home; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, Glady Davis, Carolyn Furey, and Hal Holappa.

We also remember in our prayers Andy Gehret who is in Afghanistan and Allan Marshall who has returned to the United States after serving in Afghanistan.

**The next *Tower Notes* is the week of February 28.**

**The Church Office will be open 9-12:00 Feb. 22-25  
and 9-3:00 Feb. 28-March 4.**