

# TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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

## March 16, 2011

### Jesus Wept

It has been a very difficult week! A massive 8.9/9.0 magnitude earthquake hit the Pacific Ocean nearby Northeastern Japan at around 2:46pm on March 11 (JST) causing damage with blackouts, fire and tsunamis. As of 8 am today, Monday, March 14, 2011, the death toll from the Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan had reached 1598 with 1720 missing. It is feared that thousands more will be found dead, if found at all.

I have been thinking that the tragedy of 9-11 with a death toll of over 3,000 was challenging to comprehend. Now this. But, there have been other tragedies also hard to comprehend, like wars, genocides, exterminations, and other natural disasters like the earthquake in Haiti (estimated 100,000 to 200,000 dead).

The Psalmist prays as we might pray:

*"Hear my prayer, O Lord;  
let my cry come to you.  
Do not hide your face from me  
In the day of my distress.  
Incline your ear to me;  
Answer me speedily in the day when I call.*

*For my days pass away like smoke,  
And my bones burn like a furnace.  
My heart is stricken and withered like grass;  
I am too wasted to eat my bread.  
Because of my loud groaning  
My bones cling to my skin.  
I am like an owl of the wilderness,  
Like a little owl of the waste places.  
I lie awake;  
I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.  
(Psalm 102:1-7)*

I am so overwhelmed I do not know how to weep. I am so full of sorrow I do not know how to mourn. Further, I fear for those still alive that their lives are so threatened by further quakes, homelessness, lack of nourishment, and warmth. Such a beautiful land, such a beautiful people destroyed, devastated.

As Jesus cried out to God on the cross, so we might also cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And yet, just as Jesus cried with Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus, God grieves with the world now and groans and weeps.

It is one thing to "give up" something for Lent, as a spiritual discipline to help us reconnect with God, removing one more obstacle to God's approach to us. It is quite another to have your whole life ripped away from you.

I know that you, like me, have been grief stricken in your own life, and have not known where to turn. And yet, we are not alone, nor do we need to be left alone or

### In the Sanctuary

**Sunday, March 20, 2011**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent**

**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

*John 3:1-17*

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey  
"By Day and By Night"

Children may worship with their families before going to  
Rotation Workshops.  
Nursery open for children up to age 3.

**Sunday, March 27, 2011**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent**

**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

*John 4:5-42*

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey  
"Jesus Steps into Alienation"

Children may worship with their families before going to  
Rotation Workshops.  
Nursery open for children up to age 3.

feel alone. God's people are always ready to meet you where you are and walk with you in your grief, our grief. Sometimes the deepest comfort comes from knowing that we are comforted by those who have grieved before us and they, as servants of God, disciples of Christ, will walk with us, cry with us, and pray with us.

I announced this past Sunday that whoever wishes may meet me on **Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, in Centre Church Chapel, for a time of prayer for the victims of this earthquake and tsunami, but also for and with other victims of other losses.**

Sunday evening, there was an explosion at the Bostik plant in Middleton, just outside of Lynnfield. Fortunately, no one was killed, but four people were injured, none with life threatening injuries. Thanks be to God!

We will also welcome donations to assist the victims of the Earthquake in Japan. Checks can be made to Centre Church, Memo: Disaster Relief. Donations can be made through charities of your choice. We typically send such donations through our United Church of Christ Wider Ministries, but we are considering contributing to other aid providing organizations.

Our grief is never wasted, writes Flora Slosson Wuellner. When we grieve for loved ones near and far, we cherish those who have been given the breath of God in this life. We honor all the ways that they were a blessing. We believe that God's compassion receives them safely home, just as surely as we believe that God shared them with us here.

In this Lent, in this time of overwhelming sorrow, let us walk, talk, pray, grieve, and cry together, for the sake of those lost, and, for the sake of remembering them, and for the sake of believing in the life and lives yet to come. In our faith, Christ is the door to new life. He welcomes us every day to rise to greet the new day. Let us rise together, and find Christ's presence, strength, and hope in each other.

Yours in Christ, Dennis

**Rotation Sensation**

Our Nursery, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand each week.

PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Rotation Workshops during Lent will focus on Palm Sunday. Sally Flickinger will be leading Upper Room and Kathy Delaney will be leading the movie workshop. In addition, each class will have a turn in cooking with Judie Potter where they will be baking muffins to sell after worship to benefit Heifer. When your class is scheduled for cooking, please head directly down to the kitchen at 10 am to start baking.

	<b>PreK-4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></b>
March 20	Cooking	Movie	Upper Room
March 27	Upper Room	Cooking	
April 3	Faith in Action	Faith in Action	Faith in Action
April 10	Movie	Upper Room	Cooking

**Stewardship Is The Key**



Stewardship packets will be available on Sunday March 20 for pickup. Please review the materials and think prayerfully about your pledge this year. Pledges will be collected during the service on Sunday April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Heifer Benefit Concert on Thursday, April 7**

You're invited! Please join us for a concert by the award-winning contemporary a cappella group, OVERBOARD.

**Where:** Centre Church Sanctuary

**When:** Thursday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$10.00; ages 10 and under free.

*All proceeds to support Heifer International.*

Invite your friends, loved ones, neighbors, teachers, co-workers – anyone you can think of! We'll hear some amazing music while you help us spread the word about Heifer's work. See [www.overboardvocals.com](http://www.overboardvocals.com) or <http://boston-north.heiferblog.org> for more information.

**Heifer Muffins**

Muffins are here! This week the High School Class took the lead in baking and selling muffins to benefit Heifer. Muffins will be sold each Sunday during Lent. Please help support this worthwhile cause while enjoying freshly baked muffins.

**Invitation to Join Centre Church**

If you enjoy the worship services, people, and ministry of Centre Church, we invite you to become a member. A New Members Orientation Class will be held soon. Please contact Rev. Bailey if you are interested: [pastor@centre-church.org](mailto:pastor@centre-church.org); phone-781-334-3050, and/or speak with him in person.

**Shopping Card Update**

Did you know that every time you purchase a shopping card, you help support the ministry of Centre Church? So far, shopping card sales have netted just over \$1550 for our church. Now that we're seeing signs of spring, we want you to know that we have shopping cards to meet all your spring time needs - house and garden projects, your spring wardrobe, etc. We always have cash and carry cards on hand for Dunkin Donuts and the 99 Restaurant. Please visit our Shopping Card table on Sunday mornings. Sandi Watson and Debbie Cotting,

Shopping Card Coordinators

**Pancake Supper**

Many thanks to all who attended and helped with the Pancake Supper on Tuesday, March 8. We had a great meal and fun playing Wii at different stations throughout the church. Thank you to all who lent their t.v.s and Wii games. A good time was had by all!

### **Breakfast with the Easter Bunny**

On Saturday, April 2 from 8:30 a.m. until noon, your child's/family's photograph will be taken with the Easter Bunny by Priestley's Fine Art Photography in the Fireside Room. Breakfast will be included. The photography will be processed and delivered to the church office for pick up before Easter. Additional packages will also be available, if desired. The cost is \$10.00 for the first photograph, with breakfast. Please call the church office at 781-334-3050 if you have a preferred time for your sitting. Proceeds will benefit Centre Church.

### **Pennies for Peace**

On Sunday, March 6, the children and youth made Pennies for Peace banks and took home a special calendar to follow during Lent. Pennies for Peace is a program of Central Asia Institute (CAI) founded by Greg Mortenson-author of the best seller Three Cups of Tea. CAI is a nonprofit organization that has built nearly 100 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Please help your child to follow the Lenten calendar and add to their penny collection each day. We ask that you return the filled banks on Easter Sunday so that we can send our donation to Pennies for Peace. Adults are welcome to bring pennies to the container on the table in the narthex to add to our donation.

### **News From Around the Parish**

We extend our love and sympathy to Marcia Imbrescia and her family upon the recent death of her father, Arnold Carlson of Lynnfield.

Every time I look at my beautiful bouquet I realize how fortunate I am to belong to a church with so much love and caring. The good wishes of Judith Doe who delivered it were most welcome. A hospital visit from Dennis, all the cards, letters, calls and offers to shop for me were also so heartening.  
- Betty Conn

### **Weight Watchers at Centre Church**

Are you ready to lose weight in a healthy way? Weight Watchers can help you reach that goal. Starting Thursday, March 17 we will have the convenience of attending Weight Watcher meetings right here at Centre Church in the Fireside Room. On the 17<sup>th</sup> we will meet at 5:15 for registration and private weigh in. The meeting will be from 5:30-6 pm. Thereafter, the group will meet at 5:45 for weigh in and the meeting will be 6-6:30 pm. The cost for the 17 week plan with 19 free e-tools weeks is \$186.00 payable in full at the first meeting. Laurel Caputo will be the leader of this group. Anyone who currently has a monthly pass and wants to join will have to call 1-800-651-6000 and press 0 to cancel the pass and then pay for our series in full. Lifetime members at goal are welcome to attend.

### **Youth Group News**

#### **Volunteer at BKP**

On Saturday March 19, 10 am- 12 noon, Middle School and High School youth will volunteer here at Centre Church with BKP, a non-profit organization that sets up mini libraries and read aloud programs for children in the Philippines. For the past 2 weeks, we have been collecting children's books to donate. You are welcome to bring additional books with you on Saturday. Please contact Mrs. Langill if you plan to attend so that BKP knows how many extra volunteers to expect.

#### **Laser Quest**

Both youth groups will be heading to Laser Quest in Danvers on Sunday, March 20 from 6-8:30 for a night of non-stop laser tag. Pick up and drop off will be at Laser Quest. Please arrive promptly at 6 pm so players can register their codenames and be ready for the first game. No meal will be provided so please plan to eat dinner before you come

#### **Both youth groups will meet on Sunday, March 27**

#### **Middle School Youth Group Lock-In**

The Middle School Youth Group will be having a lock-in at the church Friday, April 1 to Saturday, April 2. We plan to watch a movie, play some games, make snacks, and sleep overnight at the church. In the morning we will have breakfast and participate in a service activity. Please let Mrs. Langill know by Sun., Mar. 27 if you can come.

#### **High School Mission Trip July 24-29**

This year's High School Youth Group will be going to New York City where they will be partnering with Youth Services Opportunities Project (YSOP), a nonprofit organization which was founded by Quakers. A typical day will involve working in a soup kitchen, a furniture warehouse or a food bank, going to a different site each day. Lodging will be dormitory style. We will travel to NYC by bus. Entering High School Freshmen are welcome to attend. Please send in your \$50.00 deposit by Sunday, March 20 if you are interested in going on this Mission Trip. Leaders: Jeff and Barbara Langill.

#### **Young Adult Mission Trip to Maine**

This year the Young Adults from Centre Church will be heading to Portland, Maine from May 22-27, 2011 to work with Habitat for Humanity. There is space for up to 12 people in a farm house with bunk style sleeping arrangements, full kitchen, dining room and 2 bathrooms. We will rent a van for transportation. We hope to keep the entire cost below \$250.00. If you are interested in attending, please contact Mrs. Langill. You will need to send in your deposit of \$50.00 before March 20. On Sat. April 23, we will hold a fundraising tea at the Meeting House. Let us know if you can help!

## *Our Opportunities*

Sun. Mar. 20	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 pm 6:00 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Confirmation/Youth Choir Youth Groups at Laser Quest
Mon. Mar. 21	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women's Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Alanon & Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Mar. 23	7:00 pm 7:00 pm	Council – Pastor's Office Women's 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thurs Mar. 24	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Mar. 25	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office
Sun. Mar. 27	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Confirmation/Youth Choir Youth Groups (Gr.5-12)-Basement
Mon. Mar. 28	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women's Bible Study– 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fl. Ofc. Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Mar. 30	7:00 pm	Women's 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thur. Mar. 31	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri., April 1	10:30 am overnight	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office Middle School Youth Lock-in

Our prayers are with Olive Wood at Woodbriar, 90 West St., Wilmington 01887; Barbara Bean at Daniels House, 59 Middlesex Avenue, Reading, 01867; Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Betty Conn, 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 and Bob Trayers who are in Afghanistan.

### **We Thank Our Volunteers**

March 20: Head Usher: Deacon. Greeter: Betty Hayter. Lay Reader: David Bjorkman. Provide Altar Flowers: Dot Holden. Deliver Altar Flowers: Barbara Ericson and Margaret Waugh. Coffee Hour: David and Diane Bjorkman. Lights Out beginning March 18: Roger Batchelder.

March 27: Head Usher: Deacon. Lay Reader: Randy Russell. Provide Altar Flowers: Kathi Martin. Deliver Altar Flowers: Marjorie Potter and Laurel Caputo. Lights Out beginning March 25: Dwight Decker.

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

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***Pies!, Pies!, Pies!***

Sunday March 27, 2011 - APPLE Pie Sale – Centre Church Fundraiser

A team of Centre Church bakers led by Meg Gulezian will be baking pies on Saturday March 26.

They may be picked up after church on March 27.

Please send your orders and your checks to the Church office! [781-334-3050]

**APPLE PIE ORDER FORM**

Fresh baked - \$12 each. How many: \_\_\_\_\_ Frozen - \$12 each. How many \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

***Stewardship Fundraiser - Lobster Roll Order Form***



Plan ahead to purchase and support Centre Church with your order for the “Shorey Lobster Rolls” available following the worship service on April 10<sup>th</sup>. All proceeds to benefit Centre Congregational Church

**LOBSTER ROLL ORDER: (\$10 each).**

Pick up on Sunday, April 10 after church.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ How Many? \_\_\_\_\_

***Easter Plant Order***



I would like to order for \$7.50 each:

\_\_\_ lilies      \_\_\_ red tulips      \_\_\_yellow tulips      \_\_\_kalanchoe

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 the 10:00 A.M. Easter Service on April 24.

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

***Tuesday, April 12 is the deadline for placing orders***