

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

November 23, 2011

Advent

Are you struggling with patience? Are you struggling to have hope?

As a child I remember how hard it was to be patient and wait for the things I wanted, for Christmas to arrive. I knew, though, that my parents were always doing the best they could for my brother and me. The world also seemed a lot bigger then, living, as we did, many miles from stores and shopping centers. Shopping malls didn't exist when I was a child. A trip to a shopping center was at least 45 minutes away and given how busy we were on our family farm, those trips didn't take place very often.

As I have grown, the things I want are a lot more because everything is so much more available. I usually don't have to be patient for the things I want because I can either go to a mall or shopping center within 15 minutes from where I live and/or go online and have something delivered to my front door either the next day or within 3 days, max.

Like a lot of us, a trip to the grocery store is usually when I'm going from one thing to another and I want it to be quick. So, when the lines are long and I have to wait to cash out for more than 3 minutes, I am tempted to be very impatient. As I feel impatience welling up inside me, I ask God to hear my prayer (I know, it's corny, but it works for me.)

*Jesus Lord,
make me aware
to be patient,
do I dare?*

*Make me aware
of the presence of others
Time and space to share.*

*As I expect others to be courteous
May a courteous nature I also share.*

*Jesus was born for all,
Clerks and sales persons, also, for them he cares.*

So let me be patient.

My turn will come.

*Jesus will get around to me,
As sure as the shining of the sun.*

You see, I need to remind myself that I am no more important in the heart of God than anyone else. In fact, perhaps I'm even less important because Jesus gave a lot of importance to the people he called "the least of these," who shall enter the Kingdom of heaven first.

Advent is a time for me to consider what is important. It is important to patiently wait my turn. It is important to treat the person for whom I am waiting with respect, love, and courtesy because that person is often overwhelmed with the concerns of others. It is important to remember that all of God's children are important, and given that I am warm, well-fed, loved by many others, and capable of taking care of myself, I can wait, patiently wait my turn for there are many, many others who need to be taken care of before me.

In the Sanctuary

November 28, 2011 – 1st Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Mark 13:24-37

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Advent Disruption"

The Nursery will be open in Room 11.

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

December 4, 2011 – 2nd Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. Holy Communion

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Children may worship with their families for the first part of the service.

The Nursery will be open in Room 11.

While I wait, I can spend some productive time thinking about how I can make some other people happy this Christmas through my giving, visiting, caring, calling, and helping. As I wait I can think about how I can bring hope and joy to others, especially those who feel so alone.

The Psalmist wrote: "You, O LORD, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth." (71.5, nrsv)

How can I, while I wait, plan to bring the Lord's hope to others? Oh what joy I shall experience when I can help bring happiness and life to another, that is my HOPE for this Advent, as I prepare for Christmas.

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Sunday Morning with the Children

Our Nursery, located in Room 11, will be open for infants through age 3 on Sunday, Nov. 27 and on Dec. 4. There will be no Rotation Sensation classes on Sunday, November 27, Thanksgiving Weekend. Please plan to worship as a family in the Sanctuary.

On December 4, children and youth will worship briefly with their families and then leave to prepare for the Heifer Living Gift Market.

Advent Workshop – Nov. 27



Educational Ministries invites you to start the season of Advent by coming to the Advent Workshop on Sunday, Nov 27. Join us at 5 pm for a delicious spaghetti dinner. Please bring a dessert to share. There will be activities for all ages. Rev. Bailey will be leading wreath making with fresh greens. Another fun activity will be making photo wreaths. Please bring 20-25 photos that you would like to display on your wreath. They will be attached permanently to the wreath, so be sure you have copies. Each child can make their own, or you could make a family photo wreath. There will be hands on activities, making ornaments, crafts, and more. We will also be asking for your help to make 100 Holiday cards as well as fleece scarves for City Mission Society. Doug Hodgkins will lead a carol sing to get everyone in the Christmas spirit. There will be a silent auction for a very special wreath, made by Rev. Bailey, decorated by Denise Weaver, and adorned with Mass Lottery Scratch tickets!

Turkey Drive a Success

Last Sunday we collected 21 turkeys for Haven from Hunger in Peabody. Many thanks to Scott DeSantis for volunteering his pick up truck to collect and deliver the turkeys and the many non- perishable food items collected during November.

Youth Group Meetings

Both High School and Middle School Youth are invited to attend the Advent Workshop on Sunday, Nov 27 at 5 pm.

On Sunday, December 4 the Middle School Youth Group will meet at 5:00 for their regular meeting.

The High School Youth Group will meet at 12:30 pm to car pool to First Church in Winchester to help set up for City Mission's annual Christmas Shop. We will return by 3:30 pm. We will be bringing along the Christmas cards and scarves made at the Advent Workshop. There will be no evening meeting for the High School Youth Group that night.

Important Schedule Change

on Middle School Youth Group Calendar

The Middle School overnight, originally scheduled for Dec 2-3, has been rescheduled to Dec 9-10. Please let me know by Sunday, Dec 4 if you plan to attend. We will be meeting from 5-6:30 pm on Sunday, Dec 4 and there will be no evening meeting on Sunday Dec 10. Be sure to come volunteer at the Gingerbread Cookie decorating event on Saturday, Dec 3 and enjoy the festivities at the Country Store in the Meeting House, the Gingerbread House display in the Narthex, and the tree lighting on the common.

Youth Groups Active in Helping Others

Many thanks to Raden Sorli Hawk and Elizabeth Miller who went out Trick or Treating for UNICEF. We were able to collect \$29.00 to help kids in need around the world. Just 25 cents gives 10 kids clean water to drink for a day, \$1.00 pays for protein biscuits for a starving child, and \$17.00 keeps a kid safe from 6 killer diseases.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation through your donations of birthday supplies and with the money raised from the Pumpkin Carving contest, the youth groups were able to put together 96 goody bags and 12 Birthday Boxes for Birthday Wishes, the organization that provides Birthday parties to children living in homeless shelters. Please check out their web site at www.birthdaywishes.org and also a great 7 minute video at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ycO_tw9gKU&feature=channel_video_title

On Friday 11/11/11, several Middle School youth joined with other UCC youth at Topsfield Congregational Church to participate in Mission 1, the national event to collect food for those in need. Each youth was asked to bring 11 food items, and more than 400 items were collected to donate to local food pantries. Many thanks to Denise Weaver for driving and chaperoning at this event.

Gingerbread Boy/Girl Decorating

On Saturday, Dec 3 from 10-2, the youth groups will be hosting a Gingerbread cookie decorating event in the church kitchen. For just \$3.00 per child, we will provide the gingerbread boy or girl and the frosting and other decorating materials for children to create their own design. Volunteers are needed from 10-12 or 12-2. Please let Mrs. Langill know if you can help.

Christmas Giving Opportunity: **City Mission Society**

Do you want to help make Christmas more meaningful for Boston area families in need? Here are two ways that you can help City Mission Society bring joy to adults and children this Christmas:

Donate a gift. Take a tag with a gift suggestion from the Christmas tree in the narthex. Then bring back your new, unwrapped gift to put under the tree. We will deliver the gifts to Winchester where volunteers – including the Centre Church High School Youth Group – will sort them for distribution. We will collect gifts through noontime on Sunday, December 11.

Donate money. Instead of sending a zillion paper Christmas cards, make a donation to support City Mission Society's work. Send just one 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. Here are some examples of what your donations make possible:

\$100 makes sandwiches for 150 people (Boston Urban Outreach volunteers will distribute the sandwiches).

\$50 buys a warm hat, coat, and gloves for a young person in the Peace Workshops program.

\$25 buys a holiday meal for an isolated elder through the Christmas Shop.

Together, we can make a real difference for children and adults this Christmas season! If you have questions, please contact Sandi Watson at 781 334-7032.

From the Mailbox

Dear Friends,
The beautiful bouquet of altar flowers delivered to me on Sunday is a bright spot in my room. Many thanks to Gage and Dotty Whittier for beautifying the sanctuary with their presence and then sharing some with me. My friends at Centre Church are often in my thoughts; thanks for putting me in yours.

Priscilla Hahn

(Congratulations to Priscilla on her recent 93rd birthday.)

Breakfast with Santa

Santa will be coming to Centre Church on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 9-11 am. Children are invited to come have a photo taken with Santa, make a craft, hear a story and enjoy a delicious buffet breakfast. The cost is \$5.00 per person. (Children under 2 years old are free.) There will also be a Kids only, Secret Santa Shop where children can shop for presents for their family and have them gift wrapped. Please call the church office for tickets.

Gift Items Needed

The youth groups will be collecting gift items to sell in the Secret Santa Shop. We are looking for inexpensive gifts children will be able to purchase for their mom, dad, grandparents or siblings. Do you have new, unused Christmas mugs, candles, candy dishes, etc that you could donate? There will be a box in the Narthex for your donations.

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to Iris Davis and her family upon the death of her mother in Germany on November 7. A memorial service will be held later this month.

Congratulations to Paige Whittier and Eric Beckman who were married on Saturday, Nov. 12 in Bristol Maine. Paige is the daughter of Gage and Dotty Whittier.

Remember to use Shopping Cards **for your Holiday Shopping**

Let us help you take some of the stress out of holiday shopping. Just stop by the Shopping Card table on Sunday morning to learn how you can help Centre Church just by doing your usual Christmas shopping. Shopping Cards are available for all the major retailers and restaurants. To view the complete list, visit www.glscrip.com. You can use the cards to shop on the internet, from catalogues, or in the store. The cards also make great gifts for all those "hard to buy for" people on your list. For more information, contact Sandi Watson or Debbie Cotting, Shopping Card Coordinators.

Thanks to our Volunteers

November 27: Head Usher: Linda Ladd. Greeters: Roger and Peggy Batchelder. Lighting the Advent Candle and Reading Scripture: Kathi and Emma Martin. Providing Altar Flowers: Betty Hayter. Delivering Flowers: Marjorie Potter and Laurel Caputo. Lights Out beginning Nov. 25: Phil Johnson.

December 4: Head Usher: Jeff Law. Lights Out beginning Dec. 2: Jeff Langill.

The next Tower Notes will be the week of December 5.



Living Gift Market – December 4

What do you buy the person who has everything? How about a sheep, a flock of chicks, 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 4, 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	Share of a Sheep.....	\$10
Share of a Heifer.....	\$50	Pig.....	\$120
Llama.....	\$150	Share of a Pig.....	\$10
Share of a Llama.....	\$20	Tree Seedling.....	\$60
Goat.....	\$120	Honeybees.....	\$30
Share of a Goat.....	\$10	Starter Flock of Chicks..	\$20
Sheep.....	\$120		

During the month of November, Rotation Sensation workshops focused on learning more about Heifer International with a focus on what a cow can provide for a family in need. The children have made posters which will be displayed at the Marketplace. They have also made cow ornaments you will be able to purchase. Your support is needed to reach our goal of \$5,000 which will enable us to purchase an ark.



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, December 18.

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

Wednesday, December 7 is the deadline for placing orders.

Our Opportunities

Sun. Nov. 27 1st Advent	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 5:00 pm	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Nursery Older Children in Church Spaghetti Supper & Advent Workshop - Richards
Mon. Nov. 28	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. Nov. 30	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thurs. Dec. 1	7:30 pm	Sr. Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Dec. 2	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. Dec. 3	10am-2pm	Gingerbread Cookie Decorating
Sun. Dec. 4 2nd Advent	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:00 am 12:30 pm 5:00 pm	Holy Communion– Sanctuary Rotations/Nursery Heifer Marketplace - Narthex High School to Winchester UCC Middle School Youth Group
Mon. Dec. 5	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues., Dec. 6	12:30 pm	Get-Together Wheel – Fireside Rm
Wed. Dec. 7	8:30 am 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Bread & Roses _ Kitchen Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR Sr. Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Dec. 9	10:30 am 7:00 pm	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office Middle School Grp Overnight in church
Sat. Dec. 10		Breakfast with Santa

Our prayers are with Jean Card at Union Hospital; Al Farnsworth at Salem Hospital; Bob Shockley at Brigham and Womens; Caroline Walsh at Essex Park Rehab Center, 265 Essex Street, Beverly, 01915 (978-927-3260); Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins, Harold Kress and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, Carolyn Furey, Olive Wood.

We also remember in our prayers Bob Trayers, David Tuttle (Kathy Delaney’s cousin), and Sam Schnare (Dick and Carol Carter’s grandson) in Afghanistan.

YANKEE CANDLE ORDERS ARE IN!

You may pick up your order in the Chapel
