

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

February 1, 2012

When God Leads...

Yesterday afternoon I hosted "A Prayer Service for Matt," a Lynnfield Middle School student who needs a bone marrow transplant. Some of his friends and neighbors have been moved to action by their compassion to hold Matt and his family in their hearts and in their prayers, before God. They organized and held a Bone Marrow Registration Drive last week at the Middle School.

When approached by these caring friends and neighbors to hold a prayer service I was honored to be asked to help hold Matt in prayer. We gathered to pray for Matt, his family, and his caregivers. We gathered to pray that a bone marrow match will be found for him. We gathered to pray for a miracle of healing!

An amazing cross-section of people gathered in prayer, his friends, school classmates, teachers, nurses, his fellow parishioners from Our Lady of Assumption Roman Catholic Parish in Lynnfield, and his Pastor, Fr. Jack Farrell. We also invited and offered prayers for anyone who needed healing prayers, prayers of hope. Fr. Farrell and I invited people to come forward for the laying on of hands for healing.

Our good friend, Noel Smith, shared her healing vocal and instrumental music, which set an atmosphere that reminded us that all things are possible in God.

In scripture we find these powerful words:

*I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;*

*I will turn the darkness into light before them
and make the rough places smooth.*

These are the things I will do;

I will not forsake them.

(Isaiah 42:16)

Earlier in this text, reference is made to injustice in the land, and how disturbed the LORD is about this. The prophet exhorts God's people to listen to how the LORD promises to take hold of their hand, to lead them into healing, into liberation, freedom. The LORD will

give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, defense to the defenseless.

The LORD, the Creator of the heavens, the One who creates the earth and all that springs from it, the one who gives breath to us, his people, will make the weak of the earth into the light of all of the nations.

I think of these things as I think of young Matt, and how his family and friends inspired us to gather together as a new spiritual community yesterday, people from a variety of religious traditions and backgrounds, to pray for the healing of a person, of a family, and of a community. It may seem like an extraordinary miracle to you and to me, but to God, it is an ordinary miracle, what he does every day.

Are you faced with impossible odds, overwhelming darkness, deep depression, broken relationships, regrets, illness, losses, difficult decisions, a search for meaning? Do what others before us have done,

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In the Sanctuary

February 5, 2012

10:00 A.M. Holy Communion

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotations. Nursery open in Room 11.

February 12, 2012

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Boy Scout Sunday

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotations. Nursery open in Room 11.

have faith in the Lord of creation, Christ the healer, and let God lead the way for you. Dare to pray for miracles. God wants you to be healed and sometimes facing our brokenness is the way through which the light of Christ shines.

Let God lead the way! Yours in Christ, Dennis

Sunday Morning With the Children

Our Nursery, located in Room 11, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time and play.

Rotation Sensation

On Sunday, Feb 5, we will continue our Rotation Workshops and learning about "Jesus Calls the Disciples". Many thanks to our Workshop Leaders, Laurie Timmons- Cooking, Sue Tomich-Upper Room and Kathy Delaney-Art/Science

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Middle School Youth Group will be in the Narthex on Sunday, February 5th collecting for the Souper Bowl of Caring. More than 20 years ago, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: "Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat." Since that day, more than \$81 million has been raised for local charities across the country. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday by bringing at least \$1 or one can of soup (or both) to church to benefit Haven from Hunger

News From Around the Parish

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of Gretchen Elizabeth Holt, daughter of Harriet and the late Brad Holt, on January 30. Arrangements are pending.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Caroline Walsh, who died peacefully on Saturday, January 28, 2012, with her family by her side: her son, John, and his wife, Maura, along with Caroline's grandchildren: Michael, Patrick, and Catie Walsh. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, February 4, 2012, 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Caroline's memory to "Centre Congregational Church," 5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, MA 01940.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Philip Bjorkman, who died peacefully on Friday, January 27, 2012. Philip was the son of the late Elouise Bjorkman, and brother of David Bjorkman and Karen Terwilliger. A Memorial Service will be held in the sanctuary on February 11 at 2:00 p.m.

Spread the Love

I was recently at the Lynn Shelter speaking to Marjorie St. Paul, the Executive Director. I asked her what the shelter needed the most right now hoping that maybe Centre Church might be able to help. She said that there was a great need for men's white tee shirts and white tube socks both of which should be new. It is February and the importance of having layers on and nice warm socks can make all the difference.

New toiletries, both full and travel size, are also needed. If you are in the process of cleaning out closets, moving, etc., please check for twin size sheets, blankets and towels.

The Shelter Association supports 7 different programs which provide shelter and support services to homeless individuals and families in the Greater Lynn Area. This organization was very important to Elouise Bjorkman. She was on their board. This might be a nice way to thank her by spreading your love to them. There will be a box in the narthex with a heart design on it for your donations.

In appreciation, Donna Marino (781) 581-2022

February Food of the Month: SOUP!

We're collecting food for Haven from Hunger in our Missions Pantry (just inside the Summer Street entrance to the church). Given the weather, it seems like a good time to collect cans of soup. If you are able to donate even one can, you'll be helping to make a difference for our brothers and sisters in need. Thank you in advance for anything that you can do to help.

-- Sandi Watson, on behalf of the Outreach Team

Whole Church Mission Trip

This year we are planning a congregational Mission Trip for anyone 16 years and older. We have the opportunity to volunteer with UCC Disaster Recovery in Joplin, Missouri where workers are needed to help with rebuilding efforts after much of the city was damaged in the tornado that hit this past May. We would plan to go the week of Aug 12-18. We will be holding an informational meeting on Sunday, Feb. 5 in the library after church to discuss details of the trip.

- Barbara and Jeff Langill

Shopping Cards for Valentine's Day

Are you planning to take your Valentine out to dinner? Why not buy a shopping card for your favorite restaurant? Maybe you and your Valentine would like a hot cup of coffee on a cold morning. A Dunkin Donuts card would be just perfect. Stop by the Shopping Card table on Sunday morning to place your order.

Sandi Watson and Debbie Cotting,
Shopping Card Coordinators

Paperback Book Drive

The High School Youth Group will be volunteering at the Prison Book Program in Quincy on Feb. 18. Prisoners send a letter to this organization requesting books and volunteers then try to fill their requests. The Prison Book Program can rarely match requests for specific titles, as the selection is limited to what has been donated, but they do try to make a wide variety of books available and do their best to find something that fits the interests of the prisoner. With 2 million people locked up in our Nation's federal and state prisons and with educational programming being drastically cut, the need for this service has never been greater. Please help by bringing new or nearly new **paperback books** to the box provided in the narthex by Sunday, Feb 12. The most requested subjects include:

African-American studies, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, works about or by Martin Luther King, Jr., thesauruses, Spanish/English dictionaries, books in Spanish, Spirituality & Religion - especially Bible concordances & dictionaries, Islam, Mysteries, Westerns. For more details, please visit:

<http://www.prisonbookprogram.org/donatebooks.php>

Youth Groups

High School Youth Needed

On Sunday, Feb 5, the High School Youth Group will be selling subs and salads after worship to raise money for this year's mission trip. High School youth are asked to meet in the kitchen at 9:45 am to start putting together the orders. Please call or e-mail Barbara Langill and let us know that you can help.

Both the Middle School and High School Youth Groups will meet on Sunday, Feb 12. The Middle School meets from 5-6:30 and the High School from 6:30-8 pm.

National Youth Event Informational Meeting

This year, the United Church of Christ will be holding the National Youth Event on July 10-13, 2012 at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana. This event happens only once every four years. This is a gathering of youth and youth leaders of the UCC who come to learn and experience spiritual and leadership formation. There will be speakers, workshops, music, and the opportunity for fun and new friendships with youth from across the country.

Please join us on Tuesday, February 7, 7:30 p.m. in the church library for more information on the trip and transportation options.

- Barbara Langill

Tubing

Thirty youth and several adults spent a fun evening snow tubing at Nashoba Valley on Sunday, Jan 29. We were a little concerned regarding the lack of snow and mild temperatures, but it was a great night for tubing under the stars. Thanks to all who helped with supervising the kids and providing snacks.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

February 5: Ushers: Linda Ladd, Doreen DiFillippo, Margaret Waugh and Gage Whittier. Reader: Carrie Pericola. Provide Altar Flowers: Ginny Daniels. Deliver Altar Flowers: Chuck Cotting and Barbara Becker. Coffee Hour: Confirmation Class. Lights Out beginning February 3: Rick Carey.

February 12: Ushers: Bruce Weaver, Paul and Karen Harrington, Al Johnson. Reader: Cory Johnson. Coffee Hour: 7th/8th Graders. Lights Out beginning February 10: Jeff Langill.

If you would like to donate altar flowers for either February 12 or February 19, please contact the church office. (781-334-3050)

From the Mailbox

It was a "blessed Christmas season." Cards, calls and prayers were welcome. Thanks to Pinky Warnock for delivering the beautiful flowers. My appreciation to Dennis for his visits and prayers. I am thankful for healing knees so I could return home on December 22nd. Our biggest blessing was the birth of twin great-grandsons the evening of the 22nd. Our granddaughter Kaylin and twins Mac and Luca are doing well. Our blessings to all for a Happy Healthy New Year.

-Phyllis Ciampa

Dear Friends of Centre Congregational Church,
Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the flowers and cards.

-Al Farnsworth

I wish to thank Chuck Cotting, Harvey Waugh, and John Harris for helping clear the snow for Olive Wood's Memorial Service. Thanks also to Barbara Becker and her crew for preparing a lovely collation after the service.

- Dennis

Dear Friends, I want to thank you for the lovely plant delivered to me by my Good Neighbor, Earl Richard. Many thanks go to Rev. Dennis for his patience, kindness and understanding. May we all have a Happy New Year.

Love, Elva Batchelder

MISSIONS PANTRY: Our ongoing collections include Bottles & Cans, Aluminum Can Pull Tabs, Used Eyeglasses, Non-Perishable Food, Travel Size Toiletries, and Used Cell Phones (numbers erased with charger).

Don't forget to bring newspapers, magazines, catalogs, etc. to the paper recycle bin in the parking lot. No phone books or cardboard, please.

Our Opportunities

Sun. Feb. 5 <i>Souper Bowl of Caring</i>	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 11:00 am	Holy Communion – Sanctuary Rotations/Nursery Confirmation Class Mission Trip Mtg - Library
Mon. Feb. 6	7:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Education Ministries– Pastor's Ofc Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues Feb. 7	7:30 pm	National Youth Event Mtg – Libr.
Wed. Feb. 8	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR Diaconate – Pastor's Office
Thurs., Feb. 9	7:30 pm	Sr. Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Feb. 10	10:30 am 6:30 pm	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office Cub Scout Blue & Gold Banquet
Sun. Feb. 12 <i>Boy Scout Sunday</i>	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 5-8 pm	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotations/Nursery Confirmation Class – Library Youth Groups - Basement
Mon. Feb. 13	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. Feb. 14	7:30 pm	Stewardship – Pastor's Office
Wed. Feb 15	7:00 pm	Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thurs. Feb 16	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Feb. 17	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Priscilla Hahn recuperating at home – (Winsor Place, Wilmington;) Muriel “Mickey” Nasson at Kindred Hospital, Peabody; Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins, Harold Kress and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, and Carolyn Furey.

We also remember in our prayers John Clarke (Lee Clarke's nephew), Allan Marshall (Jim and Sheila Marshall's son), Sam Schnare (Dick and Carol Carter's grandson), and David Tuttle (Kathy Delaney's cousin), in Afghanistan. We rejoice that Bob Trayers is on his way home from Afghanistan.

Church Office Hours are 9am-3pm Mon. – Fri
The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of Feb 13.
