

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

March 28, 2012

Easter: New Life and Sacrifice

Jesus made an offering to us to bring us to Easter. He offered nothing less than himself, his whole self. He offered himself unto death so that we might live now and into the future. He offered himself so that we might live beyond our challenges, beyond our losses, beyond our sufferings, beyond our sorrows, and beyond our sin. We live because he lives. As a result, we are confident that the challenges of death, sin, and suffering will not have the last word, but that God, through Jesus Christ, will speak and give us new life, new hope, allowing our journey of faith to continue forever.

When I was a child and I broke something, my parents paid to have it repaired or replaced. If I broke something in the house, like a lamp, my parents said, "That's okay. We know you didn't mean to do it. Don't worry. We'll take care of it." They did.

As I grew, they taught me how to take care of things so that they didn't break. My father, a farmer and carpenter, taught me how to take care of the tools so that they lasted. Tools were too expensive to be replaced frequently.

More importantly, they taught me how to take care of life, the lives of the animals on the farm. It wasn't just that they were expensive, but that they were living, breathing gifts of God's creation. I was taught to treat them with respect and loving care. As I grew older and able to understand, my parents gave me responsibility over the lives of the animals. Their well-being depended upon what I did, feeding them, protecting them, cleaning up after them.

I learned that with responsibility for tools and life came consequences. If I followed their direction, all usually went well. If I did not, then, things and life would suffer. My family would suffer and I would suffer. If I did something wrong I was given a chance to correct my mistake(s). I was also punished if they felt I knew better, and if I intentionally did something to damage a tool, to harm an animal.

My parents taught me that my actions had consequences, and affected the lives and well-being of others. I live with those lessons every day and think about them when acting and making decisions. They are no longer here to sacrifice and pay for my accidents, mistakes, and sins. Now I must be the one who pays and sacrifices for what I do.

On a Thursday in Jerusalem Jesus gathered around a table with his disciples in an upper room, sharing what we call the "Last Supper," his last meal before his arrest, trial, flogging, and crucifixion on the following day, Friday. He paid for our sins, taking responsibility for them through the sacrifice of his life. He gave us a great gift, the gift of forgiveness, and, therefore the gift of salvation, saving us from total

Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday

April 1, 2012 – 10:00 a.m.

Holy Communion

Cantata by the Choir

"Who Do You Say That I Am?"

Children may worship with their families for the entire service. Nursery open in Room 11.

Maundy Thursday

April 5, 2012 – 7:30 p.m.

The Office of Tenebrae with Holy Communion

Easter Sunrise Service

April 8, 2012 – 5:45 a.m.

Newhall Park, Lynnfield

Easter Service of Morning Worship

April 8, 2012 – 10:00 a.m.

Children may worship with their families for the entire service. Nursery open in Room 11.

destruction, eternal death. He saved us from forgetting how to honor life with respect and dignity, the lives of others and our own.

But on the following Sunday, Jesus showed us that his sacrifice brought a great and grand reward: Resurrection! Alleluia! He is Risen! Death, sin, evil, and destruction do not have the last word!!!

Yes, my parents sacrificed and suffered for me. They frequently helped me out of the mistakes of my own doing so that I could go on living, growing, maturing, and finding life and a future. On one such occasion when I had an automobile accident that was clearly my fault, my mother hired and paid for an attorney to represent me in court. She suffered as a result of what I did and paid the price, for my sake. I got through it as a result of what she did, learning a valuable lesson about responsibility and consequences. Someone had to pay for what I did. My mother did that for me. Why? She loved me and wanted a happy, successful, and healthy future for me. And Jesus Christ has done the same for us, because he, too, loves us so much!!! He has staked his life upon it and wishes for us to experience fulfillment and meaning in our lives.

Jesus told his disciples in the Upper Room at the Last Supper to remember him. Remembering him allows us to remember his life, teaching, and purpose. He has given us that meaning, lasting meaning, and eternal life.

I remember Jesus and I remember my parents, how their sacrifices have given me such a grand and wonderful life of meaning and purpose. Now I am the one who can do what they did, sacrifice for the sake of the lives of others, through my living, acting, forgiving, teaching, preaching, and giving. I now understand that my sacrifice can give the same to others as I have been given, food for eating and living, hope in the midst of despair, the company of friendship wherever it takes us, and the knowledge that my Savior, Jesus Christ, can be your Savior, too. My sorrows, losses, and sins, have not had the last word in my life. As a result, I am here with you today. Jesus Christ has delivered me and he can deliver you.

Therefore, I extend to you an invitation to join with me in the journey of faith, getting to know a man named Jesus. Be prepared to follow the example of others, like my parents, like Jesus, to sacrifice knowing that whatever we give and do, in the name of God, will be honored by God to serve a great purpose, the purpose of new life for others, and, truth be known, for us, also.

My parents died knowing that what they did for my brother and I resulted in our happiness and fulfilled lives. Jesus died and rose knowing that his gift of life allows me to lose my self in order to find my new self by living as he did, giving myself for the sake of others. I have learned that one person can make a difference. But oh, the mountains that we can move for the sake of God's work when we work together, as a team, as disciples!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

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. Pagers are available for all parents.

Rotation Sensation

Children and youth will worship with their families for the Palm Sunday Service (choir cantata) on April 1 and also on Easter Sunday, April 8.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the church school dramatization of "The Walk through Holy Week" on Sunday, March 25 - especially to Linda Ladd, Denise Weaver, Carol White and Nancy Miller and to all our wonderful narrators, actors and actresses.

Maundy Thursday Service 7:30pm April 5th

The Maundy Thursday worship service is one of the most meaningful Christian services of the church year. In this Communion service, we remember the Last Supper as Jesus shared it with his disciples. We follow the ceremony of Tenebrae, by gradually extinguishing candles while reading Bible passages depicting the events which led to Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. Eventually we hear the story in music, as we remain in total darkness, before leaving in silence. This service highlights the emotional journey of Holy Week and paves the way for the joy of Easter.

Youth Group News

Middle School Youth Group Schedule Change

We are postponing the overnight originally scheduled for March 30/31. We will have a regular meeting on Sunday, April 1 at 5 p.m.

There is no High School Youth Group meeting on Sunday, April 1.

There will be no youth group meetings on Easter Sunday, April 8.



Deacons' Easter Breakfast

What better way to start your Easter Sunday than with an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet? Enjoy eggs, bacon, sausage, all kinds of pancakes, fresh fruit salad and your favorite breakfast beverages.

The Deacons will be serving this eggs-cellent breakfast in Richards Hall between the Easter Sunrise Service at Newhall Park and the 10am service in the sanctuary. Please come directly from the early service or stop in by 9:30am. Hop on down for a delicious and sociable start to Easter Sunday! Suggested donation is \$10/person or \$25/family. Please sign up in the Narthex after church. All proceeds benefit the repair and maintenance of our church organ. – Your faithful Diaconate

30 Hour Famine

Thank you to all who supported our fundraising efforts for World Vision and the 30 Hour Famine. We were able to raise \$1305.00 to help end hunger around the world.

We Did It!

Thank you, Centre Church, for all your generous donations in our "Spread the Love" drive. Last week, Dennis, Sandi Watson and I were pleased to present to Marjorie St. Paul, the director of the Lynn Shelter Association, your gifts, which included:

- 2 big bags of sheets - one new set
- 1 big bag of towels - some nice new ones too
- Blankets and Clothing & a dozen new hairbrushes
- 3 Boxes of toiletries. 50 New Tee Shirts
- 126 New Socks (She was really happy about these :)

As an added bonus which I did not know about, a member had mailed in a check to the church for this drive. In addition, Outreach Ministry presented the Shelter with very generous gift cards so that they may buy what is especially needed. I am very proud and grateful to be a part of such a wonderful and caring congregation like Centre Church. Thank you again – Donna Marino

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to Richard Hatfield and his children Sarah and Justin upon the death of wife and mother, Susan Hatfield on March 28. She had recently been in hospice care at her home. Arrangements through McDonald Funeral Home are pending.

We extend our love and sympathy to Priscilla Kress and her family (daughter and son-in-law Patricia and Jerry Greer of Andover) upon the recent death of her husband, Harold on March 19. He died peacefully at the Renaissance Gardens at Brooksby Village with his family by his side. A graveside service was held on March 23.



Honey Baked Ham Fundraiser

Don't forget to purchase your gift cards for Honey Baked Ham. On Sunday, April 1, representatives from Honey Baked Ham will be selling \$25.00 gift cards after worship. The gift cards can be used any time of the year and at any Honey Baked Ham nationwide. There is no expiration date. **Centre Church will receive 50%** of all gift card sales to help close the budgeting gap. You may pay with cash, credit card or **checks made payable to THE HONEYBAKED HAM COMPANY.**

Easter Fun Day



Join us Saturday, April 7 at 10:00 for Easter activities and fun. The Youth Groups are sponsoring Easter Fun Day for children 10 and under accompanied by a parent. Easter crafts and games in Todd Hall start out the morning, followed by an Easter story and an Easter Egg Hunt on the front lawn. Please be sure to bring a basket for collecting eggs. This event will take place rain or shine – special provisions will be made in case of inclement weather.

All Youth Group members are encouraged to volunteer at this event.



Spring Afternoon Tea

The Young Adults of Centre Church will be hosting a tea on Saturday, April 7 from 2 to 4 pm at the Meeting House. In addition to a variety of teas, we will serve elegant pastries, finger sandwiches and much more. The cost will be \$10.00 per person in advance and \$12 at the door. Please call the church office at 781 334-3050 for tickets. Easter bonnets are welcome, but not necessary. All proceeds will help fund the Centre Church Mission trip to Joplin, Missouri to help with rebuilding efforts.

Engraved Brick Patio

Many people have asked me if there is still an opportunity to purchase an engraved brick for the patio at the rear of the church. I am taking orders now through April 30th. The small bricks are \$50 and the large bricks are \$100. The small bricks hold up to 3 lines of 20 characters each (including spaces and punctuation). The large bricks hold up to 6 lines.

Checks should be made payable to Centre Congregational Church and can be mailed to the church office. This is a great way to memorialize someone you know or a family member. Or you can use the brick to thank someone special or record an important date. You may have a favorite Bible verse or inspirational quote. Or you may just want to put your name on the brick. Anything works! If you have any questions you can get in touch with me at pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu or 781-598-5678.

- Phil Johnson

Lost and Found

Are you missing your jacket these cool mornings? Two girls' fleece jackets have been found at the church. One is pink and the other is beige. Please call the church office or Mrs. Langill to identify.

Reminder: Middle School Youth are collecting items for the Animal Shelter at Nevins Farm, Methuen. Items needed are blankets, sheets, canned cat & dog food, etc..



Sharing Our Stories

During our Stewardship Celebration, we are asking people to share their stories about why Centre Church is important to them. You will hear stories every Sunday in service as well as be able to read other stories here in Tower Notes. We hope you will join us in our celebration and hear with your heart the wonderful stories that people share. On April 29th, we will be pledging for the next fiscal year during the service. Pledging is one way we learn to be closer to God and follow His footsteps in love. You will be invited to bring your pledge card up and be blessed and also are invited to stay for a luncheon after the service. Now onto our sharing...

The following is an excerpt from Johnathan McCarthy's confirmation paper. He is writing what confirmation means to him. He was confirmed in May 2010.

Deciding to be confirmed is a commitment that I have made with myself and to God. ...Being confirmed means to nurture what God has given me. Family and friends that love me. A church community that no matter where I am or what's happening in my life, I will always be welcomed and cared for....Being confirmed means being involved. There is so much to be said about the involvement here at Centre Church. Barbara and Jeff Langill who give so much to the youth here through mission trips and other youth group events. To all the board and committee members who give up so much of their time for the well being of this church. And finally Rev. Bailey whose involvement here has been a blessing for many. Knowing he is always there in ones time of need is more than anyone can ask.

I have learned during this confirmation program to remember the ones who have left Centre Church but through their accomplishments their memory will carry on. To all the former Pastors who gave so much of themselves through their teachings and leadership to have made Centre Church what it is today. Jack Orrall, former deacon and scout master, who gave so much to the scouting program here at Centre Church and to its youth. To Ernest Becker who through his tireless efforts helped rebuild the Chapel after it was destroyed by fire some years ago. And to the many others who gave of themselves so I would have my place here at this church. Thank you, you have made a difference for me and to so many others.

Being confirmed means being together. For some of us maybe it's just being together for worship service on a Sunday morning. Getting together for the next Chuck Cotting Trivia Night or maybe just having dinner with some friends. For me, whatever brings us together creates a special connection with the people we are with. By being together we learn, and when we learn we grow closer with ourselves and to one another. Rev. Bailey, when I think about being together in worship service, I remembered a story you told during one of your sermons. I was really inspired by it. You told of how when you were in college you shared your car with your roommate. When it was time to part ways you gave the money that you earned to him so he could buy a car for his own. By you offering to do that you gave this person a new beginning, and for me that is confirmation.

MISSIONS PANTRY: Our ongoing collections include Redeemable 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.

FOOD OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL: Peanut Butter and Jelly

Our Opportunities

Sun. April 1 <i>Palm Sunday</i>	8:30 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 5-6:30 pm	Confirmation Class Holy Communion – Sanctuary Nursery – Room 11 Older Children in Church Middle School Youth Group
Mon. April 2	7:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women's Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Boy Scout Troop 48 - Todd Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. April 4	8:30 am 7:00 pm	Bread & Roses Group - Kitchen Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thurs April 5 <i>Maundy Thursday</i>	7:30 pm 8:30 pm	Tenebrae Service - Sanctuary Senior Choir - Choir Room
Fri. April 6 <i>Good Friday</i>	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. April 7	10:00 am 2:00 pm	Easter Fun Day – Front Lawn Spring Tea – Meeting House
Sun. April 8 <i>Easter</i>	5:45 am 7-9:30 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am	Sunrise Service – Newhall Park Easter Breakfast – Richards Hall Easter Worship – Sanctuary Nursery – Room 11 Older Children in Church
Mon. April 9	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop 48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. April 11	7:00 pm	Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thur April 12	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. April 13	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Muriel "Mickey" Nasson at home; Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins, and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, and Carolyn Furey. We rejoice that David Tuttle is home from Afghanistan. We remember in our prayers Sam Schnare (Dick and Carol Carter's grandson) in Germany; and John Clarke (Lee Clarke's nephew), and Allan Marshall (Jim and Sheila Marshall's son), in Afghanistan.

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of April 9.
