

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey, Pastor, Pastor@Centre-Church.org

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Barbara Langill, Director of Christian Ed & Youth Ministry, ChristianEd@Centre-Church.org

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Sally MacDonald, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

April 11, 2012

Blessings In and Blessings Out

Many thanks to all who have made our Lenten and Holy Week Journey and Easter Celebration very meaningful and powerful!

I appreciate the leadership and support of **the Deacons**, from helping plan and provide excellent Lenten experiences to hosting a great Easter morning breakfast!

I appreciate **the Choirs**, the leadership of **Douglas Hodgkins** that enables the choirs to sing better than they think they can. I give special thanks for their recent Cantata on Palm Sunday and the music of Easter Sunday, including the Hallelujah Chorus by Handel! Wow, so inspiring! Those who attended these events were greatly moved to live a more faith-filled life!

I appreciate the leadership of **Barbara Langill** who designed, and with the children, youth, young adults, and the Education Ministries Team, shared a special "Walk Through Holy Week" Experience, Easter Fun Day, and a Mission Trip Tea at the Meeting House. I also appreciate the recent Mission Trip Barbara helped to organize to New York City, and the whole church Mission Trip she is working hard to organize for 20 people going to Joplin, Missouri, August 12-18, 2012. Wow!

I appreciate **Kathi Martin, Chair, Education Ministries**, for providing the primary leadership and teaching for the **Confirmation** program this year, allowing me to be involved, teaching some of the classes.

I appreciate **Susan Spear**, who keeps all of us grounded and organized through these busy seasons of spiritual meaning, while putting together the bulletins for worship, *Tower Notes*, and helping us make it look good.

I appreciate **Membership Ministries**, under the leadership of **Dotty Whittier**, who help to make us all feel welcome on Sunday mornings as we

In the Sanctuary

Sunday, April 15, 2012

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Child care will be available in Room 11 for infants through first grade. Older children may worship with their families for the entire service.

Sunday, April 22, 2012

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops. The Nursery will be open in Room 11.

Sunday, April 29, 2012

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Message by Jill DiGiorgio, David Bjorkman and Mary McCarthy

Stewardship Thank You Luncheon following worship

enter the church and during our fellowship after church, and provide us with enjoyable and entertaining activities throughout the church year!

I appreciate **Outreach Ministries**, under the leadership of **Sandi Watson**, who help us have positive, transforming impact on the lives of people who have need of food, shelter, water, life-giving opportunities (Heifer International), support for their ministry, and hope. Yes, we want to make a difference in the world and Outreach Ministries helps us do it.

I appreciate **Chuck Cotting** who is leading the **Finance and Properties Commission**, accomplishing a lot on behalf of Centre Church - the renewal of the handicap ramp (via Steve Richard and a generous donor), gutter repair, minor repairs, rebuilding the stage platform in Todd Hall, (via a generous donation from the late Caroline Walsh), and handling building use requests and updating fees for building use.

I appreciate all of these ministries which are such a blessing in the service to our Lord, and our Centre Church ministries. I am very fortunate to be part of it and, I believe, so are you. We are certainly a unique spiritual community, able to proclaim an "open and affirming" welcome to everyone who seeks to worship and/or serve with us. Our emphasis is on loving, and not judging; on open doors and not barriers; on enabling us in finding the joy of discipleship, a joy that increases the more that we give of ourselves to God's calling. Oh, the great and grand reward of blessings that result in our service to God together.

On recent Sundays we have heard testimonies from:

Carrie Pericola, Stewardship Ministries: "...there was (the time when) having the entire congregation stand up during (our daughter) Hazel's baptism when Dennis (Rev. Bailey) asked for our family to stand up." "To be a member of Centre Church means to me "giving of myself in time, money, and effort to help others and the church. It is listening to God's voice when you are asked to do something...."

John Sievers: speaking about stewardship, "I feel that this church is a good investment. ...we stayed at Centre Church and kept coming back because it was the only church that the kids didn't complain about getting up for every Sunday. We think our time and our kids' time in this church is priceless and we look forward to continuing to build relationships here for many more years. I really look forward to seeing all the choir members. I look

forward to seeing the friends I've made there, and to have so much fun singing together."

Sandi Watson: Here at Centre Church I found meaningful worship. I found generous people who are determined to help others. I found a congregation that is Open and Affirming, that is happy to welcome anyone who shows up. We choose to give our time, energy, and money to help people. The meals prepared by the Bread and Roses team matter. Our gifts to Haven from Hunger, City Mission Society, Nevins Farm, the Lynn Shelter, and Heifer International all make a difference.

(read more at:

<http://www.centre-church.org/Stewardship.html>)

Soon, it will be time for all of us to share our "testimony" through our Stewardship Pledges to Centre Congregational Church's ministries, on Sunday, April 29th in worship. I hope that you will join with Carrie, John, Sandi, me, and others, in giving in faith, giving generously.

It has been my experience that the more I give on every level - spiritually, emotionally, financially, mentally, and physically, the more I receive from the abundance of God's kingdom. I hope that you will consider giving more generously than ever before, but I mostly pray that you will allow God to guide you in the decisions you make with regard to our ministry together. We are asked to contribute to many things. By following Jesus Christ, we are called to a higher standard of faith and discipleship. We are called to pick up our cross and follow him. Yes, it pushes us beyond our comfort zone, but as Sandi Watson said in her story, "Life begins at the end of our comfort zone," and, I might add, faith begins at the end of our comfort zone, too!

Yours in Christ,

Sunday Mornings with the Children

Rotation Sensation: On Sunday, April 15, child care will be available in Room 11 for infants through first grade.

On Sunday, April 22, we will begin our new Rotation, "The Journeys of Paul." All children in PreK through 8th Grade are invited to join us.

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.



Floral Design Workshop

Platinum Posies of Middleton will be offering a special class in designing a spring floral basket here at Centre Church on Monday, April 23 at 7:30 pm. They will provide the flowers, basket and instruction for \$25.00. We need a minimum of 8 people for this activity.

Please contact Barbara Langill or the church office (781-334-3050) on or before April 16 to reserve your spot.

Youth

The next Confirmation Class will be on Sunday, April 22 at 11:30 a.m.

MSPCA Visit

The Middle School Youth Group will be going to Nevins Farm in Methuen on Wednesday, April 18. We will meet at the church at 11:45 am. Please pack a bag lunch to eat when we get to the farm. We will be delivering the donations collected from the congregation.

There will be no youth groups meeting on Sunday, April 15, the beginning of vacation week. Both groups will meet on Sunday, April 22. The Middle School meets from 5-6:30 pm and the High School from 6:30- 8pm.

An Invitation

You are all invited to the next Get-Together Wheel meeting on Tuesday, April 24, when Linda Gillon will share her love and knowledge of samplers. Come to the Fireside Room for coffee or tea and dessert at 12:30 p.m. The program will begin at 1:00. We hope you will join us.

Bits 'n Pieces

Congratulations to Devyn Lowe (a big-time hockey fan) who won the raffle for tickets to the Bruins game on March 27.

Reminder: Food of the Month for Haven from Hunger is peanut butter and jelly. Bring your donations to the Food Pantry along with redeemable bottles and cans to benefit Haven.

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

From the Mailbox

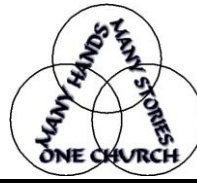
Dear Friends,
Thank you very much for the beautiful flowers and for your prayers and well wishes.

Sincerely, Ed Potter

Thanks to Our Volunteers

April 15: Head Usher-Jeff Law. Sharing Our Stories-Debbie Cotting. Provide Altar Flowers-Foulds Family. Deliver Altar Flowers-Barbara Ericson & Margaret Waugh. Coffee Hour-Bjorkmans. Lights Out beginning April 13-Charlie Wills.

April 22: Head Usher-Linda Ladd. Sharing Our Stories-Dotty Whittier. Provide Altar Flowers-Rose Giunta. Deliver Altar Flowers-Marge Potter and Laurel Caputo. Lights Out beginning April 20-Rick Carey.



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 passing out the pledge cards and collecting them 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. Before April 29th, we hope you will ponder how much you would like to pledge and how much our church means to you. Now on to our sharing...

To us, Centre Church is a place to learn about God and to enjoy being together with our friends and family.

Going to church has made me a kinder person, and more aware of what I can do to help others. I'll never forget baking muffins for Heifer, or throwing a Halloween party with the children at Bridge House in Lynn. Every week I look forward to coming to church, because there is always something new or special. (Caitlin Timmons)

I enjoy singing with the youth choir and making music for the congregation to enjoy. One of my favorite memories is playing the piano for the remembrance service last month. I loved that I was able to make people happy through my playing. Centre Church means a lot to me, and I love attending church there. (Hayley Timmons)

Our Opportunities

Sun. April 15	10:00 am 10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations No Youth Groups
Mon. April 16	----- 7:30 pm	Office Closed – Patriots’ Day Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. April 17	7:00 pm	Stewardship Comm. – Pastor’s Ofc
Wed. April 18	11:45 am 7:00 pm	Middle Sch. Youth to Nevins Farm Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Fri. April 20	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. April 22	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 5-8 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Confirmation Class Middle & Hi School Youth Groups
Mon. April 23	7:30 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Floral Design Workshop - Kitchen Boy Scout Troop 48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. April 24	12:30 pm	Get-Together Wheel – Fireside
Wed. April 25	12:30 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thur April 26	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. April 27	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun April 29	10:00 am 11:00 am	Stewardship Sunday Lunch – Richards Hall

Our prayers are with Robin Keck (Dave Clough’s sister); Dotty Whittier’s father; 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 remember in our prayers Mark Holden (Dot Holden’s grandson), John Clarke (Lee Clarke’s nephew), and Allan Marshall (Jim and Sheila Marshall’s son), in Afghanistan and Sam Schnare (Dick and Carol Carter’s grandson) who is stationed in Germany.

The next Tower Notes will be the week of April 23.