

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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

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Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

April 25, 2012

Why I Give

Over the past few weeks members of Centre Congregational Church have been sharing their stories of faith about how the ministry of Centre Church and its members and staff have, throughout the years, been a blessing to them and continue to bless their lives and the lives of others.

Through these stories I have been reminded of how God has been and continues to be at work in many ways, people, and churches. Listening to and reading these stories reminds me just how important it is for us to continue our work in ministry.

Yesterday afternoon I visited one of our parishioners in the hospital. The son of this parishioner expressed to me great heartfelt appreciation for the ways that several people (he listed their names) from our congregation have maintained contact with his mother throughout the years and recently visited her, bringing loving kindness and flowers.

I give thanks for the countless ways that all of you are a blessing in ministry to those inside and outside our church community.

I grew up in a church community a lot like Centre Congregational Church in the ways that it always made me feel welcome, appreciated, and cherished. The church I grew up in also made me feel that I, too, had something to offer to the mission and ministry of the church.

I took pleasure in teaching 5th and 6th grade boys and girls in Sunday School. Yes, it was challenging to me, but the challenge helped me to grow in my faith and in my ability to serve the Lord. Those students taught me a lot about how important it is to keep our children interested in learning just how much God loves them. To this day I appreciate

that my church was willing to let me teach and grow in this special ministry.

My church community and its pastor were also very, very supportive of me and my family when my father was diagnosed and treated for cancer. They loved us, took care of us, visited us, fed us, and, believe it or not, even harvested the crops on our farm for us when we were not able to do it ourselves!

And, when I felt God calling me into Ordained Christian Ministry, my church community encouraged and supported me in many, many ways. They were excited and gave me many opportunities to test out my wings when I visited to lead worship and preach. And, they were still loving and caring

In the Sanctuary

April 29, 2012 – 10:00 A.M.

Stewardship Sunday

Message by:

Jill DiGiorgio, David Bjorkman
and Mary McCarthy

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

May 6, 2012 – 10:00 A.M.

Holy Communion

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
Children may worship with families before going to
Rotation Workshops. Nursery open in Room 11.

May 13, 2012 – 10:00 A.M.

Confirmation Sunday

Nursery open in Room 11.

Older children in church

of me and my family when my mother died a couple of years ago.

These are just some of the reasons I give to the ministry of Centre Congregational Church, because I know that we are serving the Lord in countless ways every day, through every one of us, and through every contribution we make. And, every contribution we make makes our ministry and mission stronger, bolder, and more effective.

This coming Sunday, April 29th, is our Stewardship Sunday. Stewardship Ministries will give us our pledge cards to complete and submit during the worship service. You will be invited to bring your completed pledge card forward during worship, to place it into our special secure, pledge card box (hand-made by Stan Rossier years ago). I will offer to each of you who come forward a special blessing. For each pledge received, Stewardship Ministries will place a colorful hand-print cutout in our sanctuary to symbolize our support of what God has for us to do.

I hope that you will join me, and others of us, in acknowledging that all that we have comes to us as a gift from God and that we have the blessed opportunity to serve the Lord in many ways through the ministry of our welcoming, loving, and affirming Centre Congregational Church.

And please, consider seriously and carefully how much you give to our Local Expenses and our Missions. The more we give, the greater and stronger our ministry. I simply ask that you pray about your decision, talk it over with your spouse/partner/family, and challenge yourself to give in faith. To quote Sandi Watson: *"Life begins at the end of our comfort zone."*

May our giving also begin "at the end of our comfort zone."

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. Pagers are available for all parents.

Rotation Sensation

The Church School children are learning about The Journeys of Paul in Rotation Sensation Workshops through Storytelling, Games and Movie. All children in grades Pre-K through 8th grade are invited to participate.



Sharing Our Stories

On April 29th, we will be passing out the pledge cards and collecting them during the service. After the service you are invited to stay for a luncheon. 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...

Centre Congregational Church has been a part of my life for five decades. This church has led me through life's journeys. Centre Church has seen me through my Sunday school, confirmation, and youth group years. In my adult years, the church conducted the ceremonies of my parents' memorials, my marriage, and my daughters' baptisms and confirmations. The church has provided immeasurable support and guidance during the difficult times in life as well. I have received strength and care during my divorce and recent house fire. This strength has not only come from the institution of the church or the instruction of Christianity. It has come from the personification of our faith in the church members.

I cannot imagine having weathered these challenges without the wonderful role models for my daughters or the loving friendships I am blessed with from this congregation. The commissions of our church provide the rich spiritual, educational, and musical aspects to the worship experience. It is an honor to support the ministry and programs of Centre Church. It is my hope that generations to come will benefit from the ministry, opportunities, and fellowship of this exceptional church.

- Diana Gerbick

Mother's Day Flower Sale

On Sunday, May 13, participants for this year's mission trip will be selling hanging plants after church. We will have a variety of flowers to choose from. Please remember your mother and help us to raise money for this summer's Mission Trip to Joplin.

Youth Groups

Seven members of the Middle School Youth Group traveled to the MSPCA at Nevins Farm in Methuen on Wednesday, April 18 for an educational tour. We were also able to bring the many donations collected from the congregation. Thanks to Nancy Miller and Heather Sievers for chaperoning.

The Middle School Youth Group will be meeting on Sunday, April 29 from 5-6:30 pm. There will be a reunion of the youth who attended the NYC mission trip at A Different Christian Voice in Middleton at 4:30 pm. There is no High School Youth Group scheduled.

Both youth groups will meet on Sunday, May 6. The Middle School meets from 5-6:30 pm and the High School from 6:30- 8pm.



Geranium Fest Flea Market

May 19 – 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Centre Church is part of the town Geranium Fest on May 19. Our celebration will be held rain or shine. We will be featuring a **flea market** where you can have an 8' table and two chairs for \$35.00 or bring your own table for \$30.00. We will be advertising extensively and have the best location in town! Reserve early - we have limited space left. In case of rain, the event will be held indoors. Other activities for all age groups will contribute to the enjoyment of this event.

Call **Dotty Whittier @781-635-6225**
to reserve your flea market space

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to Jeannine Hawk and Raden Sorli Hawk upon the recent death of their mother/grandmother Mary Hawk Unanos of Florida.

Our congratulations to Daniel and Kerilyn Johnson of Woburn, MA upon the birth of a son, Evan Riley Johnson on April 19. His proud grandparents are Phil and Sue Johnson.

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. 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!

Checks should be made payable to Centre Congregational Church and can be mailed to the church office. If you have any questions you can get in touch with me.

Phil Johnson at pcjohnson@meei.harvard.edu
or 781-598-5678.

Thank You!

My love and thanks to everyone at Centre Church for visits, flowers, transportation during the last 8 weeks. Once again, Centre Church family was there for me and my family. - Barbara Becker

A special thank you to Joe Gallo of Plantscape Designs for supplying the beautiful spring plants which decorated the sanctuary on Easter. Thanks also to those who donated plants and the team of volunteers who delivered the plants to our shut-in and bereaved members and friends.

With much appreciation,
Laurel Caputo for the Flower Committee

Cable Coverage Changes

If you watch the Thursday evening showing of our worship services on local access TV using Comcast, the channel has changed to #99.

We Appreciate Our Volunteers

Lights Out beginning April 27: Bill Seelig
Lights Out beginning May 4: Jeff Langill

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.

Our Opportunities

Sun. April 29	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 5-6:30 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Confirmation Class – Pastor's Ofc. Luncheon – Richards Hall Middle School Youth - Basement
Mon. April 30	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scouts – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. May 1	7:00 pm	Education Ministries – Library
Wed. May 2	8:30 am 7:00 pm	Bread & Roses - Kitchen Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thurs. May 3	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. May 4	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. May 6	10:00 am 10:00 am 5-8 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Youth Groups - Basement
Mon. May 7	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop 48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. May 9	12:30 pm	Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thur. May 10	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. May 11	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. May 12		Confirmation Rehearsal – Sanct.
Sun May 13	10:00 am	Confirmation Sunday

Our prayers are with Edith Reed at Union Hospital; Seavey Bowdoin recuperating at home; 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), 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. We rejoice that John Clarke (Lee Clarke's nephew), is home from Afghanistan.

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of May 7.
