

# TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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*We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church*

**November 28, 2012**

## Light and Dark

I appreciate both the light and the dark. I love the bright light of a clear morning sky, especially one in which I am able to relax and enjoy the day. I also appreciate the darkness, at night, when exhausted, I can lay down and fall asleep, giving to the darkness all of my burdens till, in fresh light, I am able to look at them more clearly. In the darkness I find shelter, closing off the threats of despair.

Yet, there are nights when the darkness does not overcome the overwhelming circumstances in which I find myself. The sounds and light of my struggles seem to shake me right out of my sleep and bed, calling upon me to deal with them even though I'm trying to run from them, at least for a while.

What to do?

Sometimes I lay there, toss and turn, trying not to give in. This is almost always futile. Sometimes I get up, sit at my computer and work on the things that are keeping me awake, writing letters to God, working on the upcoming sermon, newsletter article, or matters of personal business. This is usually the better course because once I work on the thing(s) that were keeping me awake, I am usually able to get back to sleep. I just pray that I finish them before my alarm goes off and the sun rises.

Sometimes, I just need to ask the Lord to help me, to bring his amazing light to shine upon the things that threaten to overcome me and those for whom I am concerned. What is so hard, for me, is to have many days and nights when darkness and struggle combine their forces to not only awaken me, but to set me back and to put me in a place of weakness, not strength. There are times when despite my years of experience, the depth and breadth of my faith, my knowledge and training, I still feel as if I'm a long way from realizing the words of the prophet Isaiah when he said: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Isaiah 60).

I am reminded of the times when I was training to run a marathon. It seemed like the work out sessions

got longer, harder, and that the end of the course was so far away.

The spiritual side of Thanksgiving and the season of Advent remind me that the resolution of my struggles does come, with God's help, and the blessing of God's light will, again, abide in me to heal, to renew, and to strengthen.

After all, sometimes the light shines the brightest in our darkest moments. It doesn't take a big light, a "sun-sized" light. Sometimes it just takes one, little light, like a candle, to make a difference, to encourage us, renew us, and give us hope. And sometimes, that light is you, reaching into someone's darkness, being, together, the presence of Christ.

## In the Sanctuary

**December 2, 2012 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent**

**10:00 A.M. Holy Communion**

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Nursery at 9:00 & 3-5 Year Olds at 10:00

Children Gr. 1-8 may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops.

Followed by Heifer Marketplace

**December 9, 2012 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent**

**10:00 A.M. Morning Worship**

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Nursery at 9:00 & 3-5 Year Olds at 10:00

Children Gr. 1-8 may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops.

**December 16, 2012 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent**

**10:00 A.M. Morning Worship**

Christmas Pageant

Led by the Children of the Church

Come to Advent ready to experience the light of Christ, ready to be the light of Christ. As I said yesterday at the end of the Worship Service, "God takes us just as we are and does amazing things!" I pray God takes you this Advent and does something amazing!

Yours in Christ, Dennis

### A Journey to Bethlehem

#### YOU are invited to be involved!

Our church members will be the people of Bethlehem on Sunday, Dec. 2. These will include: marketplace workers, roman soldiers, census takers, tax collectors, beggars, shepherds and sheep!

All who are interested in being part of the atmosphere, by dressing in our supply of Biblical gear, are asked to arrive next Sunday at 2 pm for costuming, duty assignment, and tips on how to be your character. Contact Linda Ladd ([ladd@neb.com](mailto:ladd@neb.com)) to start planning costumes.

### Rotation Sensation

**December 2-** children and youth will worship briefly with their families and then leave to prepare for the Heifer Living Gift Market.

Children in the 3-5 year old class will go directly to their class at 10 am.

**December 9-** Children and youth will worship briefly with their families and then leave for a group lesson on Advent and to plan for the Christmas Pageant.

**December 16-** Christmas Pageant during worship

### Youth Group Update

**Sunday, December 2** no evening youth group meetings, all youth (both Middle and High School) should plan to take part in "A Journey to Bethlehem". Please be at the church at 2 pm to get in costume and receive your assignments.

The High School Youth Group and Confirmation Class will be participating in Ecclesia Ministries City Reach on **Dec 7-8**. We will meet here at Centre Church at 5:30 pm for dinner and then head into Boston by bus. We will return around 4 pm on Saturday. There is no High School Youth Group scheduled for Sunday night.

**Sunday, December 9** The Middle School Youth Group will be meeting from 6-7:30 pm



### Heifer International Market

#### Alternative Christmas Giving on December 2

What do you buy the person who has everything? How about a goat or a flock of chicks? At this year's Living Gift Market on December 2, learn how gifts of livestock can provide food and income for hungry families through Heifer International. At the Market, we will "sell" food and income-producing animals like bees, ducks, pigs, and heifers. The animals go to hungry families working to improve their lives. Each gift includes training in animal care, sustainable farming methods, community development, and more. And each family who receives a gift is required to Pass on the Gift of an animal and training to another family – your gifts start a chain of giving that lasts for years.

In return, you get a beautiful honor card to give to your loved one, to describe the alternative Christmas gift that you've made in their name.

During the month of November, Rotation Sensation workshops focused on learning more about Heifer International. Join the Sunday School children on December 2 to make a difference!

### Nursery Update

The nursery at Centre Church will now be open each Sunday morning at 9am to provide child care for infants and children up to age 5. When there are Rotation Workshops scheduled, children ages 3-5 will go to their class in Room 14. The nursery will also be open on long weekends and vacation weeks for infants and children up to age 5.



### Cookie Swap

On Sunday, Dec 16, the High School Youth group will be holding our annual Cookie Swap. We would like to ask everyone in the congregation to help with this fundraiser by baking 2- 3 dozen cookies and bringing them to the church library on Sunday morning. After worship, you will have the opportunity to purchase a decorated container to fill with your choice of cookies for just \$10.00.

This is a great way to have a variety of cookies on hand for the holidays, or perhaps even purchase an extra container or two to give away as gifts.

**Turkey Drive:** Thank you to everyone who brought a frozen turkey or made a donation to help support Haven From Hunger and their efforts to provide Thanksgiving dinner for those in need. Many thanks to Brittany DeSantis and our High School Volunteers

### **Deacons Holiday Breakfast – Dec 9th**

You deserve a break during this busy holiday season! Treat yourself to a delicious and social breakfast served with a smile by your Deacons. What better way to start your Sunday than eggs, bacon, coffee, juice, fruit and...made-to-order pancakes!? The Diaconate will be cooking this up for you starting at 8:30 am on Sunday, Dec. 9th. All are welcomed! This will be a Diaconate fund-raising event to benefit the repair and maintenance of our church organ. We hope you will come to enjoy a breakfast out, and to support the music portion of our worship services. Suggested donation is: \$10/person, \$25/family. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

--Your Faithful Diaconate.

### **News From Around the Parish**

We extend our love and sympathy to Gini Laing and her family upon the death of her husband, George on November 14. His funeral service was held at Centre Church on November 17.

We extend our sympathy to Barbara Langill and her family on the occasion of the death of her Uncle Warren McKinstry, who died Sunday, November 25. Mr. McKinstry, who owned West Parish Farm in Granby, MA., was the twin brother to Barbara's father, Alfred W. McKinstry.

Our love and sympathy are with Chuck Cotting and his family upon the death of his brother, Roger Cotting in Michigan. His funeral will be Saturday, December 1.

Dear Friends,

I so appreciate your calls, cards and flowers during my recuperation. I am home, doing well and look forward to being back with you soon. —Edith Wendt

### **Thanks!**

Thanks to the following for donating the materials for the Christmas Wreath Making Workshop this year: Forrest and Kathy Higgins, Higgins Family Christmas Trees, Holliston, MA and Tony Raiano of Raiano's Gardens and Greenhouses in Marlborough, MA.

\$74.00 in donations was received and will be given to the Organ Maintenance Fund. Thanks to all who attended, many learning how to make their first Christmas Wreath!

Rev. Dennis Bailey



### **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:

1. **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 collect gifts through noon on Sunday, December 9.**

2. **Donate money** – Instead of sending a zillion paper Christmas cards, make a donation to support City Mission Society's work. Send one Christmas card to the church (5 Summer Street) with your donation. The cards will be displayed on the Christmas tree and your donation will be recognized in *Tower Notes*.

All proceeds will go to Boston City Mission Society for their continuing work to help families avoid homelessness, bring meals to elderly shut-ins, and work with at-risk teens. 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.

Questions? Contact Sandi Watson at 781 334-7032 or sandiwatson@deltek.com.

### **We Appreciate Our Volunteers**

**December 2:** Ushers-Linda Ladd, Gage Whittier, Bill Seelig, Jeff Law. Advent Candle-Joplin Mission Trip Participants. Provide Altar Flowers-Charlotte Kilgore. Deliver Altar Flowers-Barbara Becker and Pinky Warnock. Lights Out beginning November 30-John Walsh.

**December 9:** Ushers-Bill Seelig, Al Johnson, Paul Harrington, Gage Whittier. Provide Altar Flowers-Richard Evans. Deliver Altar Flowers-George and Perry Hayden. Lights Out beginning December 7-Scott DeSantis.

**December 16:** Ushers- Jeff Law, Bruce Weaver, Gage Whittier, Margaret Waugh. Advent Candle-The Bayer Family. Lights Out beginning December 14-Sтивен Richard



**Sunday Dec 2, 3-6pm**

**A Journey to Bethlehem**

**Interactive arts and crafts, with a  
“First Christmas” theme.**

Centre Congregational Church will be creating  
“A Journey to Bethlehem” experience for YOU.  
This is an event for all - young and old alike. It  
will be an afternoon of arts & crafts, set in  
Bethlehem, about 2012 years ago!

The people you’ll see there will include: roman  
soldiers, marketplace workers, census takers, tax  
collectors, beggars, shepherds and sheep!

YOU will experience the atmosphere of a long ago  
marketplace, and comply with this proclamation:

**It has been DECREED!**

**By our Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus,  
that a census shall be taken of all the inhabited earth.**

**It is REQUIRED that all people register in the cities of  
their ancestors.**

**The place of YOUR registration shall be Centre  
Congregational Church.**

**The time will be on Sunday December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3 to 6 pm.**

**ALL members of every family must attend  
and be prepared to have FUN.**

**This is per order of our Emperor Caesar Augustus.**

Get your picture taken in Bethlehem! Send “Wish  
you were here” postcards to your friends!

For more information, please call the church office at  
781-334-3050 or see [www.centre-church.org](http://www.centre-church.org)

## *Our Opportunities*

Sun. Dec. 2  <i>First Sunday in ADVENT</i>	10:00 am 10 :00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 11:30 am 11:30 am 3-6 pm	Holy Communion – Sanctuary Nursery / 3-5 Year Old Class Gr. 1-8 Rotation Sensation Heifer Marketplace – Narthex Confirmation Class – Kitchen Youth Choir – Choir Room “Journey to Bethlehem” -Basement
Mon. Dec. 3	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. Dec. 5	8:30am 7:00 pm	Bread & Roses Group - Kitchen Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR
Thurs., Dec. 6	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Dec. 7	10:30 am 5:30 pm	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office Sr. High Group–City Reach/Boston
Sun. Dec. 9  <i>Second Sunday in ADVENT</i>	8:30 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Breakfast – Richards Hall Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery / 3-5 Yr Old Class Gr. 1-8 Rotation Sensation Youth Choir – Choir Room Middle School Youth – Basement
Mon. Dec. 10	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues Dec. 11	12:30 pm 7:30 pm	Get-Together Wheel - Fireside Diaconate – Pastor’s Office
Wed., Dec. 12	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Meeting - Fr
Thurs Dec. 13	7:30 pm	Sr. Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Dec. 14	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office
Sat. Dec. 15	9:30 am	Sr. Highs/City Mission Soc. Shops

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of December 10.

Our prayers are with Dana Richardson recuperating at Renaissance, Brooksby; Mary McCarthy and Edith Wendt recuperating at home; John Wishart, Sunrise Senior Living, 618 Granite St., Braintree, 02184; Priscilla Hahn and Ginny Daniels at Sunrise, Lynnfield; Ray and Arlene Thorn, Charlotte Kilgore, Helen Butcher, Marion and Denis Edkins, and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Brooksby; Marion Barnes in Danvers, Ginny Davis in Amesbury and Carolyn Furey in Charlton. We remember in our prayers Dan Neary (Jo Ann Neary’s son) in Afghanistan, and Sam Schnare (Dick and Carol Carter’s grandson) in Germany.

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## 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 16.***

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

***Wednesday, December 5 is the deadline for placing orders.***

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