

# TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts 01940 Phone: 781-334-3050 Fax: 781-334-6463

Email: Office@Centre-Church.org Web Site: www.Centre-Church.org

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

Carrie J. Pericola, Church School Superintendent

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Sally MacDonald, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

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

**February 27, 2013**

## **Our Lenten Call:** **Can We Trust In God's Plans?**

One of the scriptures for the second Sunday in Lent is from **Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**. Here we are witness to a dialogue between Abram (Abraham) and God. In this dialogue Abram reminds God of the promise of offspring given to him. Abram had become impatient with God because years had gone by since God made this promise with no result. So, Abram devised a way of his own for having offspring, via a woman, a slave, other than his wife, Sarah. This was not God's plan for Abram and God reminds him of this saying, *"This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir,"* meaning, no one but a child born to you and your wife, Sarah, will be an acceptable offspring.

Further, in Abram's eyes, time was running out because of Abram and Sarah's advanced age.

Clearly, this text reminds us, again, that God's way are not our ways. When God gives us a promise, a vision, or a plan, we are expected to trust it, follow it, and believe in God's plans for fulfillment of promises. In this case, Abram was expected by God to be patient and to follow the rules of God's love for his life, his wife, and for his promise of an inheritance of offspring, a family, and a nation.

Abram was dependent upon God for this promise to be fulfilled. The promise was eventually fulfilled, but complicated by Abram's actions and disobedience.

As I think of this for my own life and journey of faith I can identify with Abram, wanting to take matters into my own hands, fix things, do

things that make life better and happier for others. I want it to happen faster than God may want it to happen. I also find myself thinking that "If I owned this Church I would do such and such and find a way of doing it now," thinking that my actions and ideas would fix whatever problem we are facing. I have fallen into this trap more than once in my life and ministry. And, when I have done so, I have, like Abram, made things unnecessarily more complicated. The result has been hurting the feelings of others, costing more time and money, and betraying the very structure and process that I have promised to follow and support.

Trusting in God's plan not only means trusting God, but also trusting God's people. I am not the only person desiring to be in the service of the Lord's work. I am not the first nor will I be the

## **In the Sanctuary**

**March 3, 2013**

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

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Nursery at 9:00 & 3-5 Yr. Olds at 10:00

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

**March 10, 2013**

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

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Sacrament of Baptism

Nursery at 9:00 & 3-5 Yr. Olds at 10:00

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

last, to want to follow Jesus as a disciple. There are others who desire to follow in the way of God's calling and they have great ideas, resources, and important parts to play in the fulfillment of what God has promised to me, to you, and to us, the Church.

Yes, sometimes we frustrate each other for failing to follow through. Sometimes we grow impatient with each other, and, with God. Sometimes things interfere with *our* perfectly conceived plans, like illness, tragedy, losses, and/or other things. And sometimes, God's timing is not ours and we may never know the reason for why God does things a certain way. That is why we must trust.

God did eventually fulfill the promise made to Abram and Sarah in the birth of their son, Isaac. Perhaps if Abram hadn't tried to take matters into his own hands; perhaps if Abram had not doubted God, perhaps if Abram had trusted God more fully, his first child would have been born earlier. We do not know. What we do know is that Abram gave up on God and tried to handle matters himself and only made matters a lot worse.

This Lenten season let us think about God's plans for our lives, how God is asking us to trust so that the work God is intending to occur through us will come to take place. That work can be children and family, but, it can also be many other things that will bless our family, our world, our neighbors, our church, and even ourselves.

Great things of God occur when we trust God each day, to show us the way. Even when we feel as if we are not sensing God's presence and action in our lives, God is still at work and will be faithful to the promises made to us. Abram and Sarah had to be patient, do what God had given to them to do, and trust in the path God had given them to follow to a place unknown to them. They also had to trust that God would bless them to participate in the plans God has for others.

Let us, together, renew our trust in the Lord's plans. Let us be faithful in the promises we have made, give the Lord our attention, our dedication, our service, so that we, like Abram, will witness the fulfillment of what God desires for us and through us. Yours in Christ, Dennis

Our Nursery, located in Room 11, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff & volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time & play. The nursery is now open at 9am.

## **Sunday Morning With the Children**

### **3-5 year old class**

Children ages 3 to 5 are invited to join us each Sunday at 10 am in Room 14 for a class just for this age group. There is time for free play, a Bible Story and a craft and/or activity to help reinforce the story.

### **Rotation Sensation**

We are now in the Season of Lent, the time to prepare for Easter. The workshops will focus on Holy Week and each student will be making a Holy Week booklet, adding pages each week.



### **Heifer Muffins**

Each Sunday during Lent, we will be selling muffins after worship to help raise funds for Heifer International. On Sunday, March 3, the 3-5 year old class will be doing the baking.

## **Confirmation**

### **Confirmation Retreat:**

Please plan to meet in the church parking lot at 5:30 pm on Friday, March 1 to head to Grotonwood. Be sure to eat dinner before you come. You will be returning around 6-6:30 on Sat. Please bring sleeping bag or linens, pillow, modest sleepwear, casual clothes, toiletries, towel and your Faith Interview paper.

Sunday, March 3- no confirmation classes

Sunday, March 10

### **Baptism and Confirmation Class**

Please plan to attend the first part of worship for a special Baptism. When the church school children leave, you will also leave to go to class with Mrs. Martin.

Sunday, March 17 Confirmation Class at 10 am with Mrs. Martin. Plan to stay for the Stage Dedication and luncheon and *Life School Musical* presentation. (Please note, this is a schedule change, the luncheon meeting will be on Sunday, March 24)

### **News from Around the Parish**

We extend our prayers and sympathy to Marion Edkins upon the death of her husband, Denis Edkins on Feb. 2. His funeral was held in Wakefield on Feb. 8.

We extend our love and sympathy to the family and friends of Jeffrey Dale Brigham who died on February 15, leaving his wife, Elizabeth Brigham. Her address is 2743 Morenci Rd., San Tan Valley, AZ 85143-4554.

Our loving sympathy goes to Ann Decker and her family upon the recent death of her father, John Wishart. His funeral will be at Centre Church on Saturday, March 2 at 11 a.m.

### **Youth Groups**

Middle School Overnight- March 1-2.

No Youth Group Meetings on Sunday, March 3.

On Sunday, March 10, the middle school youth group will be meeting from 6-7:30 pm. The High School Youth Group will not be meeting.

### **Laser Quest**

On Sunday March 24, The Middle School and High School youth groups will be heading to Laser Quest in Danvers for an evening of nonstop laser tag. You will need to let us know by Friday, March 8 if you plan to attend. If we meet our goal of 25 -30 participants, we will have Laser Quest all to ourselves and play 4 games for the price of 3. Friends are invited to attend.

### **Can and Bottle Fundraiser for Joni and Friends**

The High School and Middle School youth will be sponsoring a can and bottle drive beginning on Sunday, March 3 and ending April 21. Please drop off your redeemable cans and bottles in the bins provided. All proceeds will go to Joni and Friends, a nonprofit Christian organization focused on helping persons with disabilities. The New England chapter of Joni and Friends offers Family Retreats at the Barbara C. Harris Center in Greenfield, NH to both disabled and able-bodied campers of all ages. Your donations will help provide scholarship funds for a family affected by disability that otherwise could not afford to attend the Family Retreat. Please donate your cans and bottles to this worthwhile organization.

## **Coming Soon:**

**Todd Hall Stage Dedication  
and Luncheon Theater event**

**Sunday, March 17, 2013  
11:30 am**

**Featuring: The Centre Church Youth Choir and others  
Performing: "Life School Musical"**

**The Deacons will be organizing a luncheon of Shepherd's Pie, Kid-friendly Sandwiches, Salads, Desserts and Drinks. Please sign up in the narthex after church, so we know how many seats will be needed.**

## *Our Opportunities*

Sun. March 3	9:00 am 10:00 am 10 :00 am 11:30 am -----	Nursery – Room 11 Holy Communion– Sanctuary Rotations / 3-5 Year Old Class Youth Choir – Choir Room No Youth Groups
Mon. Mar. 4	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. Mar. 5	7:00 pm 7:00 pm	Education Ministries - Library Membership - Pastor's Ofc.
Wed., Mar. 6	8:30 am 7:00 pm 7-9 pm	Bread & Roses - Kitchen Women's 12 Step Mtg. – FR Lenten Book Group - Richards
Thurs Mar. 7	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar. 8	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office
Sun. Mar. 10	9:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10::00 am 11:30 am	Nursery – Room 11 Morning Worship - Sanctuary Rotations / 3-5 Year Old Cclass Confirmation Class – Pastor's Ofc Youth Choir – Choir Room
Mon. Mar. 11	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 - Todd Alanon/Alateen – FR & Libr.
Wed., Mar. 13	7-9 pm 7:00 pm	Lenten Book Group - Richards Women's 12 Step Meeting - FR
Thurs Mar. 14	6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Stewardship - Library Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 15	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Office

Our prayers are with Elaine Pyburn at Aviv Centers for Living, 240 Lynnfield St., Peabody MA 01960; Arthur Pyburn at Hunt Center, 90 Lindall S., Danvers 01924; Marion Barnes at Hawthorn Hill, 15 Kirkbride Dr., Danvers 01923; Ginny Daniels at Sunrise in Lynnfield; Ray and Arliene Thorn, Charlotte Kilgore, Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Continuing Care at Brooksby; In addition we pray for Judy Embleton (Carrie Pericola's mother), and Tom Vancor.

We remember in our prayers Michael Bruce in the Far East and Dan Neary in Afghanistan.

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