

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

May 15, 2013

Extraordinary

On the occasion of Pentecost, this Sunday, May 19th, it is important to remember what it was: **extraordinary**. The events of Pentecost are recorded in the Bible, in the Book of Acts in the New Testament. It is written in Acts 2.

Some of the words in the early part of that chapter give clues that something extraordinary was happening that day: "suddenly," "a violent wind," "bewilderment," "utterly amazed," "wonders of God," "amazed and perplexed," "tongues of fire." The apostle Peter then explains what was happening, how it had been foretold by the Prophet Joel, in the Old Testament book by his name:

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams."*

(Joel 2:28-32)

Of course today I am convinced that the prophet and the apostle would include women in their wording, as I'm sure was their intent, given how they say "all people." It was extraordinary how the people, all the people, were filled with some very powerful force. It was the very same power that had filled Jesus as he taught and healed and performed miracles. Now, as Jesus had foretold, that same force, called "The Holy Spirit," was filling Jesus' disciples, apostles, and followers.

That same Holy Spirit is available to all of us who, as Peter said,

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

Repentance can take many forms. It can be in the form of an individual turning to God, asking for forgiveness. It can take the form of a person asking God to help them have a new life of service in the work of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It can also take the form of a realization that God is calling a person to a greater form of discipleship and the person consenting to that call, wherever and however it may manifest or show itself. Of course, today, the Holy Spirit can suddenly or slowly come into our lives, individually or in larger numbers at any time. We do not control it. Its ways are not our ways.

I would like to ask all of us to be open to it and the changes it brings into our lives. It has and does cause people to suddenly become more excited about their faith and the use of their gifts and skills. It can cause people to become more generous in their giving, more

In the Sanctuary

May 19, 2013 - Pentecost

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
Nursery at 9:00 a.m. & 3-5 Year Olds at 10:00 a.m.
Children Gr. 1-8 may worship briefly with their families
before going to Rotation Workshops.

May 26, 2013

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey
Nursery at 9:00 a.m. & 3-5 Year Olds at 10:00 a.m.
Older children may worship briefly with their families
before going outside to plant flowers.

generous in their time with their family, even selecting to take jobs that pay less in order to be more present to their children and family especially when the children are young. It can cause us to go back to school to learn a new trade, career, etc. It can prompt us to choose to take on a new adventure, like a Mission Trip that will likely change our lives.

The Holy Spirit can come into the life of one person and then change the lives of others, in a family, in church, in any group or setting. The Holy Spirit can also come into a person's life on the occasion of a traumatic event, giving healing and comfort to those who are injured and grieving.

My awareness of the Holy Spirit is heightened anytime that bonds are formed in my life, anytime I feel new energy, and anytime I'm feeling the need to change direction.

One thing to keep in mind about the Holy Spirit. The purpose of its action and movement in our lives is to take us beyond ourselves in order to be of service to God and to become a blessing in the lives of others. In other words, what the Holy Spirit seeks to do in and through us is not about us, but about the work of God, using us to serve the mission to which God calls us. As soon as we think it is about us, the Holy Spirit may move on to someone who is more prepared and willing.

My Old Testament Professor Dr. Phyllis Triple once told me that if I wanted to be more blessed and more gifted, then find someone who I experienced as gifted and stay close to him or her. God's gifts are not locked into a person, a place, or a time. They are available to all and anyone who is a welcoming vessel.

A reading of Acts 2 helps me realize the extremely generous nature of God because the gifts of the Holy Spirit were available to all people that day, people from all nations who were gathered there.

It is extraordinary how the Holy Spirit works when a welcoming soul is blessed and changed by the Holy Spirit, dropping gifts into a person's or group of persons lives!

I have experienced it many times and know how wonderful it is. It brings changes to our lives, sometimes significant changes. It can take us on new journeys and adventures, but often, it starts by calling us to responsibility and service right where are.

Remember how Jesus said, that those who exhibit faithfulness in small things, will be given greater opportunities, greater blessings, and greater opportunities for service. That's what happens when the Holy Spirit takes hold of a life, when the Holy Spirit drops gifts into your life. Are you ready for an experience of the extraordinary? Are you ready to welcome the Holy Spirit? Are you ready for a change of heart, mind, body, and soul? Are you ready for a change of point of view, opinion, and/or direction? (Read what happens when people receive the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:42-47.) **It is extraordinary!**

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Congratulations to Our Confirmands

We congratulate the following young people who were confirmed on Sunday, May 12:

Leigh Clafin
Olivia Costello
Kelly Look
Elizabeth Miller
Rebecca Sievers
Hayley Timmons
Rachelle Votano
Abigail Weaver

Lynnfield "Town Day" **Saturday, May 18, 2013**

Centre Church Flea Market
On the Front Lawn - (Richards Hall if rain)
8:30 am – 2 pm

Lynnfield Art Guild Show & Sale
In the Narthex - 9 am - 3 pm

Thank you to everyone who has returned their pledge cards and who helped to make this year's campaign a success. If you have not turned yours in yet, please do so by mailing it to the church or putting it in the offering plate on Sunday. If you have not received one (or have lost it), there are extras in the narthex and the church office. (or call 781-334-3050 and we will mail one to you.)

Sunday Morning With the Children

Our Nursery, located in Room 11, is open each week at 9 am for infants through age 3.

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.

Rotation Sensation

Sunday May 19 - Rotation Workshops. After worshipping briefly with their families, children and youth in grades 1 through 8 will leave and meet in the chapel. We will continue learning about Ruth.

Sunday, May 26 - Flower Planting Sunday. All children, grades PreK-grade 8, are invited to join us as we plant flowers. Please bring trowels, watering cans and wear garden-friendly clothes.

Youth Groups

Sunday, May 19 - The High School Youth Group will end their year with a trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH. We will meet at the church at 1 pm and carpool to the park. The cost is \$28.00 per person. Parents are needed to help drive and chaperone. Please call Barbara Langill if you can help.

Regular Youth Group meetings have concluded for the year. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year great! We look forward to resuming meetings again in September.

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School for children ages 4 and up, will be held here at Centre Church on July 15-19. This year our theme is: *Everywhere Fun Fair; Where God's World Comes Together*. We are excited to welcome Mia Sievers as our VBS Coordinator. A successful VBS requires many volunteers; please consider joining us for a wonderful week working with children. High School youth are needed as well as adults to lead stations. Contact Barbara Langill in the church office for more information.

Guided Tour of PEM

We will be sponsoring a visit to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA, on Sunday afternoon, 6/2/13 with our own Ann Decker as our guide! We will be having a "highlights tour" including the special exhibit "In Conversation: Modern African American Art". After our tour, we will be heading to one of the great eateries in Salem. More details to follow. Sign up in the narthex after service.

Dotty Whittier, Membership 781-635-6225

Write On! Secret Pen Pal Program!

Do you like getting mail? Have you always wanted a pen pal? We are looking for adults and youth interested in being secret pen pals over the summer. Here's all you need to do:

- 1.) Pick a secret code name for your letters
- 2.) Send and receive at least 4 letters or post cards from June-September
- 3.) Meet your secret pen pal at an ice cream social in the fall.

Want to sign up? Call or e-mail Barbara Langill at 781 334-3050 or christianed@centre-church.org with your name, summer address, phone number and a secret code name that you want to use.

Do You Have a Graduate in Your Family?

Please let us know so we can share the good news! Office@centre-church.org or call 781-334-3050.

Confirmation Thanks

I wish to thank Barbara Langill, Kathi Martin, Linda Ladd, and the dedicated Mentors for their support and teaching of the Confirmation Class this year. They did a wonderful job and I am grateful for their leadership and service!

I also wish to thank Douglas Hodgkins and the Centre Church Choir for making the Confirmation service special and inspiring through their music. I am grateful to Bo Martin of Middlesex Gas for donating the helium for the balloons.

Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

News From Around the Parish

We rejoice with Rob and Jill McCarthy whose son Shane Robert McCarthy was baptized on May 5.

We rejoice with David and Marylee Riester whose daughter, Elizabeth Lee Riester was baptized on May 5. Her proud big brothers are Benjamin and Henry; her proud grandmother is Janet Riester.

Our love and sympathy are extended to Lola Leggett, whose mother, Evelyn Page died on May 4. Her funeral was held on May 11.

Thanks for your Donations!

Thank you so much for bringing in your redeemable bottles and cans these past months. 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.

The High School & Middle School Youth

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Sunday, May 19: Head Usher-Jeff Law. Provide Altar Flowers-Judi & Tony Lucia. Deliver Altar Flowers-Judith Doe & Randy Russell. Coffee Hour-Joan & Steve Press. Lights Out beginning May 17: Drew Taylor.

Sunday, May 26: Provide Altar Flowers-Betty & Clayton Conn. Deliver Altar Flowers-Barbara Becker & Chuck Cotting. Coffee Hour-Laurel Caputo. Lights Out beginning May 24: Scott DeSantis.

SUPPORT THE MISSION TRIP TO JOPLIN



Cook Out on the Front Lawn

On Sunday, June 2, the Joplin Mission Trip participants are planning to hold a cook out on the front lawn of the church to raise funds for our August Mission Trip. We will have hot dogs, hamburgers and side dishes as well as dessert. The suggested donation is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 10. Please plan to support the Mission Trip as well as enjoy a fun time with your church family. We will also be holding the raffle for the Red Sox Tickets on this Sunday as well.



Red Sox Ticket Raffle

Attention Red Sox Fans: Want to head to Fenway and catch a game, but find ticket prices too high? Here's your chance to win two tickets to the Boston Red Sox vs. Los Angeles Angels on Saturday, June 8, 2013 at 7:15 pm. Tickets will be on sale after worship Sunday, May 19 & 26, and June 2. The drawing will be held June 2. Tickets are 1 for \$5.00, 3 for \$10.00 or 9 for \$20.00. Also included in the Raffle is an adorable Red Sox Build-a-Bear along with \$50.00 in cash for parking. Please call Barbara Langill in the church office for more information. All proceeds will go toward the Joplin Mission Trip.



Mission Money

Please remember to bring back your M & M mini tubes filled with quarters. The donations received will go toward supporting the church wide Mission trip to Joplin, Missouri. There is a basket in the Narthex for your filled tubes.



Stock Sales

This August, 15 volunteers from Centre Church will be traveling to Joplin, Missouri to help with the rebuilding efforts after last year's devastating tornados. We invite you to "share" in this experience by purchasing stock in our Mission Trip. For just \$20.00 per share, you will be helping our youth and adult volunteers give Joplin residents hope for a better future. All share holders will receive a stock certificate and an invitation to a shareholder dinner in the fall where mission trip participants will give a presentation of their experiences. Shares will be on sale this Sunday after worship or you may send in your order to the church office.

Our Opportunities

Sun. May 19	9:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 1-6 pm	Nursery – Room 11 Morning Worship – Sanctuary Rotations & 3-5 Year Old Class Sr. High Youth to Canobie Lake Pk
Mon. May 20	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. May 22	3-9:00 pm 7:00 pm	Trip to Museum of Fine Arts Women's 12 Step Mtg. - Fireside
Thurs May 23	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. May 24	10:30 pm	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. May 26	9:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am	Nursery – Room 11 3-4 Year Olds – Room 14 Older Children Plant Flowers Morning Worship - Sanctuary
Mon. May 27	----- ----- 7:30 pm	Office Closed for Memorial Day No Boy Scouts Alanon/Alateen – FR & Libr.
Tues. May 28	12:30 pm 7:00 pm	Get-Together Wheel - Library Council – Pastor's Office
Wed. May 29	7:00 pm	Women's 12 Step Meeting - FR
Thur. May 30	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. May 31	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of May 27.

Our prayers are with Anne Gist at Lahey Clinic, Burlington; Esther McGrath and Tom Vancor recuperating at home; Red Hollett at Meadowview in North Reading; Carolyn Furey at Overlook in Charlton; Marion Barnes at Hawthorn Hill in Danvers; Marge Cole, Ray and Arlene Thorn, Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Continuing Care at Brooksby Village.

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