

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

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Sally MacDonald, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

March 12, 2014

Lenten Choices

Can you give God access to every part of your life? I have had people tell me, "*I give God an hour of my time each week, attending church. The rest belongs to me.*"

Yes, I also block God out of some of the places in my life. And yet, I continue to pray for God's kingdom to come. It is not easy to open the door to God in every part of my life. There are just so many voices calling me, making requests, beckoning me. I want to be helpful. I want to serve and respond to every request. But, I need to give God access to every choice that I make, every part of my life. As a result, I have to make choices for the sake of what God wants for me.

So, I focus on the given choices that I have made. I choose to have a family so I remain committed to them first.

I choose a career in the Christian ministry, working in and with a congregation in the United Church of Christ. I have a contract that requires I fulfill my agreed to obligations and responsibilities. I believe that God has given this opportunity to me and I need to do my best to fulfill all of its objectives. I have chosen certain friendships. As a result, I believe God expects me to consider those relationships to be extremely important, as they have blessed me in so many ways throughout the years.

I also believe that God wants me to remain flexible enough to respond to unexpected things. I believe, for example, that God expects me to be open to strangers who cross my path, to be aware that God may be present in the interruptions in my life. Can I give God access to all of my scheduled

things so that, as the need arises, I can be available for God's emergencies?

With all good intentions, people bring to us things that they feel we must read, we must respond to and do. And yet, if we are guided by God we must walk with his guidance.

Remember how people were bringing children to Jesus (Matthew 19:13) so that he could place his hands upon them and pray? But, his disciples, with all good intentions, scolded them and tried to push them away as an interruption. Jesus stopped for the interruptions, the unplanned and unscheduled moments. God can give to any of us, all

of us, opportunities for acts of compassion at any moment.

In the Sanctuary

March 16, 2014

Second Sunday in Lent

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Nursery in Room 11

3-5 Year Old Class in the Kitchen

Grades 1-8 Rotation Workshops

March 23, 2014

Third Sunday in Lent

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

Nursery in Room 11

3-5 Year Old Class in Room 14

Grades 1-8 Rotation Workshops

A late colleague, Fr. Joseph Wilson, Pastor of St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, North Billerica, MA, always felt that every request and interruption might be Jesus, himself, paying a visit. No matter who came to his door, he looked at that person as if it were his very Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and treated that person accordingly. The call could have come in the middle of the night, from the other side of the world, and Fr. Wilson would listen and respond as if it were God speaking directly to him.

Left to me, I am more discriminating in my responses, as I feel God wants me to be. And yet, God responds to me with overflowing abundance.

This is the choice that the Lord desires for me and for you, I believe. It is found in Matthew 7:12, *"Treat other people exactly as you would like to be treated by them—this is the essence of all true religion."* This is a call to show mercy to everyone, to love and forgive without limit.

Many years ago, on a Tuesday, I received a phone call from a friend. He simply said, "I need a friend." I canceled everything in my datebook that day and went to meet him. As I sat and listened to him, I did not like the choices he was making. And yet, I loved this friend. And so, I listened, I helped, and welcomed him into my home when he did not have a place to stay.

Many strangers welcomed me into their homes when I bicycled across the country in 1997. They treated me the way they would have wanted to be treated, the way Jesus would want. Their choices were Lenten choices!

Lent calls us to pray. Pray that God will help us open all of the doors in our lives to him. Pray for and with others. We don't need special words, just words of the heart and soul to pray with and for someone. It can be in person, over the phone, via text and/or email, in quiet. In prayer, always leave time for listening to God's response. I ask you, choose to pray. Pray for peace in the world. Pray for a friend's surgery to be successful. Pray that a chronic illness will be healed. Dare to pray for the impossible.

May we, together, make Lenten choices, choices that give God full access to our thoughts, our schedules, our sleeping and waking, our work, our wealth, our home, and our family. Remember how God has come to you in your life, and reflect upon how you can do the same for God.

I pray that, like Fr. Joseph Wilson, we choose to see Jesus in every encounter.

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. The nursery is open at 9:45 am.

3-5 year old class

Children ages 3 to 5 are invited to join us each Sunday for a class just for this age group.

On Sunday, March 16, the class will be baking muffins which they will sell after worship to raise funds for Heifer. Please plan to bring your child directly to the kitchen at 10 am.

City Reach Report

Eight members of the High School Youth Group participated in Ecclesia Ministries City Reach Program on March 7/8. The group traveled into Boston where we heard firsthand the stories of people who are or have experienced homelessness. We took a walking tour with our guide Leigh, who showed us where he used to sleep at night and answered our many questions. We participated in an outdoor worship service on Boston Common and then slept overnight on the church pews at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The next day we got ready to welcome more than 170 homeless men and women to City Reach. Each guest was welcomed at the door and received a pair of new socks. They were able to pick up a bag lunch, have some refreshments and pick up clothing, underwear, toiletries, and blankets, sleeping bags or back packs if they were available. We are very grateful for the 160 pairs of socks donated by our congregation.

We ended the event with a time of reflection. Each group sent a volunteer to help write a prayer together. We would like to share it with you.

"Dear God, Thank you for showing us that one person can make a difference. We are grateful for this opportunity to help people. Help us to lend a hand, heart, or a ham sandwich to all those in need. Being given the chance to spread hope is one of the most rewarding gifts you can give us. We appreciate this powerful and eye-opening experience. Help us to always remain hopeful and remember to smile.

Love,
Your Children



Uniting Generations through Love

You should have received your stewardship packet. We will be collecting pledge cards on April 6 during the service. Please bring yours filled out to the service. Our annual Stewardship Lunch will be served immediately after the service and all are cordially invited.

If you will not be at church on April 6th, please send in your pledge card.

Thank you to all who helped with the Stewardship Packets and the March 9th service: Katherine Decker, Jill DiGiorgio, Mary McCarthy, Annmarie Pendola, Joan Press, Becca Sievers, Mia Sievers, John Sievers, Cindy Trayers, and Abbie Weaver.

Carrie Pericola, for Stewardship Min.

Because of You

I was pleased to bring all our donations down to the Lynn Shelter and My Brother's Table last week. Both places were thrilled to receive all your generous donations. Because of you, 1,400 cups of coffee will be provided to spread warmth to people. Below is what was collected for each agency:

My Brother's Table

12 pounds of coffee
23 pounds of sugar
1,700 packets of sugar substitute
2 big mustards
2 peanut butters
2 large grape jelly
8 cans of tuna

Lynn Shelter Association

3 blankets
Nice twin comforter
New flannel comforter and sham set
2 pairs of sheets with extra pillow cases
7 face cloths
8 hand towels
18 bath towels
Travel size toiletries

Thank you all very much for helping out these two deserving organizations. They both do so much to help others with great care and to provide help in a dignified way.

Blessings, Donna Marino

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to the Seelig family upon the recent death of Bill's father, William C. Seelig of Mahopac, NY.

We extend our prayers to Eda Kramer and her family upon the recent death of her sister, Elsa DeSanctis of East Boston.

Our love and sympathy are with Roger Lummus and his family upon the death of his wife, Gloria.

Weight Watchers

We are trying to put together another Weight Watcher session this Spring. Last year we had a very successful group of church members, Tower Day teachers and their friends and family. One evening a week we will meet at the church for a weigh-in and a meeting.

If you have any interest in joining our group, please contact Laurel Caputo petcp@aol.com 781-245-3874 or Denise Weaver dweav57@verizon.net 781-334-3360.

Confirmation

Sunday, March 16 is the date set aside to visit a church of a different denomination with your mentor and/or family. Be sure to fill out a worship sheet to be handed in to Mrs. Martin.

On Sunday, March 23, the class will meet downstairs at 9:00 am. After class, you will go to the kitchen to make muffins to sell after church to benefit Heifer.

Youth Group News

Both youth groups will be meeting on Sunday, March 16 in the church kitchen from 6-7:30 pm.

On Sunday, March 23, we will be heading to Laser Quest. Youth should be dropped off at Laser Quest at 6 pm. The cost for 3 games is \$20.00. Please RSVP to Barbara Langill in the church office at 781 334 3050 or e-mail christianed@centre-church.org.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Lights Out beginning March 14: Steven Richard

Lights Out beginning March 21: Al Johnson

Centre Congregational Church
Trivia and Silent Auction 2014

Many Thanks to our BUSINESS DONORS. Please patronize these establishments and thank them for their generosity.

Bertucci's - 15 Newbury Street [Route 1 North], Peabody
Christine's Café and Confections - 618 Salem Street, Lynnfield
Compliments Resale Boutique - 132 Boston Street, Salem,
Davio's Northern Italian Restaurant - Market Street, Lynnfield
DeSantis Painting - 4 Fernway, Lynnfield
Edible Arrangements of Peabody - Goodwin's Circle, Peabody
The Fat Cactus - 215 Broadway [Route 1 North], Lynnfield
Five Guys Burgers and Fries of Peabody - 227 Andover Street, Peabody
Glitterati Prom & Pageant Superstore - 30 Maple Street [Route 35], Danvers
The Hampton Inn of Peabody - 59 Newbury Street [Route One North], Peabody
Kappy's of Peabody - 175 Andover Street, Peabody
King's Bowl Lynnfield at Market Street - 510 Market Street, Lynnfield
The Kowloon Restaurant - 948 Broadway [Route 1 North], Saugus
Latitude Sports Clubs of Peabody - 194 Newbury Street, Peabody
The Maine Diner - 2265 Post Road [Route 1 North], Wells, Maine
Middleton Golf Course - Route 114 in Middleton
Nails Plus, Wakefield - 86B Albion Street, Wakefield
New Brother's Restaurant & Deli - 31 Maple Street, Danvers
Petrillo's Restaurant - 6 Foster Street, Peabody
Polcari's Restaurant - 92 Broadway [Route One North] Saugus
Prince Pizzeria and Giggles Comedy Club - 517 Broadway (Route 1 South), Saugus
Quannapowitt Players, Inc. - 55 Hopkins Street, Reading
Red's Kitchen + Tavern - 131 Newbury Street (Route 1), Peabody
Santarpio's Pizza of Peabody - 71 Newbury Street [Route 1 North], Peabody
Simplicity Consignment Boutique - 58 Maple Street, Danvers
Stowe Mountain Lodge - 7412 Mountain Road in Stowe, Vermont
Su Chang's Restaurant - 373 Lowell Street, Peabody
Tasty Foods of Peabody - 49A Lowell Street, Peabody
Whole Foods at Market Street - 100 Market Street, Lynnfield

Our Opportunities

Sun. March 16	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 6:00 pm	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Nursery & 3-5 Yr. Old Class Rotation Sensation Youth Group - Basement
Mon. Mar 17	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. Mar 19	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thur. Mar 20	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 21	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. Mar 23	9:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 6-8 pm	Confirmation Class – Todd Hall Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery & 3/5 Yr Old Class Rotation Sensation Youth to Laser Quest
Mon. Mar 24	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 - Todd Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Wed. Mar 26	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg - Fireside
Thurs. Mar 27	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 28	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Al Farnsworth at Salem Hospital; Jean Card at Rosewood Nursing and Rehab Center, 22 Johnson St., W. Peabody, 01960; Marion Barnes, Helen Butcher, Marge Cole, Ginny Davis, Marion Edkins, Rose Giunta, Parker Holloway, and Ray and Arliene Thorn.

We remember in our prayers William Lafferty and Dan Neary who are serving in Afghanistan.

The Church Office is Open 9-3 Mon-Fri

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of March 24
