

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

April 9, 2014

Where is God in Tragedy?

In recent weeks we have had some terrible tragedies. On Wednesday, March 26th, Firefighters Lt. Edward J. Walsh, age 43, Boston Engine Company 33 and Michael R. Kennedy, age 33, Boston Ladder Company 15, rushed into the basement of a burning building at 298 Beacon Street, Boston, MA, losing their lives in an effort to save the lives of others.

On Tuesday, April 1st, there was the Line of Duty Death of Plymouth Police Officer Gregg Maloney, who died when his motorcycle crashed.

On Wednesday, April 2nd, there was the tragedy of the shootings at Fort Hood Military Base, near Killeen, Texas in which four people were killed: Sgt. First Class Daniel M. Ferguson, Staff Sgt. Carlos A. Lazaney-Rodriguez and Sgt. Timothy W. Owens, along with the soldier who was accused of killing them and wounding 16 other soldiers before taking his own life, Specialist Ivan A. Lopez.

At some time in our lives we are all touched by some kind of tragedy. In these times it is not unusual for us to ask, "Where is God? Why would a good God allow such tragedies?"

As we prepare to gather for this coming Palm Sunday, we are aware of how Jesus was also the victim of a tragedy. Jesus didn't just die. He was executed by the authorities, by some of the very people who should have known better than to be threatened by someone who was going around healing people, forgiving people, and loving people. He was executed by people who realized their own sin in light of what Jesus was doing and they just

couldn't bring themselves to face their own hypocrisy. So, they executed the truth teller, Jesus.

So, where is God when we experience our own tragedies? Even Jesus cried out, while on the cross, "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" But note: he still calls God "my God." Just as Jesus cried on the occasion of his friend, Lazarus' death, so, too, does God feel the pain of our own suffering and tragedies.

In the Sanctuary



Palm Sunday - April 13, 2014

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship
Choir Cantata -
The Power of the Cross
Nursery in Room 11
3-5 Year Old Class in Room 14
Grades 1-8 in Church

Maundy Thursday - April 17, 2014

7:30 P.M. Service of Tenebrae
with Holy Communion

Easter - April 20, 2014

5:30 A.M. Sunrise Service
At Newhall Park



10:00 A.M. Morning Worship
Nursery (up to age 5) in Room 11.

God does not manipulate our lives and the lives of others. God is with us when we gather for worship, for prayer, and for service. And, we believe, God is with us in our human suffering, betrayal, disappointment, and trouble. God has walked all of the tragedies that we face many times before.

It was not God's will that the Firefighters, Police officer, and the soldiers, remembered above, died. It was not God's will that their families were left without them. God is with us in every tragedy, in every darkness, in all of our pain and suffering. Even through the valley of the shadow of death, God is there, with us. God is dead set against all of the tragedies that take lives before their fulfillment.

As William Sloane Coffin said after his own son, Alex, died when his car plummeted into Boston Harbor, "God's heart was the first to break."

Following the ministry of Jesus, we see him in the places where people are hurting, forgotten, suffering, and pushed aside. We see Jesus where the least of these live and suffer. He brings truth, love, forgiveness, compassion, and healing. He does not leave us alone. It is in these places where I find the greatest compassion, the greatest empathy, and the greatest ties that bind us together in the love of God.

I live my faith by these powerful words spoken by God through the voice of the prophet Isaiah (41:10):

*"So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

When I have been through tragic times in my life, God has been there, with me, through family, friends, and strangers. God has reassured me that lost loved ones and friends will continue to be in his care, and that he will continue to give to those of us left behind life, fulfillment, joy, hope, and lives worth living.

As we walk toward and through Palm Sunday, the Passion, the betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus, let us remember how God was there then, to continue life beyond tragedy and death, how God has been with us in the past, and how God will, indeed, be with us now and in the future.

The love of God endures. It is stronger than our tragedies, and stronger than death. Where there is tragedy, there is God!

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Easter Flowers

If you would like to order a lily, tulip or kalanchoe plant to be part of our display on Easter Sunday, please call the church office by 10 a.m. on Friday, April 11. (781-334-3050). Plants are \$7.50 each and may be either taken home after the Easter service or donated to be delivered to shut-ins and those recently bereaved.



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 a.m.

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. There is time for free play, a Bible Story and a craft and/or activity to help reinforce the story.

There will be no class scheduled on Easter Sunday, April 20. Children may attend the Easter worship service with their families or go to the nursery in Room 11 for playtime.

Rotation Sensation

Palm Sunday, April 13 - Children in grades 1-8 are invited to attend worship. There will be a musical telling of the Easter Story by the choir.

Easter Sunday, April 20 - No Rotations, all in worship

Youth Group News

Sunday, April 13: Both youth groups will be meeting in the kitchen from 6-7:30 pm

No youth groups on Sunday, April 20 Happy Easter.

Confirmation

On Sunday, April 13, there will be a 9 a.m. meeting with Mrs. Martin downstairs in the kitchen. The written portion of the confirmation project is to be handed in. You will also need to have a plan for the creative portion of your final project and get approval from Mrs. Martin.

News From Around the Parish

Congratulations to Lt. Michael Bruce and Vallerie Rose. They were recently married in San Diego, CA where Michael is stationed at the Marine base at Camp Pendleton.

We extend our love and sympathy to Clayton Conn and his family upon the death of his wife, Betty on March 29. Her Memorial Service was held at Centre Church on April 2.

Maundy Thursday Service **Thursday, April 17 – 7:30 p.m.**

The Maundy Thursday worship service is one of the most meaningful Christian services of the church year. In this Communion service, we remember the Last Supper as Jesus shared it with his disciples. We follow the ceremony of Tenebrae, by gradually extinguishing candles while reading Bible passages depicting the events which led to Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. Eventually we hear the story in music, as we remain in total darkness, before leaving in silence. This service highlights the emotional journey of Holy Week and paves the way for the joy of Easter.

Deacons Easter Breakfast- April 20

This will be our last breakfast of the season! Join us after the sunrise service or from 8:30 – 9:30 for scrambled eggs; crispy bacon; blueberry, chocolate chip, banana or plain pancakes and fresh fruit salad. Juice, coffee and tea round out the menu. Suggested donation is \$10.00 per person or \$25.00 per family. The proceeds go to the Organ Maintenance Fund. After you open your Easter Basket, come on down to Richards Hall and join us for Easter breakfast!

- The Diaconate

Paint Party at Border Café – May 6

From 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6 Centre Church will host a fundraising Paint Party. A local artist will facilitate a painting class and each participant will come away with their own masterpiece. Cost is \$45 per person. (\$20 goes to the church) Sign up in the narthex after church or call Carrie Pericola (781-231-0954)

Thanks for your Continued Generosity!



Pledge cards are being collected to fund our fiscal year which begins on June 30, 2014. If you have not yet turned yours in, please mail it to the church or put it in the offering plate on Sunday. Thank you!!

Thank you to our generous donor who helped us reach our pledge goal of \$90,000 for the Raise the Roof Campaign.



Please continue to send in any amount that you pledged toward this project. Work should be underway this summer.

A huge thank you to the amazing Stewardship Committee and Volunteers for helping with this year's pledge drive. The committee has Katherine Decker, Jill DiGiorgio, Mary McCarthy, Annmarie Pendola, and John Sievers. The volunteers are Scott DeSantis, Mike Timmons and Cindy Trayers. Thank you all for your hard work!!
- Carrie Pericola. Chair

Saturday, May 17 Flea Market **Reserve Your Table Now!**

Be part of Lynnfield's "Town Day" on May 17 as Centre Church hosts a Flea Market on the lawn. It's a great way to pass on un-needed treasures! Get your space now for only \$30 if you bring your own table, or \$40 if you rent a table from us. You may download a table reservation form from our website, www.centre-church.org or call the church office at 781-334-3050 and one will be mailed to you.

Dotty Whitter, Chair - 781-635-6225


Save the Date!

Sally MacDonald will be stepping down as Director of Tower Day School at the end of the school year. Join us as we honor her at a reception following church on Sunday, May 18.

We Appreciate Our Volunteers

Lights Out beginning April 11: Steve Furey
Lights Out beginning April 18: Phil Johnson

Our Opportunities

Sun. April 13 Palm Sunday	9:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 6:00 pm	Confirmation – Todd Hall Morning Worship – Sanctuary Nursery & 3-5 Yr. Old Class Grades 1-8 in Church Youth Groups - Basement
Mon. April 14	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Wed. April 16	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – Library
Thur. April 17 Maundy Thursday	7:30 pm 8:30 pm	Service of Tenebrae & Communion in the Sanctuary Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. April 18 Good Friday	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. April 20 Easter 	5:30 am 8:30-9:30am 10:00 am 10:00 am	Sunrise Service – Newhall Park Deacons Breakfast – Richards Hall Easter Worship - Sanctuary Nursery up to age 5
Mon. April 21	----- 7:30 pm	Office Closed – Patriots Day Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Tues April 22	12:30 pm 7:00 pm	Get-Together Wheel - Fireside Council– Pastor’s Office
Wed. April 23	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg – Fireside
Fri. Apr 25	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Al Farnsworth and Jean Card at Rosewood; Barkey Gulezian, Marion Barnes, Helen Butcher, Marge Cole, Ginny Davis, Marion Edkins, Rose Giunta, Parker Holloway, and Arlene Thorn. We remember in our prayers William Lafferty and Dan Neary who are serving in Afghanistan.

Church Office Hours April 14-18 – 9am-3pm
April 21 – Closed. April 22-25 - 9am – Noon

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of April 21
