

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Estelle Margarones, Interim Pastor, RevEstelle@centre-church.org

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Barbara Langill, Interim Director of Faith Formation

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

FEBRUARY 2017

Dear friends,

You may be familiar with the following piece that's been attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. The actual author may be Bessie Stanley. Whoever wrote it shared some very wise words.

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better,

whether by a healthy child, a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

Rarely do we sit down to contemplate the mystery of life...or our sense of "success" in life. We're too busy shuttling the kids to events or going to doctor's appointments. You may even feel like a hamster on a wheel. Yet, life is a wonderful mystery—and it's a gift. When we've had some kind of a close call or we've had a recent loss, that's when we allow ourselves the time for self-reflection.

I invite you to take 5 minutes now to start that introspective journey. Are you who and how and where you want to be? Are you kind and helpful and gracious? Or can you see parts of yourself that are angry and bitter? If you were to take a

'Facebook-style' survey and I asked you what your biggest accomplishment is, what would you say? Perhaps it's a child, grandchild, degree, home, car...or perhaps it's a general sense of ease and comfort with who and where and how you are. I suspect that it's more about your connections than your things.

Here's a powerful statement for you to ponder over the next few minutes: God loves you. Simple, but true. And with that basis, you can become whoever you want to become. Your past does not define you. Your present does not limit you.

When you are in relationship with God, you can overcome anything; heal from anything; trust again; move forward; and you can make a difference. After all, Jesus gave us two commandments: love God and love your neighbor. Isn't that what we're here to do? Be loving.

Here's your holy challenge....In what ways can you put forth love into the world? How can you put your faith into action? In the last few days, I've had occasion to witness kindness in a corporate setting and overhear a patient talking to a crying teenager in a waiting room. I've also learned of a woman who is concerned about the serious decline of honeybees so she plans to plant a garden to attract bees. What will you do?

Blessings,

Rev. Estelle Margarones

In the Sanctuary

Sunday, February 5, 2017
10:00 a.m. Holy Communion
Sermon by the Rev. Estelle Margarones

Sunday, February 12, 19 & 26 2017
10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Sermon by the Rev. Estelle Margarones

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. Pagers are available for all parents.

PreK – 2nd Grade

Jan. 29 – Godly Play in Todd Hall
Feb. 5 – Faith Formation in the Library
(return for Communion)
Feb. 12 – Godly Play in Todd Hall
Feb. 19 – Worship with families
Feb. 26 – Godly Play in Todd Hall

3rd – 5th Grade

Jan. 29 – Brick by Brick – Room 22
Feb. 5 – Faith Formation in the Library
(return for Communion)
Feb. 12 – Brick by Brick – Room 22
Feb. 19 – Worship with families
Feb. 26 – Brick by Brick – Room 22

News From Around the Parish

Our congratulations to Marge Cole who will celebrate her 105th birthday on January 26.

We extend our love and sympathy to Reilly and Jenny Waugh Bayer upon the death of Reilly's father, Gary in Israel in early January.

We extend our prayers to the Popoloski family upon the death of Joanne's bother-in-law, Martin on January 10.

Our love and sympathy are with Ruth Coffill upon the death of her husband, Bill, on January 12.

Our sympathy to Jean Claflin and her family upon the death of Jean's mother, Dorothy Saunders on Jan. 17.

Special Offerings

Fill the Ark: Thank you to everyone who participated in Fill the Ark. We counted up all the coins and have collected \$350.00 for Heifer International. If you still have a bank at home, it is not too late, bring it into church and it will be added to the total.

Souper Bowl of Caring Join us on Super Bowl Sunday, February 5 for another special offering. Please join young people around the country as they demonstrate God's love by loving their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others. Drop \$1 (or more) in the soup pot as you leave worship on February 5. This year, our donations will be going to Haven from Hunger.



Saturday February 4, 2017 @ 6:30 PM
\$15 each

Hors d'oeuvres, Sandwiches,
Desserts, Beverages and Coffee

Trivia brought to you by Jason Cotting

Prizes!!!

Team limit 6 people – get your team together
Contact Chuck Cotting @ 781-593-3120

Silent Auction on Trivia Night

Things can get pretty heated during the bidding that night! Wouldn't it be nice to know in advance what some of the items are to bid on? Now there's a way to do that! Go to centre-church.org/wordpress1 and click on "Trivia Night Auction". From there you can view auction items, read detailed descriptions, and even place bids! You will be notified if you have the winning bids after the event on February 4th and can collect your prizes. Good luck!

Relax with Get Together Wheel

We will be having one of our most popular programs in February. It is chair yoga led by our own Jo Farnsworth. Jo's voice will lead you through the simple steps and it is not strenuous on your body. Please join us on Tuesday, February 28 at 1 pm in the Fireside Room. All women of the church are welcome so please stop by and join us.

Any questions please give me a call.

Blessings, Donna Marino 781 581-2022

Youth Group

Mission of Deeds: Six members of the ecumenical youth group Giv2 spent Saturday morning, Jan. 14th at the Mission of Deeds in Reading. Our time was spent organizing donations and helping with client pickups by participating in interviews and loading moving vans.

THANK YOU to everyone who donated household items for us to take along with us that day. For more information, see <http://www.missionofdeeds.org>

Sunday, January 29 - Empty Bowl Painting:

Youth from Giv2 will be meeting at St. Paul's Episcopal Church from 4-6 pm to hand paint bowls for the Empty Bowl Project, an international grassroots effort to raise money and awareness in the fight to end hunger.

How Does it Work? Artists from different community groups (Churches, Boys and Girls Clubs, Rotary Clubs, etc.) host painting events where unfinished white ceramic bowls are decoratively hand painted. Once glazed, the bowls will be fired in kilns and put on display at the Empty Bowls event. Admission (\$15 in advance or \$18 at the door) buys you the bowl of your choice. Fill it with fresh soup and bread. Then join neighbors and friends around the table. Take home your bowl as a reminder of the hungry in the community.

Snow Tubing Sunday, February 26: The middle school and high school youth will head to Nashoba Valley for an evening of snow tubing. We will plan to meet at the church at 5pm and will return at 9pm.



Looking Ahead into March

Ministry Teams Celebration

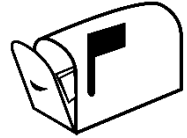
You're invited to our All-Church Potluck Supper on Saturday, March 4th at 4:00 PM. Please join us in celebrating our various church ministries. Bring your favorite dish and enjoy some heavenly food and fellowship. Signup sheets will be available in the Narthex starting in February.

Pizza Fundraiser – March 13: Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza in Reading will donate 20% of all food and beverages eaten in or taken out on Monday, March 13 – All Day!

Join us at Anthony's and tell all of your friends!

From the Mailbox

Dear Centre Church Friends,
First of all, I wish each and every one a healthy and happy new year! Let's hope the world can get straightened out a bit.



I am grateful for all your thoughts and cards, and the beautiful poinsettia. How I miss Centre Church and all its wonderful activities. We have frequent visits/programs from local clergy, but it just isn't the same!

Love to you all, Ginny Daniels

Thanks so much to Gage and Dotty Whittier for bringing me a beautiful Poinsettia the week before Christmas. Their visit was very welcome and much appreciated! Centre Church has made Christmas brighter for those at church and in the town.

Barbara Ericson

Engraved Brick Patio

Many people have asked if there is still an opportunity to purchase an engraved brick for the Engraved Brick Patio at the rear of the church. I am taking orders now through May 15th.

The small bricks are \$50 and the large bricks are \$100. The small bricks hold up to 3 lines of 20 characters each (including spaces and punctuation). The large bricks hold up to 6 lines.

Checks should be made payable to Centre Congregational Church and can be mailed to the church office.

This is a great way to memorialize someone you know or a family member. Or you can use the brick to thank someone special or record an important date. You may have a favorite Bible verse or inspirational quote. Or you may just want to put your name on the brick. Anything works!

If you have any questions you can get in touch with me at chuck@thecottings.com or 781-593-3120.

Thanks, Chuck Cotting

City Reach Overnight, February 10-11

Collected until February 10



Youth in grades 7- 12 will be heading into Boston to participate in City Reach, a program offered through Ecclesia Ministries. This is an opportunity for youth to learn about homelessness in Boston and to offer their assistance distributing food and clothing to those in need. We will meet with other Giv2 youth at Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Lynnfield for dinner together and to organize donations. We will be holding a collection from January 29-February 10 for the following items:

- ◆ *All kinds of carrying cases such as backpacks, tote bags, fanny packs, small suitcases with wheels (used and in good condition)*
- ◆ *Travel-size toiletries such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, Chapstick, toothpaste, and shaving cream in small sizes, as well as tooth brushes and disposable razors, and tampons (no aftershave or mouthwash containing alcohol).*
- ◆ *New white socks (there can never be too many of these)*
- ◆ *New underwear (80% should be underwear for men)*
- ◆ *Sleeping bags & blankets (clean and in good condition)*
- ◆ *Gently used clothing- Think about what you would wear camping or hiking. Such comfortable, rugged clothing is just what is needed. There are about 4 times the number of male guests as female guests, so about 80% of our donations should be for men or unisex. Large sizes (XL, XXL, and XXXL) are very much in demand. Hooded sweatshirts and sweat pants are much appreciated.*

Collected through March 10



January 23, 2017

A Note from Rev. Estelle

Dear friends,

It has been my great joy to be your Interim Pastor for the last year. My contract is up at the end of January and, though I will be with you for several weeks beyond that, I will not be renewing the contract. I have accepted a settled ministry position with First Trinitarian Congregational Church in Scituate.

We have accomplished so much as a congregation in this transitional time and I am very, very proud of all you've done. Your openness to reflection and your willingness to try new things show me that the Spirit is at work here at Centre Congregational Church!

I hope you feel as good about our time together as I do and I pray that you will stay open to see where God is leading. I am very grateful for the way you embraced me as your Interim Pastor and I want you to know that this leave-taking does not come without some heartache for me because I have come to care so deeply for you.

Over the last few months, many people have asked me, "Why can't you stay?" and the short reason is that the UCC governance structure doesn't allow that. The longer answer is that there are many reasons that Interim Pastors are automatically ineligible to apply for the Settled position. When there is an open Search and Call process for a settled pastorate, a congregation may receive 50+ ministerial profiles. The process for hiring an Interim Pastor is very different. The church works with the Associate Conference Minister to obtain the names and profiles of a select few candidates in search that the ACM thinks would be a good fit for the congregation. Thus, the pool of candidates is significantly smaller than for a settled position. The congregation has gotten to know the Interim so it could either give the Interim an unfair advantage over other candidates or, if members didn't appreciate something about the Interim, it could lead to resistance right from the beginning of the process. If the Interim were to be a candidate and then isn't chosen, it could lead to a "lame duck" time at the end of the Interim's pastorate with the church.

I hope you will be happy for me and I want you to know that I will continue to carry you in my heart.

Rev. Estelle Margarones, Interim Pastor

A Note from Bruce Weaver

Dear friends,

We're grateful for the time Rev. Estelle has spent with us and we wish her well in her settled situation. I expect you have some questions about what her departure means for Centre Congregational Church. In terms of what's next, we'll be hiring a Bridge Pastor to assume the day to day pastoral responsibilities. Parish Council is working with the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ and expects to be conducting interviews soon. We don't anticipate any changes to the way the worship service is structured or to any other ways the church works. The Bridge Pastor will come in and maintain the status quo until a Settled Pastor is hired. The Search Team is working on the Church Profile and we plan to post the profile in the next month or so. Oftentimes, once a Church Profile is posted, the process of calling a Settled Pastor takes between three and six months.

Bruce Weaver, Moderator

Our Opportunities

Wed. Feb. 1	8:30 am	Bread & Roses – Kitchen
Thurs. Feb. 2	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Feb. 3	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. Feb. 4	6:30 pm	Trivia/Silent Auction – Todd Hall
Sun. Feb. 5	10:00 am	Holy Communion - Sanctuary Nursery & Faith Formation
	11:15 am	Deacons Meeting – Pastor’s Office
Wed. Feb. 8	7:00 pm	Council – Pastor’s Office
Thurs. Feb. 9	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Feb. 10	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. Feb. 12	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery & Faith Formation
Tues. Feb. 14	4:00 pm	Care Team – Pastor’s Office
Thurs. Feb. 16	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Feb. 17	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2nd Floor Office
Sun, Feb. 19	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery (up to age 5) Older Children in Church
Mon. Feb. 20	-----	Church Office Closed
Fri. Feb. 24	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2nd Floor Office
Sun. Feb. 26	10:00 am	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Nursery & Faith Formation
	4:45 pm	Youth Go Snow Tubing

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jim Marshall’s wife, Sheila who has lung cancer; with Bo Martin’s mother, Jan, who is in hospice care, and with Barbara Becker’s grandson, Michael Bruce who is serving in Iraq.

Church Office Hours are 9-3 Monday – Friday
except Feb. 21-24 when they will be 9-12.
The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of March 1.

In addition to our scheduled church activities, Centre Church hosts Boy Scout Troop #48, Cub Pack #48, Girl Scouts, Alanon, Alateen, Women’s AA, BKP Book Packing Group, Essex Society of Genealogists, and the New England Pastoral Institute Counseling Services. Please feel free to contact the church office if you would like more information about any of these activities or groups.
