

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Jamie R. Howard, Bridge Interim Pastor, PastorJamie@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

AUGUST 2017

Dear Friends,

This is my penultimate "View from the Bridge," and since several people have commented on poems I have offered in worship or in Tower Notes, I thought I would include two. In the spirit of the two preacher's challenges to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable," here they are.

"Rest in peace, for the mistake will not be repeated."

Hiroshima cenotaph.

Will we not? Children of the apple,

We who fire our forests

by carelessness or malice,

Who fear the stranger if she's "different"

Or if his pain is contagious,

Who are better at bandaids

than preventive measures

For society's ills...

Will we not repeat the mistake

And fire our world

Out of ferocious fear?

Then no bandaid will work.

In this season of the Spirit,

pray for us, O God.

Pray with us and within us,

That we may work for peace

That we all may rest — in peace.

jrh 1988

Inspired by Julian of Norwich:

"The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God knowing that that goodness can reach right down to our lowest depths of need."

"And so I saw fully that before ever God made us, he loved us.

And this love was never quenched nor ever shall be.

And in this love he has made all things profitable to us,

and in this love our life is everlasting. In our making we had beginning, but the love in which he made us was in him from without beginning, in which love we have our beginning."

After Reading Julian...

God of life, God of all our life,

God of love, God of stunning, infinite love,

God of grace, God of most amazing grace,

You have held me from the beginning

And journeyed with me all the way

Even before I knew You

You knew me and loved me.

And in all that I have been and done,

You know me and love me still.

Now my way is uncertain,

Now I question love,

Now I fret over things done, undone.

Help me place my life in Your embrace.

Help me settle into the arms of Your love.

Help me accept the healing of Your grace.

And I will be forever thankful
in the peace that only you can give.

jrh 2003

A View from the Bridge

For several years I have subscribed to the email offering from the United Church of Christ called "Daily Devotional." A number of the writers are people of whom I have heard through the denomination; a few are people I know personally. The variety of offerings provides me with challenge or comfort or teaching or inspiration; rarely does a submission leave me lukewarm or cold. I have gathered into email folders some selections from my very favorite writers and occasionally return to them.

If you have often faltered in a daily practice, the UCC Stillspeaking Daily Devotional can provide you with an avenue to a regular reflective moment, and perhaps help lead you into deeper prayer. To find it and subscribe, go to ucc.org and click on "Feed Your Spirit," then on "Daily Devotional."

Yours in Christ, Pastor Jamie

In the Chapel - 10:00 a.m.

August 6 "A Matter of Life and Death"
Esther 7:1-6,9-10; 9:20-22 James 5:13-20
We Will Celebrate Communion.

August 13 "No Easy Answers"
Psalm 23 Romans 12:6-15

August 20 "With All Your Heart" Part 1
Jeremiah 29:10-14 Luke 15:11-24

August 27 "With All Your Heart" Part 2
Jeremiah 29:10-14 Luke 15: 25-32
Pastor Jamie's Last Sunday with Us.

Sunday Morning with the Children

Childcare will be available during our Sunday worship service for infants and children. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time and play.

Each Sunday during summer worship, children ages 4 and up are invited to join us in the Library for Bible stories that show examples of God's compassion using a new curriculum; An Illustrated Compassion, Learning to Love Like God. We hope your family will join in the faith-filled fun.

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to the family and friends of Bob Shorey who died on June 30. His memorial service was held here on July 8.

Our love and sympathy go out to Meg Gulezian and her family upon the death of her husband, Barkey on July 20. His memorial service was held at Centre Church on July 29.

I'm Retiring. Again. No, Seriously

Two years ago, my plan was to retire from my position as Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry. Apparently, God had other plans, and it has been a blessing to be with the children and youth at Centre Church for just a bit longer. It is with a mixture of joy and sadness, that at the end of August, I really will retire! As I am cleaning and organizing my office in preparation for the new Director of Faith Formation, I have come across so many reminders of the wonderful memories of my time here - photos and files of Christmas pageants over the years, Easter Fun Day, the great Carrot Cake Bake Off, Flamingo Flocking, the "Almost" Sunrise Easter Service, the Write On Secret Pen Pal program, and so many, many more.

Especially dear to me are the unforgettable mission trips over the years - beginning with North Carolina and building homes with Habitat for Humanity, New York City with YSOP, New Orleans rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, Joplin after the devastating tornados, learning and serving at Heifer Ranch in Arkansas, and last year working with Project HOME in Maine.

Thank you for the support and trust you have bestowed on me for the past 15 years. I have enjoyed being part of such a dedicated team and working with amazing church staff, Parish Council and Education Ministry. I feel confident that the newly appointed director of Faith Formation, Larainne Wilson, will be a great addition to our Christian Education program.

While I will miss being on the staff at Centre Church, I look forward to attending worship and actually sitting in the pew to enjoy the entire service!

With heartfelt gratitude and love,
Barbara Langill

New Director of Faith Formation Named



Education Ministries is delighted to announce that Larainne Wilson will be joining the Centre Church staff as Director of Faith Formation. She will begin her work with us on August 14th.

Larainne is coming to us from the Burlington United Church of Christ, where she was the Sunday School Teacher and Youth Coordinator as well as a member of the Christian Education Committee. Prior to that, she served as the Director of Religious Education at Christ Church United in Lowell.

She holds a BA in Psychology from Clark University and a Master of Education (School Counseling) from Boston University. She has recently been part of a Mass Conference “Community of Practice” group which brings together church educators to share best practices and provide one another with support and resources. Through that group, she got to know Barbara Langill and feels blessed by her, as we all have!

She and her family live in Georgetown. We are very excited to welcome Larainne to our Centre Church family!

Jill DiGiorgio, for Education Ministries



Christmas in July a Fun Success!

Our Christmas in July Service on July 9 was great fun! Thank you to everyone for their generous donations of toys and pajamas. Cradles to Crayons Foundation was thrilled to receive them!

Bible Study Group

Our group that meets on Friday mornings at the church has decided to take off a few weeks to give our group some time to recuperate from falls and surgeries. I believe this is the first time we have taken any time off since the group was started more than 12 years ago. We hope to start meeting again in September.

As always, we welcome new members to join or just drop in and say hello. Enjoy the rest of the summer and stay healthy.

Blessings, Donna Marino

Youth @ Synod

Barbara Langill and Raden Sorli Hawk joined youth from all over southern New England and boarded a bus for Baltimore in the early hours of June 30. They had gathered at First Church in Windsor the night before to get acquainted and do some prep work for Youth@Synod. This group was part of a collaborative effort of the RI, CT, and MA Conferences.

There were 37 in the group from Southern New England, representing 25% of the registrants for Youth @Synod. Though participants do not serve as voting delegates, these young leaders connect with the wider church and learn about social justice issues. Participants in Youth @ Synod were actively engaged in three resolutions. They attended committee meetings, drafted their own statements, and presented testimony. Several youth participated in worship as both liturgists and dancers.

Highlights ranged from attending workshops on topics such as conflict resolution and mass incarceration, to talking with UCC college reps in the exhibit hall, to enjoying the pool and watching fireworks over the Baltimore Inner Harbor, and hearing uplifting messages from the Rev. Traci Blackmon and the Rev. William Barber.

Above all, youth expressed appreciation for the new friends they had made, both within their conferences and across state lines. As the bus pulled in to the parking lot in Windsor on July 5, a weary but inspired group posed for one more picture, said goodbyes, and promised to keep each other in their prayers.

Haven from Hunger Mondays

We could use your help to make and serve meals at Haven from Hunger in Peabody on Monday, August 28 – late afternoon through early evening. Please check your calendars and sign up by emailing events@centre-church.org or contact Linda Ladd – 781-334-6170 or ladd@neb.com.

Golfing with God

Our weekly golf group will continue through August. We tee off at 7:30 each Thursday morning (weather permitting) at King Rail Golf Course. The fee is \$17 per 9-hole round and pull carts are available for an additional \$3. Please call Randy Russell at 781-799-8397 or email him at randallhrussell@gmail.com, if you can join us!

Our Opportunities

Sun. Aug. 6	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Chapel Nursery – Library/Nursery Summer Sunday School - Library
Thurs. Aug. 10	7:30 am	Golfing with God – King Rail
Sun. Aug. 13	10:00 am	Morning Worship – Chapel Nursery – Library/Nursery Summer Sunday School – Library
Thurs. Aug. 17	7:30 am	Golfing with God – King Rail
Sun. Aug. 20	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Chapel Nursery – Library/Nursery Summer Sunday School – Library
Thurs. Aug. 24	7:30 am	Golfing with God – King Rail
Sun. Aug. 27	10:00 am	Morning Worship - Chapel Nursery – Library/Nursery Summer Sunday School – Library
Mon., Aug 28	3-7 pm	Make and Serve a meal – Haven From Hunger
Thurs., Aug 31	7:30 am	Golfing with God – King Rail

Our thoughts and prayers are with Capt. Michael Bruce USMC, currently deployed in Iraq and with the Pastoral Search Committee as they continue their work.

Church Office Hours – 9 am – 12 pm Mon-Fri

***The next issue of Tower Notes
will be the week of August 28.***
