

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Nancy Rottman, Pastor (pastor@centre-church.org)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

November 20, 2017

The Season of Advent

This year at Centre Church, during our first season of Advent with you, Laraine and I are hoping that we, as a whole church, will find deep and rich experience in the expectant hope, in the waiting, and realize the gifts contained there. This season, in all its fullness, stands in contrast to the hustle and bustle of the secular run up to Christmas that began before the pumpkins were even carved. Each week, as we light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, as we tell the story to the children and hear it from them, as we sing and pray together, we hope that you each will find something new that connects you ever more deeply to Emmanuel, God with us.

As we prepare for the season, let us contemplate what burdens might be weighing us down on the journey and what we might do about them.

YESTERDAY'S PAIN by Ann Weems

Some of us walk into Advent
tethered to our unresolved yesterdays
the pain still stabbing
the hurt still throbbing.

It's not that we don't know better;

It's just that we can't stand up anymore
by ourselves.

On the way to Bethlehem.

will you give us a hand?

Tethered to our unresolved yesterdays. What a lovely way to say we're stuck in our past. I would venture to say that in some ways, big for some of us this year and small for others, we are all tethered to something unresolved from our past. In the midst of these few lines, Ann Weems has revealed several beautiful

truths that will help us find our way forward. First of all, we are not alone. Notice her use of "us" and "we." Second, we are on a journey. Like Mary and Joseph, we are on our way to Bethlehem, TOGETHER! While we can't stand up by ourselves, individually, we can help each other up. Perhaps we aren't quite ready to put our burdens down, leave them by the roadside. But since we're walking together, maybe we can share our burdens and find that in doing so, we feel renewed. And if we do this in community, if we ask together, God will give us a hand called hope that will take us all the way to Bethlehem to find God with us.

In hope,
Pastor Nancy

In The Sanctuary

November 26, 2017 – 10:00 a.m.

Christ the King Sunday

Matthew 25:31-46

Sermon by Rev. Nancy Rottman

Nursery – Ages 0-4

Older Children in Church

December 3, 2017 - 10:00 a.m.

First Sunday of Advent

Lighting the Candle of Hope

Holy Communion

Sermon by Rev. Nancy Rottman

Nursery – Ages 0-4

Older Children – Faith Formation



Faith Formation

Nursery

We will provide child care EVERY Sunday during the service for children ages 0-4.

We need a second nursery person on 12/3, 12/24 and 12/31.

Church School

We are beginning sign-ups for volunteers for Nursery and Church School for January - June of 2018. We have teachers for each class, we just need a second adult -- nothing to prepare, just come and have fun with us after the mini-message until 11:15 a.m. The sheets will be on the table in the Narthex.

Look for more information to come on our "Transition Class" for those who are 4 or turning 4. We are looking to start programming for them in mid-January. This class will combine elements of "Whole People of God" and "Godly Play."

Please welcome Jacklyn Roussin, our new "Brick-by-Brick" Teacher. She will be with us on the weeks Church School has Godly Play/Brick-by-Brick.

Joyful Noise

Practices: After service on Sunday, December 3rd and December 10th

Song Sharing: Sunday, December 17th (Paper Bag Pageant)

Young Families

We will have "Open Play and B-Y-O Picnic Lunch" each Sunday after worship on the playground for families with young children. Fellowship for the parents, fun for the kids!

December Faith Formation Events

12/3 "Sharing the Light of Advent" – Intergenerational making of Advent Wreaths and related crafts.

12/11 Faith Formation Team Meeting 7 p.m.

12/16 Lunch rehearsal for Paper Bag Pageant (assigned parts) - time TBD.

12/17 9:15 a.m. Dress Rehearsal for assigned parts and "Paper Bag Pageant" during Worship



Our Advent and Christmas Schedule

- 11/26 – Greening of the Church
Angel Tree Set up
- 12/2 – Country Store at the Meeting House
Gingerbread House competition in the Narthex
- 12/3 – Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope
10 am Holy Communion
Sharing the Light of Advent – a family event in the Front Foyer
Heifer Marketplace – Narthex
- 12/10 – Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace
10 am Morning Worship
Angel Tree gifts blessed in worship and then delivered to FCC Winchester for sorting for City Mission
- 12/17 – Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy
10 am Advent/Christmas Storytelling Pageant in Worship
6:30 pm Christmas Concert - Sanctuary
- 12/24 - 10:00 am - Lighting the Advent Candle of Love
Waiting in Bethlehem- informal/relaxed worship in the Chapel
- 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Service
- 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols
- 12/31 – 10:00 am Morning Worship
- 1/7 – Epiphany Worship
Holy Communion
All ages activity for children

Heifer Living Market

Our “alternative gift” animal sale will be happening on December 3rd. To help you plan your purchases, members of our Missions Ministry Team will be in the narthex on Sundays with Heifer animal information and order sheets.

It's the gift that keeps on giving!!



Angel Tree

Please peruse our Christmas tree in the narthex, covered with Angels displaying this year's most-needed gift items. Take one or more Angels and return with the

UNWRAPPED gift by December 10th.

Gifts will be blessed in our worship service that day and delivered to City Mission Society for distribution before Christmas. Thank you!

Ma Duke's & Friends

Thank you to everyone who brought in canned goods, paper products or made donations to help support Ma Duke's & Friends Eleventh Annual Thanksgiving Dinner.

Special thanks to Cub Scout Pack 48 for helping with the food drive and to the kids in Faith Formation for their beautiful cards.

Haven From Hunger: meal volunteers are needed on Monday, November 27. Please sign up for that date or any other, on the Missions bulletin board across from the Fireside kitchen or contact Linda Ladd.

Youth Group/Giv2:

Christmas Caroling will take place on the afternoon of Sunday, December 10th at 2 p.m. at the Sunrise of Lynnfield.

Epiphany Party on January 6th, 2018

News From Around the Parish

We rejoice with Christopher and Andrea Paciello upon the baptism of their daughter, Brooklyn Paciello on November 19. Her proud big brother is Kyle.

We extend our love and sympathy to the family and friends of Marjorie Cole who died on November 14. Her Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, December 9 at 12:00 noon in the Chapel.

Come Party With Us

Get Together Wheel will be having their Christmas party on 12/5 at 1 pm in the Fireside Room. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a wrapped gift around \$5. This is always a fun time and looking forward to seeing all of you. This is open to all the ladies of the church so please join us.

Blessings, Donna Marino

Christmas Concert December 17



The Centre Church Choir will present its annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 17th at 6:30 p.m. They will perform a festive selection of Christmas music, organ prelude and postlude. During the concert, the congregation will have an opportunity to join the choirs in singing Christmas hymns. No admission will be charged for the event, but a freewill offering will be taken. The concert will be held in the sanctuary and is open to the public. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

Planning Ahead

We are thinking about a trip to Heifer Farm in March for "Pancakes at the Farm" as an intergeneration/all ages event!

The meal includes pancakes covered in Heifer Farm maple syrup with a side of farm-raised pork sausage, coffee and juice. After breakfast, tour the farm to view the maple sugaring operation, meet the newborn lambs and explore Heifer's Global Village.

Available dates are March 3rd or 10th, 2018; 8 am - 1pm; \$14/adult, \$7/child & free under 2 yrs. We will need reservations, so please email Larainne at lwilson@centre-church if you are interested! We can carpool from the church or meet there.

