

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Nancy Rottman, Pastor

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Laraine Wilson, Director of Faith Formation

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Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

March 19, 2018

Living the Paschal Mystery

It wasn't until adulthood that I immersed myself fully into observing Holy Week. Despite my Roman Catholic upbringing, and many journeys through the Stations of the Cross and participation in the Passion narrative, I hadn't ever allowed myself to go all the way to the cross with Jesus. But in adulthood, worshiping in our churches in Ohio, Virginia, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, I had new encounters with Jesus' *via dolorosa* – his "way of sorrow." In Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship I experienced, through the Word, spoken and sung, through table fellowship that reminded us deeply that it was Jesus' last supper with his friends, through light extinguished to complete darkness and silence, I opened my heart to Jesus' passion and the well of my own grief and sorrow, year after year. And again and again, the shock and surprise of Jesus' resurrection on Easter morning washed over me anew, and I experienced the mystery of new life in Christ with joy and a lingering question: What now?

Then, during my time as a student minister at Hancock Church, a confluence of events led me to explore the Christian spiritual practice of lament and to teach it through a variety of experiences to the Hancock congregation. In my exploration and preparation, I was introduced to *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*, by Ronald Rolheiser. In it, I found a truth that resonated deeply for me. Rolheiser describes a spirituality of the paschal mystery and how it can serve as a framework for us to move through the

process of transformation, of dying and letting go so that we may receive new life and new spirit. He further explains that the paschal cycle is composed of five clear moments, each one part of a whole process, each important in relation to the others for the cycle of transformation to be complete. The first moment is Good Friday, "the loss of life – real death." "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest." (John 12:24) To apply the paschal mystery as a paradigm for transformation in our own lives begins with acknowledging the deaths that we experience during our lives. We experience the death of our youth, the death of our wholeness, the death of our dreams, and so many more.

This year, I invite you to journey through the paschal mystery, from death to resurrection, to 40 days of readjustment, to Ascension, to Pentecost. We'll begin at our Maundy Thursday service, acknowledging the deeply personal deaths we are experiencing as we journey to the cross with Jesus. Then we'll claim our rebirth in the bright light of Easter morning. And as we move into the season of Easter, we'll explore in more detail how we move through this process toward accepting the spirit of new life at Pentecost.

In the hope and promise of the Paschal Mystery,

Pastor Nancy

In the Sanctuary

March 25 , 2018

Palm Sunday

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Nursery
Faith Formation for Children

March 29, 2018

Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm Holy Communion & Tenebrae

April 1, 2018

Easter Sunday

10:00 am Morning Worship
Easter Cantata
Nursery

Missions and Outreach

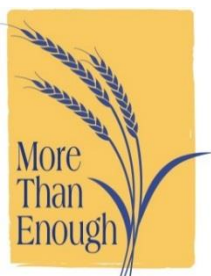
Haven From Hunger: Volunteers are needed to prepare and serve a meal at Haven From Hunger on Monday March 26th. We'll meet at HFH, 71 Wallis Street in Peabody at 3pm and work until 6:30pm. No special culinary skills are necessary. This is a great opportunity for anyone teenage or older. Please see Linda Ladd or email events@centre-church.org for more information.

Open Mosque Day – April 8 : On Sunday, April 8 twenty-one mosques across Massachusetts will open their doors to their communities. Meet and ask questions of your Muslim neighbors, observe a Muslim prayer, enjoy cultural foods, and have fun for the whole family! A group from Centre Church attended this event last year at the Mosque in Lynn. It was very interesting and we made some new friends! Contact Linda Ladd or email events@centre-church.org to arrange carpooling.

KIVA micro loans: We now have a Centre Congregational Church Team on KIVA.org! Outreach Ministries originally set up a Kiva user account for our Youth Group as a learning exercise. Now we've created the church team to invite all church members to be involved individually. Kiva micro loans allow you to lend \$25 at a time to help someone, somewhere in the world, better themselves and their community. Over time, your \$25 will be repaid and you can loan it out again. Just click this link and "Join Team" to find out more:

www.kiva.org/team/centre_congregational_church
So far our team has made three loans to women entrepreneurs in Kenya, Senegal and Tonga. Through Kiva loans, we can share our abundance and empower people around the globe to live healthy, fulfilling lives.

Donation of the Month:



“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.” ~2

Corinthians 9:

Thank you to all those who have submitted pledges! If

you haven't yet returned your pledge, please do so as soon as possible. Budget planning for the next fiscal year (beginning July 1) will begin in a few weeks, and it's important to have accurate income information to develop the budget.

With gratitude,

Debbie Cotting, Stewardship



Centre Church will be holding a Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, November 3, 2018. The church will be renting space to local crafters and we will also have our own bake table, jewelry table and craft table. We are planning on holding monthly craft nights to work on crafts that we will sell at our table. Our first craft night will be Tuesday, March 27 at 7pm. All materials will be provided. Come join the fun and fellowship. Call Barbara Langill at the church office for more information.

Stamp Out Hunger Volunteers: Please mark May 12th on your calendar. This is the day letter carriers will be collecting non-perishable food to benefit local food banks. Volunteers are needed to sort the food brought to Haven From Hunger in Peabody that day. Please sign up for this on the Outreach bulletin board across from the Fireside kitchen.



Need, or have a loved one who could use help meeting the challenges of advancing age? We at North Shore Elder Services have been supporting local area older adults and their families since 1976. We provide services such as home care, budgeting and bill paying, home delivered meals, housing options and more. For more information contact us at 978-750-4540 or visit our website at www.nselder.org

For information about volunteering or current employment opportunities, either call the above number or select "Get Involved" on our web-site home page.

Faith Formation Ministry Team:

Palm Sunday: Joyful Noise will practice at 9:45 and share their song during the children's message.

Easter: The majority of the service will be a cantata. We encourage school-aged children to stay for the service. The nursery will be available for young children (0-4) and we will have an additional staff available at the table in the nursery with Easter related crafts/coloring.

Evacuation Plan: Faith Formation has met with Chuck Cotting to discuss our evacuation plan in the event of a fire or other emergency. We plan to practice this with classes before the end of the church school year. On the day of the practice, parents will be notified in church. We are starting with individual classes and will have a whole group practice/drill in the fall.

Young Families Group: Sarah Crosbie has sent out a survey via Survey Monkey to our Young Families Group asking about activities for the Spring and what times might work best for families. We will use this information to plan our outings! If you didn't get the link, let Laraine or Sarah know!

Heifer: Thank you for your contributions to Heifer. Between the "Muffins for Lent", the "Goat Tube" and the "Heifer Boxes", it looks like we are over \$400 for our donation. Final counts will come from Missions and Outreach.

Volunteers: Nursery and Footprints (Preschool) volunteers are needed in April and May! Please see Laraine or sign up on the sheets on the FFMT table in the Narthex.

CPR/AED: We are looking at dates to offer a CPR/AED training. More information will be coming!

Faith Formation Team: If you are interested in joining the Faith Formation Team in the fall, please let Jill or Laraine know!

Next FFTM Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 10 at 7pm.

Reminder: As part of Centre Church's covenant with the Metropolitan Boston Association (MBA) of the United Church of Christ, we agree to support the MBA in its outreach and administrative activities on behalf of all churches in the Association. This support includes annual dues of **\$20.10 per member** (adults or children who are confirmed and are members of the church). Centre Church pays these dues on behalf of our members, and in our annual budget we count on members "covering" their dues through a separate contribution to the church. Those of you who receive envelope packets would have seen an envelope with an orange border in your most recent envelope packet. If you have not already done so, please return that envelope with a contribution of \$20.10 per church member in your family by April 8. Checks should be payable to Centre Congregational Church. For anyone who does not receive envelopes, please make a contribution to the church to cover your dues, and note "MBA dues" in the memo line so we will know what the contribution is for. Thank you.

Our Opportunities

Sun. March 25 	10:00am	Palm Sunday Worship-Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Faith Formation
Tues. March 27	7pm	Craft Night - Library
Thurs. March 29	1-2pm 7:00 pm	Bible Study-Fireside Room Maundy Thursday Service-Sanctuary
Sun. April 1 	10:00am	Easter Sunday Worship-Sanctuary Centre Church Choir presents: <i>Upon This Rock: The Passion, the Question, the Call,</i> an Easter Cantata Nursery – Library/Nursery
Wed. April 4	8:30am	Bread and Roses- Kitchen
Thurs. April 5	1-2pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study-Fireside Room Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

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 Center.

Please call the church office if you would like more information about any of these groups. (781-334-3050)

Church Office Hours – 9am-3pm Mon-Fri

The next issue of Tower Notes – Week of April 2
