

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

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

April 24, 2018

Ascension: A Spirituality of the Paschal Mystery, Part 3

We've been exploring a Spirituality of the Paschal Mystery over the last month, and I've been sharing insights that I gleaned from *The Holy Longing: The Search for A Christian Spirituality* by Ronald Rolheiser, and my own research into the spiritual language of lament. First we named our deaths, our losses. Next we claimed our births, the new life in Christ we are living. Now, during the forty days between Easter morning and the ascension, we work through a process of grieving what was and imagine accepting what is new for us. Rolheiser reminds us, "Unless we mourn properly our hurts, our losses, life's unfairness, . . . and all the life that we once had but that has now passed us by, we will live either in an unhealthy fantasy or an ever-intensifying bitterness." (Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*, 163) While the Psalms are a great resource for words of lament when we can't find our own, sometimes we need language and expressions that are closer to our lived experiences today. I have a wealth of resources on lament and am happy to make suggestions or loan a book to anyone who would like to explore further. In addition, reading and prayer are only one way to lament. There are other ways to lament and I'm happy to think through with you what might be helpful to you based on your interests and hobbies. Remember, forty days is symbolic for "it takes as long as it takes." Don't rush your grieving or you might leave it unfinished and likely to pop up in the midst of other moments of stress or hardship.

Once you have mourned your deaths and losses, it is vital that in letting them go, you let them bless you. This may seem impossible, especially if the

things you are letting go of have been sharp, hard, painful. I'll give you a personal example. When I was 17 years old, we moved from the home and town of my childhood to a community 6 hours away and vastly different. I cried for the better part of a year. For a long time, I tried to cling to what was and what I knew I was missing (my dear friends, "my" house, my high school, etc.). But much later I was able to look back and see the ways that the death of the life I had been living gave way to new life, new opportunities, and new challenges that were all part of getting me here, to life and ministry with all of you. I'm glad I could cry and mourn openly. That was a help. But if I had understood that clinging to what had been prevented my full acceptance of the new life I had received, I might have been able to allow it to bless me in ways that I could not see or grasp. I could have moved through it with more joy and more openness.

In John's Gospel, Mary Magdalene encounters the Risen Christ at the tomb and presumes him to be the gardener until he speaks her name. Then he tells her, "Do not cling to me." (John 20:17) Clinging to him, to his humanness, would have prevented her living with the spirit of new life made possible in him for us all. Life lived clinging to the past always prevents us from fully living into the possibility of the future. Fully grieving and then letting what was ascend and bless us opens us to the new life, new spirit waiting for us. Don't cling!

In hope,

In the Sanctuary

April 29, 2018

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

May 6, 2018

City Mission Sunday

Rev. June Cooper preaching
10:00 am Holy Communion
Nursery
Faith Formation for Children

Thanks be to God for you, Centre Church

I cannot begin to thank you all for the amazing celebration that my Installation was on Sunday. You all outdid yourselves in filling the day with the very best of who you are as church together. Your hearts, hands, and voices, your many hours of preparation, your genuine welcome, your generous spirits, showed the gathered body that we are church together and all of us ministers. I am so energized for the weeks and months ahead as we claim our mission to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly, taking nothing but our open hands into the world. Blessed be, dear Centre Church, blessed be! Yours in faith, hope, and love, *Rev. Nancy*



“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 9:8

If you haven't returned your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. Budget preparation for the next fiscal year will begin soon, and our budget gurus need accurate pledge data to do their work. If you need a pledge card, just contact the church office.

With gratitude,
Debbie Cotting, Stewardship



Flea Market & Bake Sale – Saturday, May 12 8am-2pm

This event will be held on the front lawn of the church. In the event of rain, indoor space will be available. We are looking for **volunteers** to provide individually-wrapped goodies for the **Bake Sale!** A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

We are also looking for **Flea Market volunteers** to help set up in the morning, staff the church tables throughout the day, and help clean up after the event. Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex. Market tables may be rented by Church Members at a reduced rate of \$25. Please contact the Church Office [781-334-3050] or Chuck Cotting [781-593-3120]

Please bring your Flea Market **TREASURES** to the church between **Sunday, May 6 and Saturday, May 12.** (We do not have space to take them any earlier.) Please place them in the Narthex Closet. Unfortunately we will not be able to save any items. They will either be given away or disposed of.

Help Wanted – Financial Planning

Do you have financial planning or investment experience? If so, we need your help! Parish Council is creating an investment team who will review the current church investment status, evaluate possible new investments and then present their research to the congregation, offering suggestions to enhance our financial growth. If you have any interest in becoming a member of this group, or want additional information, please contact me or a member of Parish Council at your earliest convenience. I can be reached through the church office, or call me at 781-334-4341.
Email - bcweaver@verizon.net
Bruce Weaver

Mission and Outreach News

Haven From Hunger: Annmarie Pendola, Frank Scott, Phil Fisher and Linda Ladd prepped and served a meal on April 23rd. Haven From Hunger is currently operating out of St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church in Peabody, while the kitchen on Wallis Street is undergoing a large reconstruction. Thank you to everyone who made offerings at Nancy's installation and to Nancy for directing half of those funds to HFH's kitchen project! Mission and Outreach is also contributing \$3,000 from our budget to this initiative. Our next opportunity to serve at HFH is on May 28th which is Memorial Day. Please sign up to volunteer on the M&O bulletin board across from the Fireside kitchen.

Bread & Roses: Centre Church has provided a monthly meal to support the work of Bread & Roses Kitchen in Lawrence MA for many years. This organization provides hot meals, community food outreach and pantry, health and case management services with dignity and respect for thousands in the Merrimack Valley. On June 8th they are sponsoring a comedy night fundraiser - the first fundraiser in their 38-year history! More information about the event and buying tickets can be found at: <https://brcomedynite.eventbrite.com>



Stamp Out Hunger on May 12th US Postal workers will be collecting food donations on Sat, May 12th. Bags of new canned goods can be left by your mailbox for pickup when your mail is delivered. How easy is that? We'll be helping to sort these donations that day at Haven From Hunger. Please sign up on the M&O bulletin board.

Walk for Women! Heifer of New England is organizing a 5K walk to benefit female farmers around the world. We'll be walking as a group after church on Sunday, May 6th around Lake Quannapowitt. All are invited to walk and/or to support our walk by donating at <http://fundraise.heifer.org/CCwalkers>. This is a great event for families, with short stops at the playgrounds located at opposite ends of the lake. We intend to have hotdogs, popcorn, and other snacks after church and then head to the lake and walk as a group. Wear a Centre Church shirt if you have one, and those who don't have one will be able to get one here at church before we head over to the Lake!

City Mission: Nancy and Linda attended a luncheon put on by City Mission Boston, focused on Family Homelessness. This was part of planning for a summit on the issue which will be held in September. Sunday, May 6 is City Mission Sunday here at Centre church and The Rev. June Cooper, Executive Director of City Mission, will be preaching. We will collect a special offering for City Mission beginning this week and envelopes can be found in the pews. We have received a lead gift of \$1000, and the Mission and Outreach Team will be making a donation from our budget as well. Please join us in supporting the work of City Mission to fight homelessness in Boston with your special donations that day, too.

News From Around the Parish

Our congratulations to Brian and Michelle DiFillippo upon the birth of their daughter, Olivia Jean DiFillippo on April 10. Her proud grandparents are Doreen and David DiFillippo, and great-grandfather, Earl Richard.



From the Mailbox:

Sorry I wasn't here when the lovely plant was delivered. I appreciated being remembered.

Best Wishes, Charlotte McClure

Many thanks for giving us the beautiful tulips that had been on the altar Sunday morning.

Ruth & Don Hyer

Faith Formation Updates:

We are looking forward to a busy Spring and Summer here at Centre Church!

Nursery: Child care for children ages 0-4 is available every Sunday during the service.

Sunday, May 6th

Communion Sunday and large group Faith Formation class.

At 1 p.m, join Mission and Outreach after church to "Walk for Heifer" around Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield.

Sunday, May 13- Church School (Footpirnts, Godly Play and Brick by Brick)

Sunday, May 20th – Pentecost and New Members Sunday. Church School (Footpirnts, Godly Play and Brick by Brick)

Sunday, May 27th - Memorial Day Weekend: Flower Planting with ALL Church School Classes.

Sunday, June 17th - Celebration Sunday - We will celebrate our Church School Year!

Summer Church School: July 1st - August 26th We will have an "all ages" (PreK-Grade 5) experience this summer. Our summer unit is called "Recognizing and Responding" from Whole People of God. We will explore what God is like, hear stories about God's calling and help children think about being part of God's family. We will also talk about leadership and how God calls ALL to be leaders, but also gives us what we need to be good leaders.

Upcoming donation of the Month:



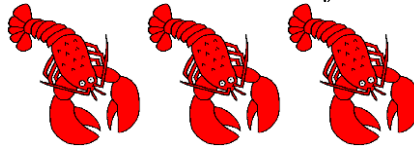
Lobsta” Roll Sunday

June 3, 2018

Pre-order lobster rolls- just \$12 each.

Lobsta Rolls will be available for pick up after church on June 3 (around 11:30am)

See the enclosed order form.



Our Opportunities

Sat. April 28	9-2pm	North Shore Parents of Multiples Yard Sale- Church Basement
Sun. April 29	10:00am	Sunday Worship-Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Faith Formation-group activity
Wed. May 2	8:30am	Bread and Roses- Kitchen
Thurs. May 3	1-2pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study-Fireside Room Choir Rehearsal-Choir room
Sun. May 6	10:00am	Sunday Worship Holy Communion- Sanctuary City Mission Sunday Nursery – Library/Nursery Faith Formation
Thurs. May 10	1-2pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study-Fireside Room Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Sat. May 12	8-2	Flea Market and Bake Sale

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 May 14
