

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 & Barbara Langill, Secretaries

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

February 5, 2019

What Shall We Bring?

By the time you read this, our Stewardship Season will have begun at Centre Church. As you have read and heard before, our theme is, "What Shall We Bring?" and we will be reflecting on the different types of gifts that we bring: gifts of love, gifts of word and deed, gifts of presence, and gifts of faithfulness. Ultimately, all of these gifts added together will reflect what we learned to give from Paul when we began our new church year together. What shall we bring? Our whole selves! Even, perhaps, the gift that you've been hiding, or hiding from. We are each called to name our gifts and to claim them, for they have been given to us by God, not to be ignored or denied, but shared.

But, you may be wondering, what if I don't know what my gifts are? What if I'm unsure of a) whether this "thing" I can do, or this "thing" I have can be useful, or b) what percentage of my financial gifts I can afford to give? I believe the way to answer your own inner questions is with two interlocking spiritual practices that enhance everything we do. I've been mentioning them both because God keeps drawing my attention to them...and I have (finally) woken up and devoted myself to both. The first is **presence** and the second is **gratitude**.

To cultivate presence, there is the title of an off-Broadway play that Father Greg Boyle turned into a motto. "Now. Here. This." When you're struggling to know what your gifts are, paying attention to the present moment can be the first step of revealing them, admitting them to

yourself. And gratitude, really developing a practice of gratitude, can turn your whole outlook around. This has to be intentional, daily, and written down. Find yourself a little notebook, a scrap piece of paper, anything, and each day, write down what you're grateful for. Something. Anything. Even on the worst days, I promise you there is something to be grateful for. And if you work on staying present to each moment and cultivating gratitude in your life, the task of discerning what you'll bring to our worship and ministries here at Centre Church will be life-giving, not only to the church, but to YOU!

In faith,

Rev. Nancy

In the Sanctuary

February 10

10:00am Morning Worship

Nursery

Faith Formation

February 17

10:00am Morning Worship

Nursery

Faith Formation hosts Coffee Hour

February 24

10:00am Morning Worship

Nursery

Faith Formation



We kicked off our "What Shall We Bring?" Stewardship Campaign on Sunday, February 3. Stewardship packets were mailed on Monday, February 4 so everyone should have their packets soon. If you did not receive a packet, please contact the church office so we can make sure you get one. Pledges will be received during worship on Commitment Sunday, March 3. Please plan to return your pledge promptly, either in church on March 3 or by mailing it to the church as soon as possible. We will begin developing our budget for the next fiscal year (beginning July 1) soon after Commitment Sunday so it is vital that we receive your pledges in March.

With gratitude,
Debbie Cotting, Stewardship Ministries

Adult Faith Formation

For the month of February, our Thursday afternoon Bible Study Group is reading, *Learning to Speak God from Scratch*, by Jonathan Merritt. The subtitle is, *Why Sacred Words Are Vanishing – and How We Can Revive Them*. As always, everyone is invited to join us at 1:00 pm on Thursdays in the library for lively discussion and joyful fellowship. But even if you cannot attend, you are invited to read Jonathan's book to spark your own curiosity and attention on how and when you talk about your faith, or don't, and why.

Deacons' Breakfast **Sunday, February 10, 2019**



Join us for bacon, eggs, French toast, pancakes, fruit salad, juice and coffee before church on Sunday, February 10, 2019 from 8:30-9:45 am. We will be serving up our delicious breakfast to raise money for the Organ Maintenance Fund. The suggested donation is \$10/person or \$25/family.

Mission and Outreach News

Haven From Hunger

On Monday, Jan 28th, we delivered 112.7 lbs of food which we had blessed in worship the day before, to Haven from Hunger. Phil Fisher, Linda Ladd and David Bjorkman helped to prepare and serve the meal of hot hoggie sandwiches, roasted potatoes and glazed carrots with fruit and green salads and a decadent chocolate cheesecake for dessert. The HFH staff was alerting everyone about a local church where they could shelter on a few upcoming unusually cold nights.



Underwear/Toiletries Drive for City Reach

The Youth Group is collecting new underwear (large sizes – Men and Women) and socks as well as travel-sized toiletries. These will be distributed during Common Cathedral's "Boston City Reach" homelessness education program which the ecumenical Giv2 youth group will be attending in March. Items are being collected in the Green Wagons located in the Missions closet, adjacent to the church front hall.

KIVA.org "micro loan" reminder: Please see an update on the M&O bulletin board about Kiva micro loans, originally financed by M&O for the Youth of Centre Church to loan and learn from. To date, sixteen \$25 loans (\$400 worth) have been made from the original \$150 donated by M&O. EVERYONE is invited to be involved in this activity by joining the Centre Church Team. Please contact Linda Ladd for more information. Check it out at:

www.kiva.org/invitedby/centrechurch7822

Mission of Deeds COAT Collection

Gently used winter coats, gloves, scarves and NEW hats are being collected in the Missions Closet. We delivered 19 coats to MOD on Jan 19th, and will make a final delivery on Feb 16th. These will be distributed to MOD clients.

Faith Formation Ministry Team

Sundays in February:

2/10: Joyful Noise Practice (9:30)

Share during Worship – Church School

2/17: FFMT Hosts Coffee Hour (Lisa Gerbick and Kristen Kadera) and children help to set up during worship. Families are encouraged to bring a drink or treat to share.

2/24: Church School

Young Families Group:

We are planning a Family Ice Skating Family Event for February or March -- more details to come!

April: We will "Light it Up Blue" in April for Autism Awareness. Our church will have blue lights for the month beginning on April 1st. We may also host an event during the month, but we need a few volunteers to help put this together.

Giv2/Older Youth

There was a meeting of the Giv2 Leadership Committee on January 29th.

We are planning to continue with our church's connection to City Reach/Common Cathedral via the Giv2 Ecumenical Group. On March 8-9th, our middle and high school students will have an opportunity to become more educated on the issue of homelessness with an overnight in Boston. **CityReach** is an overnight urban outreach program begun in March 1996 for youth (with accompanying adults), young adults, and college students from churches of any denomination. The program gives these young people the opportunity to learn first hand about homelessness from people who have experienced it. During the 20 hour session, participants join CityReach staff in street ministry and offer hospitality, food and clothing. This is followed by times of sharing and reflection.

The program starts on Friday evening and ends on the following Saturday afternoon. Participants arrive at 7 p.m. Friday night, and are addressed by staff who are experiencing, or have experienced, homelessness. They walk through the city guided by members of *common cathedral* and end the evening with a simple worship service. Participants sleep at a local church. On Saturday morning participants offer clothing that

they have collected and a simple meal to unhoused guests who come to "shop" for clothing from among the donated items. Participants form teams for street outreach, taking sandwiches and clothes to people at South Station, Copley Square, Boston's waterfront and other sites. All then eat lunch and reflect together about their experiences in light of the Gospel, write a prayer, and talk about next steps for them personally and/or as a group. Adult chaperones welcome. We will be collecting adult sized underwear and socks and bringing them with us to Boston. The cost is approximately \$75/per person, but we have money in our Youth Mission Budget to help with the cost.

VBS:

Kristen Kadera, Lisa Gerbick and Larainne Wilson are putting together a week long, half-day program that is affordable for families of Pre-K - Grade 4. Potential dates are August 12-16 or August 19 – 23.

The next Faith Formation Ministry Team Meeting will be held on Tuesday 2/12 at 6:30pm. at the church.

Does this bag look familiar?



Searching for the owner of this teal and white striped insulated bag. It was left in the kitchenette after the Bake Sale. Please contact the church office 781 334 3050 so we can return it.



Trivia Night, Raffles, and Silent Auction

Saturday, March 2, 2019 at 5:30 PM

Tickets are just \$15.00 each

Mardi Gras Theme

**Appetizers, Beverage, Pizza,
Finger Foods, Desserts, and Coffee**

Trivia brought to you by Jason Cotting

Prizes!!!

Team limit: eight people – get your team together now - plan ahead

Please contact Chuck Cotting @ 781-593-3120

Donations of Appetizers and Finger Desserts are very welcome.

This is our biggest fund raiser and we are looking for donations of Raffle and Silent Auction Items! Can you help? Please fill out the form below and contact Chuck Cutting at chuck@thecottings.com Thank you!

TRIVIA NIGHT, SILENT AUCTION AND RAFFLES

Saturday, March 2, 2019

DONATION FORM

Donor: _____ Phone _____

Donation Description:

Approximate Value: _____

Thank you from Centre Church!

Our Opportunities

Sun. Feb. 10	8:30 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Deacons Breakfast – Richards Hall Joyful Noise Practice - Sanctuary Sunday Worship- Sanctuary Nursery- Nursery/Library Faith Formation Classes
Tues. Feb. 12	6:30 pm	Faith Formation Ministry Team – Library/Nursery
Thurs. Feb. 14	1:00 pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study- Library Choir Rehearsal- Choir Room
Sun. Feb. 17	10:00 am	Sunday Worship - Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Faith Formation hosts Coffee Hour
Mon. Feb. 18 <i>Presidents' Day</i>		Church Office Closed
Thurs. Feb. 21	1:00 pm	Bible Study- Library
Sun. Feb. 24 Scout Sunday	10:00	Sunday Worship – Sanctuary Nursery – Library/Nursery Faith Formation

In addition to our scheduled church activities, Centre Church hosts Boy Scout Troop #48, Cub Pack #48, Girl Scouts, Alanon, Alateen, Women's AA, and the Essex Society of Genealogists. Please call the church office if you would like more information about any of these groups. (781-334-3050)

Church Office Hours – 9 am-3 pm Mon.-Fri.
Vacation Week (Feb. 19-22) Office Hours 9-12

The next issue of Tower Notes – Week of February 18, 2019
