

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

December 8, 2020



CHRISTMAS EVE PILGRIMAGE AT CENTRE CHURCH

While we can't gather as usual in our sanctuary and chapel on Christmas Eve this year, we know how much we all need to welcome the Christ light into our midst. So, this Christmas Eve you are invited to journey (safely) to the manger! Sign up for a time slot here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094eaeac28a0ff2-christmas> or by calling the office at 781-334-3050.

On Christmas Eve, begin your pilgrimage by arriving in the parking lot at your chosen time. You will enter through the back door with your family group to follow the marked pathway through the chapel and out to the manger. Everyone must wear masks and follow the directions of the guides who will assist in groups maintaining physical distance and following the designated, one-way path. There will be music and candlelight and Baby Jesus and Silent Night! O Come, Let Us Adore Him, Centre Church! Come!

A Virtual Christmas Eve service will also be available for everyone on our YouTube Channel!

DON'T FORGET TO SEND PHOTOS OF YOUR FAMILY NATIVITY SCENE!

Do you have a family Nativity Scene/Crèche that you display in your home every Christmas? We're planning on sharing a video montage of them for our virtual Christmas Eve service. Send a photo(s) of your crèche or of your favorite figures along with any details you want to share to pastor@centre-church.org.

Blue Christmas

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

~ Matthew 11:28

We have experienced unprecedented loss this year. Family and friends have succumbed to death in this pandemic, millions have lost economic security through loss of jobs, some have lost businesses they have built over a lifetime. We have lost the safety, comfort, and possibility of our church building. Most of us have lost our beloved rhythms of life that felt familiar and gave our lives the richness of gatherings and adventure. And we can name so many losses related to hatred and violence. We will proclaim hope, love, joy, and peace this Advent as always, remembering that our faith story is grounded in the presence of God that came and dwelt among us in the midst of hardship. But this year, perhaps more than any other year, it is important for us to name that sometimes, maybe right now, hope, love, joy, and peace are distant feelings. Our Blue Christmas service is an opportunity to do just that, to name our losses and use ritual to help us move through these feelings. It is for anyone and everyone.

Our Blue Christmas service will be virtual this year. It will be posted on our YouTube Channel from Tuesday, December 8th on so that you can access it whenever you need or desire to.



The minutes from the most recent Parish Council meetings can be found at <http://www.centre-church.org/Council>



CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT SUNRISE SENIOR LIVING

Join us for caroling on Sunday, December 13th at 1:00 pm. We'll meet at Sunrise Senior Living and sing safely to the residents from outside. We will encircle the building, physically distanced and masked, and sing to them through their open windows. In case of inclement weather, we will reschedule for Sunday, December 20th. Sign up here <https://forms.gle/j69hnXMe4TBjAbxF9>, Any questions, email Larainne at lwilson@centre-church.org.

DRIVERS NEEDED

Both the Chelsea Collaborative and the New Lynn Coalition are in need of drivers to deliver groceries/supplies to families in the community. COVID-19 continues to impact these communities disproportionately and there is an ever-growing need for food aid.

Diane and David Bjorkman have been driving for the New Lynn Coalition. Here's what they have to say about their experience,

Diane and I have found something to do with our spare time, which seems to be considerable nowadays. We are driving and delivering food to folks who are experiencing food insecurity. We enjoy it, although it took a little time for us to refine our technique, and find it quite fulfilling. We feel great after finishing our job.

Here is how it works. We are working with the New Lynn Coalition. On Thursday mornings we, and other drivers, show up at My Brothers Table in Lynn, which supplies space to fill orders. We arrive at 11:30 and our cars are loaded with 2 large shopping bags of food for each household, one cold/frozen, one with fresh vegetables and canned/dry goods. We are given a list of deliveries, usually 7-8. We also get a "cheat sheet" of phrases for when we encounter Spanish speakers. Diane dials up the address on the GPS and off we go. Upon arriving at an address, we call the addressee and have them come

to the door. We bring up 2 bags (one cold, one not) and place them on the porch. If no one responds or can't come down, we leave them on the porch or in the foyer and leave a message. I/we return to our car. We carefully sanitize BEFORE we remove our masks or touch anything. Then it's off to another address. It takes us about an hour or so to finish. That puts it about lunchtime. We often reward ourselves with a sub sandwich or something. But something much more rewarding is the inner glow we get. That cannot be bought. Try it sometime. Just Ask!

You can read more about and volunteer for the New Lynn Coalition at <https://www.newlynn.org/programs/grocery-delivery-program>. You can read more about La Colaborativa (formerly known as the Chelsea Collaborative) at <https://www.la-colaborativa.org/covid19>. To volunteer with La Colaborativa, please call the church office for the contact of the Volunteer Coordinator.

News from Around the Parish

Our love and sympathy are extended to Sue Lambe and family upon the death of Sue's mother, Regina Engel. Services will be private.



Faith Formation Ministry Updates

Young Families Group

Sunday, December 13, 2020, Caroling. We will be combining with Youth Group to carol OUTSIDE at Sunrise Assisted Living. Stephany Petrillo will work with us to develop guidelines for keeping everyone safe. We may be going around the outside of the building while residents open their windows to hear us!

Church School

Dec. 13 Godly Play, Exile and Return

Dec. 20 Godly Play, Advent

Dec. 27 Holiday Sunday, Ms. Larainne, The Grumpy Shepherd

Youth Group: 12/13/2020 (Caroling)

We will continue our Weekly Parent Support Zoom Meetings on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.

STAR SUNDAY



January 3rd we will be celebrating Epiphany with our "Star Sunday". Do you remember what star chose you for 2020? Do you even remember where your star is? Time to find it and spend a bit of time reflecting on your Star

Word and this crazy year we have been through! We would love to include as many of your reflections as possible in worship on January 3rd. Written reflections can be sent to Rev. Nancy via email. You can also audio or video record yourself talking about your Star Word and your life in 2020. And stay tuned for how we'll choose new Star Words for 2021. New year, new inspiration!

Mission and Outreach



Angel Tree gifts for City Mission

Mission and Outreach Ministries is teaming up with Tower Day School to collect gifts for City Mission. This year, following new pandemic procedures, these gifts will be sorted and inventoried here before we deliver them boxed up by category, to City Mission on Dec 13. There will be one more parking lot drop-off of gifts on Sat. Dec 12 from 9-10am. The City Mission Wish List can be found at the bottom of our homepage at www.centre-church.org. Thank you for being generous with these gifts as the need in 2020 is greater than ever.

Shopping Card donation match

The following organizations are looking for donations of shopping cards for their clients. Mission and Outreach will match the value of any shopping cards donated to: **Bread & Roses** (requesting Stop & Shop or CVS), **Chelsea Collaborative** (Market Basket, Target, CVS) or **City Mission** (Target, Walmart, CVS, T.J.Max). Please submit your receipts to the church office for matching.

Heifer Living Gift Market

New for 2020, your Heifer tribute donations can be made in contactless fashion! You can use this link (<https://fundraise.heifer.org/campaign/living-gift-market-centre-congregational-church/c312746>) to select your tribute gifts and pay by credit card. You can then select to send an emailed or printed card to those you are honoring, right from that website. What's better still, all gifts made online will be matched by an anonymous Heifer donor until donations total \$200,000 or until 12/31. Mission and Outreach will also match your donation to Heifer so your gift will really be TRIPLED! You can also send a check to the church office made out to Centre Church with memo "Heifer", and we will supply tribute cards for you. Please just tell us how many.

Equal Exchange Fair Trade

The deadline to order EE goods has been extended to **noon on Fri Dec 11**, and even later for items which don't require placing another order. We can order in packs of 6 or 12 for most things, so will end up with partial cases from this December order, for sure. Then we'll sell whatever we have in stock until it's all gone. And for "Minis" fans out there, we've added them to the order form. However, they can only be purchased in a box of 150 (23.8 oz) for \$32. We can supply small cellophane bags if you want to bundle these for gifts!

Centre Church Tee Shirts- Heathered Indigo



Looking for a last minute gift? Centre Church 300th Anniversary Tee shirts are available for just \$7.00 each for adult sizes and \$6.00 for children. There is an order form on the Centre Church web site, or contact Chuck Cotting at chuck@thecottings.com to get yours before Christmas.



PLEASE SEND US YOUR FAVORITE HYMN

Would you like to hear your favorite hymn sung during a Sunday Service? We will be including someone's favorite hymn in each worship service until we can gather again in person. Please email your hymn requests to Annmarie Pendola at annmarie.pendola@gmail.com.

The Power of Music in the Midst of Difficult Times
An Advent Film Festival

This Advent, as we fill the night with music and light, we are including a collection of documentaries all about the power of music in difficult times. Each week a film has been chosen that connects to the theme for that week and discussion questions are offered for your home study and reflection either individually or with your family and/or friends who might be watching with you. Films for the remaining weeks are:

Week 3: Following the Ninth Watch before Sunday, 12/13	You can watch the film in its entirety on the director's YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPWpV3BWLJs&t=5s
Week 4: Sweet Honey in the Rock: Raise Your Voice! Watch before Sunday, 12/20	Rent for \$1.99 on Amazon Video: https://www.amazon.com/Sweet-Honey-Rock-Raise-Voice/dp/B004QFSKKC
Week 5: The Singing Revolution Watch before Sunday, 12/27	Rent for \$3.99 on Amazon Prime Video: https://www.amazon.com/Singing-Revolution-Estonian-Chorus/dp/B003PH3RY6/ref=sr_1_1?crid=31SYP9ANXE2EQ&dc_hild=1&keywords=the+singing+revolution&qid=1598836937&spr_e fix=the+singing+revolution,aps,202&sr=8-1

Centre Church Virtual Gathering Schedule

- **Sunday Morning** worship video – Premieres on our YouTube Channel at **10am each Sunday**. Subscribe to our channel at www.youtube.com/c/centrecongregationalchurch/
- Zoom Fellowship hour: **Sundays at 10:30 am**
- Midweek Prayer and Support Gathering: **Wednesdays at 4pm** with Rev. Nancy.
- Parent Support Group: **Thursdays at 7:30 pm** with Ms. Larainne and/or Jill DiGiorgio. Contact Larainne for the link
- **Blue Christmas Virtual Service**- available starting December 8 on our YouTube Channel.
- **December 24: Virtual Christmas Eve Service at:**
www.youtube.com/c/centrecongregationalchurch/

Church office hours are
Monday to Friday
9 am to 12 pm

Tower Day School is in session
Monday to Friday
8 am to 3 pm.

