

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 & Barbara Langill, Secretaries

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

June 2021

Too Much and Not Enough

Dear Centre Church, What was true at the beginning of the pandemic has turned out to be true in its waning. Last spring, I observed that most of us fell into two categories – those who were never alone, and those who were always alone. So many of you were isolated in your homes. Your contact with other human beings was infrequent. The rest of you were at home with what felt like a houseful, even if it was only your spouse or roommate, because you were always together. Now, as we begin to see each other again or have time alone again, I have realized that there is another aspect of this “all or nothing” that has plagued us as Centre Church.

On May 30 we reach the one-year anniversary of the water calamity that wrought significant damage in our building. And because of the pandemic and the measures taken to keep us all safe, there are those of us who are completely familiar with every detail of the damage and the work to recover from it, and those who either have no idea that the flood happened or the extent of the damage it caused. Unlike the fire in the Chapel, which was visible to everyone and front-page news, the damage of the flood was hidden by our building's beautiful facade. We have discovered again what we have a tendency to forget: that there is some of Jesus' friend Thomas in all of us. Seeing is believing. Whether for good or ill, our imaginations rarely serve up reality for us.

Friends, the damage to our building was extensive. While we tried to show you what over a half a million dollars of damage looked like and how gorgeous our reconstructed/renovated spaces are, unless you had occasion to be inside, the damage was invisible. So, while there is much re-gathering happening in our lives, at Centre Church our in-person gathering is going to happen a bit haphazardly. We hope for your patience always,

your participation whenever possible, and your support however possible for you.

Here is what we can confidently hope for: We will gather as a congregation in September in our fully renovated sanctuary, worshipping together in a hybrid format – livestreaming our in-person worship service. We will have in-person Church School for our children, likely with some precautions still in place. We will begin serving in-person with our mission partners again, wherever and whenever possible. AND, we'll face together, the things that still need our attention, such as completing the renovation of our kitchen. You will have the opportunity to come and see with your own eyes so we can again be the fullest expression of the Body of Christ that we were created to be. Until that time, there is going to be some variety in how we gather. We will do our very best to communicate clearly and often. And before you know it, it will be October and we'll be celebrating and re-dedicating our building and ourselves to the shared life and ministry God has for us!

I hope and pray that you have a safe and joyful summer, joining in at Centre Church whenever you can!

Grace and peace be yours, **Rev. Nancy**

Well Done Good and Faithful Servant

Centre Church, it is with a mix of gratitude, joy, sadness, and hope that I share the news of Susan Spear's retirement after over 36 years of service as Centre Church's secretary. After a recent trip to South Carolina to visit Nathan and his family and imagine life there, she has decided to retire and relocate. Her last day at Centre Church will be July 2. She will be moving to South Carolina later in the summer. *(continued)*

We will celebrate Susan, honor her years of faithful service, and release her from her ministry here at an in-person worship service on Sunday, June 13. Join us for worship at 10:00 am in the sanctuary and on the front lawn following worship for a fellowship celebration. Please sign up for worship at <https://forms.gle/MEWE1D1RiwA6ejvKA> or by calling or emailing the office: 781-334-3050 or office@centre-church.org. Masks will be required indoors at all times.



Faith Formation Ministry Team News

Children's Sunday: Sunday, June 6, 2021 (Digital Worship) This is a Sunday where we celebrate the important role(s) of the children, youth, their parents and teachers in the life of our church.

The Theme of our Children's Sunday is "Dancing AFTER the Rain". The overall idea is that the pandemic has brought us lots of "rain", but what is next for us? How can we dream together? The Godly Play story is The Ark and the Flood. This tells the story of the flood, the ark, the rainbow and God's enduring love even after hardship.

Celebration Sunday worship will be online. Ice Cream Sundaes will follow from 11-12.

Your help is needed to make this digital service a success. We are looking for photos, drawings and videos of umbrellas, rainbows and dancing. We also need 6-8 readers to come in to be taped in the sanctuary. Please check the April 28 e-mail for more details. Let me know if you, your child or members of your family group would like to participate.

Summer Church School

We will begin our Summer Church School on July 11th with Compassion Camp. The overall theme is: Be Loved, Be Kind, Be You!

Memorial Service for Rev. Mark Strickland

There will be a memorial service for Rev Mark F. Strickland on Saturday June 12 at 2 p.m. at First Congregational Church Falmouth. Please wear masks if you plan to attend in person. It is also possible to watch the livestream of the service at www.firstcongfalmouth.live at 2 pm that day.

News from Around the Parish

Dear Centre Church Friends – Thank you very much for all of the cards, calls, emails and text messages with your good wishes for a speedy recovery from my knee replacement surgery. Your messages are deeply appreciated. My knee is coming along well and I continue working toward a full recovery.

With Thanks. Chuck Cotting

Dancing Together

Into Our Shared Future

We have received 39 pledges so far, but we still have many outstanding pledges - people who pledged last year, but have not yet done so this year. Despite the challenges presented by the Pandemic and the damage to the church from the sprinkler head failure, the work of the church continued, thanks in large part to our pledges. We worshiped on YouTube, had Coffee Hour on Zoom, and supported our Mission Partners. With vaccines available and restrictions being lifted, we look forward to the time when we can resume our usual activities and worship in person.

Our financial support for the mission and ministry of Centre Church is vitally important. Please carefully consider your pledge, be as generous as you can be, and return your pledge card as soon as possible.

Accurate pledge data is essential for developing the budget for FY2022 which begins on July 1.

If you need a pledge card, please call the church office 781-334-3050 and one will be mailed to you.

Blessings,

Stewardship Ministries

Summer Schedule

Rev. Nancy will be on vacation June 14 – 20 and June 27 – July 3. She will be having minor, outpatient surgery on July 9 and be on medical leave for the two weeks following. Once pastoral coverage has been determined, worship/fellowship plans will be announced. As always, if you have a pastoral need, please call the Centre Church office and you will be connected with Rev. Nancy or with the covering pastor.

Mission & Outreach

Each month, Mission and Outreach is highlighting a different food bank or meal provider in our area. I have been asked to do a writeup on My Brothers Table in Lynn, or MBT for short. A look at their website states that the mission of My Brother's Table is to “nourish our community every day through hospitality, free meals, and unconditional love”. At Centre Church, our worship starts with “Wherever you are in Life’s journey you are welcome here.” These are words that MBT lives by and delivers on daily.

If there was a place that identifies with our mission and outreach it would be My Brothers Table. The message here is one of privacy and ethics as MBT refuses to take any State or Federal aid, as that all comes with strings attached. It could expose their clients to what amounts to an invasion of their client’s privacy and loss of dignity, as well as potential exposure to the authorities. This would force them to exclude some people so as to not serve the whole community.

I could go on about how MBT has been in service of the community since 1982. I could tell you about the need for food and food banks, as we all know the need now is more than ever during this pandemic. I could tell you that MBT has served more than 1,100,000 meals in the last 12 months of the pandemic, but you could learn that from visiting their website <https://mybrotherstable.org/> Please visit the website, learn about MBT and give what you can. Let us know and we will match your donation from the Mission and Outreach budget.

Regards, Jeff Langill

Matching Funds

May’s matching funds totaled \$189.18. Recipients were PROJECT BREAD and La Colaborativa in Chelsea.

Heifer

Soon we will be sending a \$5,000 check to Heifer as our FY2021 donation. Our match of member gifts plus passing on the \$ we collected, comes to just shy of \$5000 so we rounded up to a complete ARK! Donations being passed through to Heifer = \$2,478. Member donations being matched total \$2,450.

Equal Exchange Fair Trade

Coffee, tea, and a variety of chocolates are available for purchase. Check out the EE Order Form on www.centre-church.org to order. We can order anything you see in their wholesale catalog at <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>

Green Team web page

There’s a new Centre Church Green Team page accessible from the sidebar menu of www.centre-church.org which details some of our Creation Justice initiatives and is a repository of educational resources about climate change as well as tips on how we can all Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The schedule of videos we watched during Earth Month is published there as well as links to organizations focused on sustainability. Creating and maintaining this information repository is also a step towards being certified as a Green Congregation of the United Church of Christ.

The Green Team sponsored a bamboo toilet paper give away in honor of Nancy’s birthday on Sunday 5/16. We attempted to create a non-edible CAKE made of stacked toilet paper rolls! This product has no plastic packaging. Better yet, each roll is wrapped in a party print with punny information blocks. This paper is made from bamboo which grows faster and sequesters carbon better than wood. Find more information and buy your own supply at: <https://us.whogivesacrap.org/>