

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

September 2021

Dear Centre Church,

Thank you! So many of you reached out to me to cheer me up and cheer me on in my recovery and I am deeply grateful. I could feel your prayers lifting me up as I took it one day and one step at a time. I thank Parish Council, and by extension all of you, for the respite during August. Thank you to Ms. Laraine, Rev. Chuck Wildman, and my friends Rev. Korte Yeo and Rev. Emelia Attridge for leading worship, preaching, and caring for you all.

Life's challenges are always our teachers, and this experience was no exception for me. I am certain I will be learning from it for a long time as I continue moving toward the fullness of healing and wholeness that is mine. The biggest realization came immediately following my discharge from MGH. Because my time in nursing makes the hospital feel familiar if not comfortable, it did not dawn on me until I was being discharged that I had never spent a week as a hospital inpatient before. I had never smiled and said thank you to so many people who were, quite literally, causing me pain. Yes, I received exceptionally skilled and compassionate care. I believe cooperation and gratitude were the kind and appropriate responses. But I also believe that healing moves forward more steadily when we acknowledge the truth of what we've been through. If we don't acknowledge what really happened, or we diminish it, which our culture often demands of us, we can only pretend we're better for so long before the trauma brings us low again, often baffling us at the same time.

Admitting the extent of what I experienced is not only aiding my recovery. It has also bolstered my compassion for other's suffering. There has been tremendous suffering through this pandemic and time of societal upheaval. Naming the truth of our experiences can deepen our compassion for ourselves and for others. So often our response to suffering is to armor up and look away, as if we can fight our way through to peace and harmony with our friends and neighbors. But as Jesus has shown us, it is in our vulnerability and truth-telling that we find our deepest connections with one another. Those connections allow us to act in ways that consider everyone's well-being, not just our own, and move toward healing, wholeness, and lasting peace together.

Friends, it is good to be back among you!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Nancy

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, September 26, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. to discuss the following items:

1. Reports of Officers and Ministry Teams
2. Presentation and Approval of the 2021 to 2022 Budget
3. Election of Officers, Ministry Team Chairs, and Other Positions
4. Remembrance of Deceased Members
5. Recognition of 50 Year Members

Bruce Weaver, Moderator



In worship this fall, we will be journeying through the Book of Acts and finding inspiration from the early church. Drawing from *Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day*, by Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, we will examine the stories of the first century Jesus movement and how their experiences as a transformed and transforming community informs our present-day experience as a transformed and transforming community. We'll take stock of who we say we are, who we want to be, and how we'll continue becoming. We'll ponder what it means to be resilient and look at examples of failure and how we can embrace every failure for the learning and growth opportunity that it is. If you thrive on certainty, this is for you. If you are a big risk-taker, this is for you. If you are a bit of both, this is for you. Called to be Church: each of us and all of us!

Gradual Fall Rollout

Friends, what a year and a half it has been! We're certain that you are all wondering how our life together as Centre Church will be structured this fall as the Delta variant of COVID-19 threatens our health and well-being and the ways we gather. We are going to be progressing toward fuller programming gradually as we continue to monitor the infection rates around us and implement the recommendations and requirements to keep us as safe as possible.

Our livestream system is installed and many of us have been trained in it's use. So here is our hoped-for schedule for worship and church school:

9/5:Worship in the Chapel with Holy Communion, Rev. Nancy preaching
9/12:Worship returns to the Sanctuary: First Livestream. Kick-off Fall Worship Series: Called to Be Church
9/19: Welcome Back to Church School
Blessing of the Back Packs
9/26: Worship and Church School
Annual Meeting immediately following worship
Everyone must wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status while we monitor the infection

rates in Lynnfield through the first few weeks of school. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness, we ask that you remain at home and join worship via the livestream until you are symptom free or test negative. We will continue to do all we can to protect those who are vulnerable, including our children who are not yet eligible for the vaccine and those who are at greater risk due to other health conditions.

Dancing Together Into Our Shared Future

We have received 65 pledges, but we still have at least 5 outstanding pledges - people who pledged last year, but have not done so yet 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 to our talented staff and dedicated volunteers. We worshiped on YouTube, had Coffee Hour on Zoom, maintained our building, and supported our Mission Partners. Our pledge dollars made all this possible.

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 FY2022 budget which we will vote on at Annual Meeting.

If you need a pledge card, please call the church office and one will be mailed to you. If you're interested in fulfilling your pledge online, visit the church website www.centre-church.org and click Online Giving.

Blessings,

Stewardship Ministries

News from Around the Parish

Congratulations to Kristen DiFillippo and John Nickerson who were married 7/31/21 at Our Lady of Good Voyage in the Boston Seaport.

Our best wishes to Jean Fiscus who will celebrate her birthday on September 8 and to Ethel Leonard will be 100 years old on Sunday, September 12.



Faith Formation Ministry Team News

Summer Church School:

We enjoyed seeing many children over the course of the summer for our Illustrated Ministries Compassion Camp Series. We learned about having compassion for ourselves, our friends, our families and our community. We learned that compassion is "empathy plus action". We will be posting our mural from the series on Facebook, so keep an eye out for that.

Staffing News:

Over the summer we accepted the resignations of Katie Hamilton and Jacklyn Roussin. They were active in our Brick-By-Brick Program and we are grateful to their creative contributions to church school.

Young Family Survey:

Faith Formation Ministry Team is putting together a short survey, as we are rethinking what the format of our Church School should be at this time. Our guiding question is "What has your family missed MOST about church?" You can write us an email or answer the survey, your choice! We want to be sure that we include as many of those things in worship and church school as possible even if other things need to be different for a time.



Welcome Back Sunday for Church School:

We will bless our backpacks with a special liturgy inspired by Illustrated Ministries. We will have some team building activities in Todd Hall, talk about our summer fun and the start to the school year. Please be sure your child has a water bottle labeled with their name and a mask.

Faith Formation Ministry Team: Our next meeting is **Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.** Any parent is welcome to join us!

Mission and Outreach

Matching Funds: Totals of our fiscal year 2021 funding are as follows. Thank you all for helping these organizations get through the past year.

Bread & Roses	\$807.26
Change is Simple	\$200.00
Citizens Inn	\$983.00
City Mission gift cards	\$600.00
Feeding America/GBFoodBank	\$150.00
First Church Chicopee	\$100.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$75.00
La Colaborativa Chelsea2	\$1,062.52
Lazarus House	\$100.00
Ma Duke's gift cards	\$590.00
My Brother's Table	\$225.00
PROJECT BREAD	\$140.00
The Food Project	\$150.00
Wakefield Food Pantry	\$315.00
Grand Total	\$5,497.78

Equal Exchange Fair Trade: Coffee, tea, and a variety of chocolates are available. Check the form on www.centre-church.org for what's in stock and contact green@centre-church.org (or Linda Ladd) to order.

Earth Matters: Do your back-to-school laundry in plastic-free style with Earth Breeze laundry strips. The Centre Church Green Team is pleased to offer these Fresh Scent and Fragrance-Free laundry strips at wholesale prices. Each pack contains 30 sheets to do up to 60 loads of laundry in completely plastic-free recyclable paper packaging! Price is \$10 each (\$20 when purchased individually online). Please email green@centre-church.org to order. Checks can be made out and delivered to Centre Congregational Church. Look for more information on www.centre-church.org.

Reid's Ride – July 18, 2021 Thank you for supporting our Reid's Ride efforts again this year. Our Team, the CCCylers raised \$1,450 for the Sacco AYA Cancer Alliance by paddling, walking and running in our own rainy day activities. Hopefully in 2022 we will again ride to Gloucester together. Until then, please mask up!

WELCOME BACK TO CENTRE CHURCH

SEPTEMBER

- 5th: Worship in the Chapel with **Holy Communion**,
Rev. Nancy preaching
- 12th: Worship Returns to the Sanctuary - First **Livestream**
Kick-off Fall Worship Series: CALLED TO BE CHURCH
- 19th: Blessing of the Backpacks for all ages in worship
Welcome Back to Church School
- 26th: Worship and Church School
ANNUAL MEETING immediately followship worship

FALL 2021

2nd Annual Alyssa Conte Build- A-Bed Day

Sat. Sept 18, 2021, 10-2pm

Wakefield Lynnfield United Methodist Church, 273 Vernon St. Wakefield
Volunteers of All Ages and Abilities Welcome. Tools and Lunch provided.

Please RSVP using this [link](#)

This event will be held outside in the church parking lot

Donations welcome at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/alyssas-annual-build-a-bed>

Event Questions? E-mail, call or text Laraine Wilson

(see [flyer](#) on www.centre-church.org)

Church office hours are 9am to 12 pm, Mon.-Fri.

The office will be closed on

Monday, September 6 for Labor Day

Tower Day School is in session beginning September 7, M-F 8am-3pm

