

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Lori Anne Wyckoff, Pastor

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

December 2022

Beloved of Centre Church,

Greetings to you in the name of Emmanuel, the One who was, who is, and who will always be, the Word made flesh who came to dwell among us.

This Advent, as we wait within the mystery for the One who came and is always coming to us, we are exploring the sacredness of all creation. Our theme this year is "Reflecting the Sacred" and I share with you that on my trip to Ireland, immersed in the Celtic spiritual tradition, I rediscovered this deeply faithful Christian knowing that every single "thing" is sacred. I am not learning it for the first time, but rather it feels like an awakening. I am recalling what I knew as a small child. My faith feels like it has burst forth from the confines of society, culture, religion, and polite company and can no longer be shoved into one specific container – rather like those mattresses you order from Amazon that, once unwrapped, are never able to be packaged again.

Throughout the season I invite you to pause daily for a moment of awe and wonder. Reinvigorating our capacity for noticing, for being taken with awe and wonder, is a beginning. It is a steppingstone into the deeper truth of the paschal mystery – we are forever dying and rising with Christ. This is not something we can control or get over. And the learning and growing we do toward God happens as much or more in the dying, the descent, as it does in the rising.

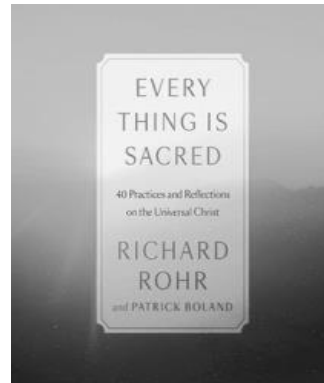
Friends, I am more convinced than ever that being a community of hope depends fully on us living into these two truths. That every single

thing in God's creation, including every single one of us, is sacred, and we, individually and collectively, are forever dying and rising with Christ. Witnessing to the sacred in everything and telling the truth about Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, is the source of our hope. And our hope is a light we shine for ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our community.

Here's to seeing with new eyes the sacred in everything! May we practice, practice, practice until it assumes its rightful place in our very nature; right where God put it in the first place.

Blessed Christmas, Beloved,

Rev. Lori



Advent Book Group

Join Rev. Lori on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 pm or Thursday afternoons from 1 – 2:15 pm for our Advent Book Study. *Every Thing is*

Sacred by Richard Rohr and Patrick Boland will greatly enhance your Advent understanding and experience of "Reflecting the Sacred." The labyrinth will also be available for walking contemplation on Wednesday evenings. See Rev. Lori for a copy of the book. They should be available after Monday, 11/28.



Blue Christmas

Rev. Lori, Larainne Wilson, and Noel Smith invite you to our annual Blue Christmas service. All who are grieving or not feeling up to the hubbub of the season are welcome to join us at our Blue Christmas service. We'll remind each other of what is true and hold it all together with God through prayer, sacred reading, song, and Holy Communion. **Sunday, December 4 at 5:00 pm in the Chapel.**



Decorate the Angel Tree

Join us in decorating our Angel Tree! On Sunday, December 4th, after worship. Decorations will be available. As in past years, Social and Environmental Ministries will be teaming up with Tower Day School to collect gifts for City Mission's Christmas Shop. The tree will already bear Angel tags asking for clothes of a certain size or games for a certain age. The idea is to take a tag and return the UNWRAPPED gift by **December 11th**. If you're already starting your holiday shopping, the most needed items are: Winter coats, sweaters, sweatshirts in large adult sizes as well as hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks and underwear, as well as gift cards to Target, Walmart, Kohl's, CVS, Marshalls, and Walgreens (see Shopping Card buying information).

Thank you in advance for your generous support!



Faith Formation

12/4	Advent II @ 10:00 ~ Youth Group @11:00 Blue Christmas ~ 5:00 pm
12/11	Advent III @10:00~Confirmation Class @11:30
12/18	Advent IV @ 10:00
12/24	Christmas Eve Family Service @ 5:00
12/25	No service~ Merry Christmas!



Holiday Craft Fair THANK YOU

November 5 was a beautiful day for our church fair! The event raised just over \$3900 for the ministry of Centre Church. We received positive feedback from our crafters, and several of them have already said they want to participate again next year. Linda Ladd reported that Social and Environmental Ministries sold about \$500 worth of Equal Exchange and Earth Breeze items. So, it was a good day for The Green Team too! The success of the fair was made possible by our great team of volunteers, including members of Boy Scout Troop #48, who helped with set-up, clean-up, staffing tables, decorating trees, and donating gifts for the raffle, serving food in the kitchen, donating jewelry, and providing baked goods. And of course, we are grateful for folks who supported this fundraiser by attending the fair. It was an all-church effort! Special thanks go to our leadership team:

Margaret Waugh: Festival of Trees Raffle
Barbara Langill: Craft Group and Craft Table
Annmarie Pendola: Bake Table
Peter and Laurel Caputo: Kitchen
Betsy Brown: Jewelry Table

With gratitude,
Debbie Cotting



Thank You!

We had a very successful Apple Pie Sale this year and sold 72 pies! Proceeds from the pie sale will support the mission and ministry of Centre Church. A Big Thank You to all who ordered pies – I hope that you enjoyed them. The Apple team peeled almost 400 apples. The Pie dough team made 144 crusts. The assembly team made 72 pies – pie perfection! The best part of this whole process, to me, is that a whole bunch of people came together over three days and had some time for relaxed conversation with folks that they might not have caught up with lately. People shared their stories, their Thanksgiving plans, and even shared some recipes – lots of cheerful chatter. Thank you for all the work on the pies and for the chatter! ~ Chuck



POINSETTIA ORDER

I would like to order: ____ red poinsettia(s) \$11.00 each
Enclosed is my check for \$_____made payable to Centre
Congregational Church.
These flowers have been given by

In Memory of

In Honor of

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

____ I will take my plant(s) home after one of the services on
Christmas Eve.

____ I wish to donate my plant(s) to the hospitalized,
bereaved or shut-in.

*Plants will be displayed in the sanctuary on the 18th and
Christmas Eve.*

A list of donors will be printed in the bulletin on that day.

Thursday, December 8th is the deadline for placing orders.

**Thurs., 12/1: Advent Book Group
1 - 2:15 pm, Fireside Room**

**Sun., 12/4: Second Advent Worship
10:00 am - Sacred People
Sanctuary and Livestream
Angel Tree Decorating after worship
5:00 pm Blue Christmas ~ Chapel**

**Wed., 12/7: Advent Book Group
7 - 8:30 pm, Narthex**

**Thurs., 12/8: Advent Book Group
1 - 2:25 pm, Fireside Room**

**Sun., 12/11: Third Advent Worship
10:00 am - Sacred Space
Sanctuary and Livestream**

**Wed., 12/14, Advent Book Group
7 - 8:30 pm, Narthex**

**Thurs., 12/15: Advent Book Group
1 - 2:15 pm, Fireside Room**

**Sun., 12/18, Fourth Advent Worship
10:00 am - Sacred Knowing
Sanctuary and Livestream
6:00 pm, Christmas Concert
Sanctuary**

**Wed., 12/21, Advent Book Group
7 - 8:30 pm, Narthex**

**Thurs., 12/22, Advent Book Group
1 - 2:15 pm, Fireside Room**

**Sat., 12/24, Christmas Eve Services
5:00 pm, Worship for all ages
Candles, Lessons and Carols
Sanctuary and Livestream**

**11:00 pm, Worship ~ Candles,
Lessons and Carols, and Holy
Communion
Chapel**

**Sun., 12/25, MERRY CHRISTMAS
*** NO SERVICE *****

