

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

March 2, 2011

Now Is The Time

Now is the time that we prepare to enter the season of Lent.

Now is the time for us to consider, in Lent, our call to discipleship. Jesus calls us to follow him. **Discipleship through Relationships:** Some of us feel that call to mean that we strive, to the best of our ability, to follow Jesus through our dedication to our relationships: taking care to love those given to our care and those to whom we have promised our love.

From the time of our birth we are born into relationships. Those who give us life follow Jesus by loving us unconditionally. Our parents follow Jesus by making sure our daily needs are met. They protect us, make decisions for the sake of our well-being, sacrificing, when necessary, their own desires and needs for our sake, striving to give us the best that they can so that we will have the best chances for happiness.

I know that there were times in my childhood when my parents wished that they could give me more. My mother once expressed it to me saying, "I wish we could give you more material things like some of your friends have." Perhaps that is many a parent's wish, but, I never lacked for the things that really mattered. What mattered most to me was that I knew they were doing the very best that they could to love me like Jesus loved me. My father and mother spent time with my brother and me every chance they had. They included us in everything they did and we never doubted that their world revolved around us. I could count on one hand the number of times we were left in the care of others. Most assuredly our parents, Clyde and Betty Bailey, have been told, by God, something similar to what the master told his most faithful servants in one

Worship Opportunities

Sunday, March 6, 2011

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion

Girl Scout Sunday

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"It Is Good For Us to Be Here!"

Special gospel music by the Choir and Guest Instrumentalists

Children may worship with their families before going to a Faith in Action activity.

Nursery open in Room 14.

Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Entering Lent

7:30 p.m. Worship in the Chapel

Renewal of Baptism and

Disposition of Ashes

Sunday, March 13, 2011

First Sunday of Lent

10:00 A.M. Morning Worship

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey

"Who Is Jesus?"

Matthew 4:1-11

Children's Message: "Lent"

by Rev. Dr. Calvin B. Kool

Children may worship with their families before going to Rotation Workshops.

Nursery open in Room 14.

of Jesus' parables (Matthew 25:21), *"Well done, good and faithful servant! ... Come and share your master's happiness!"*

We are given many opportunities to echo this kind of discipleship in all of our relationships, in marriage, in friendship, in our choices to belong to organizations and associations through which we can serve God.

Discipleship through the Body of Christ:

Jesus calls us to serve him as his disciples by being part of his church, which is the Body of Christ. The Church is one of the primary places, if not the primary place, through which we answer Jesus' call to discipleship. The church is the people who gather for worship, education, and service to God at appointed times and places. It is often in the context of our relationships in the Body of Christ, the church, that we come to more fully realize how we can serve as a disciple.

I realized that call by watching others serve in the Church when I was a child. I admired their dedication and felt the benefits of their work and sacrifice by the way they cared for me and taught and gave me my faith. By example, and by the presence of God in my life, I felt moved to offer myself as a disciple through my involvement in the church's youth fellowship, then as a Sunday School Teacher, and as a volunteer in many of the church's activities. Again, moved by the example of others, I felt moved to dedicate my life's work to shepherding the Body of Christ as a pastor, preacher, and teacher.

Lent is the time in which we are called to examine our own personal call to discipleship and our corporate call, as part of God's people.

Now is the time for us to consider, "Am I, are we, faithfully hearing and following the call of Jesus Christ in all of our relationships and in our role as part of the Body of Christ?"

There have been special times, challenging times, in my life when I have struggled with that question, when I felt God, and the examples of others, speaking to me and telling me that I could do more, perhaps much more, than I had been doing. And, in order to do more, I had to choose to give up something, even something I cherished, in order to do what I felt God was asking me to do.

I ask you now, to consider your call to discipleship. How is God speaking to you? How is Jesus calling you? And, what challenges are the examples of others extending to you?

Returning to the parable in Matthew 25:14-21, I am reminded that our Lord, Jesus, has given his wealth to us. Occasionally, we are challenged to consider how well we are doing using the wealth he

has given us. Perhaps this Lent is that time for you, me, and us.

Read it again, pray, reflect, and then, act.

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Pancake Supper – March 8



Join us Tuesday, March 8 at 5:30 p.m. in Todd Hall for a church-wide Pancake Supper. In addition to a delicious Pancake Supper, we will have Wii stations set up throughout the church for all ages to participate in games and activities such as Wii Bowling, Jeopardy, Rock Band, and Who Wants to be a Millionaire? Come join in the fun.

Rotation Sensation

The children will participate in a Faith in Action Activity on Sunday March 6. After receiving communion with their families, all grades will be heading down to Todd Hall where we will learn about Pennies for Peace and make banks for a special collection throughout Lent.

Our Nursery, located in Room 14, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time and play. Pagers are available for all parents.

Youth Group News

There are no youth group meetings scheduled for Sunday, March 6. We would like all youth group members (5th-12th grades) to come to the Pancake Supper on Tuesday, March 8. Your help is needed to set up, cook, and serve pancakes. Please plan to arrive at 4:45 pm. We will also be setting up Wii stations throughout the church. Come and play!

Both youth groups will meet from 6-7:30 pm on Sunday, March 13. The High School Youth group will meet in the kitchen and the Middle School in Todd Hall.

Children's Book Drive

Clean out your bookshelves and make a difference in a child's life. From March 6-13, we will be collecting new and gently used children's books to be donated to Bagong Kulturang Pinoy (which translates to "New Filipino Culture"). BKP is a non-profit organization that sets up mini libraries and read aloud programs for children in impoverished areas of the Philippines. Its mission is to promote a reading culture to empower children to improve their lives and brighten their futures. Twice a month, BKP holds book packing sessions right here at Centre Church where books are collected, sorted, stamped and packed for their long journey into the hands of children on the other side of the world. There is a box in the narthex for your donations.

Women of the Bible

Educational Ministries is offering a 6 week Lenten Bible Study using the book "Women of the Bible" by Ann Spangler and Jean E. Syswerda. It will be held on Monday evenings from 7-8:00 beginning March 14. Each week we will read about and discuss a different woman from the Bible. You do not have to commit to all 6 six weeks to join, drop ins are welcome. We hope to cap off our Bible Study with a Women's Retreat in the spring. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office if you are interested by March 6 so that we can order the books (\$11.55 each) from Amazon.

Stewardship Is The Key



The time is approaching for the church to begin planning for our upcoming year. The annual stewardship campaign is a "key" part of this process. This year we are focusing on the church building and all it represents about who we are and what we do. Our worship, programs, ministries and presence in the community all depend on and are contained in the building at 5 Summer Street.

Stewardship packets will be available on Sunday March 20th for pickup. We ask that you review the materials and think prayerfully about your stewardship pledge this year. Pledges will be collected during the service on Sunday April 10th.

Time Change



**Set clocks ahead one hour
on Sat., March 12.**

News From Around the Parish

We extend our love and sympathy to Betsy Brown and her family upon the death of her mother, Jane Thompson on February 15. Her funeral was held at Centre Church on February 19.

Laser Quest

Both youth groups will be heading to Laser Quest in Danvers on Sunday, March 20 from 6-8:30 for a night of non-stop laser tag. Pick up and drop off will be at Laser Quest. Please arrive promptly at 6 p.m. so players can register their codenames and be ready for the first game. No meal will be provided, so plan to eat dinner before you come. Friends are welcome to attend. They will need to fill out a permission slip and medical form (available from your leader or on the church website www.centre-church.org). The cost is \$20.00 and includes 4 games. Please let us know by Friday, March 11 if you plan to attend.

My Brother's Table

This past Thursday, 5 youth and 3 adults volunteered at My Brother's Table in Lynn to help prepare, serve and clean up for the luncheon meal for 120 guests. Thanks to a very generous donation, we not only brought cans of soup, but a variety of non-perishable food for their pantry.

We Thank Our Volunteers

March 6, 2011: Head Usher-Linda Ladd. Provide Altar Flowers- Margaret Waugh. Deliver Altar Flowers-Judith Doe and Randy Russell. Coffee Hour-Paul and Sue Gustavsen. Lights Out beginning March 4-Steven Richards.

March 13, 2011: Head Usher-Bruce Weaver. Lay Reader-Diana Gerbick. Provide Altar Flowers-Grayce Kushmerek. Deliver Altar Flowers-Barbara Becker and Chuck Cotting. Lights Out beginning March 11-Phil Johnson.

MISSIONS PANTRY: Our ongoing collections include Aluminum Can Pull Tabs, Used Eyeglasses, Non-Perishable Food, Travel Size Toiletries, and Used Cell Phones (numbers erased with charger).

Our Opportunities

Sun. Mar. 6	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:20 am 11:30 pm 6:00 pm	Holy Communion - Sanctuary Nursery – Room 14 Children’s Activity - Todd Confirmation – Library Youth Groups - Basement
Mon. Mar. 7	7:30 pm	Alanon & Alateen – FR & Library
Tues. Mar. 8	5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Pancake Supper – Todd Hall Membership – Pastor’s Office
Ash Wednesday Mar. 9	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside Worship Service - Chapel
Thurs Mar. 10	10:00 am -----	Caregivers – Fireside Room No Choir Rehearsal this week
Fri. Mar. 11	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. Mar. 12		Set Clocks Ahead One Hour
Sun. Mar. 13	10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery/Rotations Confirmation/Youth Choir Youth Groups (Gr.5-12)-Basement
Mon. Mar. 14	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Women’s Bible Study– 2 nd Fl. Ofc. Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Tues. Mar. 15	7:30 pm	Diaconate – Pastor’s Office
Wed. Mar. 16	7:00 pm	Women’s 12-Step Mtg. – Fireside
Thur. Mar. 17	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri., Mar. 18	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Olive Wood at Woodbriar, 90 West St., Wilmington 01887; Barbara Bean at Daniels House, 59 Middlesex Avenue, Reading, 01867; Marion Edkins, Denis Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Renaissance Gardens, Peabody; Betty Conn, Al Farnsworth, and Art Pyburn at home; Louise Allen, Marion Barnes, Glady Davis, Carolyn Furey, and Hal Holappa. We also remember in our prayers Andy Gehret and Bob Trayers who are in Afghanistan.

The Church Office will be open from 9-3 Monday-Friday
The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of March 14

Stewardship Fundraiser



Lobster Roll Order Form

The snow is melting, and the temperatures are moderating. This means that Bob and Myrna’s Famous Lobster Rolls will be back for sale soon. Mark your calendars to order early for pick up on Sunday, April 10th after church. **LOBSTER ROLL ORDER: (\$10 each).**

Please make check payable to Centre Congregational Church and return with this form to the church office.

Name _____ How Many? _____