

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

March 20, 2013

Holy Week: Excitement and Challenge

We are on the threshold of entering the most exciting and the most challenging week of the Christian Year - Palm Sunday, Passion Sunday, and Holy Week.

Most of us love Palm Sunday, with the music, the Centre Church Choir's beautiful Cantata, "Upon This Rock" and Palms. In fact, many of us have great memories of going to church on Palm Sunday, receiving the Palms, making crosses out of them during the service, waving them, having sword fights with them, taking them to relatives and friends unable to attend church, etc.

In my previous parish I encouraged people to wear attractive hats on Palm Sunday. That added to the excitement and joy of the day's remembrance of Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem. It also gave some permission to get a bit carried away, dusting off the hats that women wore to church once upon a time and others the chance just to wear their favorite hat. It reminds us of how great respect for Jesus and his ministry had spread throughout the land among the common people. People were so moved by him that they were ready to follow him as a leader who might become King of the Roman Empire. In showing their respect and joy over Jesus they quickly adapted, taking off their cloaks, putting them on the ground and taking palms off the trees and waving them to show their joy.

Today, we would probably use fireworks, sparklers, air horns, colorful balloons, marching bands, our coats, wave our hats, limbs of trees, whatever we have at our disposal. We might put colorful ribbons around trees, wear colorful bracelets to demonstrate our respect for Jesus and our desire

to publicly announce that we are one of his followers.

We would also at least privately, if not publicly, pray and implore Jesus to lead us into a new way of life, less tyranny and political oppression, and more respect for "the least of these."

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

March 24, 2013 – 10:00 a.m.

Cantata by the Senior Choir
and Guest Musicians
"Upon This Rock"

Children may worship with their families
for the entire service. Nursery open in Room 11.

Maundy Thursday

March 28, 2013 – 7:30 p.m.

The Office of Tenebrae with Holy Communion



Easter Sunrise Service

March 31, 2013 – 6:30 a.m.

Newhall Park, Lynnfield

Easter Service of Morning Worship

March 31, 2013 – 10:00 a.m.

Children may worship with their families
for the entire service. Nursery Open in Room 11.

Yes, I would encourage such a celebration of Jesus, especially on Palm Sunday because I love celebrating the presence of Jesus' unconditional love in my life, and the amazing ways that he calls us to serve him, giving our all, making us more like the people God wants us to be. I love celebrating Jesus as the one who comes to us as God in human form to show us what God is like and what God wants of us. To serve him, just follow the example of Jesus, showing extravagant love to all of God's people.

The challenging part of Jesus' journey is to follow him all the way to the cross, to boldly proclaim that we are his disciples while others laugh at us as religious fanatics. It is hard to follow Jesus when he asks us to choose between worldly treasures and the treasures in the Kingdom of Heaven. Disciples of Jesus were threatened with arrest, even death. Followers of Jesus all over the world have been ridiculed, arrested, murdered for standing against oppression, slavery, and genocide. Hopefully, none of us ever have to face such challenging circumstances and choices.

Holy Week is a good time for us to ponder our spiritual depth, breadth, and to remember what Jesus did for us in his crucifixion, and what others have done in order to follow Jesus' call to love God and neighbor. Jesus' amazing act of love, giving himself for the sake of our sins so that we would have life today and into eternity, is the greatest love of all.

I am reminded of the thousands who have died for the sake of our freedom, sacrificing their lives so that we would have a free country. I am reminded of parents who have sacrificed for us so that we would have a better life. I am reminded of first responders who put themselves in harms' way to save life and property every day. I am reminded of people who share a kidney, a lung, bone marrow, so that another may have life. Even something as simple as donating blood every eight weeks, saves lives every day.

Holy Week's purpose invites us to reconsider our discipleship to Jesus Christ. How are we following him? Can we follow him more? Can we step up our commitment to him even when it is going to cost us more to do so, in time, dedication, giving up something in our life that we enjoy and cherish, volunteering?

If you, like me, have had moments in your life when you were so grateful to God that you said you would do anything to show your gratitude, or when you bargained with God that you would do anything in return for an answered prayer, then, think of it again.

Let us swallow our pride, ask for God's help, and pray, "Dear Lord, what can I do to follow you, to become a disciple you can be proud of, serving you, no matter the cost?"

I was a farmer (when I was a child) and I remember and cherish some of the agricultural sayings of Jesus. I especially like this one, "*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*" (Luke 9:62)

This is what Jesus asks of us when we say we want to follow him. Will we put our hands, hearts, minds, and souls to the plow, to discipleship in the Lord's service, and not look back, not make bargains, but go forward knowing the promises of God will be enough reward. Can we fully dedicate ourselves to the journey of Holy Week trusting in the Lord, Jesus, to show us the way, provide what we need, and find our reward simply in the blessing of doing what the Lord asks of us?

Yours in Christ, Dennis

Sunday Morning With the Children

Our Nursery, located in Room 11, is open each week for infants through age 3. Experienced staff and volunteers are on hand to welcome children for story time and play. The nursery is now open at 9 am.

3-5 Year Old Class

Children ages 3 to 5 are invited to join us each Sunday at 10am in Room 14 for a class just for this age group. There is time for free play, a Bible Story and a craft and/or activity to help reinforce the story. On Easter Sunday, March 31, there is not a class scheduled. Children are invited to play in the nursery or attend worship with their family.

Rotation Sensation

There are no Rotation Workshops scheduled for March 24 or March 31

March 24 Palm Sunday Children in grades 1-8th are invited to attend worship and enjoy the Cantata sung by the senior choir

March 31 Easter Sunday attend worship with your family

Confirmation

- Sunday, March 24 - Confirmation Luncheon with Rev. Bailey and mentors at 11:30 am.
- Thursday, March 28 - Maundy Thursday service 7:30 pm
- Friday, March 29 - Please meet at the church at 7 pm for a special communion class led by our head Deacon, Linda Ladd. There will also be a brief Good Friday service led by Judie Potter.

Easter Plants

Place your order for an Easter Plant by calling or emailing the church office. 781-334-3050 or office@centre-church.org.

The deadline for orders is 10am Friday, March 22.



Picture with the Easter Bunny!

What could be more fun for your child than having their picture taken with the Easter Bunny? Nothing this side of a jelly bean!

Date: Saturday, March 23

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Cost: First picture - \$10.00

Additional Packages Available

Taken By: Priestley Photog. Studios

Appointments available or walk in that morning.

Call 781-635-6225 for more information.

By the way, jelly beans will be served!

Youth Groups

Sunday, March 24 Laser Quest 5-8 pm Drop off and pick up at Laser Quest in Danvers.

Sunday, March 31 Easter Sunday no youth groups.



Deacons' Easter Breakfast

What better way to start your Easter Sunday than with an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet? Enjoy eggs, bacon, sausage, all kinds of pancakes, fresh fruit salad and your favorite breakfast beverages.

The Deacons will be serving this eggs-cellent breakfast in Richards Hall between the Easter Sunrise Service at Newhall Park and the 10am service in the sanctuary. Please come directly from the early service or stop in by 9:30am. Hop on down for a delicious and sociable start to Easter Sunday! Suggested donation is \$10/person or \$25/family. Please sign up in the Narthex after church. All proceeds benefit the repair and maintenance of our church organ.

– Your faithful Diaconate

Save the Date!

Vacation Bible School will be offered for children age 4-10 years July 15-19.

Maundy Thursday Service 7:30pm March 28

The Maundy Thursday worship service is one of the most meaningful Christian services of the church year. In this Communion service, we remember the Last Supper as Jesus shared it with his disciples. We follow the ceremony of Tenebrae, by gradually extinguishing candles while reading Bible passages depicting the events which led to Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. Eventually we hear the story in music, as we remain in total darkness, before leaving in silence. This service highlights the emotional journey of Holy Week and paves the way for the joy of Easter.

From the Mailbox

To My Centre Church Family,

Thank you so much for all your well wishes, flowers, cards, fruit, and prayers. My hip replacement surgery went very well and I am back at home for my recovery. I just want to express my appreciation for the care and concern from everyone at church. I very much miss being there and look forward to coming back in 4-6 weeks, with my new and improved hip.

Blessings, Barbara Langill

The Third Time is a Charm!

Snow storms and medical emergencies are behind us. Once again the Get Together Wheel has invited Linda Gillon to share her love and knowledge of samplers. You are all welcome to join us in the Fireside Room on Tuesday, March 26. Come for coffee and dessert at 12:30. The program will begin at 1:00. If you have a special sampler you would like to share, please bring it with you.

Can & Bottle Fundraiser for Joni & Friends

Please continue to drop off your cans and bottles to help raise funds for Joni and Friends, a nonprofit Christian organization focused on helping persons with disabilities.

Lights Out:

March 22-28 – Charlie Wills

March 29-April 4– Dave Bjorkman

April 5 – April 11 – Drew Taylor

Our Opportunities

Sun. Mar 24 <u>PALM SUNDAY</u>	9:00 am 10:00 am 10 :00 am 11:30 am 11:30 am 5-8	Nursery – Room 11 Morning Worship – Sanctuary 3-5 Year Old Class Confirmation –Kitchen Youth Choir – Choir Room Youth at Laser Quest
Mon. Mar 25	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. Mar 26	12:30 pm	Get-Together Wheel - Fireside
Wed Mar 27 Thurs. Mar 28	7:00 pm 7:30 pm 8:30 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – FR Maundy Thursday Service – Sanct. Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 29	10:30 am 7:00 pm	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office Confirmation Class
Sun. Mar 31 <u>EASTER</u>	6:30 am 7:30-9:30 9:00 am 10:00 am	Sunrise Service – Newhall Park Easter Breakfast Nursery – Rm 11 Morning Worship - Sanctuary
Mon. April 1	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 - Todd Alanon/Alateen – FR & Libr.
Wed., April 3	8:30 am 7:00 pm	Bread & Roses - Kitchen Women’s 12 Step Meeting - FR
Thurs. April 4	6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Stewardship Comm. - Library Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. April 5	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of April 1.

Our prayers are with Barbara Langill and Elaine Pyburn recuperating at home; Arthur Pyburn at Hunt Center, 90 Lindall S., Danvers 01924; Marion Barnes at Hawthorn Hill, 15 Kirkbride Dr., Danvers 01923; Ray and Arliene Thorn, Helen Butcher, Marion Edkins and Priscilla Kress at Continuing Care at Brooksby; In addition we pray for Judy Embleton and Tom Vancor.

We remember in our prayers Michael Bruce in the Far East and Dan Neary in Afghanistan.
