

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Dr. Dennis C. Bailey, Pastor, Pastor@Centre-Church.org

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We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

February 26, 2014

On the Verge of Lent

We are on the verge of entering the Christian Season of Lent. It begins with Ash Wednesday, March 5th. Our service of Renewal of Baptism takes place in the Chapel at 7:30 pm, followed by Imposition of Ashes for those who wish it.

Many in the worldwide church attend services in the morning at which they are reminded of how our human nature is sinful. Ashes are placed on the foreheads of worshippers to remind them of our fragile and sinful natures, how if we practice our piety in order to convince others that we are religious for religious sake, we are hypocrites.

Ash Wednesday reminds us of how we need to be faithful to God in all of the places where no one notices. It reminds us to live in godly ways in order to please God first and foremost.

Ash Wednesday also serves to remind us to do a thorough self-examination of our spiritual life.

I go to my primary care physician annually for a thorough physical exam. I do so because I want to know if there are things going on inside me that I am not aware of and need to tend to. I also go to be reminded of how my daily lifestyle affects my well-being. My doctor talks with me about what I need to do in order to be healthier (you know, lose weight and lower my cholesterol!)

A good physical by our primary care physician is one good way to begin Lent.

A good spiritual examination is also a good way to begin Lent.

What about it? Do you profess to love your neighbor, and then curse someone with whom you live and/or work, under your breath?

Do you say that you talk with that relative you say you love on a regular basis but, in fact, do not, except when they call you?

Worship Schedule

March 2, 2014

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion

Message by the Rev. Dr. Dennis Bailey & Barbara Langill, Dir. of Christian Education

Nursery in Room 11

3-5 Year Old Class in Room 14

Older Children in Church

March 5, 2014 Ash Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Worship Service in Chapel

Renewal of Baptism

March 9, 2014

First Sunday in Lent

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Message by the Stewardship Committee

Nursery in Room 11

3-5 Year Old Class in Room 14

Grades 1-8 – Rotation Workshops

Do you say that you are a disciple of Jesus but do not consistently talk with Jesus in prayer?

Do you like to sing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," but treat him like a stranger when he calls you to a position of responsibility and leadership in his church, or when he gives you the opportunity to help a stranger, a neighbor, or a friend?

Jesus has given his all for us. What do we give to Jesus? Do we give our all, or just a little of our spare time or our spare change, and then, do so reluctantly?

Early on in my life, while I was busy trying to make the grade in college, I continued to drive the hour home on weekends in order to teach 5th and 6th grade Sunday School. It was not easy to prepare and teach the class, while trying to keep up with my college work. I felt, though, that I had to maintain my dedication to serve the Lord even when it was not easy. It was a very rewarding experience and kept me in touch with the people of God in my church who gave me my faith. I attended worship and taught Sunday School every week while in college, no matter how convenient or inconvenient it was for me.

It was a time in my life when I was welcoming of God's word and presence in my life, especially as I was beginning to feel that God was calling me to service in the Christian Ministry. I now know, that if had not maintained my dedication during that time in my life, consistently listening to God's word, giving myself to teaching children about Jesus, I would have likely missed the greatest opportunity of my life, to be ordained a minister and to meet and serve with the wonderful and loving people of the three churches and communities where I have been called to serve.

So, I ask you, how and where is God calling you? How will your increased discipleship and service to God bless you, but also, through you, many others?

In this Lent, I pray that you will devote yourself to a closer walk with Jesus Christ, and, therefore, perhaps find the greatest opportunity of your life, and experience the greatest fulfillment of your life.

You might start by asking yourself, "What are the important things in my life?"

Family
Job
Housework
Watching TV
Playing video games
School Work

And where, in that list, is the practice of your faith? Does it even make the list?

The Prophet Joel in the Old Testament offers challenging words for Lent: He urges us to return to the Lord. He urges us to not simply serve the Lord with our outward appearances, but with our hearts. Let our hearts break for the Lord where his heart breaks for people in the world. (see Joel 2)

In everything you do, remember the God who is your creator and considers you unique and special, knows your name, your every thought, your history, your present, and your future. May you give yourself to that future. May we all.

Yours in Christ,

Dennis

The Stewardship Campaign is kicking off on Sunday, March 2. There will be a packet for everyone after church on that day. If you are unable to pick yours up after church, the information will be mailed to you. Enclosed will be a pledge card for our next fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2014 and runs through the following June.

- Carrie Pericola for the Stewardship Comm.



Set Clocks Ahead One Hour
On Saturday, March 8

Confirmation

The Confirmation Class will be meeting at 8:30 am on Sunday, March 2 for a special communion class. They will then help serve communion during worship. They will be meeting with Rev. Bailey and their mentors at 11:30 am in the kitchen.

Members of the Confirmation Class will assist in the Ash Wednesday service on March 5 and on March 7/8 the Confirmation Retreat will be held at Grotonwood.

There is no Confirmation Class on Sunday, March 9.



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 open at 9:45 am.

3-5 year old class

Children ages 3 to 5 are invited to join us each Sunday in March at 10 am 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.

Rotation Sensation

There are no workshops on Sunday, March 2. Children in grades 1-8th are invited to remain in worship for a family-friendly service on the first Sunday of every month. The PreK-K class will meet at 10 am in Room 14.

In March our focus will be learning about Lent. We will also be baking muffins to sell after worship. All proceeds will go to Heifer International.



Spring Forward On March 8

Youth Group News

The youth group schedule has been revised. The updated version will be mailed home and will also be posted on the church web site. On March 2, we will be meeting at 6-7:30pm in the church kitchen.

There are no youth groups scheduled March 9.

News From Around the Parish

Our congratulations to Dan and Kerilyn Johnson of Charlotte, NC upon the birth of a son, Ames Phillip Johnson on February 14, 2014. His proud big brother is Evan (22 months old) and his very proud grandparents are Phil and Sue Johnson.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

Sunday, March 2:

Ushers-Margaret Waugh, Gage Whittier, Jeff Law, Linda Ladd, and Confirmation Class.
Lay Reader-Raden Sorli Hawk.
Provide Altar Flowers-Margaret Waugh.
Deliver Altar Flowers-Laurel Caputo and Marian Orfeo.
Lights Out Beginning Feb. 28-Dave Bjorkman.

Ash Wednesday, March 5:

Ushers-Margaret Waugh and Mary McCarthy.
Readers-Maggie Weaver and Matthew Seelig.

Sunday, March 9:

Ushers-Margaret Waugh, Al Johnson, Karen and Paul Harrington.
Provide Altar Flowers-Grayce Kushmerek.
Deliver Altar Flowers-Barbara Ericson and Margaret Waugh.
Lights Out beginning March 7-Bill Seelig.

Our Opportunities

Sun. March 2	8:30 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Confirmation Class Holy Communion – Sanctuary Nursery & 3-5 Yr. Old Class Older Children in Church Confirmation Class Youth Group - Basement
Mon. Mar 3	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 – Todd Hall Alanon/Alateen – Fireside & Libr.
Tues. Mar 4	7:30 pm	Deacons – Pastor’s Office
Ash Wed. Mar 5	8:30 am 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Bread & Roses - Kitchen Women’s 12 Step Mtg. – Fireside Ash Wednesday Worship - Chapel
Thur. Mar 6	6:30 pm 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Cub Scouts Blue & Gold Banquet Stewardship Comm - Library Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 7	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Fri-Sat 8/9 Time Change		Confirmation Retreat– Grotonwood City Reach – Boston (Gr. 10-12)
Sun. Mar 9	10:00 am 10:00 am 10:00 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery & 3/5 Yr Old Class Rotation Sensation
Mon. Mar 10	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Boy Scout Troop #48 - Todd Alanon/Alateen – FR & Library
Tues. Mar 11	7:00 pm	Membership – Fireside Room
Wed. Mar 12	7:00 pm	Women’s 12 Step Mtg - Fireside
Thurs. Mar 13	7:30 pm	Senior Choir – Choir Room
Fri. Mar 14	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office

Our prayers are with Andrew Warburg at Beverly Hospital; Al Farnsworth and Jean Card at Rosewood Nursing and Rehab Center, 22 Johnson St., W. Peabody, 01960; Doris Nelson and Roger Lauzon recuperating at home; Marion Barnes, Helen Butcher, Marge Cole, Ginny Davis, Marion Edkins, Rose Giunta, Parker Holloway, and Ray and Arliene Thorn. We remember in our prayers William Lafferty and Dan Neary who are serving in Afghanistan.

The Church Office is Open 9-3 Mon-Fri.

The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of March 10.