

TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Estelle Margarones, Interim Pastor, RevEstelle@centre-church.org

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Barbara Langill, Interim Director of Faith Formation

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear, Secretary

We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church

JANUARY

We shared a very beautiful Christmas season at Centre Church! During the weeks of Advent, many, many loving hearts and helpful hands joined together to praise God in spoken word, drama, song, and with candle lightings. Together, we shared the stories; welcomed visitors in our midst; were treated to a glorious children's pageant; enjoyed the Choir Christmas Concert, held two services Christmas Eve and observed a moving worship service on Christmas Day. Hope, peace, joy, and love are all living at Centre Church!

I have a plaque that says, "The real star in Bethlehem wasn't in the sky". The real star in Bethlehem is Jesus. He is the light of the world and the light of our lives. With God, transformation isn't only possible, it's inevitable. As Christians, it's our job...and our joy... to reflect God's light into the world. Christmas Day is behind us, but the Christmas Season continues.

Dr. Howard Thurman wrote the following poem.

"The Real Work of Christmas"

*When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among brothers, To make music in the heart.*

This is the goal of the church and, ultimately, our goal as Christians. This year, let's resolve to do the work of Christmas all year long!

It's the new year...the time that we traditionally focus on what we'll change. What can you leave behind? What no longer serves you? What have you outgrown? Let these things go to make room for what serves, what fits, and what you really want. Take a few moments to consider change. Then, try a new spin on New Year's Resolutions. See if you can list more intangibles than things. For example, can you pass along kindness? Can you help someone every day? Can you do the work Christ inspired--all those things listed in Howard Thurman's poem? (*Hint: Yes, you can!*)

Blessings,

Rev. Estelle Margarones

In the Sanctuary

January 8, 2017

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion
Sermon by Jeffrey Langill
Nursery (up to the age of 5)
Older Children in the Library.

January 15, 2017

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Sermon by the Rev. Estelle Margarones
Nursery (up to age 5)
Older Children in Worship

January 22, 2017

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Sermon by the Rev. Estelle Margarones
Nursery and Godly Play

January 29, 2017

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Sermon by the Rev. Estelle Margarones
Nursery and Godly Play

Sunday Morning with the Children

Nursery

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.

Older Children

Sunday, January 8: After Children's Time, children in preschool through 8th grade are invited to join us in the library for a special group project. We will be creating an art project to be auctioned off at Trivia Night.

Sunday, January 15

There are no Godly Play classes scheduled. Children and youth are invited to attend worship with their families. Children 5 years old and younger are welcome to go to the nursery for story and playtime.

Sundays, January 22 & 29

Godly Play for children PreK-5th Grade.

Pageant Sunday

Many thanks to Linda Ladd and Lisa Gerbick for putting together our Godly Play Christmas Pageant. Joyful Noise did a wonderful job with their song "On the Road to Bethlehem."

Heifer

Thank you to all who supported the Heifer Marketplace by purchasing ornaments or living gifts. We raised just over \$1,800.00

Let's Fill the Ark

Be sure to bring your filled Heifer Ark bank back to church on Sunday, January 8. We will collect and bless the arks during the worship service.

Youth Group



Both Middle School and High School Youth Groups will be meeting on Sunday, January 8th from 6:00-7:30. We will be having an "Epiphany Party". Please bring a \$10 gift for Yankee Swap.

We Could Use Your Help!

On Saturday, January 14, Giv2, our ecumenical youth group, will be volunteering at Mission of Deeds in Reading, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide basic home necessities, without charge, to those in need. They serve men, women, and children of all ages. Over 70 percent of the households helped have children under 18, and most live at or below the federal poverty level. For the next 2 weeks we will be collecting items they are most in need of:

- Twin bed linens-sheets, blankets & comforters
- Pots and pans & small kitchen appliances

To round out our month, we will go Snow Tubing on Sunday, January 29.

News From Around the Parish

Our love and sympathy are extended to Ann Smith and her family upon the death of her husband, John, on November 22.

Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness - the cards that held get well wishes and thoughts, the beautiful delivery of flowers and the kind prayers. I hope to see you soon.
- Nancy Miller

Dear Centre Church friends,

I am very grateful for your expressions of sympathy after my mother's passing. Your cards, emails, and conversations were all meaningful to me, as was the beautiful poinsettia plant. A special thanks to Rev. Estelle for her outreach and kind words of remembrance at Sunday service.

Sincerely, Marian Orfeo

Get Together Wheel

We will be meeting on January 24 at 1 pm in the Fireside Room. Please come to share some fun. This is the month that we bring in items for the Special Care unit for babies at Melrose Wakefield Hospital. A former member, Rhoda Buttrick, started this tradition many years ago to help out the preemies and other little ones. We continue this in honor and remembrance of Rhoda. If you are not a member of Wheel but would like to help – wonderful! You could pick up an item while shopping. Just put a tag on it for Get Together Wheel. Our donations are always appreciated by the hospital. Wheel is open to all the women of the church. Please come out of the cold and enjoy the warmth and friendship you will find here.

Blessings, Donna Marino

Ministry Teams Celebration



You're invited to our all- church potluck supper on **Saturday, March 4 at 4:00 PM.** Please join us in celebrating our various church ministries. Bring your favorite dish and enjoy some heavenly food and fellowship. Looking forward to seeing everyone. Signup sheets will be available in the Narthex starting in February.

Painting Project

Our fundraising effort is off to a great start! As of Dec. 26, we've received donations totaling just over \$20,000. So, we are 1/3 of the way toward our goal of \$60,000, which is the amount we need to finish painting the church. We thank those who have contributed and hope that others will do so soon. Let's make a New Year's resolution to complete the painting of the church this spring!

Debbie Cotting, Stewardship Ministries

Donations Needed

Have your children outgrown their baby toys? Education Ministries is excited to announce that we are in the process of creating a new nursery space, dedicated to infants and toddlers. We need your help to stock it with toys and baby play items. If you have gently used items that you could donate, we would love to hear from you. Please call Barbara Langill in the church office. Any items that are not used in the nursery will be donated to Cradles to Crayons.

Search Update

The Search Team has been meeting since September and is currently in the midst of working on the church profile. On December 18th, the Search Team was officially commissioned during the worship service. They then lit the Advent Candles.



Due to Christmas, the deadline for returning your pastoral search surveys **has been extended!** Please return your survey to the collection box in the narthex or mail it in to the church office by January 13th. Your response is vital in helping the Search Team to craft the church profile, which will attract the next settled pastor of Centre Church.

The following members of Centre Church are on Search: David Bjorkman, Sarah Crosbie, Ann Decker, Linda Ladd, Jeff Langill, Jeff Law, Kathi Martin, Randy Russell and Bruce Weaver.

The congregation affirmed the following at the Commissioning: "We pledge as a gathered community of faith to be patient with you and to respect your need to be confidential in your task. We recognize that your work will take time and that you are expending a great deal of effort on our behalf as a church. We pray for you and offer you our support and encouragement during this time. We promise this in the hope and belief that you will be led by the Spirit as you seek a new pastor to minister with us."

Thank You!

What a beautiful display the poinsettias made during the Christmas season! The Flower Committee would like to thank Plantscape Designs and Joe Gallo for supplying the plants. Thanks also to those who donated the poinsettias and the team of volunteers who delivered them to the shut-ins and bereaved in our church family. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated.

Laurel Caputo

Saturday, February 4th 6:30 PM



TRIVIA NIGHT/ SILENT AUCTION - TICKETS ARE JUST \$15 AND INCLUDE appetizers, finger foods, desserts, wine, beer... and FUN!
Please call 781-334-3050 to reserve your spot by Tuesday, JAN 31st at noon.

Individual and Team reservations accepted.

Silent Auction items include:

Red Sox tickets, restaurant gift cards, artwork, vacation getaways, event tickets, & lots more!

Silent Auction Donations!

We are looking for donations for our Silent Auction on Trivia night.

Saturday February 4, 2017 @ 6:30 PM

Some items have already been donated: a pontoon boat tour of Pillings Pond, an autographed CD by the musical group Heart, a Tour for Four of the Peabody Essex Museum, a \$100 restaurant gift card, and four home-made pies.

Donations could be sports or theatre tickets; vacation getaways; gift baskets of all kinds; rounds of golf; gift cards for restaurants, shops, or activities; autographed books or CDs; home services like yard clean-ups or room painting; home-baked goods like pies or cakes; pictures or photographs; or anything else of value.

All proceeds go directly to the Centre Church Operating Budget!

A BIG Thank You to all donors for your generosity.

Your donations make this Silent Auction our largest and most successful fundraiser for Centre Church.

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Our Opportunities

Sun. Jan. 8	10:00 am 11:30 am 6:00 pm	Holy Communion - Sanctuary Nursery – Room 11 PreK-Gr8 – Library Missions & Outreach – Sanctuary Youth Group - Downstairs
Tues. Jan. 10	4:00 pm 7:00 pm	Care Team – Pastor’s Office Council – Pastor’s Office
Thurs. Jan. 12	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Planning Workshop - Library Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Jan. 13	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sat. Jan. 14	9am-12pm	Youth - Mission of Deeds, Reading
Sun. Jan. 15	10:00 am 11:15 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery (up to age 5)– Room 11 Older Children in Church Deacons – Pastor’s Office
Mon. Jan. 16	-----	Office Closed – ML King Day
Thurs. Jan. 19	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Jan. 20	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun, Jan. 22	10:00 am 6:00 pm	Morning Worship - Sanctuary Nursery and Godly Play Youth Group - Downstairs
Tues. Jan. 24	1:00 pm	Get Together Wheel – Fireside Rm.
Thurs. Jan. 26	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Planning Workshop - Library Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Fri. Jan. 27	10:30 am	Bible Study – 2 nd Floor Office
Sun. Jan. 29	10:00 am	Morning Worship – Sanctuary Nursery and Godly Play Youth Group – Snow Tubing

Prayer List: We lift up Dotty Whittier for healing. She has been diagnosed with melanoma. We lift up Gary Bayer (Jenny Waugh Bayer’s father-in-law) for comfort and peace as he is in hospice care in Israel. We also lift up the Waugh and Bayer families and Capt. Michael Bruce, USMC, who is serving in Iraq.

Church Office Hours are 9-3 Monday – Friday.
The next *Tower Notes* will be the week of February 1.

In addition to our scheduled church activities, Centre Church hosts Boy Scout Troop #48, Cub Pack #48, Girl Scouts, Alanon, Alateen, Women’s AA, BKP Book Packing Group, Essex Society of Genealogists, and the New England Pastoral Institute Counseling Services. Please feel free to contact the church office if you would like more information about any of these activities or groups
