

# TOWER NOTES

Centre Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)

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The Rev. Nancy Rottman, Pastor

The Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland, Pastor Emeritus

Laraine Wilson, Director of Faith Formation

Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director

Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School

Susan Spear & Barbara Langill, Secretaries

*We Welcome Everyone: An "Open and Affirming" Church*

**January 27, 2020**

## Caretakers of the Way

Humans leave traces of connection. The British naturalist Robert MacFarlane has written "that once you begin to notice them, you see that the landscape is still webbed with paths and footpaths .... Pilgrim paths, green roads, drove roads, corpse roads, trods, leys, dykes, drongs, sarns, snickets –say the names of paths out loud and at speed and they become a poem or rite – holloways, bostles, shutes, driftways, lichways, ridings, halterpaths, cartways, carneys, causeways, herepaths."

(Robert MacFarlane, *The Old Ways*, p. 13)

Faith too is a path of connection but unless the way is practiced it disappears. Stewardship is the practice that generates and regenerates the path of faith. Stewardship is less about sharpening our pencils and more about sharpening our tools for trail maintenance, equipping ourselves to be caretakers of the path connecting us to our Creator and guiding our steps.

Robert MacFarlane reports that in the 19th century small sickles were hung on stiles or posts where paths connecting communities began. Walkers would pick up the sickle or hook to lop off branches as they walked. They would then leave the 'hook' on the stile or post at the end of the path so a walker going in the opposite direction could do the same. This shared caretaking of the path benefited each individual walker but also the larger community.

The early Christian movement was known internally as well as to its persecutors as the way (Acts 9). The life of faith is a way of being human, a way of interpreting, a way of practicing, a way of living. In December, several of you found your way onto the labyrinth to pray with your feet. If only one of you had found meaning, then having the labyrinth would be worthwhile. But the story is even bigger than that. It turns out we are caretakers of the path that brought meaning to others as well. Individuals who were here for a meeting found their way onto the labyrinth. We didn't keep this amazing tool for ourselves, but instead shared it with all who wanted to connect to our Creator and find guidance on the way.

As we journey towards the reign of God, we are following in the tracks of others, ways walked by Jesus himself, paths as ancient as Abraham and Sarah. Today we are not just signposts pointing the way but the caretakers, the stewards of that way. Come and join in the way.

Together, we are on the way,

*Rev. Nancy*

### In the Sanctuary

**February 2, 2020**

Morning Worship  
Nursery Care  
Creation Care Class

**February 9**

Morning Worship/Communion  
Nursery Care  
Church School Classes

**February 16**

Morning Worship  
Nursery Care  
Church School Classes



### **Breakfast – February 2nd**

Please join us for bacon, eggs, French toast, pancakes, fruit salad, juice and coffee before church on Sunday, February 2nd from 8:30-9:45 am. We will be serving up our delicious

breakfast to raise money for the Organ Maintenance Fund. The suggested donation is \$10/person or \$25/family.

### News from around the Parish

Our love and sympathy go out to the family and friends of Ruth Hyer who died on January 23. Arrangements have not yet been finalized.



Thank you to Centre Church and Judith Doe for the lovely flowers she delivered on Sunday. I have a broken ankle which will keep me wheelchair bound for another couple of weeks.

Many thanks for thinking of me.  
Janet Everson

Thank you to Dorsey and Lynn Holappa for the beautiful bouquet of flowers that brightened up the office all week.

## **Mission & Outreach Ministries**

The Missions and Outreach Ministries Team hosted coffee on January 26, serving Fair Trade coffee, tea and treats.

### Haven From Hunger

On Sunday Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, we blessed a Green Wagon full of food collected for HFH and then delivered it when we served dinner there on Monday Jan 27<sup>th</sup>. Our next volunteer date is on Monday Feb 24. Please sign up on the bulletin board across from the Fireside kitchen. Suggested donation items for February are:

**Donation for February is:**  
Canned and boxed meals  
(stews, chili, mac & cheese)  
*Collected in the Missions closet*

### Heifer International

Centre Church's 2019 framed Ark Award arrived and has been hung in the Narthex along with our existing Arks and certificates, on a beautifully re-designed display. THANK you to Scott DeSantis and Chuck Cotting for preparing, painting, measuring, re-measuring, planning and installing this new format for the Centre Church Ark display! It looks great!



### **The Great Pie Challenge**

Thank you to everyone who helped make The Great Pie Challenge a huge success and congratulations to our pie winners! Who will be the winner at the next Pie Challenge?

## Faith Formation

### Upcoming Sundays:

#### February 2

- Deacon's Breakfast @ 8:45 a.m. - Come and bring the whole family!
- All-Ages "Care for Creation" Class: Wilson/Halloran
- Joyful Noise Practice at 11:30

#### February 9

- Joyful Noise Practice (9:30)
- Joyful Noise Sharing during service
- Church School Classes: Children will return for communion

#### February 16

Church School Classes

#### February 23

Church School Classes/Youth Group 5:30 p.m.

#### March 1

All Ages Care for Creation Class/Communion

**Church School Pick Up:** Pick up time for church school is 11:15 (except on the rare occasion the service runs later than 11:15). If you have a child in Brick by Brick & another child in Footprints, Godly Play or Nursery, they will be brought to the Fireside Room at 11:10 so that you can pick them up on your way to the other classroom. We are trying to make the 11:15 a.m. pick up time easier for families with multiple children and we welcome your feedback.

**Joyful Noise:** We encourage your school-aged child to join in the practices and sharing of songs during the service. See Lauren Donadio or email her at ([laurendonadio@gmail.com](mailto:laurendonadio@gmail.com)) if you have questions.

### Volunteer Needs:

We have a need for Nursery (ages 0-4) and Footprints (ages 3-5) volunteers.

We are looking for volunteers to help us run stations at our Autism Awareness Event on Saturday April 4th.

We would love to have a parent volunteer for our O&A Committee. We are celebrating 15 years of being Open and Affirming. We'd like to

update our covenant and plan to Attend Boston Pride (6/13) and help to plan Pride Sunday (6/14) including a rainbow themed coffee hour celebration! Please send Larainne your availability via Facebook messenger OR [lwilson@centre-church.org](mailto:lwilson@centre-church.org)

**Next FFMT Meeting:** Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Parents are welcome to join us. We typically meet on the 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

### Looking Ahead/Save-The-Date!

**Autism Awareness Event: April 4, 2020 at Centre Church, time is TBD.**

**Palm Sunday is on April 5, 2020 and Easter is on April 12, 2020.**

### Children's Sunday:

We will hold Children's Sunday on **June 7, 2020** and the theme will be "Caring for Creation". We will be putting together a service that integrates our year-long focus on Creation Care. Ice Cream Sundaes will be on the menu for coffee hour.

**Summer 2020:** Our nursery is open all summer (and year-round).

We will also offer an all-ages class "An Awesome Adventure" for children in grades K-6 each week in the summer.

### Stewardship Campaign 2020



Our annual Stewardship Campaign will begin on February 2 and end on commitment Sunday, February 23. This year's theme, "I am the Way", takes shape from the passage in John 14:6 when Jesus said to Thomas "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through me" Stewardship packets will be available on Sunday Feb. 2. Packets not distributed that day will be mailed. If you are interested in online giving, please visit our website. [www.centre-church.org](http://www.centre-church.org) and click on "Online Giving" on the bottom left of the homepage.

## **Trip to the Holy Land**

We are planning a tour of the Holy Land in celebration of the church's 300th birthday! In November 2020, we will fly to Israel for eight days where we will be led by Amir Or-ly, an amazing teacher and tour guide. The logistics of our trip are being handled by Keshet Educational Journeys, a well-known tour group that specializes in quality educational tour programs. This is an opportunity for your knowledge and understanding of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures to explode with all the layers of personal experience – the sights, tastes, sounds, and textures of the Holy Land.

Highlights of the tour include: Caesarea where St. Paul was arraigned before being sent to Rome for trial; Tiberias where we will stay on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and visit Capernaum, which was Jesus' home base for his ministry, the Mt. of Beatitudes where the Sermon on the Mount teachings were given, Nazareth, and more; Ein Gedi, where we will visit Masada, and Qumran to learn about the Dead Sea Scrolls; and then up to Jerusalem, where we will visit Mt. Zion, David's Tomb, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and other important locations in Jewish and Christian history. All along the way, we will be learning about modern day life in Israel as well. This tour includes eight full days of travel and education with ample time for self-guided side outings and personal prayer and reflection. There is a fair amount of walking (up and down as well; not all surfaces are level) so if you really want to go but have concerns about your ability to participate in all the activities, let's talk.

We have a growing group of interested participants and would love for you to join us. Based on a tour group of 15-20 people the base fee for each participant will be less than \$3,000 not including airfare. Airfare adds another \$1,200 or so. The deadline for signing up for this tour is mid-March 2020. Please contact our trip coordinator, Randy Russell to express your interest in joining the group or to ask any questions. He can be reached at [randallhrussell@gmail.com](mailto:randallhrussell@gmail.com) or 781-799-8397.

## **Trivia Night, Silent Auction & Raffles**

**Saturday February 8, 2020 @ 5:30 PM**

**STILL \$15 per person**

**Trivia brought to you by Jason Cotting**

**Appetizers, Pizza, Finger Desserts, Beverages & Coffee**

**Donations of Appetizers, and Finger**

**Desserts are very Welcome!**

**Sign Up sheets in the Narthex each Sunday!**

**TEAM LIMIT: Eight people per table – Sign Up Soon!**

**Questions: please contact Chuck Cotting!**

**@ 781-593-3120 or [chuck@thecottings.com](mailto:chuck@thecottings.com)**



**and**

## ***Our Opportunities***

<b>Sun. Feb 2</b>	8:45 am <b>10:00 am</b>	Deacons Breakfast – Richards Hall <b>Morning Worship – Sanctuary</b> Nursery – Room 10 Church School
Wed. Feb. 5	8:30am	Bread & Roses-Kitchen
Thurs. Feb. 6	1:00 pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study - Fireside Room Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Sat. Feb. 8	5:30pm	Trivia/ Auction-Richards Hall
<b>Sun. Feb. 9</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Holy Communion – Sanctuary</b> Nursery - Room 10 Church School
Thurs. Feb. 13	1:00 pm 7:30 pm	Bible Study – Fireside Room Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
<b>Sun. Feb. 16</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship– Sanctuary</b> Nursery – Room 10 Church School
Mon. Feb. 17	---	Church office closed

**Office Hours – 9am – 3pm**

**Closed Monday, February 17 in observance of Presidents Day**

**The next Tower Notes will be on February 11**

In addition to our scheduled church activities, Centre Church hosts Boy Scout Troop #48, Cub Pack #48, Girl Scouts, Alanon, Alateen, Women’s AA, and the Essex Society of Genealogists. Please call the church office if you would like more information about any of these groups. (781-334-3050)