

## GODISNOWHERE

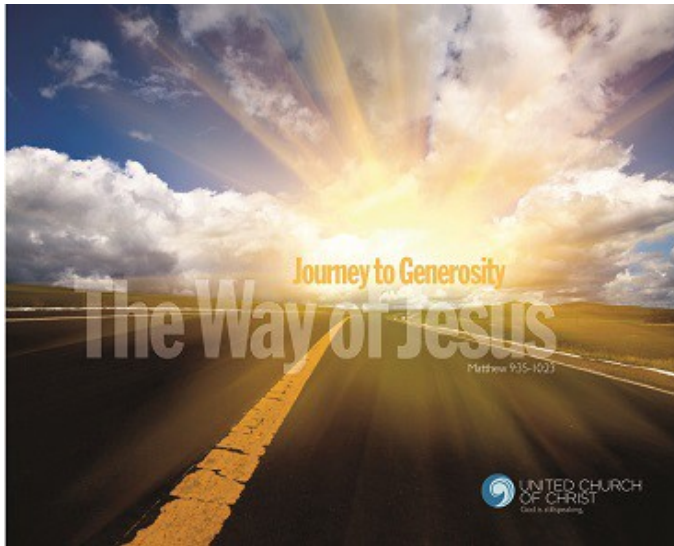
The eye-teaser above is found in a book entitled *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*, by Paul Wegner. It's a beautiful book with many illustrations of ancient biblical manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts. Some of these are intended by the author to demonstrate the myriad difficulties encountered by translators when working with these documents. New Testament Greek manuscripts, for example, were written without spaces between the words, had no punctuation marks, and no chapter and verse divisions. Hence, the Gospels were read as one continuous story – which, by the way, is a very powerful and transforming way to read a gospel! To illustrate the difficulties of having no word divisions in the most ancient manuscripts, Wegner gives the above example: *GODISNOWHERE*. You've probably noticed by now that this collection of letters can be read in two ways: "God is nowhere" or "God is now here". Two opposite meanings contained in the same phrase! For the translators of ancient biblical texts, these are tremendous challenges – and there are numerous instances like this in which the text is not clear.

How did you first read GODISNOWHERE? And how do the meanings of this conglomeration of letters translate into your life? For me, it's the ambiguity which translates perfectly: in my life, sometimes it seems that God is nowhere, and sometimes it seems that God is now here. Some days I search and search for God but find the world empty of divine presence and spirit. Other days, God seems to be *everywhere*, here now and there now and everywhere all around and in everything. GODISNOWHERE neatly describes, in its ambiguity, my experience of God as sometimes here and sometimes not here.

This kind of ambiguity in the biblical texts often manifests itself in translation, and in fact is usually *lost* in the act of translating. A good example is found in Luke 17:21: "the kingdom of God is within you". The Greek word here, *entos*, in addition to being translated "within", can also mean "among" or "in the midst of". "You" in this verse is plural, which adds to the possibility that Jesus is not speaking of a personal inner experience, but rather of a community experience. The bottom line, however, is that *entos* can mean *all of these things*: within, among, in the midst of. And it can have all of those meanings simultaneously - an ambiguity in the Greek text which is essentially untranslatable into English. How much deeper and richer this verse is if it retains that ambiguity! The kingdom of God can be within *and* among *and* in the midst of you. What a marvelous idea beautifully expressed in Greek! And what a shame that it's completely lost in English.

It is good practice for us, as people of faith and as people of the Book, to be constantly tuned in to God's presence in our lives, to recognize when God is near and when God seems far away. A regular practice of prayer and bible study is a good way to do this. When we pray and spend time studying our sacred texts, we discover what people of faith have encountered for many centuries: the mystery of God's presence and absence, the inscrutability of God's ways, and the imponderable depths of God's being. That this God who is at once "no-where" and "now-here" should care about us and love us unconditionally then becomes a truly amazing revelation.

Where is God in your life? When is the last time you went looking? When have you felt that God was looking for you? How did you respond? Are there times when you feel that God is nowhere to be found? Don't worry. Sit with it. Live with it. Work through it. Pray about it. Very often, God is in the ambiguities, in the places we've overlooked, in the spaces between the meanings of words, or in the places we fear to enter. God calls us from 'nowhere' and from 'now here'. Perhaps we could say, ~~un~~imately, that



**Stewardship as a Means of Grace**

... [t]he practice of stewardship can be a means of grace. One reason the synagogue and church worship every seven days is that we so easily forget the presence and love of God, and can so easily drift into attitudes, values, and behaviors that work against God’s purposes of love for all. Worship reminds us of the promises of God to us and of our response to God. When we engage in particular acts of stewardship during the week—for example, attend a meeting at church, participate in a service project, work at a shelter for the homeless, meet with a legislator concerning health resources in the community, or demonstrate against capital punishment—the act itself can remind us of the brokenness of the world, God’s healing love, and our commitment to be part of the movement towards a loving and just world.

Ronald J. Allen, UCC

Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.

*William Arthur Ward*

**CENTRE BELLS**

The Newsletter of  
**Centre Congregational Church,  
 United Church of Christ  
 November 2017**

**From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY**

MUSIC NOTES

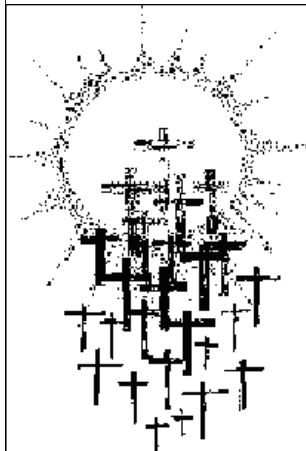
I’m not quite sure what happened to September and October, but as you read this, the choir will likely be thinking about music for Thanksgiving and Advent. Time does certainly fly by...especially when we are busy!

I’d like to thank JoAnne MacLean for filling in for me in October while I was in Idaho attending a music convention. Thanks also go to Bert Marshall and Mike Mario for sharing their musical talents during the service, enabling the choir to be off duty and out in the congregation rather than in the “loft.” It’s always wonderful to have other voices and other instruments so please do let me know if you’d like to share in the joy of music making!

I’d like to encourage you to consider singing with the choir during the Advent season. We can always use new voices and will welcome singers even if only for a short time. Please think about it! We have folks who are going to be away for weeks at a time so perhaps some of you could make a short term commitment! We would be very grateful!

**BOARD of DEACONS**

Deacon’s Doings



On November 5th we will be remembering members and friends of Centre Church who have passed away during this last year. That Sunday is All Saints Day, and we invite you to contribute the names of anyone you wish to include by sending it in via email or calling the church office as soon as possible if

you haven’t already.

We continue to be grateful for the generous response to the new altar flower contribution program. If you wish to honor, memorialize, or celebrate a person or event, please consider giving a Sunday bouquet. Sign up for a date in the parlor.

## BRATTLEBORO CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

October was a busy month for us! We had a raffle and not only did a cash prize go to one of our supporters ( E. Neathawk won \$442.50), but an equal amount was earned by BCC! It was a successful first fundraiser of the year! Thank you to all who bought tickets and we wish you the best of luck next time around.

We had a work party to put the playground to bed for winter and it was lovely to have so much help. As usual parents and staff worked together to help. Thank you all!



Instead of Halloween, October 31 at Brattleboro Centre for Children is always Pajama Day! We all look forward to it and this year, children and staff all came to school in our pajamas. We had a special All-School Sing

(lullabies) and kept ourselves warm and cozy with blankets and stuffed animals. It is a fun day that we always enjoy! You can look for pictures of it on our Facebook page! Thank you.

~Nan Mann, BCC Director

## SEARCH COMMITTEE

After reviewing our Church Profile, we met with Lynn Bujnak from the Vermont UCC Conference. We shared dinner together and went over her ideas on our profile. One area needed a serious re-write. It was a very good meeting with future plans made.

Lynn sent us an electronic version with her minor suggestions. We sent her the re-written section. She signed off on the re-write! (The conference will not publish a profile it does not approve of.)

After reviewing our submitted profile again, Lynn suggested strengthening our benefit package. At this point in time, this is our current project. We will work through this with our church council.

We have written the cover letter to attach to our finished Profile. Soon the conference will put out the word that we are looking for a fulltime settled minister at Centre Church in Brattleboro, Vermont! The Conference will send interested candidates our profile.

We are truly in the process.

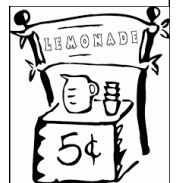
~Anne Fecto

## BOARD FOR MISSION & SERVICE

October brought lots of successful hard work by many members of Centre Church and Mission & Service. On October 6 we supported the mission of Carry Me Home with a wonderful dinner in Memorial Hall followed by the informative talk by Lloyd Dakin on Refugees and Displaced People of the World. Both were well attended and about \$700 was raised for this mission. Thank you to ALL who spent hours organizing the evening, especially Carlene McCarty, Meg and Tom Harriman, Anne Doesburg, and Margo Neale. The support to Carry Me Home is greatly appreciated as is the connection of Centre Church with Windham World Affairs, as mentioned by the chair, Esaugh Shaoul. We hope that we can continue to make connections with groups in our community providing a platform for concerns.

Second Sunday offering for October was Neighbors in Need, one of the Five for Five churchwide offerings. As of this writing, \$700 was donated. November's Special offering recipient is Boys and Girls Club.

With the youth of the church, LemonAID was a huge success! For three Sundays in October the children set up their newly made LemonAID stand twice outside in front of the church and one rainy Sunday in the parlor. \$400 was raised toward our goal of \$250!! WOW! So now we are applying for the matching grant of \$250 to then purchase the materials needed in the CWS Cleanup kits. Thank you to all who helped us reach this goal. Stay tuned for the next steps as we support our church families in this wonderful mission.



Don't forget the annual food drive on Thanksgiving Sunday and to watch for the opportunity to help with Groundworks' turkey distribution from our Sanctuary in November.

Respectfully submitted,

~Priscilla Svec, Mission and Service Committee Member

## BOARD FOR MEMBER CARE

In mid-October the call comes from Hilary who puts together in excellent manner the monthly edition of Centre Bells. In the Centre Church archive closet, there are copies from the earliest mimeographed newsletters up through the latest editions. They keep getting better due to the talents of our administrative assistants (formerly called church secretaries).

So, I will write here of things that will have happened by the time you receive this newsletter. (I used to teach English grammar, but I forget what tense that is!) We on Member Care try to answer the requests for help that come from people in the congregation. On October 16th members of our board set up, served and cleaned up for the reception following the memorial service for Myrna Melroy.

Last month we drew your attention to the photo displays on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the summer picnic at Bert and Kare's and the luncheon honoring Mary Bristol. Soon to be replacing some of them are the pictures that will be taken at our celebration of Centre Church Silver Bells. Three new members were welcomed to that group this year. They joined in 1992: Nancy DiMauro, Susan Cay and Alison Hale. Several members who have died this past year will be remembered on the first Sunday in November.

Thanks to the people who made the coffee and served the refreshments at our fellowship time....and for the children who sold lemonade to raise money for their project.

We bet some of you had the most delicious and expensive glass of lemonade ever---all for a very good cause! Thanks to Priscilla Svec and the other adults who helped in this.



## ORDER 2017 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



If you would like to give one or more poinsettias for Christmas, please fill out the form below for each plant ordered and return to the church office with your check made payable to: *Centre Church* by **Sunday, December 3**, addressed to:

*193 Main Street  
Brattleboro, VT 05301*

The plants will decorate the sanctuary from December 17 to the 24<sup>th</sup>. You are invited to take yours home after our Christmas Eve Service.

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### CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:

**IN HONOR / MEMORY / CELEBRATION OF /  
THANKSGIVING FOR**

\$14.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Donation toward other decorations \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

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### CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:

**IN HONOR / MEMORY / CELEBRATION OF /  
THANKSGIVING FOR**

\$14.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Donation toward other decorations \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_



## CHURCH LIFE

### November Worship Service Schedule

V V V V V

**November 5** Communion Sunday with Rev. David Stinson leading worship; All Saints' Service with the reading of names of those who have died this past year

V V V

**November 12** Hymn Sing and Stewardship Testimonials

V V V

**November 19** Stewardship Commitment

The **Windham-Union Association** will hold its Fall Meeting on Sunday, November 5, at 2:00 PM at the Second Congregational Church of Londonderry.

The program will include a short annual business meeting. The feature presentation will be about the "new" reformation that technology has brought to the church. The title is "How To Get Your Community to Hear You." Our presenter is Kim Dixon from Waterbury, an expert on using the media and technology for attraction and promotion. Her website is <http://insights-llc.com>. Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting.

"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough."

~Meister Eckhart

### WOMEN'S SPIRIT . . .

We are finishing up GOD IS NOT ONE and are still deciding on our next adventure in reading and sharing life experiences. We said a sad goodbye to Karita who was with us for the summer. We look forward to seeing her again in the spring. Everyone is welcome each Thursday at 4:30 in the library. Come join us. All opinions are welcomed in our lively discussions.



Everyone is invited to the  
**MOMENT for PEACE**  
Friday, November 3•5:30-6:00PM  
Centre Church Parlor

In these troubled times, finding moments to notice the slant of the evening sun, a late summer's bee on asters, the purring of a cat, a fallen yellowed leaf can bring us deep connection with that which is constant and gives us Peace. With commentary and meditation, Clare Walker Leslie will speak on these connections so easy to find and so heartwarming.

Clare Walker Leslie is a nationally known educator, wildlife artist, and author of twelve books connecting people with nature. She lives with her family in both Cambridge, MA and Granville, VT. For more information about her, go to: [www.clarewalkerleslie.com](http://www.clarewalkerleslie.com).



"The river this November afternoon  
Rests in an equipoise of sun and cloud:  
A glooming light, a gleaming darkness shroud  
Its passage. All seems tranquil, all in tune."

~Cecil Day-Lewis, *The Complete Poems of C. Day-*

*Luther and the Reformation: A 500-year Appraisal*  
November 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Brooks Memorial Library

Martin Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses on the cathedral door at Wittenburg five hundred years ago launched a movement that utterly transformed Western society and our notions of authority, culture, art, and tradition. Dartmouth Religion professor Randall Balmer assesses the Protestant Reformation half a millennium later.

Sponsored by the Vermont Humanities



### COME TALK TURKEY!

THE BROWN BAG LUNCH GROUP is a small group but always ready for more to come join us at noon on **Wednesday, November 1**, in the parlor. Mark an arrow on the October page to the next month. The very first day of November is when we meet to share conversation. Bring your lunch and join the fun.

### Greek Supper

Saturday, November 18, 5-7:00 p.m.  
Centre Congregational Church



A delicious meal featuring Greek specialties (avgolemono soup, fasolakia, spanakopita, pastitsio, and more) to help raise money for **Carry Me Home**, whose primary mission is to support children fleeing zones of conflict.

Kids 5 and under Free  
6-11 year-olds \$7  
12 and up \$12  
Max \$30 for family

Carry Me Home is seeking volunteers to help with preparing the meal. A sign-up sheet is posted outside the sanctuary detailing what is needed, from donating ingredients to helping cook, serve, or clean up. Email [alixf@mac.com](mailto:alixf@mac.com) or [carrymehomecampaign@gmail.com](mailto:carrymehomecampaign@gmail.com) with any questions, or call Alix at 802-355-2256.

## PEOPLE



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are housebound as of October 24.

### DON WEBSTER

50 Highlawn Road  
Brattleboro, VT 05301 257-1434

### JEANNE RUETER

Thompson House, 80 Maple St.,  
Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-4977

### NANCY CLARKE

Holton Home, 158 Western Ave.,  
Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-5005

### WANDA GODFREY

Vernon Hall, 13 Greenway Dr.,  
Vernon, VT 05354 254-2444

### PHYLLIS HICKOK

1520 Little Blue Stem Ct.  
Ames, IA 50014 (515)292-9196

### ROBERT & JANE REED

461 Grafton Rd., #201  
Townshend, VT 05353 (802)221-4213

### KAREN GETTY PETER

Langdon Place, 136 Arch Street, Room 152  
Keene, NH 03431 (603)357-3902

*Please let Hilary know if we've missed someone.*



**SAVE THE DATES!** Centre Church's **Holiday Craft Fair** is Friday, Dec. 1, 5-7 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m. -1 p.m., followed by FOMAG's annual Messiah Sing in the Sanctuary. The Cookie Walk, homemade wreaths, local crafts . . . lots to enjoy. Details to come in upcoming eNewses and Sunday bulletins.

### *From Carry Me Home:*

"Dear Rev. Bert and the parishioners of the Centre Congregational Church,

Thank you for generously donating the proceeds of your October 6th dinner to Carry Me Home. This money alone will allow us to ship almost five boxes of warm clothing, shoes and sleeping bags to refugees who will be spending another cold winter living in tents, trying to keep their kids warm.

We are very grateful for all your support."

The Carry Me Home team

# NOVEMBER 2017

\*Holy Communion celebrated

			<b>1</b> 12 <sup>00</sup> Brown Bag Lunch  *Rev. Bert on vacation until November 13	<b>2</b> 10 <sup>00</sup> BWC Rehearsal 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	<b>3</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 5 <sup>30</sup> Moment for Peace 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/*All Saints 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	<b>6</b> 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl	<b>7</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>8</b> 3 <sup>30</sup> Fundraising Committee	<b>9</b> 10 <sup>00</sup> BWC Rehearsal 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	<b>10</b> 12 <sup>30</sup> Centre Bells deadline 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	<b>13</b> 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl 7 <sup>30</sup> AA District 8	<b>14</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 6 <sup>00</sup> Meeting Night 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>15</b> 12 <sup>30</sup> BAI	<b>16</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Meetings (L) 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	<b>17</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>18</b> 5 <sup>00</sup> Carry Me Home dinner
<b>19</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA Commitment Sunday 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	<b>20</b> 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl	<b>21</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>22</b> Centre Bells mailed	<b>23</b> OFFICE CLOSED Thanksgiving Day	<b>24</b> OFFICE CLOSED 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	<b>27</b> 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl 7 <sup>00</sup> Spiritual Conversations	<b>28</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 6 <sup>00</sup> Church Council 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal		

## ANNIVERSARIES

8 Sylvia & Milton Eaton  
10 Anne & Steve Fecto  
13 Roger & Sandy Daly  
27 Bob & Sen Pu  
29 Mo & Jeffrey Meyer



## BIRTHDAYS

2 Judy Palmer  
3 Joanne Clark  
5 Fred Edmonds  
13 David Henry  
Stephanie Brown  
16 Virginia Knuebel  
30 Jonathan Secrest

I am grateful for what I am and have. My thanksgiving is perpetual.

Henry David Thoreau

## November Lectionary Texts:

1 Rev 7:9-17•Ps 34:1-10,22 •1 John 3:1-3• Matt 5:1-12  
5 Josh 3:7-17•Ps 107:1-7, 33-37 or Mic 3:5-12 • Ps 43•1 Thess 2:9-13•**Matt 23:1-12**  
12 Josh 24:1-3a, 14-25•Ps 78:1-7 or Wisd of Sol 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24•Wisd of Sol 6:12-16 or Ps 70• 1 Thess 4:13-18•**Matt 25:17-20**  
19 Judg 4:1-7•Ps 123 or Zeph 1:7, 12-18•Ps 90:1-8 (9-11), 12•1 Thess 5:1-11•**Matt 25:14-30**  
23 Deut 8:7-18•Ps 65 •2 Cor 9:6-15•Luke 17:11-19  
26 Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24•Ps 100 or Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24•Ps 95:1-7a•**Matt 25:31-46**

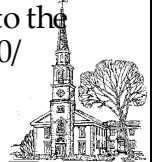
## Centre Bells

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[centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org)



**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

**Office Hours:** M - F: 8:30am—12:30pm

**Church Office:** (802) 254-4730 / [centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org)

**Website:** [www.centrechurchvt.org](http://www.centrechurchvt.org)

**Facebook:** [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro, VT](https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT)

**CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP**

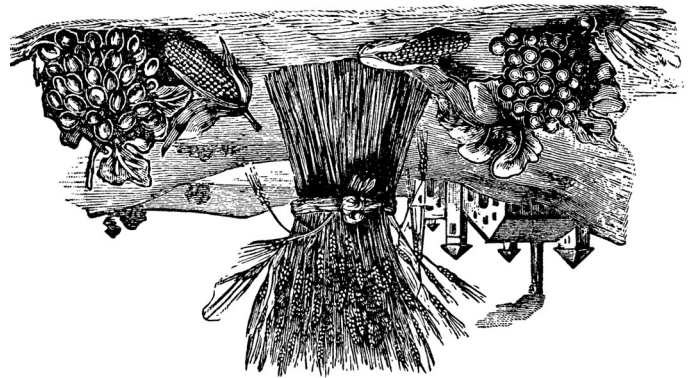
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Council Chair  
Treasurer / Clerk

Matt Kennedy  
Holly Kennedy / Constance Bresnahan

**2 0 1 7**



**NOVEMBER**

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org  
193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301

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