

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



Minister and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper: 786.622.8473 (cell)
centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org
Music Director: Mary Milkey-May: music@centrechurchvt.org
Administrator: Bruce Landenberger: admin@centrechurchvt.org
Financial Secretary: Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org
Council Chair: William McCarty
Treasurer: Anne Fecto
Clerk: Connie Bresnahan
Custodian: Emelio McCalla

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842
Office Hours: M - F / 8:30am-12:30pm
Church Office: 802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org
Website: www.centrechurchvt.org
Facebook: Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT
Instagram: @centrechurchvt
Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:
VT Conference: www.vtcucc.org / National: www.ucc.org

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends in Christ,

Though I have only ministered at Centre Church for a year and a half now, I am beginning to note the ebb and flow of church activity during the course of the year. Of course, the 'Christian year' begins in December with Advent. The 'calendar year' begins in January with New Year's Day. In addition, I feel our 'local church year' actually begins *in February*. Recently, our church has been a hive of frenetic activity. Within the last two months or so, we have hosted at least a half-dozen events that filled our sanctuary to capacity! To be honest, I am exhausted by the very busy Christmas season that is artificially extended by the planning and hosting of the community Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration service (January 19).

Thanks be to God, we enjoyed a little rest to catch our collective breaths for the last two weeks of January.

In February, I feel we are beginning our 'local church year' with a bang! On Saturday, **February 1**, we will have a church delegation travel to Springfield, VT for a Vitality Coaching Workshop from 10:00am to 3:00pm where in our leaders will be inspired by the Rev. Paul Nickerson to be more engaged, hospitable, and relevant to our community. Our church will host a New Members' Gathering throughout the month beginning on **February 2** each Sunday afternoon after the fellowship hour from 12:00pm to 12:45pm. We have many new prospective inquirers that will attend. I pray they will discern to remain in fellowship with our beautiful faith community on Sunday, March 1. We will also host a new Bible/Book Study throughout the month beginning on **February 4** and into March led by our beloved former bridge minister, The Rev Dr. (and retired Rear Admiral) David Stinson, on Tuesday evenings from 4:00pm to 5:00pm. Our annual congregational financial meeting whereby we present and approve a budget for the year will be called to order on Sunday, **February 9**. Throughout February, we continue our Epiphany season sermon series entitled 'Eventually, Epiphany' wherein each Sunday for six weeks a member of our church co-preaches with me by offering a personal testimony of an epiphany they once experienced. Epiphany concludes in February before Transfiguration Sunday on **23 February** and thus before the Lenten season begins on **February 26** with a special service in our chapel recognizing Ash Wednesday.

The old years (Christian, calendar, and local church) have concluded. Yet, the new ones have begun in earnest in February! So, hold on to your ecclesiastical hats, buckle-up, fellowship with us, and thus journey with Jesus Christ along The Way.

Love always in Christ, Scott



Council Chair, BILL McCARTY

What a wonderful year we experienced in 2019. It is exciting to be a member or friend of Centre Church. It is hard to believe or appreciate the numerous church and civic activities that originate and occur at Centre Church on a daily and weekly basis. I won't repeat each of them here, but just review them in this or last month's *Centre Bells* to get a synopsis. It is hard to believe that so much can come out of this place!

An important date in the life of CCC is approaching – our Annual Financial meeting on Sunday, 9 February, after church services. Oh, you don't regard our Annual Financial meeting as 'exciting'? Well, it can be, if we really review the reports and comments as to what has, and is, and will be happening. Review and think about how it all affects us as members and friends of CCC. The full Annual Financial report will be available on Sunday, February 2. Obtain one and review it to appreciate the activities for the past year and to prepare for the coming year. It can be interesting reading. We will have full disclosure and reports from our Endowment Committee, Treasurer, (Anne Fecto), boards, and committees. Please review the reports and plan to attend the meeting. It will also be a time to review and evaluate how we can contribute in order to sustain Centre Church as a viable and integral part of the Brattleboro community. As members and friends we should be committed to maintaining this church which has been a part of the Vermont and Brattleboro area for these past 204 years!

Also, remember that we will be having our Annual Program Meeting in three months in May 2020. So it is important to contemplate how you can participate and contribute to the life of CCC as a board, committee, or council member.

As Council Chair I can say this – the current members of the Council have been around too long! We need a change!! So, line up and agree to serve in some new capacity. All are welcome and needed. Please join us.

See you Sunday!!

CENTRE BELLS
February 2020
The newsletter of
**Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ**

From Music Director, MARYMILKEY-MAY

January has been a somewhat relaxing month compared to all of the musical happenings during the Advent/Christmas season. After a well-deserved week off, the adult choir is back to regular rehearsals preparing for each Sunday service. We are still in need of altos!! It's difficult to believe we are already approaching the Lenten season beginning at the end of this month. Time flies!

The Children's Choir sang its first repeated anthem on Martin Luther King Sunday with both Henry and Jackson Grobe taking the solo verses. This was Henry's debut as a solo singer - pretty neat for a first grader!

We are hoping to have another hymn sing in the future, so please have your favorites ready! You can also let me know if there is a hymn you are dying to do some Sunday. We can often insert one, especially if it connects with the scriptures or sermon theme of the day!

DEACONS

Every year in February the Deacons put on a Chili Luncheon. This year it will be on **Sunday, February 16** directly following worship. The Deacons will have a sign-up sheet for a few extra items. Hope you will all join!

The Deacons are also looking for card tables. We would like to find five or more that folks would donate to the church.

The February Deacon of the month is Mary Bristol.

-Carlene McCarty, *Chair*

NOTICE OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL FINANCIAL MEETING

Pursuant to our By-Laws, this is to notify you that the Annual Congregational Financial Meeting of Centre Congregational Church will be held **Sunday, February 9, 2020**, after the worship service.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive financial reports, approve the annual budget, and conduct such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

All members and friends are encouraged to attend.

Centre Congregational Church, by The Rev. Roger L. Brown

Creation Spirituality Communities are living acting groups and institutions doing their best to respond to climate change issues in their home region or world-wide. While it is true that it is quite alarming the manner in which political and economic forces are damaging our planet, I find it more productive and satisfying to work with communities that are making a difference, large or small to heal the Earth. That others may be inspired, I want to share how my church and community is responding to the current climate crisis. While neither unique nor original, the programs I will share work well in my community, Brattleboro, Vermont, but they still require passion, commitment and community support to make them happen.

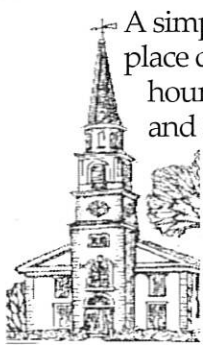
Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, under the leadership of our pastor, The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper, began this year programs in worship and community life that celebrate our existence as a Creation Spirituality Community. Rev. Couper began by reminding the congregation that humankind's spiritual connection with earth and sky reaches back to the earliest times in the Bible story. He initiated a sermon series on climate change. Here are the sermon titles in the series: "A Bible Obsessed with the Environment," "God as She and Earth as Mother," "Cosmocentrism is the New Anthropocentrism," and "The Praxis Principle." Simultaneously, I provided the church and local community with a video series on climate change. This series included "Journey of the Universe" and a video introducing the Transition Town movement since there are several Transition Town groups in the region.

Members of Centre Church were also present at community demonstrations around climate justice sponsored by the Brattleboro Area Interfaith Leaders' Alliance (BAILA) and others.

While Centre Church has only relatively recently taken up arms in the climate change issue through education, prayer and proclamation, we succeed best because we live within a Creation Community - Brattleboro, Vermont. Brattleboro has for more than a decade promoted climate and environmental awareness. Post Oil Solutions (<https://www.postoilsolutions.org>), has been providing climate change education, activism, and local program development for the past fourteen years. The Strolling of the Heifers parade the first Saturday in June, where the cows and heifers literally march down Main Street, has been celebrating agriculture and environmental concerns since it was founded in 2002! That this event was founded by one person in the community with an idea, is a testament to the power of an individual to make a big difference. Today, Strolling is more than just a parade, managing programs at the town gateway, The River Garden, and sponsoring many events which nurture and strength our community life as a town and region in southeast Vermont. (see <https://www.strollingoftheheifers.com>)

It helps, of course, that we are surrounded by beautiful mountains, streams, and forests to hold our attention to the greatness of God's creation which we want to do our best to preserve and hand on to our children and grandchildren. Indeed, I celebrate the fact that Centre Congregational Church as a Creation Spirituality Community lives among a web of such communities!

[The Creation Spirituality Communities online newsletter, in which this article is published, is a spinoff from the work of Matthew Fox, a former Catholic Monk who has been writing and leading workshops on creation spirituality for the past thirty years. For details on Creation Spirituality Communities see <https://escommunities.org>. For the newsletter see this same link under "what we do" "newsletters."]



A simple celebration will take place during a Sunday fellowship hour in February giving thanks and support for the generosity of many of our church members who contributed and matched donations for the money we borrowed from ourselves to repair and paint our church steeple.

We hope you will be there to give thanks!

-Finance, Endowment, and
Building & Grounds

TAKE a MOMENT for PEACE

Friday, February 7 • 5:30-6:00pm

Mantra and Meditation with Tracy

Join in this simple seated practice of cultivating embodiment, relaxation, awareness, and presence - and in-turn, inner peace. We'll begin with a lightly guided meditation, then Tracy will teach a mantra and we'll chant it together. We'll finish our collective practice in peaceful silence.

Tracy has been teaching Yoga asana, philosophy and meditation since 2006. She is a lineage holder and authorized teacher in the tradition of Shri Vidya—the wisdom of the Vedas (the ancient books of knowledge from India).

MISSION & SERVICE

Thank you to all who support the missions of our church and serve others through our church. Many times we do not have the most recent information from the previous month at the time of the *Centre Bells* deadline, so we share with you a bit of recent history. In December, our church gave generously in many ways! We heard from Nan Mann yesterday during the time for children of a 'thank-you' from one of the many children who received gifts from our sanctuary's Christmas tree, the Giving Tree. We served 41 children from Department of Children and Families and Brattleboro Centre for Children this year! Our Second Sunday Offering supported the Christmas Fund, which in turn supports retired ministers who receive minimal to no retirement benefits. Our church donated \$511 toward this fund. And on Christmas Eve our free-will offering funded our Samaritan Fund for which \$725 was raised. Again, thank you for your generous giving!

Our February Second Sunday Offering is called *MISSION POSSIBLE*. Our church has many missions that are housed in the church basement: Loaves & Fishes, BCC, and *Carry Me Home*. AA is also in Memorial Hall at least once a week. We feel that our church building IS a mission in itself, so we would like to support our church this month. Funds collected on February 9 for *MISSION POSSIBLE* will go to Building & Grounds for the upkeep of our amazing church.

February 9 also marks the next Seasonal Overflow Shelter meal that Centre Church will provide. Though January's meal total was low, as the temperatures outside hit 60 degrees, the temperatures will return to their seasonal lows and the number of meals needed will return to over 30! Please consider offering food and/or help to serve at the shelter. Please note that the hours are different this year. Food drop off is at 5:15pm at the Austine School campus and the meal is served at 5:30pm. Thank you again to all who help with this vital mission.

One last note from Mission & Service: our committee attended the Homeless Awareness Vigil on January 14 prior to our committee meeting. We brought our church's Welcome Wagon to serve coffee and warmth. As the weather turned cold and damp, we remember those who have no place to get warmed up and take cover.

In Faith,
Priscilla Svec, *Mission & Service*

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 March 26.

Fran Burrows—Langdon Place
136A Arch St. #150, Keene, NH 03431

Wanda Godfrey—Vernon Hall
13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354
802.254.2444

Phyllis Hickok
1520 Little Blue Stem Ct., Ames, IA 50014
515.337.1956

Jane Reed—Valley Cares
461 Grafton Rd., #101, Townshend, VT 05353
802.221.4213

Karen Getty Peter—Pine Rock Manor
3 Denny Hill Rd., Warner, NH 03278

The Rev. Allen Vander Meulen
1 Harvest Circle #301, Lincoln, MA 01773

Sylvia Eaton
86 Brets Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.254.6853

Alta Barber
13223 N 3937 Dr., Bartlesville, OK 74003

Pat Neer—Thompson House
80 Maple St., Brattleboro, VT 05301

Bob & Dee Keller
153 Spruce St., Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.257.4588

*Please let the Administrator know
if we've missed someone.*

BIRTHDAYS

- 17 Nan Mann
- 20 Emily Randrup
Dart Everett
- 23 Ben Lefebvre
- 27 Mary Ann Donovan

♈ Aquarius



The editor regrets the omission of
Holly Kennedy—January 30
from last month's birthday list

Best Wishes from Centre Church!

FEBRUARY 2020

**Holy Communion celebrated

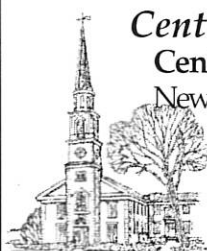
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 10 ⁰⁰ Vitality Team Workshop 3 ⁰⁰ VT Interfaith Action listening
2 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship** 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons 12 ⁰⁰ New members gathering 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	3 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 4 ⁰⁰ BCC Board	4 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 4 ⁰⁰ Book/Bible study 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	5 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	6 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	7 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	8 11 ⁰⁰ Writing Workshop
9 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 11 ³⁰ Annual Financial Meeting 12 ⁰⁰ New members gathering 6 ⁰⁰ Overflow Shelter 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	10 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 6 ³⁰ AA District 8	11 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 4 ⁰⁰ Book/Bible study 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	12 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	13 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	14 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	15
16 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 11 ³⁰ Chili Luncheon 12 ⁰⁰ New members gathering 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	17 Presidents' Day Office Closed 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro	18 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 4 ⁰⁰ Book/Bible study 6 ⁰⁰ AA meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council	19 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	20 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	21 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	22 11 ⁰⁰ Writing Workshop
23 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 1 ⁰⁰ New members gathering 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	24 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	25 Shrove Tuesday 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 4 ⁰⁰ Book/Bible study 6 ⁰⁰ AA meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Pancake supper 7 ⁰⁰ Worship service	26 Ash Wednesday mail Centre Bells 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting 7 ⁰⁰ Worship service	27 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	28 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	29

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed in eNews, at the church website, and Facebook. From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).



The Centre Church Quilters send a special 'thank-you' to all the people who sold tickets for the 2019 raffle quilt. The winner was Justin Harriman of Boston.

The Fundraising committee sends a grateful 'thank-you' to everyone who helped make the Christmas Craft Show a great success.
-Meg, Carlene, Anne, and Mary Bristol



Centre Bells is published monthly by Centre Congregational Church, UCC
News items, articles, address changes, and requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should be submitted to the church office:
802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org

FEBRUARY LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, February 2, 4th Sunday after Epiphany
Mic 6:1-8, Ps 15, 1 Cor 1:18-31, **Matt 5:1-12**

Sunday, February 9, 5th Sunday after Epiphany
Isa 58:1-9a (9b-12), Ps 112:1-9 (10), 1 Cor 2:1-12 (13-16), **Matt 5:13-20**

Sunday, February 16, 6th Sunday after Epiphany
Deut 30:15-20 or *Sirach 15:15-20*, Ps 119:1-8, 1 Cor 3:1-9, **Matt 5:21-37**

Sunday, February 23, Transfiguration
Ex 24:12-18, Ps 2 or Ps 99, 2 Peter 1:16-21, **Matt 17:1-9**

