

## MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott

Out of the blue, I received a publication in the mail entitled *Holding All Things Together: The Primacy of Unconditional Love* (2018) by Ernest Bodenweber, a retired United Church of Christ minister. I am using it as my current devotional. This month, I share with you one of book's reflections.

*Theologian Paul Tillich said that there are three fundamental threats to life – death, guilt, and meaninglessness. Love has something to say about all three. Death is annulled by the risen Christ, whose love will not let us go; Guilt is abrogated by God's loving forgiveness; and life is meaningful as long as love is given and received.*

It is often said that 'money is the root of all evil'. I disagree because I suspect that the love of money is sourced from a fear of death. So, I agree with Tillich that death (or rather, the fear of it) is a threat to life (lived abundantly). Humans falsely believe that money insulates us from death – and not without justification. Good healthcare, food, accommodation, etc... all cost money. Yet, so many have these basics and yet they accumulate more and more, seeking with money to somehow become immortal. Ultimately, they become slaves to their monetary idol. We fail to love others so as to futilely protect ourselves from death.

I admit it; I am very squeamish about receiving a gift, any gift. Christmas makes me uncomfortable. Birthdays make me uncomfortable. Receiving a gift makes me retract and redirect attention elsewhere. These feelings perhaps originate from a deep sense of guilt. With me, it is not so much a 'I've done something wrong' guilt, but rather a 'I don't deserve this' guilt. I have a sense of un-deservedness because deep down I have an understanding as love as contractual, with strings attached. Do I deserve it? With any love, I question, 'Do I deserve it?' With any gift, I question, 'Do I deserve it?' And with those questions, I rob myself of any enjoyment and I thus rob myself of love itself. Now, what if I translated that sense of transaction and guilt to my relationship with God? Perhaps Tillich is correct in that guilt robs me of God's love and thus of life abundant.

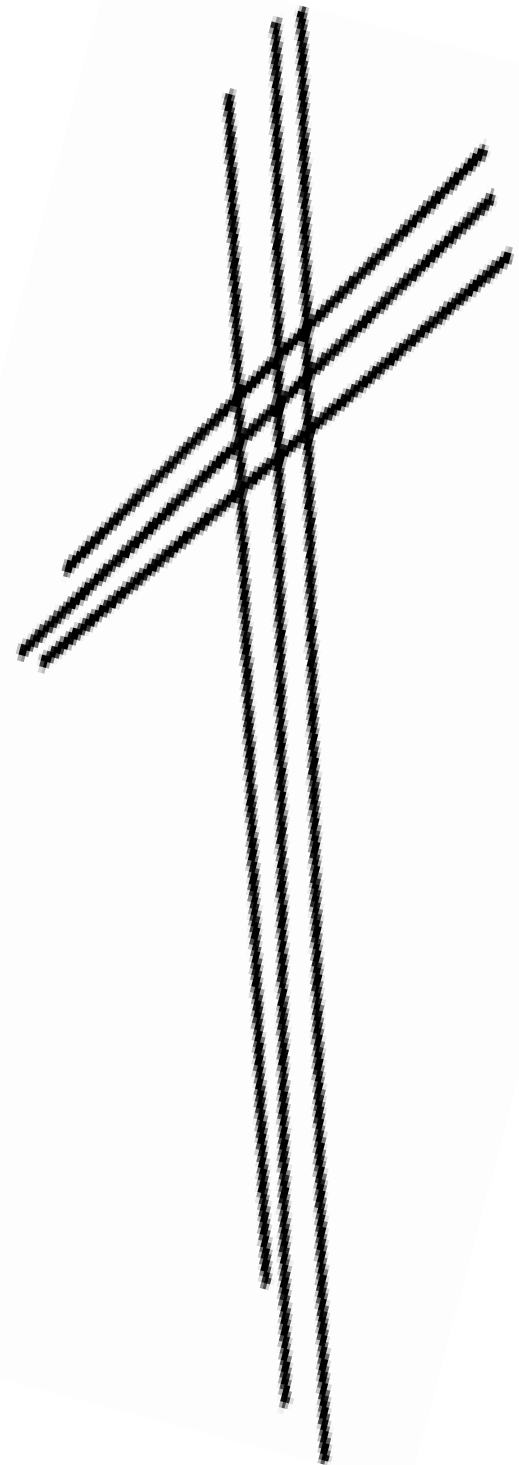
If we seek to cease to protect ourselves at others' expense (fear of death) and if we cease to view love as transactional (guilt), then perhaps we will be more enabled to give and receive love and that, ultimately, will make our lives more meaningful.

Last month during our "Christian Symbols: Signposts of Faith" sermon series, we examined the cross. Many understand the cross' vertical beam to represent our mutual love with God and the cross' horizontal beam to represent our mutual love with others. Both beams intersect to enable us to live life meaningfully.

Thanks be to God for selfless and unconditional love.

Be well.

Love always in Christ, Scott



**CENTRE BELLS**

**June 2022**

The newsletter of  
**Centre Congregational  
Church**  
**United Church of Christ**

## **Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG**

Summer will soon be upon us, bringing with it some changes in our church life. We will welcome in the summer, we hope, with African drumming and dancing on the lawn at Gallery Walk / Green@Centre on Friday, June 3. Then we will have our Church picnic on the front lawn Sunday, June 5 after our worship service. Let's hope the weather is summery too!

One of the pleasures of summer is the UCC Union services that happen on the last Sunday of May, June, July, August, and September. It is a great opportunity to experience different worship services – different spaces, different ministers, different music, different people. We are all UCC, but we have different styles. I'm always embarrassed by how few Centre Church people go to Union Services. But it's true of other churches too – people just don't seem to want to try something different. Or perhaps they just enjoy the chance to have a leisurely Sunday morning. One of the many benefits of working on the Afghan Co-Sponsorship Team is getting to know people from the West B. and Dummerston churches. There are many wonderful people out there – fellow Christians, and also UCC members. Attending church with them in their own sanctuary shows our interest in others and worshipping God together brings us closer. It creates a bond that can become stronger with time. My own dream is that someday there will be just one big, bustling Brattleboro Protestant Church. Union Services are a tiny step in that direction.

At our recent Council meeting, we got a financial update. For the month of April, we spent \$5,800 more than we brought in. For the year to date, our net income is -\$10,255. Therefore about \$15,000 was taken out of the endowment. At our Financial meeting in February, the Treasurer was given permission to withdraw up to \$50,000 from the endowment, to be reviewed in six months, which will be August. A special congregational meeting may be necessary at some point, if we have withdrawn \$50,000 and have no money left to pay our bills for the rest of the year.



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

As we approach the month of June, the choir will be finishing up its season! Our last Sunday singing will be June 5, Pentecost Sunday. It has been wonderful being able to sing a full season (September-June). We even pre-recorded during January and February for ZOOM services. Still fully masked, choir members provided anthems for every single Sunday since September, as well as for Christmas Eve and Maundy Thursday. I am so grateful to each member for his/her faithful participation.

This means I will be looking for volunteers to provide special music for the summer services. If you are willing and available to help, please let me know. I will be starting to assign Sundays right away, hoping to have each one covered through August. Instrumental and vocal soloists are both needed. Please step up if you are able! And, please thank a choir member when you get a chance!

## **AFGHAN CO-SPONSORSHIP TEAM**

The Afghan Co-Sponsorship Team continues to enthusiastically support the Afghan family through all phases of resettling here in Brattleboro. Thanks to the help of our Housing Committee, and with support from ECDC, the family has recently moved into a new home that suits their needs and is conveniently located. We sincerely appreciate all of the donated furniture and household goods from our community. Your contributions have helped tremendously.

The three children are busy as the school year comes to a close next month. After-school programs have included cooking classes, soccer, and the visual arts. The eldest daughter has achieved high honors at the middle school. We look forward to engaging the children in recreational programs over the summer. The family has received donated bikes, and have been using them to explore their new neighborhood.

Looking ahead, we hope to plan an 'ice cream social' for the family and our three churches (details to follow). For the family's home, we are looking for a writing desk and a printer, as well as a rolling pin for baking use.

Coordinator,  
Gabriella (Gabi) Martin: [cipolla.gabi@gmail.com](mailto:cipolla.gabi@gmail.com)

## DEACONS

The congregation is reminded to continue to use hand sanitizer and wear masks when entering the sanctuary and to practice social distancing. That being said, members are encouraged to greet friends, new members and guests in a friendly manner. Everyone wants to feel welcome in our church!

Rennie Washburn has agreed to assist the Deacons when possible. She is our newest 'per diem' Deacon, along with Lisa Keller. Thank you!

Wayne Randall has asked to be removed as a Deacon due to his continuing health issues. We wish you well, Wayne!

Holy Communion is served by intinction on the first Sunday of each month. Everyone is welcome to partake.

On May 7, many beautiful flowers filled the sanctuary and parlor for Gisela Robeck's memorial service. Her family contributed them for our May 8 Mother's Day service, after which they were gifted to members, including those who could not be here in person. Thank you to the Abells, Svecs, Lynn Herzog, Scott, and others who lovingly delivered them. Gisela was the inspiration for all of this generosity and floral beauty!

May 8 was also the first planned coffee hour in a long time. This fellowship time will continue on the second Sunday of each month. Dart Everett volunteered to make the coffee and other members are encouraged to bring snacks to share on a volunteer basis. Let us all help to make this a successful monthly time of friendship!

Joy Everett, Chair of Deacons



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

There will be a lovely family-friendly picnic in early June (see Member Care). That day will be the last day of church school classes offered by CE's valiant team, as they are taking a break for the summer. However, the Children's Moment will continue on for the whole summer, except for the weeks when there are union services, such as June 26 and July 24. August's union service is at Centre and we will do a children's message then.

We welcome Anne Doesburg to our Board and look forward to beginning to plan with her for the next stages of evolution of Centre's Christian Education department. You are welcome to join us. Our meetings are usually in-person and on the first Monday of the month at 4:30pm in the church school classroom. Contact Nan Mann for more details. Stay well, all!

The **Sunday Spirit Book Discussion** group will continue to meet through June at 9:00am on Sundays in the Heritage Room/Financial Office (except for June 26, a union service Sunday).

We'll be finishing up *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard. We read orally and discuss as we go. New participants are always welcome and could be instrumental in helping to choose our next book.

For more information, contact Judy Palmer:  
[judithp41@gmail.com](mailto:judithp41@gmail.com) / 603.353.0590.

## GREEN@CENTRE

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. What a fun and lively May Gallery Walk, thanks to so many helping hands and dancing feet.

We have a wonderful line-up for the June 3 Gallery Walk event. Kay Curtis, the creator of the Harmony Gallery, will be our artist of the month. On the Green, the evening will begin with a taste treat from the Brattleboro School of Dance. Then we will be entertained by Didadi, a Mali, West African influenced drumming group. Didadi means 'sweet rhythms', music to which anyone can dance. There will be instruction. If you just want to watch and enjoy, our Fundraising committee will be offering tuna and egg salad rolls and ice cream to purchase.

Look for other Green@Centre events in *eNews*.

Spreading love through joyful activity,  
Bonnie Girvan [girvangardens@gmail.com](mailto:girvangardens@gmail.com)

## MISSION & SERVICE

As I watch a Deacon extinguish the lights of the candles from our service and carry the lit candle down the aisle and out the front door, I often think how difficult it is to keep it from going out.

Sometimes people have to stop for the flame to gain energy or not be blown out by a breeze or by the speed of walking. Sometimes it doesn't make it at all out 'into the world'. I think of this struggle, to keep it brightly burning, as we move from our sanctuary and our church family, into the world. How do we regain our energy and not get blown out as we carry our flames, our work, and the word of God into the world?

The work that we at Centre Church do through our missions and our service brings so much light into the world. The Second Sunday offering has supported *Luz del Mundo*, Groundworks, *One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)*, Summer Lunch Program, and *Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP)* already this year. In June we will have an opportunity to give to one of the 5 for 5 UCC offerings, *Strengthen the Church (STC)*.

"The *STC* offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ (UCC) to cooperatively build it up. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations." Centre Church received a *STC* grant to help pay for our work with Paul Nickerson and our Long-Term Planning work. Envelopes for this offering will be available through June for those who choose to give.

Locally, our Second Sunday offering in June will go to Brattleboro Centre for Children (BCC). Celebrating its twentieth anniversary last year, we celebrate our commitment to this mission, which we started with the hard work of church members. BCC provides a growing place for children, infants to five year olds providing childcare and preschool.

M&S rejoices in the return of Amy Balin! We are so happy to have her return to this committee. She has been an active participant for years and we are so thankful for the return of her health and her positive energy with M&S. Thanks to Amy, our church has applied for a Summer Lunch Program grant. This grant will accompany our Second Sunday offering from April to support Brattleboro's lunch program.

We are continuing to provide one meal a month at the Groundworks Overflow Shelter. Please sign up on the Signup Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4dada82da6ffce9-groundworks> for a part of this meal, provided on the third Sunday of each month (June 19). We would love to have a few NEW participants. Make this be the month that you help our neighbors in need.

In early May, we celebrated the settled housing of our Afghan family. We are so thankful to all of you who helped make this possible. You donated household items and furniture; you spoke with people you knew and found possible housing; you helped pack, carry, and explain recycling and trash removal. Our family is settling in and are happily making Brattleboro their new home. Thank you to all!

Many of us from M&S attended the last Loaves & Fishes (L&F) board meeting when financial support for utilities paid by Centre Church was discussed. A motion passed at this meeting that confirms that the two churches supporting this mission, St Michael's Episcopal and Centre Church, plus L&F itself would split the cost of the utilities used, beginning in 2023. This motion was then shared with St Michael's vestry and Centre Church's council. This idea came out of 2021's budget work and has been made possible due to the hard work of Bob Pu, Rennie Washburn, and Dennis Newman. Thanks also to Ruth Tilghman and Mary Ellen Bixby for their clarity and deep caring for the ongoing work of L&F.

November is the month for the Sister Parish Conference in El Salvador. In past years, Jenifer Ambler has attended this conference, however this year's conference has not been decided upon yet due to COVID. Jenifer and Scott Couper hope to attend, if the conference does occur. It has been a wonderful enriching conference in the past and we hope that it can be held safely this year.

We hope that you are enjoying the artwork in the hallway. Each artist's work is up for a month, so take time to enjoy each artist. Also, be present on the first Friday of each month for Gallery Walk (including our hallway's art) and for the activities of both Brattleboro's Main Street and the Green@Centre. This month we will enjoy dancers from Brattleboro School of Dance and an African dance/drumming troupe.

## LOAVES & FISHES

### COMPASSION STORY OF THE MONTH

# Vermont's volunteer culture is a special trait

Brattleboro Reformer—04/30/2022

BY PHIL INNES

*"If you have something to share..."*  
– *The Spirit of Loaves & Fishes*

Note: This continues Compassionate Brattleboro's series of stories highlighting compassionate activities in our community.

Many years ago, I asked a senior county official to explain to me the rationale behind continuing to provide services for disadvantaged persons despite the chaos which so often characterized them. Her response – I'll never forget it – was that, for generations, the culture here in Vermont has been that "if you have something to share, you do so; that this is what makes you a Vermonter whether you were born here or not;" and "that it is this very volunteer culture of compassion that makes Vermonters different."

In my continued explorations of who actually does such sharing, I paid a visit to Loaves & Fishes, a community kitchen located at Centre Congregational Church. The staff seemed overly busy, so I put down my camera, microphone and notebook, put on an apron and, remembering the old Findhorn aphorism that "work is love in action," I took the plunge.

That was a dozen years ago. Even back then, the work was led by the estimable Ruth Tilghman who coordinated a dozen volunteers, cooks, sous-chefs and delivery folks and served from 200 to 300 full meals twice a week, no questions asked. If you're hungry, here's a meal for you and yours.

That was in a pre-COVID yesterday when Loaves & Fishes was open to diners. Then, for essential hygiene reasons it closed, while the kitchen, with often skeleton staff, continued to deliver hot meals to venues including Hayes Court and Dalem Chalet, to the homeless staying in motels, to Groundworks, and to a walk-up window.

These days, Loaves & Fishes has begun serving Halal meals to Afghan refugees temporarily resident at SIT. A few indicated that this food was lacking spice and 'not oily enough.' Accordingly, an Afghan adult and child were asked to go down to the kitchen and help us figure out the best spicing and the best levels of cooking oil.

And, not surprisingly, there have been other challenges. Even when equipped with a 6-top commercial BTU Vulcan stove, a commercial oven and a 20-shelve Vulcan convection oven, it is quite the challenge to prepare this much food in a short time. (And imagine making 30 Thanksgiving spreads, each for 12 people, or 360 dinners, all in a few hours!)

Those hours usually begin at 6am, with the mainline cooks arriving at 6:30, the sous-chefs at 9am with meals available at 11 or 11:30am, and clean up 'til 1pm, come heat-wave or blizzard.

The kitchen is 'in service' on Tuesdays and Fridays, so do stop by to learn more – or come and help with the stocking on Mondays and Wednesdays. Would suit any person of good cheer and good will. After all, we're Vermonters.

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With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a "Compassion Story of the Month." This is the 58th. Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: [compassionstory@gmail.com](mailto:compassionstory@gmail.com) or mailed to: **Compassion Story of the Month, PO Box 50, Marlboro, VT 05344**. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.

## MEMBER CARE

For two decades the **All Church Picnic** has been held at the Kiwanis shelter in Living Memorial Park. This year we are going to celebrate right here on the church lawn. It will happen following morning worship on the first Sunday of June (**June 5**).

Member Care will be buying the hot dogs, hamburgers, rolls, and buns. There will be a 'what to bring' chart posted on-line so that we will be sure to have enough salads and desserts. A search is out for two grills.

We are planning this with hopes for a good turn out. It has been over two years since we planned for an All Church Picnic.

Some games on the lawn will be there for young and old to play. Be sure to bring the children.

Marion Daley, Member Care

## PEOPLE

### NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

**Jack & Mary Ellen Bixby**

119 Harris Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802.246.7757 (Jack) / 207.233.7863 (ME)

**Nancy DiMauro:** [ndimauro1@icloud.com](mailto:ndimauro1@icloud.com)

Dear Bruce,

I am enclosing a check for the Ukraine "Flowers of the Cross" fund-raiser. I am hoping that it is not too late to contribute.

We wish that we were able to attend the church services not that they are back in person, but it is just too much right now. It is good to be able to see the service on the computer instead.

Give our regards to the 'old timers' who may remember us.

As Ever,  
Arnold and Marilyn [Young]

To everyone at Centre Congregational Church,  
On behalf of the Robeck family, thank you all for your love and fellowship with our mother, Gisela, through the years.

And a very special thank-you for your help preparing a magnificent celebration of her life in your beautiful House.

Peace & Love,  
Linda Robeck Fuhrman



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 April 26.

**Gary Carrier**—Dirigo Pines  
c/o Allison Carrier Lucy  
16 Page Place, Orono, ME 04473  
207.944.0030

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

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

**Jane Reed**—Pine Heights  
187 Oak Grove Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802.257.0307

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



There will be a Celebration of Life for  
Dorothy 'Dee' Birge Keller  
on **Wednesday, June 22, 2022, 2:00pm** at  
Centre Congregational Church.

The service will be in-person as well as on ZOOM (link to be provided a week prior to the service).

Dee loved this faith community and loved her relationship with each person who enjoyed conversations and laughter with her. She valued inclusion and genuineness. Most of all she loved being in relationship with others and appreciating each person's uniqueness and gift.

Please join her family in celebrating the life of Dee Keller.

# JUNE 2022

\*\*ZOOM events  
\*Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff Meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 7 <sup>00</sup> VT Humanities First Wednesday	2 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	3 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 5 <sup>00</sup> Gallery Walk / Green@Centre	4
5 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship* 11 <sup>30</sup> Church Picnic	6 4 <sup>30</sup> Christian Ed Board	7 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 12 <sup>30</sup> BAILA meeting 7 <sup>00</sup> Afghan Team	8 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff Meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 6 <sup>00</sup> Mission & Service	9 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 3 <sup>30</sup> BCC Board 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit	10 <b>CB DEADLINE</b> 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	11
12 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship 11 <sup>30</sup> Fellowship Hour	13 7 <sup>00</sup> Pub Theology	14 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Afghan Team	15 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff Meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 6 <sup>00</sup> Church Council 6 <sup>30</sup> NAACP	16 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Community Equity Collaborative workshop 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit	17 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	18 10 <sup>00</sup> Feldenkreis Workshop
19 <b>Father's Day</b> 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship 1 <sup>00</sup> Feldenkreis Workshop 5 <sup>00</sup> SOS meal	20 4 <sup>00</sup> Compassionate Brattleboro	21 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Afghan Team	22 <b>MAIL CB</b> 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff Meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 2 <sup>00</sup> Dee Keller Memorial	23 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit	24 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	25 2 <sup>00</sup> Allen Vander Meulen Funeral 3 <sup>00</sup> Funeral reception
26 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Union Worship 1st Cong. Church, W. Brattleboro	27 7 <sup>00</sup> Pub Theology <b>Bruce vacation</b>	28 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Afghan Team <b>Bruce vacation</b>	29 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund <b>Bruce vacation</b>	30 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit <b>Bruce vacation</b>		

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: [www.centrechurchvermont.org](http://www.centrechurchvermont.org) -or-  
facebook page: <http://www.centrechurchvermont.org/audio-video.html> -or-  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal) -or-  
From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).

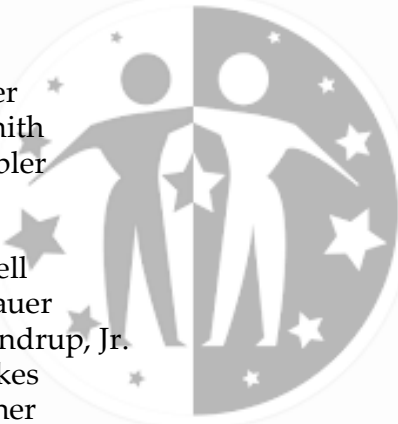
## ANNIVERSARIES

12 Arnold & Marilyn Young  
25 Julie & Michael Ball  
26 Peter & Marion Abell  
28 Rennie & David Washburn



## BIRTHDAYS

4 Tom Allen  
9 Jack Bixby  
10 Roger Miller  
12 Carolyn Smith  
13 Jenifer Ambler  
14 Ann Reed  
18 Bob Keller  
19 Marion Abell  
Patti Neubauer  
26 Morgan Randrup, Jr.  
27 Mary Hawkes  
30 Beth Crutcher



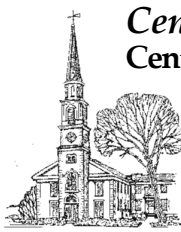
## JUNE LECTIONARY TEXTS

**Sunday, June 5, Pentecost Sunday**  
**Acts 2:1-21 or Gen 11:1-9; Ps 104:24-34, 35b;**  
**Rom 8:14-17 or Acts 2:1-21; Jn 14:8-17, (25-27)**

**Sunday, June 12, Trinity Sunday**  
**Prov 8:1-4, 22-31 and Ps 8; Rom 5:1-5; Jn 16:12-15**

**Sunday, June 19, Second Sunday after Pentecost**  
**1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a and Ps 42 and 43;**  
**Isa 65:1-9 and Ps 22:19-28; Gal 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39**

**Sunday, June 26, Third Sunday after Pentecost**  
**2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 and Ps 77:1-2, 11-20;**  
**1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21 and Ps 16; Gal 5:1, 13-25;**  
**Luke 9:51-62**



*Centre Bells* is published monthly by  
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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](mailto:admin@centrechurchvt.org)

# JUNE



# 2022

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
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**Office Hours:** M – F / 8:30am–12:30pm

**Church Office:** 802.254.4730 / [admin@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:admin@centrechurchvt.org)

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

**Facebook:** [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT](#)

**Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:**

VT Conference: [www.vtcucc.org](http://www.vtcucc.org) / National: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

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