

Mincemeat for Satan

Meanwhile there's these two sharp-dressed men well-coiffed occupying this well-appointed room on some sound stage in some television studio somewhere being broadcast into the living rooms, parlors, dens, bars and – in my case – hotel rooms of perhaps millions if not thousands or even hundreds of people across the country and around the globe – all the work-wearied denizens of Consumerland duly assembled in front of our mindless widescreens of perdition preparing to bow low and often before the gods of violence greed and thought-porridge – including my own hotel room on my TV, which I can verify, one solitary night in Halifax not long ago as the darkness shone like onyx and the salty mist ascended from the harbor below my street and the trees were rattled by shadowy-fingered wind gusts from, who knows, maybe Ontario or the Hudson Bay while hither and yon a pedestrian or two outside my window view shuffled and scurried for shelter as a chill foreign rain clattered into town which was one of the primary reasons I was in, not out, preparing to indulge my craving for October baseball by testing the channel button on the remote when lo and behold these two aforementioned sharp-dressed men appear well-coiffed on the screen speaking of – gasp! – religious themes and a certain biblical text in Paul's letter to the Romans and how my individual response to that particular text would determine my destiny for all time and how my interpretation of that particular text must of course be consistent with their teaching about it and how nothing less than my eternal salvation (here they nodded knowingly) was ultimately at stake and utterly dependent upon my strict and proper observance of that particular text and how those of us who fail to heed the clear sobering inerrant words of divine judgment in that particular text were at grave risk of becoming (and here I repeat their exact words) *mincemeat for Satan!*, and I thought well whaddayaknow it all comes down to this, doesn't it, that all the sharp-dressed well-coiffed men in their christian suits and their shiny shoes and their unforgiving faces pronounce judgment on everyone but themselves, having already achieved their most cherished enraptured delusions on the backs of every [fill in the blank] they fear or disdain or despise, having already secured their forever place in the throbbing hell of heaven's annihilation of difference dissent and free will, having bestowed through their fear a certain honor and prestige on a fictional personification of evil they claim to oppose but with whom they ultimately conspire, having blinded themselves through the unflinching severity of their unsmiling apologetics, their poisonous exegetics, their hallucinatory hairpiece photogenics – blinded I say to the light which now appears dimly on the horizon in children's dreams and ours, to the feet of the messenger upon the mountain who brings peace, as a voice from everywhere else arises in the desert of your souls' desire and mine singing 'comfort o comfort my people, says the Lord' prepare the way open the gates open the gates let them come in the poor the hungry the brokenhearted the oppressed and then us and all the rest even the sharp-dressed men trudging upward mouths agape souls exploding at the sight of the unimaginable becoming possible becoming real becoming flesh coming near coming here now and forevermore amen.



Advent approaches, friends. Be awake for the unexpected as well as the long-expected. The One who comes is coming soon, is here but not yet.

Advent Calendar



Please join us for Advent services
beginning **Sunday, December 3**
continuing through **Sunday, December 24**

The Sanctuary will be decorated for the season,
an Advent wreath will be lit each Sunday,
there will be special music and hymns
to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.

Dec 1 - World AIDS Day

Dec 1 - Moment for Peace

Dec 1 & 2 - Holiday Fair

Dec 2 - Messiah Sing

Dec 3 - First Sunday of Advent, Communion
Sunday

Dec 10 - Second Sunday of Advent

Dec 12 - First Night of Hanukkah

Dec 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

Dec 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service,
7:00 pm

NOTE: There is no service on Christmas morning.



CENTRE BELLS

The Newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
December 2017

From Music Director, MARYMILKEY-MAY

MUSIC NOTES

Musical highlights during November included Alison Hale on flute (Nov. 5th), Michael Mario on guitar with an original stewardship song (Nov. 12th) along with a congregational hymn sing (also on Nov. 12th). How lucky we are to have such talent within our congregation! The hymn sing was great fun and I hope we'll be able to do that again soon. Folks sang with gusto!

We are about to enter the season of Advent, which will include lots of beautiful music each week. Please consider joining the choir for this season. We can always use the extra help!



"Christmas Eve was a night of song that wrapped itself about you like a shawl. But it warmed more than your body. It warmed your heart ... filled it, too, with melody that would last forever."

Bess Streeter Aldrich, *Song of Year*

December Lectionary Texts:

- 3 Isa 64:1-9•Ps 80:1-7, 17-19•1 Cor 1:3-9•
Mark 13:24-37
- 10 Isa 40:1-11•Ps 85:1-2, 8-13•2 Pet 3:8-15a•
Mark 1:1-8
- 17 Isa 61:1-4, 8-11•Ps 126 or Luke 1:46b-55•
1 Thess 5:16-24•John 1:6-8, 19-28
- 24 2 Sam 7:1-11, 16•Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps 89:
1-4, 19-26•Rom 16:25-27•Luke 1:26-38
- 25 Isa 9:2-7•Ps 96•Titus 2:11-14•Luke 2:1-14,
(15-20)
- 31 Isa 61:10-62:3•
Ps 148• Gal 4:4-7•
Luke 2:22-40



MISSION & SERVICE

The Mission and Service committee would like to thank the congregation for their generosity over the year. Though we have not completed the calendar year and have not completed the Second Sunday offerings, we have supported 11 different organizations and 4 of the Five for Five general UCC offerings thus far. In October, \$743 was donated to the Neighbors in Need UCC offering.



This month, the Second Sunday offering recipient is The Christmas Fund. This fund is used for retired minis-

ters who may have limited funds. Christmas Eve's offering will go to the Samaritan Fund, which is used at the discretion of our minister in aid of person(s) with urgent needs. As Reverend Bert often refers people to Groundworks, any additional funds over \$500 collected on Christmas Eve will be donated to Groundworks.

Thank you to all who contributed time, effort in food prep, and attended the Greek Carry Me Home dinner on November 19th. It was a wonderful event. We continue to work with Carry Me Home as a mission of our church.

Thank you also for all who contributed to the CWS Cleanup Kits project/ LemonAID. The children did a wonderful job, but the congregation and the Brattleboro community made it happen. Instead of the 10 kits that we aimed for, we were able to put 14 kits together.

Jenifer Ambler and Harvey Nystrom returned from El Salvador on November 6th. They worshiped with Cristo Redentor, visited Luz del Mundo scholarship students and their families in their homes, met with the preschool teacher, and shopped for the Mission and Service table at the Christmas Bazaar. See Jenifer's article about their trip!!

Other things happening this month include the SERRV table during coffee hours each Sunday of Advent. CWS Blankets are also available to buy during these coffee hours.

~Priscilla Svec

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The past month for our Search Committee has seen us finalizing the Centre Church Profile and getting ready to receive interested candidates' profiles. With our excitement of this phase of our search there is a lot for us to do with support and direction from our UCC Conference. We will prepare for this by developing a list of questions to ask each candidate. We are likely to hold a mock interview or two. We also hope to review and maybe tune up our web site. There have been talks of a photo gallery on our web site showcasing the many activities/programs that our church family is part of, passionate about and work hard to support. We are excited to search for our next minister. ~Anne Fecto

Copies of the **Centre Church Profile** are available. If you would like a PDF copy of the profile, please contact Jim Bedard at jbedaoak@comcast.net and he will email it to you. Or, stop by the church office for a copy.

BOARD of DEACONS

Deacon Doings



The Deacons will be decorating the church at 9:00 a.m., Friday, Dec. 1, for Advent. We will be hanging the greens, and putting out candles and globes. Anyone who would like to help is welcome to join us.

The Deacons are missing the Communion silver tray from the Deacons' Closet. Does anyone know where this has gone? We used it for the October Communion, and put it pack in the closet. We went to use it in November and it was gone. We are hoping someone might have taken it to clean. Please let a Deacon know if you have it.

Wendy Randall is the Deacon of the Month.

~Carlene McCarty, Deacon



GIVING/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home.



DONATIONS TO GROUNDWORKS COLLABORATIVE

For the homeless:...Donations of warm jackets, boots, socks, gloves, sweaters, and hats (especially for men) are especially needed at this time, as are twin sheets and blankets, sleeping bags and pillows. All these can be dropped at the Drop-In Center on South Main Street. **THEY ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTING CLOTHING.**

The Food Shelf is always in need of the following:



**SECOND SUNDAY
OFFERING
FOR DECEMBER:
The Christmas Fund
And
The Samaritan Fund**

Non-Perishable Basic Foods

Peanut Butter

Dry Milk

Soups & Crackers

Rice and Instant Potatoes

Canned Fruits & Vegetables

Juices

Cereal

Canned Protein (e.g. Beans & Meats)

Tuna

Personal Care and Household Items

Toilet paper

Deodorant

Shampoo

Feminine hygiene products

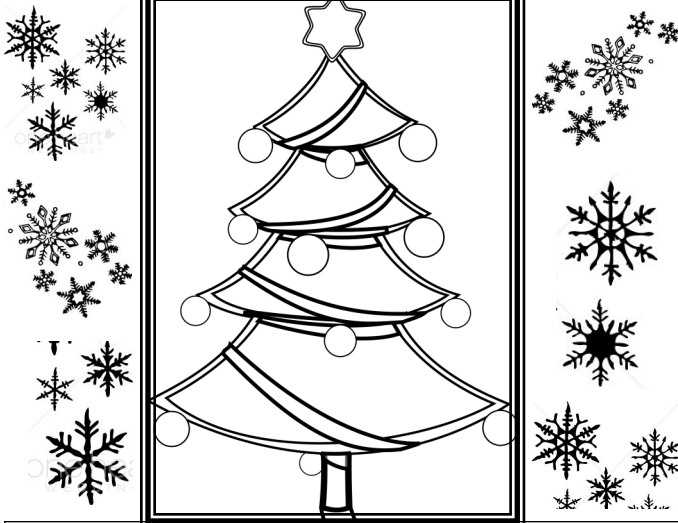
Diapers, all sizes

Toothpaste

Toothbrushes

Dish Detergent

Laundry soap



GIVING TREE: "Ornaments" will be on the tree in the sanctuary with suggestions for children from Centre for Children and /or in care of the DCF foster program. Please take one and help make a child's Christmas a little brighter. Thank you!

OVERFLOW SHELTER MEALS

Overflow dinners started on November 26th at the old Austine School campus, the Overflow Shelter's new home. Centre Church will continue serving dinner through the winter for 30 to 40 people every second Sunday of the month. A sign-up sheet will be on the Church Life bulletin board each month. The meal is served at 6:00 p.m.; food needs to be at Austine by 5:30 p.m. If you are unable to get food to the shelter, please let the person responsible for that Sunday know. You can bring it to church, or speak with someone else who is on the list for that Sunday. Directions will be posted on the bulletin board also.

December 10

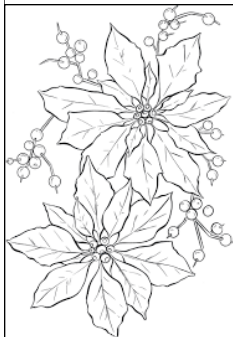
January 14

February 11

March 11

April 8

**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 17th to the 24th. You are invited to take yours home after Christmas Eve Service.

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Circle one:

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

\$14.00 _____

Donation toward other decorations _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Circle one:

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

\$14.00 _____

Donation toward other decorations _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

47th Annual Community
MESSIAH SING
Saturday, December 2, 1:00 p.m.
Centre Church

Join in singing the Christmas Choruses from Handel's *Messiah*. Bring a score; borrow or buy one at the door. Admission by donation to benefit the Groundworks Shelter and its food programs.



**CENTRE CHURCH'S
ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS FAIR**

Friday, December 1, 5-7 pm

Saturday, December 2, 9am-1 pm

This year's fair begins Friday, Dec. 1, from 5 - 7pm. There will be interactive carol singing and soups available for supper. The fun continues . . .

dOur famous waffles to start your day of shopping Saturday and a great luncheon menu to keep you going.

eNew vendors will be on hand, as well as those we look forward to each year.

eCookie Walk filled with delicious goodies for you to take home.

dSanta's Attic again, wreaths by Heidi Mario and swags by Sen Pu

fThe always wonderful Children's Creative Activities table.

iThe church's Quilt Raffle drawing takes place **Saturday at noon.**

Tickets for the 2017 RAFFLE QUILT are \$2 each; 6 for \$10; available at church office or call Anne Doesburg at 802-490-2075.

Queen-size (90"x106"); 100% cotton fabric and polyester batting. Machine-pieced by Centre Church Quilt Club and quilted by Anne Doesburg. Care: Machine wash warm; no bleach; gentle cycle or line dry.

Bring your friends to support the church, buy presents and celebrate the season!



The Fundraising Committee wishes to thank everyone at Centre Church for their time and participation . . .

BOARD FOR MISSION & SERVICE



PHOTO CAPTION:
Abuela Angela, madre Sonia, y su hija Lesli Ivett; Mercedes y su hija Zahory, y su hermana Loyda

Grandmother Angela, mother Sonia, and her sister Lesli Ivett; Mercedes and her sister Zahory, and her daughter Loyda

El Salvador Trip Was Great Fun!

Jenifer Ambler and Harvey Nystrom represented Centre Church on a trip to El Salvador from October 28 to November 5. Sunday, Oct. 29, was spent visiting our sister parish of Cristo Redentor in Apopa, El Salvador. We attended the church service; met with Pastor Francisco Aguilar, church leaders, and teachers at the local Cabanitas school; visited the homes and families of Luz del Mundo scholarship students; and enjoyed lots of hugs and smiles. We didn't bring loads of gifts or money but even just knowing we care is a huge uplift to that little church in a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of a gang-ridden city. Samuel Rodriguez, who some of you may remember from when he and his mother Antonia stayed with Peter & Marion Abell while he was treated at the Shrine Hospital, is now a full 6 feet tall and has a fulltime job in a grocery store!

The week we were there was the last week of classes for the school year, with final exams looming the next week, then vacation until mid January. Plans were being made for a Youth Retreat after school was out; Jenifer personally contributed some money to the Lutheran Synod toward that. (Francisco is the Youth Minister for that region of about 18 churches.) The parents of the younger students are very happy that scholarships allow their children to attend the local Lutheran school instead of the public schools. One high school graduate, Andrea, received a scholarship from the Lutheran Synod to study hairdressing and cosmetology at a vocational school, and proudly demonstrated her skills for us. Jenifer is researching options, probably through Rotary, to obtain a new wheelchair for Esteban "Steve" whose wheelchair is falling apart.

The rest of the week was spent working in an eye and dental clinic in San Jose Villanueva, a village connected with Epilogos, an organization from New Hampshire. Many grateful patients! And of course, a lovely day off at the end to shop and visit other parts of El Salvador. We will have loads of photos, and many more stories, to share with you one of these days!

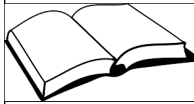
~Jenifer Ambler



CHURCH LIFE

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

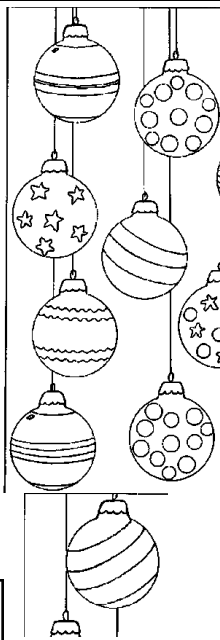
— Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*



The 9:00 a.m. **Sunday morning book group** is just beginning with

“Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind” by Yuval Noah Harari. A quote on the back cover intrigues us with “In Sapiens Harari delves deep into our history as a species to help us understand who we are and what made us this way. An engrossing read.” We agreed to read ahead to better understand the book as there is so much offered in its pages. All are welcome to explore with us. We meet in the library on the main level. If the door is closed it is because the noise in the hall is distracting, so please come in.

Mission & Service holiday sales table is open for business starting Sunday, November 26, and during coffee hours all through Advent. SERRV items, CWS Blankets, Heifer International, and brand new El Salvador crafts carried back from this fall’s trip! Come see what we have for your holiday shopping; the money helps developing-world artisans, disaster victims, farmers, and the Luz del Mundo scholarship students.



Everyone is invited to the **MOMENT for PEACE**

Friday, December 1•

5:30-6:00PM

Centre Church Sanctuary

Rev. Lise Sparrow, Pastor of Guilford Community Church, and a Choir of the Community under the direction of Peter Amidon will offer a candlelight time of music and reflection for places of the world in need of peace.

Everyone is welcome.



Brown Bag Lunch Group

Come join a small group of friendly people who love to share themselves while enjoying the bag lunch they bring with them. There's usually something to drink, but if you're fussy, bring your own. We'll likely be thinking about Christmas and would love to hear your memories and hopes. Everyone is welcome at noon on **Wednesday, December 6**, in the parlor.

WOMEN'S SPIRIT . . .

It took a while, but we finally finished **GOD IS NOT ONE**, and will be sharing items in the next weeks that are of interest to the individuals that attend WS. Everyone is invited to join this group who meet at **4:30 each Thursday** in the library. Maybe you have something you've been anxious to share with others whether it is a poem, book excerpt or an original writing. We'd love to hear it. The choice of a new book will follow the contributions of the group.





From Betsy Hickok, Phyllis's daughter:

Mom (Phyllis Hickok) wishes everyone at Centre Church a very merry Christmas. She turns 94 on December 17 and is doing great. She's made lots of friends in Iowa, where her daughter Betsy lives with her husband, Ron. They enjoy getting out frequently to the farmers' market, concerts at Iowa State University and other fun events. Phyllis especially loves attending musical events – and continues to surprise people with her wry New England sense of humor. Recently the nursing home let her know she'd soon be getting a roommate in her suite, and she asked whether it would be an attractive male . . . LOL.

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time."

—Laura Ingalls Wilder



Board for Member Care

Position open: Individual willing to be a part of the Member Care Board.

Qualifications:

!A desire to help members of the Centre Church family in times of illness

!Participate in planning for times of celebration such as Silver Bells Sunday, the All-church Picnic, etc.

!Correspondent for special occasions

!Attend monthly board meetings.

Equal opportunity volunteer opportunity!

Please contact Chair Marion Daley at (802)387-5822 or MEDaley2@myfairpoint.net.

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 November 22.

DON WEBSTER

50 Highlawn Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301 257-1434

FRAN BURROWS

66 Green Meadow
Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-4934

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)337-1956

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.

Darrel and Marion Daley are celebrating their
60th Wedding Anniversary
December 27, 1957—December 27, 2017

ORDER This Jewel on Main Street

The history of Centre Congregational Church, published for our bicentennial year, is still available for purchase from the office or during coffee hour following Sunday services.

For those who do not intend to be in the area and wish to buy a copy of this remarkable book, you may purchase it by sending a check for \$20.00 made out to Centre Church. This covers the \$15.00 book and shipping. Please send your orders to:

Marion Daley
PO Box 445
Putney VT 05346

Dot Vander Meulen will be happy to autograph the book before it is packed and mailed to you.

DECEMBER 2017

*Holy Communion celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 6 ⁰⁰ Holiday Craft Fair 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	2 6 ⁰⁰ Holiday Craft Fair 1 ⁰⁰ Messiah Sing
3 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 1 ⁰⁰ AAUW 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	4 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	6 12 ⁰⁰ Brown Bag 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	7 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	8 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	9 12 ⁰⁰ Melroy service
10 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	11 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 7 ³⁰ AA District 8	12 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Meeting Night 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	13 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	14 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ⁰⁰ DCF Party (MH) 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	15 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ³⁰ Centre Bells deadline 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	16
17 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	18 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	20 12 ⁰⁰ ACA 12 ³⁰ BAIL	21 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Sing 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	23
24 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 7 ⁰⁰ Candlelight Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED Christmas Day	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	27 Centre Bells mailed 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	28 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	30
31 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting						

J  **MERRY**   

BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Damon Kindopp
- 7 Deborah Cope
- 10 Robert Reed
- 13 Alice Stockwell
Isabelle Mann
- 17 Phyllis Hickok
- 19 Pat Austin
- 24 Mary Ellen Bixby
Sen Pu
- 25 Jesus of Nazareth
- 31 Roger Brown



LOVE   **COMFORT**  



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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

Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

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

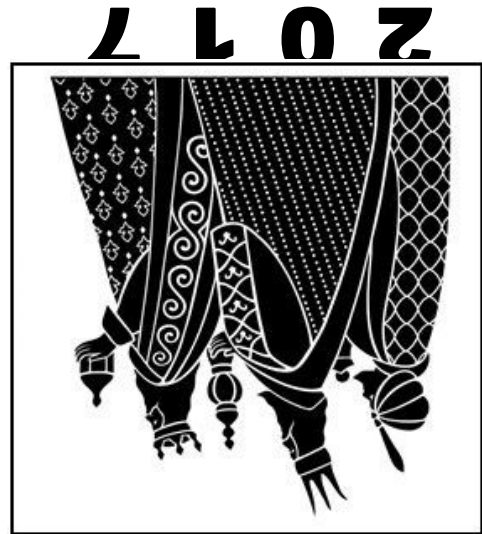
CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Interim Minister
Music Director
Administrative Assistant
Sextons
Financial Secretary

Rev. Bert Marshall: revbert@centrechurchvt.org
Mary Milkey-May: music@centrechurchvt.org
Hilary Farquhar: hilary@centrechurchvt.org
Gary and Paul Smith
Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org

Council Chair
Treasurer / Clerk

Matt Kennedy
Holly Kennedy / Constance Bresnahan



DECEMBER

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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