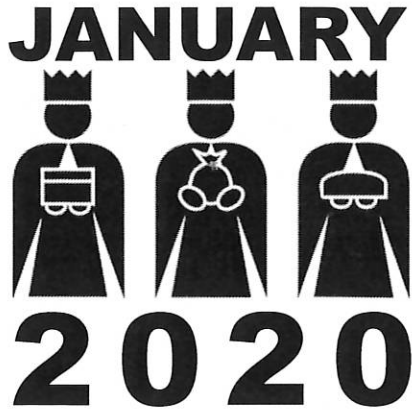


CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

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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
CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP
Minister and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper: 786.622.8473 (cell)
centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org
Music Director: Mary Milky-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: Emilio McCalla

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends in Christ,

Happy New Year! This holiday season, I have taken time to think and pray. Truth be told, during the very busy autumn season I am unable to pause, plan, and envision. So much time is spent doing triage, handling the next thing immediately in front. For a church a minister, the next Sunday is always just around the corner. If not the next Sunday, then it is the next sermon series, or the next liturgical season. The New Year is perhaps a time to take stock and envision!

For the past year I have chatted every Friday with a dozen people, half of whom are youth, in Pliny Park who publicly declare there to be a climate change crisis. I am amazed that those youths and their adult supporters have every Friday for one year witnessed to what I believe is the greatest theological, and thus for us the greatest Christian, and thus for us, the greatest biblical issue, of our time: Creation, or environmental, justice.

After I chatted with the 'witnesses', I prepared for our Sunday Advent service by reading the scripture for the week, Isaiah 35:1-10. As I read, I counted out-loud sixteen references to the land or the environment being redeemed (or 'saved') by God. That is more than one reference per verse!

As I chat with these climate change witnesses, I learn that they are, what one might refer to as, 'spiritual' but not necessarily church goers. So, in this New Year I ask myself as a member of our Church Vitality Team, how is Centre Church *relevant* to these deeply spiritual and committed people? How are we reaching out to them and inviting them to hear and experience with us the gospel of Jesus Christ?

On **Wednesday, January 15 at 6:00pm** Centre Church with Vermont350 and Everyone's Books will host Bill McKibbin. Bill will speak on the climate crisis. In his forward to The Rev. Jim Anal's book *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change* featured at our church last year, Bill wrote of Jim: "At first he was a voice crying out in the wilderness, but now everyone right up to Pope Francis has begun to sing from the same hymnal". May our entire congregation attend this event this month.

I have been asked by the Vermont Conference to be a participant of a 'New Ministry Team' that meets once a month. Our task is to envision new ways to 'do ministry' that are relevant for the twenty-first century. I have been tasked to develop an action plan in 2020 for such a new ministry. Though I am no Isaiah, I envision an 'Environment Sanctuary, a 'Greenhouse Sanctuary', covering most of our front lawn on Main Street. It is highly visible to the public. It is transparent. It is climate controlled. It is uses modern technology by stealth to make sound surround. There are places for solitary worship. It is open to the public for prayer and meditation. We can worship in the round. It is handicapped accessible. There is a fig tree. Dozens of plant species would fill the sanctuary. There are water features. The community and our congregation would together maintain this unique, beautiful, 'never done before' Environmental Sanctuary. It will be a sacred space dedicated to worship that focuses on God's salvific plan for us and the Earth. We would be relevant to the 'witnesses' across the street at Pliny Park. Our church would prove to be vital and alive, and perhaps, thrive. **Amen.**



Council Chair, BILL McCARTY

What a wonderful time of the year!

We all should enjoy this wonderful season of joy and friendship with our families, friends, and EVERYONE!

It is a time to celebrate and also to contemplate our gifts and obligation to others. We are a society of people who rely on each other for our mutual benefit. We receive and we should give to others.

In that vein, these are our obligations to our friends and society as a whole—and to Centre Church. Centre Church, while not our entire life, should be an important part of our thoughts and being.

To that end, Centre Church has given to each of us. "In what way?" you ask. Look no further than our weekly church bulletin, the *eNews* or *Centre Bells* for a summary or outline of our gifts.

It is a center of our religious, social, and moral life. It gives to each of us, as well as the community - feeding the hungry (Loaves & Fishes), assisting in recovery (AA), and hosting speakers, town events, and concerts (our sanctuary).

I could go on for the entire column, but you know what we can do, shall do, and what we accomplish.

It is that time of year for giving. Please give to Centre Congregational Church. It needs members, friends, and workers in its many activities.

Make a gift and a New Year's promise to give back to Centre Church!

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!!

Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

December was certainly a busy month with music at Centre Church. The Children's Choir enriched the Christmas Pageant by presenting four new anthems that they had been practicing for a few weeks. They did a wonderful job, with each piece memorized as usual. Jackson Grobe and Levi Healey did a terrific job as soloists. This group also joined the adult choir on Sunday, December 22 in a combined anthem entitled "See, Amid the Winter's Snow".

In February, it will be two years since the Children's Choir began. So far, this group has not repeated any anthems! In January, we plan to review some that we have learned and pick a few favorites to revive! There are many from which to choose!

Scott and I decided to have an Advent/Christmas hymn sing during the service on Sunday, December 22. People have mentioned wanting to sing some favorites and this was a chance to do so. We plan on having another hymn sing later on, enabling folks to choose some favorite general hymns. As always, if there are hymns that you wish we would choose, please let us know a specific title. We do try to connect them with the scriptures/sermon theme each week but there are some places to add some general ones as well.

Also on December 22, we were able to gather some folks to go caroling at the homes of some shut-ins, sharing some Christmas joy. We were greatly appreciated and a good time was had by all!

Special thanks go out to Kate Butterfield for subbing for me on December 29. She always does a terrific job! Special thanks also go to Florence Storey who generously donated her piano, soon to be used in the chapel. Thanks to Tony Grobe, James Cera, Eric Strickland, and Peter Abell for being the moving crew. Though we had three truck options, Peter's wooden trailer was the vehicle of choice. In retrospect, we should have taken a video of the process which was quite entertaining with Eric riding in the cart, ducking just in time to avoid the police! Adventures in moving!

REMINDER

Please send your 2020 pledges in to the church office if you have not already done so.

Thank you!



CENTRE BELLS—January 2020

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



MISSION & SERVICE

We look forward to the new year, trying some new ways to participate in the life of church and our community as well as continuing with the many familiar.

The Seasonal Overflow Shelter (SOS) started in late November due to staffing issues at Groundworks. So, we served our first meal on December 8, the second Sunday of the month. It was a feast! January 12 is our next meal. Abi Healey has offered to cook a turkey, so sign up on the bulletin board to round out our meal with side dishes and vegetarian options.

Thank you to Jack Bixby for speaking on behalf of the *The Christmas Fund* and to those who made a donation. This Second Sunday offering is a UCC offering for retired ministers and we were able to make a \$511 donation. Thank you also for replenishing the Centre Church's *Samaritan Fund*, the Christmas Eve free-will offering.

The Second Sunday Offering for January will be the *Luz del Mundo Scholarship Fund* for the children in our sister parish, Cristo Redentor in El Salvador. Since the public elementary school is farther away and in a dangerous neighborhood, we help to pay the tuition for students to attend the Lutheran School within sight of the church. The education is better and the parents don't have to worry so much about their children's safety. Funds are needed even more this year because the government-approved curriculum had been updated, necessitating updating of textbooks and workbooks at the school, leading to higher fees. Anything we can do to enable these children to get an education increases their chances for better employment and better ability to support their families later on. Please give generously.

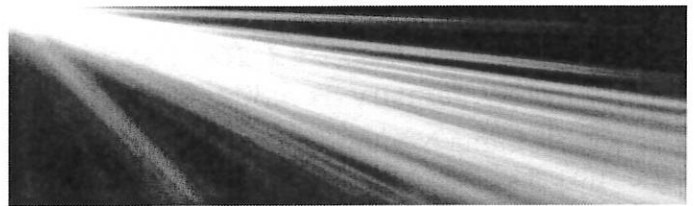
We look forward to two special coffee hours in January 2020. On January 5 after worship, Mission & Service will serve a Latin-American themed coffee hour and Jenifer Ambler will give a slide show / talk about her November 2019 trip to El Salvador, including both our sister parish Cristo Redentor and the sister parish of Bethany Church in Montpelier. Come join us for delicious food and conversation! On January 26 we will show the film *SAUTI*, which means 'Voice' in Swahili. This documentary features five young women telling their stories of "pursuing their dreams for a future beyond the constraints of a protracted refugee situation in an underdeveloped host country". You can read more on this link: Sautifilm.org.

Please also think about attending Moment for Peace on January 3 with Lama Tomas. Please read more in the separate article later in this issue.

Thank you to all who have contributed in numerous ways to our church's missions and service to our community. We look forward to 2020 with faith and hope to continue the work of our church in Jesus' name.

-Priscilla Svec

HAPPY NEW YEAR
from the Deacons of
Centre Congregational Church



CHURCH VITALITY TEAM

On **Saturday, February 1**, The Rev. Paul Nickerson, our vitality coach, is leading a special vitality seminar at First Congregational Church in Springfield, VT from 10am to 3pm, with lunch provided. The workshop will focus on first-time guest hospitality, building on the work the cluster churches are already doing. The cost of the seminar is \$100 per church, regardless of how many attend from each church. Like the previous workshops our vitality team has attended, the teams spend a lot of group time making specific plans to put outreach theory into practice. At the end of the day, each church walks away with at least four months of action plans. There will be follow-up coaching for churches that are not now in our coaching cluster; and they will receive coaching for this automatically. So, please consider attending so that more of our leadership has this important knowledge of outreach principles. For a better understanding of these events, talk to Anne Fecto, Roger Brown, Lynn Herzog, Priscilla Svec, Margo Neale, or Jennifer Ambler, all of whom have attended a vitality workshop. If you think you might attend, contact Roger Brown: 802.380.8198 / rog1b43@gmail.com and mark your calendar—2020 will be here before you know it.

-Roger Brown

MEMBER CARE

Member Care has been having monthly meetings at Pine Heights where I am recovering and getting physical and occupational therapy for my fractured left leg (that happened last month after a Sunday church service). It's been a help for me to learn about people and events of our congregation. Our membership at meetings changes as people leave for vacations, family care, or lengthy stays in other homes. We welcome others who may be able to work with us only part of the year. Each month we have a different contact person. Their names are posted in the weekly *eNews* and Sunday worship bulletin.

- Marion Daley

Everyone is invited to

TAKE a MOMENT for PEACE

Friday, January 3 • 5:30-6:00pm

Venerable Lama Noamh Tomas will speak to the subject of Peace. Lama Tomas is a member of the Order of Celtic Buddhist Monastics and lives a life of service in addiction hospice and bereavement. Lama Tomas served as a civil and human rights observer in Northern Ireland and has been an advocate for the rights of indigenous people in the Americas. He is the spiritual advisor and teacher at Riverbank House Recovery Community in Laconia, NH and a member of the Greater Laconia Ministerial Association.



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

Nancy Clarke—Hearthstone
402 Hemenway St., Marlborough, MA 01752

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

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

BIRTHDAYS

- 11 Marion Daley
- 13 Gina Hammett
Adelaide Minott
- 14 Katherine Maisner
- 15 Christina Goodwin
Joanne MacLean
- 16 Levi Healey
- 17 Bill McCarty
- 18 Dot Vander Meulen
Roger Daly
- 21 Bert Marshall
- 25 Ron Svec
- 26 Rennie Washburn



JANUARY 2020

**Holy Communion celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Years Day Office Closed 6 ⁰⁰ Alcatraz ends	2 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	3 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	4 7 ⁰⁰ Rock Voices
5 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship** 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 11 ³⁰ El Salvador talk 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	6 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 4 ⁰⁰ BCC Board	7 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	8 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting Scott on leave	9 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal Scott on leave	10 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ³⁰ L&F Steering Comm 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	11 11 ⁰⁰ Writing Workshop
12 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Overflow Shelter	13 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 6 ³⁰ AA District 8	14 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	15 4 ⁰⁰ Guided Meditation 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	16 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	17 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	18
19 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	20 MLK Day Office Closed 2 ⁰⁰ Film: Mass Incarceration 4 ⁰⁰ MLK Service	21 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ AA meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council	22 4 ⁰⁰ Guided Meditation 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	23 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	24 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ WWAC event 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	25 11 ⁰⁰ Writing Workshop
26 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 11 ³⁰ Film: Sauti 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	27 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	28 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ AA meeting	29 4 ⁰⁰ Guided Meditation 5 ³⁰ AA Meeting	30 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	31 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	February 1 11 ⁰⁰⁻³⁰⁰ Vitality Workshop-Springfield, VT 4 ⁰⁰⁻⁶⁰⁰ VIA Listening Kick-off

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



JANUARY LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, January 5, 2nd Sunday after Christmas
Jer 31:7-14 or *Sirach* 24:1-12, Ps 147:12-20 or
Wisd of Sol 10:15-21, Eph 1:3-14, **John 1:(1-9), 10-18**

Sunday, January 12, 1st Sunday after Epiphany
Isa 42:1-9, Ps 29, Acts 10:34-43, **Matt 3:13-17**

Sunday, January 19, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Isa 49:1-7, Ps 40:1-11, 1 Cor 1:1-9, **John 1:29-42**

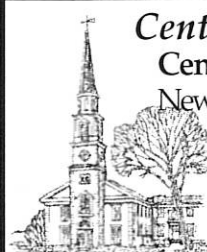
Sunday, January 26, 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
Isa 9:1-4, Ps 27:1, 4-9, 1 Cor 1:10-18, **Matt 4:12-23**

The editor regrets omission of the following people from last month's December birthday list:

Olivia Brisson December 11

Holly MacLean December 12

Best Wishes from Centre Church!



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