

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends:

Council requested me to write about 'hope'. I thought it an excellent subject, given that we are all holed-up in our homes, filled with much anxiety, and perhaps feeling depressed. We all need hope right now.

Now, 'hope' is a very specific noun (and verb). So, we need to distinguish what exactly hope is before we recognize it and seek solace in it.

The standard definition of 'hope' is "an optimistic attitude based on expectation or desire". The apostle Paul wrote, "Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). If we combine the dictionary definition of hope with the scriptures, we understand that 'hope' has two characteristics. One, unlike faith, we hope for something *in the future*. Two, unlike faith, hope is based on some kind of evidence. Faith can be distinguished from hope because we have faith in something that is true *now* and we do not require empirical *evidence* for it ("God is love." – I John 4:8). That 'God is present with us through COVID-19' is grounded in faith. That God accompanies us is a truth about the present that is known with certainty without empirical evidence. In contrast, we 'hope' for something in the future and there is some evidence that it will occur. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10) is an expectation or desire for the future for which we have some evidence – found primarily in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Centre Church, and the ministry of each one of you!

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, what hope do I have that the 'realm of God just as it is in heaven' will be present in our Brattleboro community? If we examine the scriptures, evidence of the realm of God was present when Jesus fed the multitudes (Matthew 14:13-21). Evidence of the realm of God was present when Jesus healed the sick (Luke 10:9). Likewise, evidence of the realm of God was present when the weary received rest, were visited, were comforted, and were sheltered.



In Brattleboro, I have hope that we shall experience the realm of God on Earth just as it is in heaven because of the work of Centre Church and, to an even greater extent, **Groundworks Collaborative**. Groundworks Collaborative is where the prophesied 'kingdom of God on Earth just as it is in heaven' is most substantively and profoundly glimpsed! Groundworks Collaborative does the work that churches cannot practically do. Groundworks Collaborative's work provides the evidence that our hope that all people will experience rest, love, health, and wholeness is not in vain. Groundworks Collaborative provides the best evidence for that which we hope: that God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Re-printed in this issue of *Centre Bells* is an appeal letter from our friend and Executive Director of Groundworks Collaborative, Josh Davis. Please read it with deep empathy and compassion. Through our Mission & Service Board, let us affirm and support Josh and Groundworks Collaborative, so that despite COVID-19, we will have hope in the future.

Love always in Christ, Scott

CENTRE BELLS – May 2019

The newsletter of Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

It's the most important letter I have written in my time with this organization.

- Josh Davis, Executive Director

Friends of Groundworks,

Our staff are on the front lines—managing the COVID-19 response to protect some of our community's most vulnerable people: our neighbors experiencing homelessness and living with food insecurity. As we double down in commitment to the work, we're scrambling to make it all possible, and we need your help now, more than ever.

The cascading events of COVID-19 are having an unimaginable impact on Groundworks' services as our staff are working around the clock to provide the best protections and support for the people we serve.

This pandemic will create an unprecedented financial challenge for Groundworks - as we're spending resources to pivot programs and support staff to stay safe in this time of crisis. Additionally, events we rely on to support our vital services are being cancelled, re-imagined, or delayed indefinitely. We're facing potential decisions that we hoped we would not have to make: decisions that would completely upend our programs.

The critical services we provide 24/7/365 in this community will not come to a halt as this pandemic runs its course. Rather, our dedication to the people we serve - whether they're calling our shelters "home" at this time or receiving emergency food through our food shelf program (Foodworks), working with our Case Management team or relying on the services of our Representative Payee - has only grown with this myriad of challenges. We're taking extraordinary measures to follow social distancing guidelines in order to protect our clients who are particularly vulnerable - closing our Seasonal Overflow Shelter and moving everyone into motel rooms to allow for isolation. Foodworks has moved to a delivery model - mobilizing volunteers and working to source enough food to deliver to anyone with need in our community.

Many of us never imagined we would live through anything like this. Social distancing is putting physical barriers between us and yet bringing people together to connect in powerful and exceptional ways. We cannot thank our volunteers and staff enough for all they've done to help make our strong response possible. There are everyday heroes among us - giving time and making impactful strides and donations to keep us flexible in our response.

If you are in a position to give at this time, please consider supporting Groundworks with a generous monthly or one-time gift. We need your help now, more than ever, to keep this important work and construction of the new shelter moving forward.

Thank you for being there for Groundworks and our neighbors in need. Be well and stay safe!

Josh Davis, *Executive Director* and Ann Fielder, *Board President*

P.S. We acknowledge that this may not be a good time for many of our supporters to give generously. If that is you, please know that we'll still be here - providing for the basic needs of our most vulnerable neighbors - when you are ready to give. Thank you.



Council Chair, BILL McCARTY

Greetings and welcome to a new life experience: a trying time for all, a time to learn new ways and help others who are less fortunate, a time to appreciate our life and gifts.

Centre Church, as we all are, is experiencing a unique time that has not existed in over one hundred years (the 1918 flu epidemic).

Centre Church and Council are still functioning, albeit through our Zoom meetings. Zoom, a forum most of us had not heard or even knew existed, now is apparently a primary method of communication. How life experiences change!

Church Council, at its recent meeting, discussed our current situation and Sunday services. It was decided by Scott and Council that we would continue to forego services in our sanctuary and continue the internet/Zoom services. Medical reasoning, government edicts, and common sense dictate that we practice caution and good sense.

The CCC Annual Meeting is mandated to be held annually in May of each year. Obviously, we will not be able to do it in May. Council discussed the possibility of a June meeting, but the time will be governed by the developing situation. Council will use good common sense and schedule the Annual Meeting when medical and common sense dictate.

This is a difficult and trying time. A time when family, church, friends, and church friends are needed and necessary. We may not be able to physically visit as usual, but we can use the technology and media that is available. Emails, internet, and telephones are available to most of us. Need to talk? Call, Zoom, or email a friend or the church! Scott and church members are available to visit and assist, as necessary. Member Care, Deacons. And other CCC members have been available and are assisting as necessary. If you have a need, please call. A friend is available.

This is a difficult and trying time for all. You are not alone. We all are experiencing these unique issues. If you feel isolated or just need to talk, use 'technology'. Call a church friend or Scott. Your Church and friends are here!

Good luck and see you on Zoom!



From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

I am writing this message as we approach our sixth Sunday of doing online services. Beginning in March, we live streamed three services through Facebook (FB) in an empty sanctuary. As some folks thought that method wasn't safe, we switched to Zoom where we are about to produce our third service. During this process, many folks have been helping behind the scenes. For our FB services, Jenifer Ambler and Tony Grobe were present each week to make sure the tech piece was covered. Matt Kennedy has provided special music for two of our online services so far. The music for Easter was recorded in the sanctuary, and thanks to Jenifer and Matt, we had some uplifting music for that service. Roger Brown got us started on our first Zoom service and since then, Jenifer has set up a church Zoom account where she has taken the lead. We have had numerous Zoom phone conversations before the services to make sure we are all set, and after the services to critique what has gone well or not so well. We continue to work on making the online services more easily accessible by emailing hymns and bulletins thanks to Bruce Landenberger. Scott Couper has been providing mid-week messages and he even did a Maundy Thursday service all by himself! Luckily, I have an organ in my living room so I have been able to record the music live with the help of Ernie May, who is filming me from the upstairs balcony, while simultaneously listening to his pre-recorded service at All Saints Episcopal Church where he is the Director of Music. Apparently, during one of their prayers last week they heard me playing one of the hymns for Centre! Ha! Stuff happens.

Anyhow, all of this is to point out that it has taken a TON of effort from many folks to provide Sunday services for Centre Church. It is SOOOO much easier to do "regular church" in the sanctuary each week. We are all learning as we go along. We are trying to get a better musical sound by changing some of the settings on Zoom. We have learned that it sounds much better when people mute themselves during the hymns. Maybe by the time we get all of the details figured out we'll be ready to resume regular services. That is my hope! Stay safe, everyone!



We must accept
finite disappointment,
but never lose
infinite hope.
Martin Luther King Jr

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE for CHILDREN

On April 10, Governor Scott extended the "stay at home" order until May 15. BCC will comply with that order and any more extensions of the same order by not conducting usual business, but will remain open to children of essential workers in the meantime. We are at capacity with two groups of children and a small number of staff occupying our classrooms. We maintain safe practices, but obviously social distancing is not possible with young children. Our lead teachers have established Facebook pages for their students' families so they can access a continuity of learning as required by the state, and the response has been very positive to them. All in all, we eagerly look forward to spring, and a return to the beautiful outdoors our area provides. The children and teachers who are here are proof every day of the courage and perseverance of those essential workers. Our gratitude goes out to all of them.

—Ms. Nan Mann

DEACONS

Daily Quarantine Reflections!

1. What am I grateful for today?
2. Who am I checking on or connecting with today?
3. What expectations of 'normal' am I letting go of today?
4. How am I getting outside today?
5. How am I moving my body today?
6. What beauty am I creating, cultivating, or inviting today in my life?

The Deacon of the month during the month of May is Carlene McCarty.



MISSION & SERVICE

Boys' Fund: To support Emelio McCalla family (our church's Sexton). We hope by the time that May's *Centre Bells* issue reaches you that Emelio's son's immigration paperwork has been submitted and thus the process for their immigration has begun. In April, the \$3,285 needed for this paperwork was pledged from individuals and from the Lobenstine Fund for international connections with Centre Church. We, members of the Mission & Service Board feel confident that Gail and Jim Lobenstine would have strongly supported the actions of Centre Church and Emelio in bringing his family together. Thank you to all who supported this fund. We look forward to having all together with us in the future!

Meal Team from Centre Church/ SOS: Thank you again for all those who helped provide the meals on April 19 and 30. It was a great scene to see all the cars arrive at Quality Inn and piece by piece, car by car, a dinner came together and was handed off to the Groundworks staff who with masked faces collected the food from each car. At this date we have not signed up for any future dates; however, if the Covid-19 restrictions continue into May necessitating the Quality Inn housing situation, meal teams will be needed. Please keep an eye on weekly *eNews* for any updates.

Camp-In for a Common Cause: Groundworks Fundraiser Friday, May 1. Each year, people camp out on the Commons at the beginning of May to raise money for Groundworks. This year, we'll 'camp out' in our own yards (or on our couches, or bedroom floors, or however you want to join us!) and be together in solidarity with the unhoused population of Brattleboro. Centre Congregational Church will have its own team, with a team goal of \$1,000. If you haven't joined the Centre Church Team yet, please get in touch with Abi Healey to register: abigail.m.healey@gmail.com, and consider being a sponsor for those of us who are 'CAMPING IN'. We hope that this can be an intergenerational camping experience.



Loaves & Fishes: Ruth Tilghman and two other dedicated chefs extraordinaire, have continued working hard to bring meals to our most vulnerable during this odd and challenging time. Every Tuesday and Friday this group of people arrive early in the morning to create over 150 healthy delicious meals per day. But there are more people involved:

- two groups come and deliver to the people at 3 places (Josh Steele and the Svec family)
- one person does all our ordering for all those take out containers, sanitizers and cleansers (Bob Oeser)
- one group picks up and delivers food from Price Chopper and the Food Bank (Chris, Troy and Willow)
- one person comes and cleans on an off day, the stoves and fridges. 1 family cleans pots and pans on T/F meal days
- one Person puts all the food away from the Food Bank (Hollis Carlisle)
- We have dessert makers (Wye, Cliff and Aduwa)
- Families and groups prepare vegetables for us (cutting carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes)
- Masks have been given to us (Lori Palmer and Dawn)
- We have bread makers (the Porter family)

We could use more help and would welcome Centre Church's help:

- Bread making for Fridays
- Desserts (we have some mixes and some ingredients)
- Wrapping forks and napkins
- Prepping vegetables
- Paper bags
- Making family bags (packing up food for families at home from our pantry- in a separate space).

We have a safe and easy drop off and if you are a packer, you would be alone! You can reach Ruth Tilghman at rtilgh09@aol.com.

Also MANY thanks to Emelio for the terrific job he has done cleaning, stripping, waxing and polishing the kitchen and all of Memorial Hall floors. Not only do they look terrific, it makes the clean-up process so much easier!!

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

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

John Mann, c/o Jessica Mann
595 Greensward Lane, Delray Beach FL 33445
561.265.5369

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

Arnold & Marilyn Young announce: We have a new great grandson, born on Saturday, March 28 in Springfield VT. His name is **Noah Whitney Fraser** and he is grandson to our daughter Susan and her husband Christopher Gray, and son to their daughter Elissa and her husband Andrew Fraser. He weighed in at 10lb 5oz and is 21½ inches long. He is also welcomed by big sister, Isabella Fraser. Arnold and I are delighted to add this little boy to our family. Mother and baby are doing well. Some people may remember Elissa growing up at Centre Church.

NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Michael & Linda Putnam
3176 Tater Lane, Guilford, VT 05301
802.257.0158 / momputty@gmail.com

Daniel Sicken
PO Box 8011, Brattleboro, VT 05304
802.387.2798 / dhsicken@yahoo.com

Jessica Mann (John Mann's daughter)
595 Greensward Lane, Delray Beach, FL 33445
561.418.1500 / jessica@pbautogroup.com

Melissa McLean Scholz (John Mann's daughter)
Falkenstrasse 125, 58553 Halver, Germany
melsholz@t-online.de

Dear Centre Church,

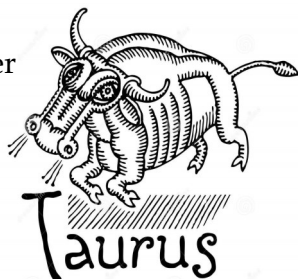
On the behalf of the McCalla family, we would like to thank you for your generous donations. With your help, we are now able to send off the paperwork to start the immigration process to bring our sons to the United States. Without your help, this wouldn't of been possible. Thanks for all that you have done.

Elmelio & Tamara



BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Bruce Landenberger
- 11 Bernadette (Mo) Meyer
- 16 Jackson Grobe
Dawn Grobe
Karen Rydant
- 18 Art Freeman
- 20 Frances Burrows
- 26 Al Rydant



MAY 2020

**Holy Communion
celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 6 ⁰⁰ Camp for a Common Cause 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	2
3 10 ⁰⁰ Worship** (Zoom) 12 ⁰⁰ Deacon (Zoom) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	4	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only)	6 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	7	8 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	9
10 Mother's Day 10 ⁰⁰ Worship (Zoom) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	11	12 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service (Zoom)	13 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	14	15 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	16
17 10 ⁰⁰ Worship (Zoom) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	18	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council (Zoom)	20 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	21	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	23
24 10 ⁰⁰ Worship (Zoom) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	25 Memorial Day Office Closed	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only)	27 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	28	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes (for delivery only) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	30
31 10 ⁰⁰ Worship (Zoom) 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team						

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurchurchvermont.org -or-
facebook page: <http://www.centrechurchurchvermont.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).



MAY LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, May 3, 4th Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:42-47; Ps 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

Sunday, May 10, 5th Sunday of Easter
Acts 7:55-60; Ps 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10;
John 14:1-14

Sunday, May 17, 6th Sunday of Easter
Acts 17:22-31; Ps 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; **John 14:15-21**

Sunday, May 24, 7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:6-14; Ps 68:1-10, 32-35; 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11;
John 17:1-11

Sunday, May 31, Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-21 or Num 11:24-30; Ps 104:24-34, 35b;
1 Cor 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

News items, articles, address changes, and requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should be submitted to the church administrator at:
802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchurchvt.org



CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842

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Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

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



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301

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