

JUNE



2020

**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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](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

Custodian: Emelio McCalla

Council Chair: William McCarty

Treasurer: Anne Fecto

Clerk: Connie Bresnahan

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Albert Einstein once stated, "A human being is a part of the whole called by us 'universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely but striving for such achievement is, in itself, a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security".

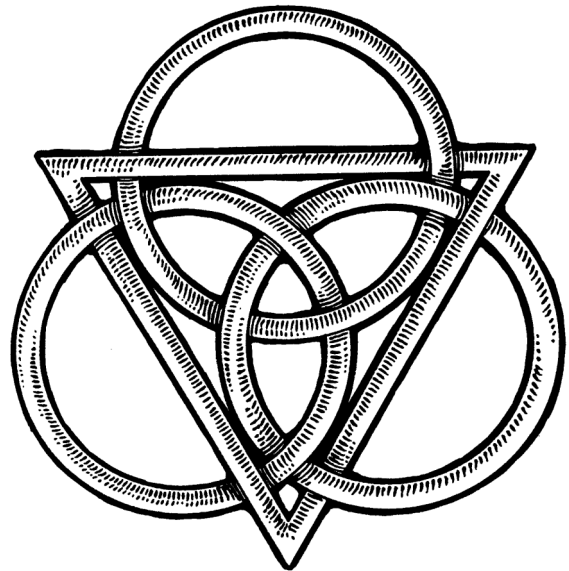
Yet, during this time of COVID-19 how are we, who are ordered to sequester ourselves in our homes and to self-isolate, supposed to "widen our circle of compassion"? The directives seem contradictory. We are told on one hand that the best thing we can do if we are not essential workers is to 'stay-at-home' and essentially 'hunker-down'. Yet, on the other hand we are instructed by our scriptures, prophets, and philosophers to protect the most marginalized and aid those in need. The solution to the seemingly mutually exclusive directives is to *be creative*. Creativity is the means by which we escape from our conundrum.

I have been inspired by Groundworks Collaborative's "Camp for a Common Cause 2020" initiative. Groundworks designed a campaign that allowed us to sequester ourselves and reach out compassionately at the same time! Teams camped out, often in their front yards or in front of churches (Centre Congregational Church on Main Street), to visibly raise awareness and advocate for the most marginalized in our communities. Josh Davis as Executive Director hosted a wonderful 'telethon' that rivalled that of any for MS led by Jerry Lewis. I understand Groundworks raised enough funds to reach and exceed their goal.

I was also inspired by the One Community/ Home Together Concert initiated by Guilford Community Church (UCC) which aired on YouTube and our Brattleboro local access television station. Again, the concert creatively allowed all to stay safe at home yet come together as a community to raise awareness and pay tribute to health care providers and first responders in our community who are protecting us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was also inspired by the Brattleboro Area Interfaith Leaders' Alliance Earth Day Interfaith Prayer Service: "Lamentations and Resolve". I was able to worship with others outside, separate, and together.

The community of Brattleboro has utilized all of its *creativity* to enable us despite extensive restrictions to be together as a community, to raise awareness, and thus to be more compassionate. I am so proud of our Compassionate Community that enables us to "embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty" despite the Vermont governor's justified orders for us to remain safe and at home sequestered from others.



CENTRE BELLS—June 2020

The newsletter of

Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

Council Chair, BILL McCARTY

Welcome to a different world that we continue to live in! No visits, no meetings, no sanctuary, no Sunday services at Centre Church. But there is plenty of life and activity at Centre Church! We are all living in a unique time and place - a time and place we wish we were not experiencing. But we are – and we must endure and, if possible, do good while we can. A lot of philosophy from a non-philosopher! Sorry for my digression.

Back to Centre Church Council and what is happening at Centre Church.

The Annual Meeting of Centre Church has always been scheduled in the month of May, but not this year. Church Council, after discussion at the monthly meeting, has deemed it best and most logical to attempt to schedule the Annual Meeting in September. June was discussed, but given events and the uncertainty, it was felt that September is a more logical and safer alternative date. So we will plan for September, unless something untoward should occur – again!

Though most of us have been sequestered to our homes, there is still much happening at Centre Church. The *Zoom* Sunday services have been a success (given the situation), but there is a recognition that not all have access to computer-aided church services or *Zoom*. If you are one who cannot access the Sunday service, please contact the Church office or a Council member to ascertain other ways to access Centre Church during these unique and trying times. Centre Church is still here (even after 204 years) and available to all on a daily basis. It may take longer to respond, but it will happen.

Future plans are being made for a revitalizing of Centre Church through the 2P2 program. More to come in September - or, if you can't wait, contact Margo Neale for a preview: 802.579.1602 / margoblue@myfairpoint.net.

As most are aware, Centre Church benefitted from the Federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP). This loan/grant has helped Centre Church maintain staff and activities during this difficult time.

This is a time for all of us to reflect on our inner strength to get through this unique time and to support and assist others who are having more difficulties. We all can, and do, receive support

from Centre Church, please reciprocate. Centre Church is here for all. Take advantage of it. If you need help or can give it, please let us know. Centre Church has been here for 204 years for its members, friends, and guests.

Thank you for being here. See you at Church--sometime!

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

It certainly has been an adventure trying to navigate church without being in the sanctuary. During our Zoom services, I have gone back to pre-recording music with seemingly better results than playing 'live'. Matt Kennedy has figured out how to highlight hymn lines and also has added a cursor so now folks can easily follow the words online. In addition, Bruce has emailed copies of hymn for folks to print-out each week if they prefer to sing from copies.

Jenifer has been using her personal equipment to record all of my music each week and she and Matt have also been singing the hymns to help out folks online. We are aware the six feet distance is not enough while singing so we have adapted accordingly trying separate mics at a 20 ft distance. That sound didn't prove to be pleasing so we are back to using the camera microphoners but with only one person in front of it. We are keeping at least twenty feet apart. Scott also has joined us singing from further back in the Sanctuary. We continue working on getting the best result possible within the various restrictions.

During these crazy times, it is important to remember that folks are working extensively behind the scenes. We couldn't do this without Jenifer and Matt at the helm of Zoom. Bruce has added many things to his 'to do' list, making it possible for everyone to have the information needed to participate in our weekly services and regularly scheduled Church Council meetings. Scott pre-records his sermons in addition to delivering them 'live' as a back-up in case there are glitches. With the exception of May 17, when Zoom had numerous updated software glitches, for the most part, online services have been going well.

Now, if only I could find a way to have my choirs back in action!



MISSION & SERVICE

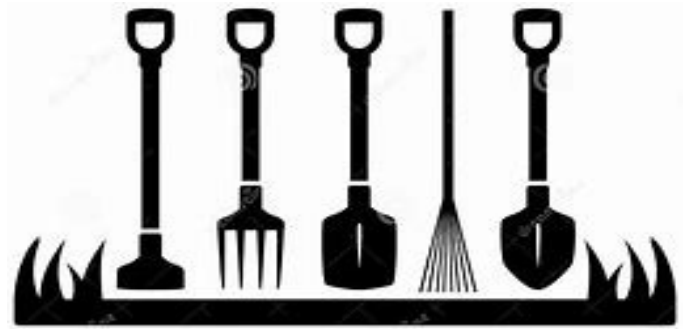
Thank you to ALL who have been doing the work of Centre Church's Mission & Service Board. We as a church have continued to be active in service to our community, whether helping with Loaves & Fishes, providing meals for Groundworks, picking up prescriptions for members, or calling and writing one another. God calls us to care for one another and we have responded.

In May, we provided a meal directly to Groundworks at Quality Inn and at the time of writing this article, a second date is being planned. We deliver over 200 meals **twice** weekly from Loaves & Fishes to Groundworks, Morningside Shelter, and Foodworks. Many thanks to Ruth, Josey, Jean, and May for being at Centre Church twice a week to prepare these meals and organize all the prep that happens at people's homes, deliveries of food before, and being present for the Brattleboro Center for Children families. If you would be able to bake or prep foods at home, please contact Ruth Tilghman: rtilgh09@aol.com / 802.254.2761. You can help once, monthly, weekly, or twice a week. You can bake, cut, do dishes, and deliver food. There are all kinds of jobs with all different time and talent requirements. If you have questions, call Ruth or speak with Ron or Priscilla Svec: psvec48@yahoo.com / 802.387.2373. We might also be able to help with information.

Our Special Offering in May was for Groundworks. Our contributions were made by participating in Camp for a Common Cause on May 1. This year we 'Camped In' due to COVID-19, so we were scattered from Brattleboro to Maine in our homes, on our porches, in tent in the yard, and even on the front lawn of the church. Thanks to Abi Healey and Jenifer Ambler for setting us up online and to all who contributed, camped, and rallied for contributions from friends and family. We raised \$730 of our \$1,000 goal.

June's Special Offering recipient is Brattleboro Centre for Children. Nan Mann has continued to provide childcare for essential workers, keeping the children safe and her staff employed. Though she received a PPP loan for employee salaries, there are many expenses. These expenses will be even greater as the requirements for safe opening are many and have added expenses. In addition to your regular church tithing, please consider a donation this month for Brattleboro Centre for Children.

Thank you, again to all who made it possible for Emelio McCalla to complete the paperwork and immigration application for his two sons from Jamaica. The process was further aided by the Lobenstine Fund (a fund within M&S), a generous donation from Jack & Mary Ellen Bixby, and the generous time from Susan Miller, a retired immigration lawyer. Thank you to all!



DEACONS

The Deacons are working on hospitality bags with Mugs filled with information about Centre Church. We are working with Marion Abell. These will be given to folks who join the church and special guests. The mugs will also be used in place of paper cups each Sunday to save money and eliminate waste.

The Deacons would like to recognize and thank Heidi Mario for polishing all the candlesticks, the cross, organizing the two books the Deacons use and the bulletin board. We so appreciate all your hard work. You are a terrific deacon!

A second thank you to Marion and Peter Abell for a job well done in the narthex. You two are amazing in all the work you do for the church.

The Deacons also discussed when we do open our church doors how to do so safely with social distancing, face masks, and outside fellowship time.

Scott, with other local ministers will gauge when it is safe for us to meet again. Older members may not be ready to venture out quite so soon, but we will just have to wait and see what happens. No one knows, so we are not rushing. Our Zoom services are progressing nicely.

The Deacon of the Month of June is Joy Everett.

-Carlene McCarty, chair

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE for CHILDREN

June 1, 2020: BCC is re-opening in small stages to comply with the governor's directive that child care centers can re-open June 1. Our first stage had been emergency child care for a small group of essential workers' children. That stage ended May 29 at noon. Second stage is all four classrooms re-opening with a nearly full staff to a larger group of still essential workers' children. Stringent health and safety protocols are being put in place during this stage and the staff is educating families on these new procedures daily. In a couple or three weeks, stage 3 will be implemented, which is a return to more normal group size classrooms, but still with strict health and safety procedures in place. The director, Nan Mann, has been carefully researching and educating the staff and families daily. We are looking forward to graduating a class of children going to kindergarten in late August, but at this time don't know how that can look or happen due to restrictions on group gatherings. We know that having the children back is important to their social and emotional well-being and our support for working families is our goal. We are glad to be back!

-Nan Mann Director

COMMUNICATION from the WIDER UCC COMMUNITY

Church Vitality in the New Normal

Church consultant Paul Nickerson did a webinar called "Now What: Navigating Church Vitality in the New Normal" for Vermont Conference pastors last week. Let me share with you about the key points he raised. He first stressed that any online service should be seen as a mission effort and outreach to people beyond the church, and not just a service for members. With that in mind, it is important to not use too much "church insider" language in our worship, and to keep the service a little shorter and faster paced. He encouraged us in our worship services to invite people to something online during the week, whether that be Bible or book studies, social get togethers, mission projects, etc. This will allow us to get to know that newcomer in a more informal and smaller setting. He stressed the importance of inviting our members to invite other people to share in whatever online worship we might do. Many churches are connecting with people they don't normally see during this Pandemic time, so this is good news!

In the area of stewardship, he said that national statistics show that in general, churches are taking in less money than before the Pandemic. Worship services online should include an invitation to give, and an explanation of how to give. For churches not doing something online, self-addressed stamped envelopes mailed to members might serve as a gentle reminder of the importance of giving during this time. Any stewardship material should include stories about the way your church is making a difference in people's lives and in the life of the community in Jesus' name.

Finally, Paul spoke to the New Normal. He said that the Digital World is here to stay, and churches that are doing something now online should plan on continuing to do something even after we can gather together again physically. This time especially reminds us of the importance of a crystal clear purpose for our church, and the need to stop doing things that don't really tie into our purpose and instead to focus on things that do. Finally, he encouraged us to see the importance of making disciples as being far more important than how many hits we get!

This is a tough time for pastors and churches. I hope and pray that you are getting enough rest and time off in your life so that you can be open to thinking and praying about what your church is called to be in this New Normal. Lynn and I and Jesse and all of your colleagues in the Vermont Conference are here to help you in whatever way that we can.

Faithfully yours,
Paul Sangree

[Paul Sangree, the Associate Conference Minister for Vermont]

We are with you

Dear Friends in Christ,

We send this with the magnitude of our emotions written large on the surfaces of our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits. We feel deep pain, loss, and anguish on our collective behalf for all that we have experienced in the last two months. Worship in our sanctuaries has come to a sudden halt. Jobs and incomes have been threatened, if not lost. Loved ones have suffered or died from a hidden enemy for which there is no current remedy.

Our sheltering in place is exhausting. For many of us the loss of human contact, the drudgery of unchanging surroundings, our inability to frequent places that brought joy to our lives, and the call to adapt overnight to overwhelming change are taking a toll.

We are also witnesses in this time to heart-warming acts of human kindness and solidarity that speak to the angels among us. We are not only making great sacrifices, we are doing so in a collective effort to protect and care for the most vulnerable among us. The courage, stamina, endurance, compassion and empathy being practiced among us remind us that we do not grieve as those who have no hope. The power of a faith enriched by Easter joy and resurrection hope is not diminished by anything. Neither death nor life, not angels or demons, not power and principalities, not height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

Seeing the church in and through this time fills us with a lingering hope in humanity, in the Body of Christ, and in the promises of a God whose only begotten child came that we might have life, and have it to the full.

In short order, states and municipalities are going to begin relaxing their shelter in place orders. We also write to strongly encourage you to give deep thought and prayer to how, if, when, and under what circumstances you will return to worship and other gatherings.

There will be a great temptation to rush back into our sanctuaries, celebrate victory over this corrosive and deadly virus, and return to life as we knew it.

Please think long and hard about that. There is no going back to life as we knew it. For a while at least, even what seems like a safe gathering may present a threat to the life of someone we love and care deeply about. Something substantial will emerge on the other side of this that we did not recognize before it started. Some of that we will accompany with our grief; and some of it we will receive as a gift from the God who is always about to do something new.

Please pay close attention to anything coming from your Conference offices about when you should return. Your Conference staff is keeping close watch on this and should be consulted before you make any decisions. If you want an example of a comprehensive look at what should be fully considered before making that decision, [check out this resource distributed by the Wisconsin Council of Churches](#) – it is the best we have seen to date.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers. All of us in this denomination are working, as one, to find our way through this. You are not alone. We love you all. We are seeing and feeling deeply your pain and suffering; as well as your heroic efforts to find meaning and healing in the midst of it. All of our own efforts are now being expended to help us find our pathway through this – a pathway we share in partnership with each other, and with the Holy Spirit of the living God and the risen Christ.

May the power of the love that created us, the love that redeemed us from the grave, and the power of the Holy Spirit rest upon you wherever you are on this journey. Lift up your eyes to the hills, from whence comes our help. The Creator of us all keeps watch. “All shall be well, and all shall be well; and all manner of thing shall be well.” (Julian of Norwich).

Sincerely,

John. C. Dorhauer, Traci Blackmon, Karen Georgia Thompson

[April 28, 2020, *A Letter to Our Churches from the Officers of the United Church of Christ*]

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
802.380.0735

Sylvia Eaton
86 Brets Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.254.6853

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

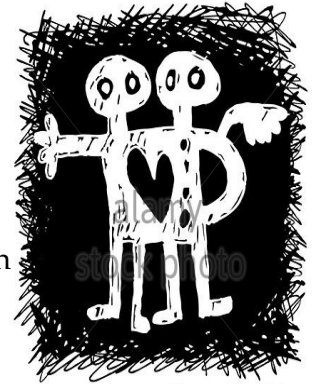
Pat Neer—Thompson House
80 Maple St., Brattleboro, VT 05301

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

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

BIRTHDAYS

- 9 Jack Bixby
- 10 Roger Miller
- 12 Carolyn Smith
- 13 Jenifer Ambler
- 18 Bob Keller
- 19 Marion Abell
Patti Neubauer
- 23 Allen Vander Meulen
- 24 Alta Barber
- 26 Morgan Randrup
- 27 Mary Hawkes



NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Teddy & Gabi Martin

132 Main St. #300
Brattleboro, VT 05301
504.450.7964
cipolla.gabi@gmail.com / ejmartin504@gmail.com

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Pat Neer telephone#:
802.258.9801

Bob & Sen Pu, mailing address:
833 Upper Dummerston Rd.
Brattleboro, VT 05301-9099

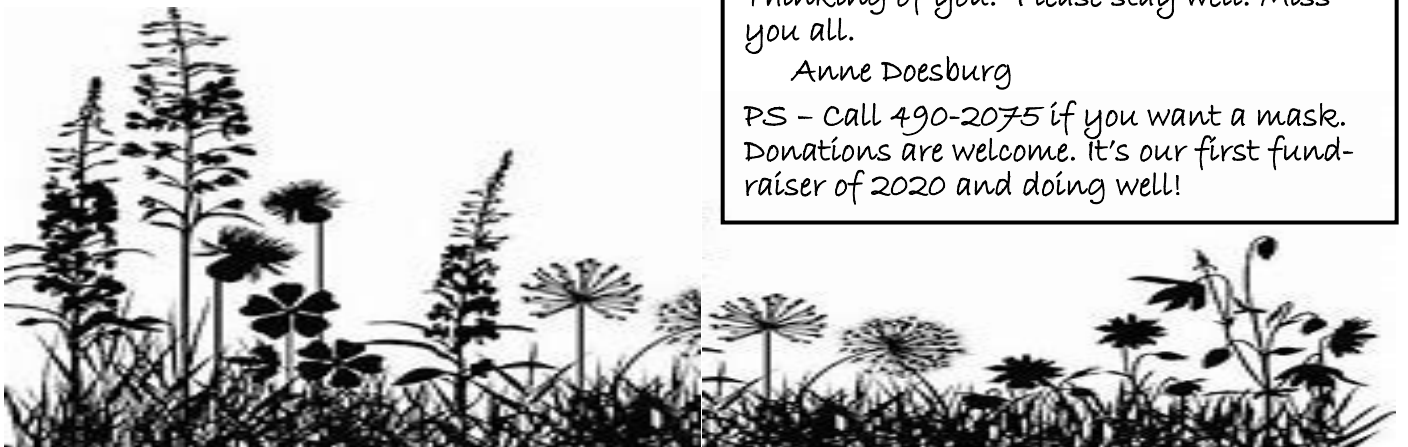
Hello!

Thank you for the birthday cards. It's quite busy here making masks, mending quilts, making the raffle quilt, niece's quilt and duvet, baby quilts, and items for the Christmas craft show.

Thinking of you. Please stay well. Miss you all.

Anne Doesburg

PS - Call 490-2075 if you want a mask. Donations are welcome. It's our first fundraiser of 2020 and doing well!



JUNE 2020

**Holy Communion
celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	6
7 10 ⁰⁰ Worship** 1200 Deacons 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	8	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	10 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	11 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	12 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	13
14 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	15	16 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council	17 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	18 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	20
21 Father's Day 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	22	23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	24 MAIL CB 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	25 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	27
28 10 ⁰⁰ Worship Union Service - W. Brattleboro 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	29	30 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes				

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).



JUNE LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, June 7, Trinity Sunday

Gen 1:1-2:4a; Ps 8; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Matt 28:16-20

Sunday, June 14, 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

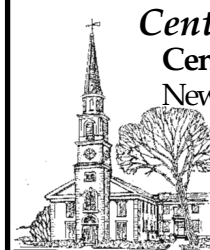
Gen 18:1-15, (21:1-7) and Ps 116:1-2, 12-19 or
Ex 19:2-8a and Ps 100; Rom 5:1-8; Matt 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

Sunday, June 21, 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Gen 21:8-21 and Ps 86:1-10, 16-17 or Jer 20:7-13
and Ps 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18; Rom 6:1b-11;
Matt 10:24-39

Sunday, June 28, 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Gen 22:1-14 and Ps 13 or Jer 28:5-9 and
Ps 89:1-4, 15-18; Rom 6:12-23; **Matt 10:40-42**



Centre Bells is published monthly by
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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

