

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends in Christ, I am giddy with anticipation for our relaunching of Centre Congregational Church after the COVID-19 pandemic. March 2000, when we first went virtual and began our sheltering, seems sooooo long ago. I am proud that we at Centre Church have been resilient and patient. I am thankful that despite the fact that we perhaps had different perspectives and contexts as it regards safety and security, we did not descend into bickering by politicizing our church's response. I am thankful that we also did not endlessly wring our hands, talk, and discuss *ad nauseum* the best course to take throughout the pandemic as many churches have (wasting so much time rather than just getting-on with the mission and work of the church that had to continue). Throughout the pandemic, we erred on the side of caution, grace, and patience striving to protect the most vulnerable in our fellowship. We will have two 'soft' openings of our church for gathered worship in the sanctuary on July 11 (Annual Spring Congregational Program Meeting) and August 8 and then we will spend many weeks beginning on September 12 (Welcoming Sunday) reactivating much of our faith lives at the 'Jewel on Main Street'. In many ways, I feel like Noah after the flood. It has been a time of death, isolation, anxiety, and uncertainty. It feels as if we have been confined in arc (talk about social distancing!) like Noah and his family, tossed by the pandemic's waves. Yet, now in July 2021 we are poised to emerge. I found a beautiful hymn that describes our journey thus concluding (*Emerge: Blessings & Rituals for Unsheltering*). Perhaps, we can ask Mary to play it so we may sing it together when we gather again.

*When Noah sent a dove to fly
across the ebbing sea
to seek a sign of life's return
he waited patiently*

*Not knowing if she'd find a thing,
he waited patiently,
and prayed the dove along her way
toward unknown mystery.*

*And as she winged her way on prayer
toward unknown mystery,
already you had freed the land
and planted olive trees.*

*Already, as she circled high,
you'd planted olive trees,
already made the branch she'd take,
its green and silver leaves:*

*Already made new earth a jewel
of green and silver leaves,
while Noah still in patience prayed,
still scanned the cloud and breeze.*

May we soon discover the olive trees God has already planted at Centre Church. Be well.

In Christ, Scott

*Our patient prayers are like the dove
that scans through clouds and breeze
for signs that in foreseeing love
you're planting olive trees.*

*We hope she'll bring a branch, but more,
we ask for faith to know
that while we're praying unaware,
the trees your planting grow.*

Tunes: Land of Rest, Dundee CM 8.6.8.6



CENTRE BELLS—July 2021

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ

Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

This month Council became aware of some concerns regarding Scott's move to Massachusetts. Council feels strongly that we have no right, legal or otherwise, to tell him where to live. There is nothing in his contract that stipulates where he should live. As long as he performs his duties to the church, he can live wherever he likes.

We had become somewhat spoiled because, living across from the church, he was always available. He has been commuting from Mass. since February 1, and he has continued his activities at the same high level as before. He has attended the church clean-up, chapel painting, funerals, and made pastoral visits despite COVID limitations. He does as much as any minister living in Brattleboro – probably more. (We have had to urge him to take the days off that he is entitled to). He will be working in Brattleboro four days a week (they will undoubtedly be ten or twelve-hour days) and working remotely the other days, and will always be available by phone for emergencies. Yes, it is a change, but in the past year we have all learned to accept change, and I think the church has been quite successful at it.

Obviously, we don't know how this will work when our activities are in-person again, and also when winter comes. We will re-evaluate the situation in the fall and winter. If you have concerns then, please bring them to the Pastoral Relations Committee:

Judy Palmer: judithp41@gmail.com / 603.353.0590 or Council:

Lynn Herzog: glherzog@sover.net / 802.254.1223.

In the meantime, we wish Scott and his new family much happiness together.



UPDATE!

COVID-19 BUILDING PROTOCOLS

Centre Church is committed to ensuring that all staff, visitors, and members of the congregation are safe while in the church building.

Effective June 17, in alignment with State and local guidelines, the following protocols will be in place:

- Stay home if you are sick with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Masks and social distancing throughout most of the building are optional.
- For the protection of the children, masks and social distancing will be required in the lower level Brattleboro Centre for Children (BCC) area, and in the corridor of the first floor Wells wing during BCC hours of operation.

This policy applies to all public areas of the building and to all staff, visitors, and congregation members, regardless of vaccination status. Anyone not complying with this policy may be asked to leave the building.

From Music Director, MARYMILKEY-MAY

Special thanks go to Jenifer Ambler and Wendy Susan Collins for helping with the hymn singing and anthems for June. Scott Couper was also a hymn singer as he happened to be in the Sanctuary when we were recording! It's always nice to have an extra voice or two!

Looking toward July, you will be able to hear Lynn Herzog's recorder group as well as Alison Hale's flute playing. It is always wonderful to have instrumentalists as well as vocalists! Also in July, we will have our first in-person service since last November. It seems like it has been forever since we've gathered in the sanctuary. I look forward to using more organ registrations as I have held back when recording. The organ is one of the most difficult instruments to record well and the more volume used, the more screechy the recording can sound.

As it looks now, we will likely be able to begin choir rehearsals in the Fall. I'm hoping we will have a sizeable group of singers for the second Sunday in September when we resume regular weekly in-person services. If we are all vaccinated, it is likely we will be able to sing. I sure hope that's the case!

DEACONS

For many of us, July has always meant flags and fireworks, cook-outs, hammocks, sunny days at the beach, and the verdant coolness of a mountain trail. This year, if all goes well, we will have a new reason to celebrate—the cessation of state-mandated COVID-19 restrictions.

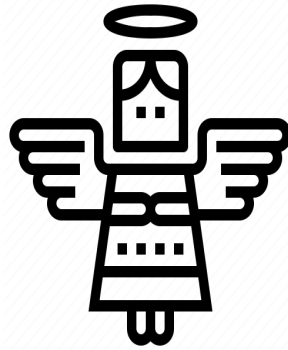
We of our “brave little state” (to quote native son Calvin Coolidge) have much to be proud of. Throughout this harrowing past year, percentages of infection and mortality in our population have been among, if not the lowest in the nation, and currently we lead with rates of vaccination. This is a testament to our care of one another, and our willingness to sacrifice for the greater good. Now, as we tentatively shed masks and prepare, with caution, to gather again, the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel shines clearer and brighter.

Thus, with joy and optimism, our sanctuary will open for in-person worship on July 13. As noted previously, this will be a ‘soft opening’. We will next worship in the sanctuary on August 8, and then, our Grand Relaunch will be celebrated September 12. Services will be hybrid (available virtually) so that those not yet comfortable with physical gathering may continue to participate.

Leading up to this time, Deacons will be plumping up the pew cushions and getting the sanctuary shined up and ready to welcome back smiling faces, faithful hearts, and glad voices.

We hope yours will be among them!

-Heidi Mario, *for the Deacons*



Women's Spirit

held a re-organizational meeting on Thursday, June 24.

Beginning **Thursday, July 8**, regular Thursday evening meetings will resume from 4:30-5:30pm in the Heritage Room.

For more information, contact Nancy DiMauro: 802.257.4489 / nedimauro1@myfairpoint.net.

MEMBER CARE

The Congregation and Prayer

Our church weekly newsletter is a long one to read. It has to be during the COVID crisis. I think about that especially when I get to the Prayers for the People at the end. What to do about that? Is it a plea or suggestion that we pray for them in the lump sum of the growing list, or individual prayers? Having been on the Member Care Board for a long time, I know of people who ask NOT to have their names on the list, or when we meet in church, not to have their names read.

Personally, I'm happy for any prayers on my behalf. I've been a pray-er ever since childhood - "Now I lay me down to sleep.....". Sound familiar? Does it make a difference if one lumps all of the people on the list into one sentence? Do you have time to pray for all those printed in the *eNews*? Plus, there are all my small and scattered family to remember in prayer everyday. I could make this a puzzlement over prayer!

My personal experience with our present pastor, Scott Couper, is that he is strong in prayer in his pastoral visits. While I had two long stays at Pine Heights, he visited me every Monday and made time for conversation and always prays in the strong name of Jesus.

I want to give my prayer support for the people on the prayer list, so I am experimenting by dividing the long list up and taking a few each day. Maybe you can share something about your prayer practice. Maybe we can have a ZOOM class centering on prayer.

With care and concern, Marion Daley

MISSION & SERVICE

Each month we seem to be very busy with new and ongoing projects. One that we would very much like to hold up is the Tag Sale for Loaves & Fishes happening at St. Michael's Episcopal church on **Saturday, July 17**, with the rain date on July 24 (see accompanying article). The importance of Loaves & Fishes is shared by Centre Church and St. Michael's, and we have asked for help from them in covering the utility costs of this important mission. Here is our opportunity to work together toward the common goal of supporting Loaves & Fishes. No additional donations of clothing or linens are needed, however, **volunteers** are needed to help move bags of clothing and linens, take out and set up tents and tables, set up clothes and linens the morning of the event, assist shoppers, and finally clean up afterward. To sign up, please call Charlene Kemp, the volunteer coordinator, at 802. 254.2083.

Loaves & Fishes continues to make a difference for MANY in our community serving the homeless at the hotels and the drop-in center with the support of Bridget's Kitchen. Beginning July 1, the many changes and supports that have been in place for the last fifteen months will be coming to a close and these kitchens will return to community meals simultaneously. However, meals will not be served in Memorial Hall until the Fall, to allow time for more of our clients to be vaccinated. So, additional outdoor picnic tables are being sought by donation.

Many thanks to Dennis Newman, Bill McCarty, Bob Pu, Anne Fecto, and Rennie Washburn, who are working to secure 501C3 status for Loaves & Fishes. This is a lot of work and will be so helpful to both Loaves & Fishes and Centre Church. Thank you all!

On **Wednesday, July 7** (rain date July 8) from 4:00-6:00pm, *Everyone Eats* will host their closing farewell party on our wonderful *Green at Centre*. This event is being organized by *Everyone Eats* with plenty of food, I assume. Please contact Bonnie Girvan:

908.307.1623 / girvangardens@gmail.com if you can help with this event for set-up, welcoming, and/or clean-up. But also come to celebrate a successful pandemic program!

On **Saturday, July 31** at Centre Church, *Trio Amphion*, with Jesse Lepkoff, Sarah Cunningham, and Peter Sykes will play a benefit concert for the Luz del Mundo Scholarship fund.

Jesse organized and played a benefit concert several years ago, which was wonderful! These fine musicians play a variety of genres to create a very enjoyable evening of music. The last concert raised \$750 for Luz del Mundo. Please come to enjoy the music and make a difference for the children of our sister parish.

Many thanks to Nan Mann for speaking in June for our Second Sunday Offering, *Brattleboro Centre for Children*. In July, our Second Sunday Offering recipient will be the *PINS* program/Department of Children and Families. This summer, our first without pandemic restrictions, the funds raised by this offering will be so welcomed to bring our local, most vulnerable children joy, safe play, or a special activity. Please give generously!

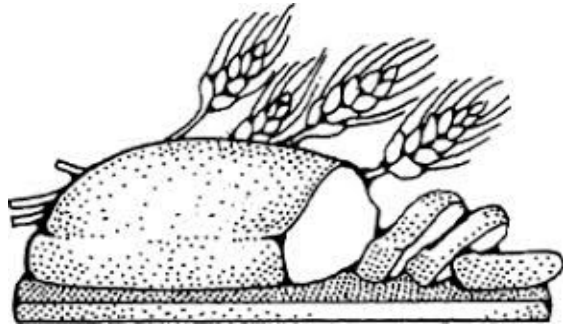
Lastly, and most exciting, is the receipt of a Hope Grant from the Vermont U.C.C Conference for new ministries. This \$2,500 grant was received in June, due to Scott's terrific writing and his presence on the New Ministries committee. Mission & Service worked to present the initial direction for this grant with the help of council. *The Green at Centre*, our front lawn, will be the site for many wonderful collaborative events, as we have already seen and have participated in. In May, the Brattleboro School of Dance students graced the lawn for several performances. In June there was music, as there will be on **Friday, July 2** with Daniel Sicken. Please come, volunteer to greet people, or set up chairs. Also, there is still room on the 'Green Team', which will keep the calendar for *The Green at Centre*. Right now, this team consists of Bonnie Girvan, Marion Abell, Sue Rowell, and Roger Brown. If you have an idea or an event that you would like to create for the Green, please let this team know. Many ideas are circulating and we are so thrilled to have a presence outside and inside our church!



LOAVES & FISHES

Sharing for Meals Project

Saturday, July 17, 2021, 9:00am-2:00pm
(rain date- Saturday, July 24)



The members of the St. Michael's Episcopal Church Tag Sale Ministry have become aware of two needs in our community exacerbated by the pandemic over the past year.

First, Loaves & Fishes, a mission of Centre Congregational Church, is a critical Brattleboro organization which provides prepared food and groceries to hungry people in the Brattleboro area, and which has more than doubled its production from 150 meals a day twice a week (pre-pandemic) to 350-400 meals twice a week since the COVID-19 began! Loaves & Fishes has requested financial support from St. Michael's.

Second, our Tag Sale Ministry has accumulated a backlog of donated clothing and linens (we haven't been able to hold any Tag Sales!) which we would like to share with the community.

In light of these two factors, we have decided to hold an outdoor 'by donation' event on the St. Michael's lawn under tents. Signs will be posted under the tent saying, *Take what you want ~ Give what you can.*

Our goal is to raise \$3,000 for Loaves & Fishes while sharing good quality clothing and linens with the broader community. We understand that it is unlikely that we will raise our full goal amount with this event. If you would like to help us support the critical work of Loaves & Fishes, there are two ways you could help:

- *One is to volunteer to help* before, during, or after our event. The jobs involve moving bags of clothing and linens, taking out and setting up tents and tables, setting up clothes and linens the morning of the event, assisting shoppers, and finally cleaning up afterward. To sign up, please call Charlene Kemp, our volunteer coordinator, at 802.254.2083.

- *The second way to help is to send a donation* to the St. Michael's parish office: 16 Bradley Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301, with "Loaves & Fishes" noted in the memo line.

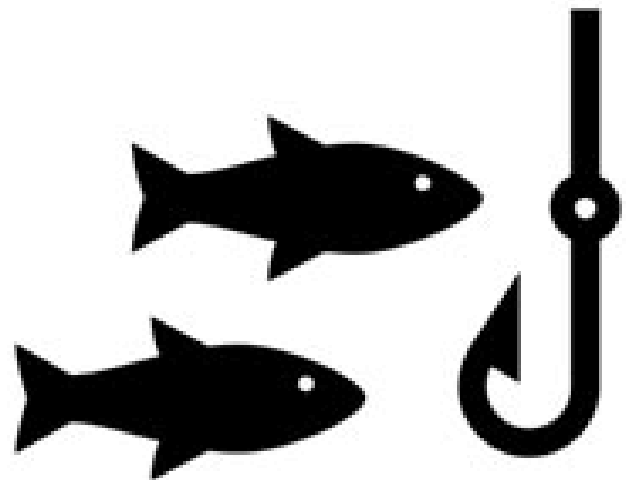
Please note that we are NOT accepting additional donations of clothing or linens at this time.

We at St. Michael's are excited to collaborate with Centre Church in supporting Loaves & Fishes! Thank you, everyone, for your interest and support!

-Elizabeth Vick,
for the St. Michael's Tag Sale Ministry

Loaves & Fishes continues to serve the homeless at hotels and at the [future] drop-in center and we'll have some more support. Brigit's Kitchen and Loaves & Fishes will return to community meals simultaneously, but probably after the summer. Only 20% of the homeless have been vaccinated, so social distancing is still important.

Thank you. - Ruth Tilghman



VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Loaves & Fishes is looking for a volunteer interested in putting together selections of grocery items into bags to accompany take-out meals. The job would require about one hour, one day per week, either Wednesday or Thursday, to assemble the items on location at 193 Main Street, Brattleboro. There would be limited contact with others. Training will be provided.

Contact Ruth: ruthtilghman@gmail.com / 802.258.1765 for further details if interested.

Everyone is invited to
The GREEN at CENTRE

Friday, July 2
 6:00-6:30pm and 7:00-7:30pm



Daniel Sicken has been singing songs for most of his life, accompanied by acoustic guitar and harmonica. The songs that he has written and favorite songs written by others largely reflect and inspire his activism in the world. The primary benefit of

making his own music is the internal peace derived during the process. If one word could describe Daniel's music, it would likely be 'songs of conscience'. In association with Brattleboro's Gallery Walk, please come join us on the lawn for a fun night of beautiful music. Bring a blanket (we have chairs if you prefer) and do expect some free form dancing.



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 June 26.

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

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

Wanda Godfrey—Vernon Hall
 13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354
 802.254.2444

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

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

The Rev. Allen Vander Meulen
 1 Harvest Circle #301, Lincoln, MA 01773
 802.380.0735

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

PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARIES

- 11 Jack & Mary Ellen Bixby
- 30 Bill & Carlene McCarty



Apologies for the inadvertent omission last month of the anniversary of

Arnold & Marilyn Young

who were married on **June 12**, 67 years ago in Centre Congregational Church.

BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Anne Fecto
- 5 Darlene LaPlante
 April Harkness
- 6 Heidi Mario
- 7 Dwight Henry
- 13 Florence Storey
- 14 Jane Reed
- 15 Scott Hoese
- 16 Dennis Newman
- 19 William Pearson
- 26 Robert Pu
- 29 Seth Marcil



NEW CENTRE CHURCH MEMBERS

On **May 23**, the following new members were welcomed to our congregation:

Matt Deen
Wendy Susan Collins



NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Mary Ann Donovan: donovanmaryann422@gmail.com

Rev. David Stinson: stinson.david@verizon.net

Nan Mann: 802.380.5231

Holly MacLean: 603.499.3271

Marcia Cox
 20 Cherry Tree Lane
 Avon, CT 06001

JULY 2021

**ZOOM events
*Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team Scott Vacation	2 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk/The Green at Centre Scott Vacation	3 Scott Vacation
4 Independence Day 9 ³⁰ Meditation** 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* ** 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons Scott Vacation	5 Office Closed Scott Vacation	6 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology** Scott Vacation	7 4 ⁰⁰ Everyone Eats Celebration Party Scott Vacation	8 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team Scott Vacation	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ L&F Steering Committee Scott Vacation	10
11 9 ³⁰ Meditation 10 ⁰⁰ Worship - sanctuary 11 ³⁰ Annual Program Meeting	12 4 ⁰⁰ BCC Board	13 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology**	14 11 ⁰⁰ Staff Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	15 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	16 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	17 9 ⁰⁰ Loaves&Fishes Tag Sale
18 9 ³⁰ Meditation** 10 ⁰⁰ Worship** 1 ⁰⁰ Christian Theology**	19 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro	20 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology**	21 11 ⁰⁰ Staff Meeting 2 ⁰⁰ Memorial Svce Phyllis Hickok 6 ⁰⁰ Council 6 ³⁰ NAACP	22 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	24
25 9 ³⁰ Meditation** 10 ⁰⁰ Union Worship Dummerston Cong. Church 1 ⁰⁰ Christian Theology**	26	27 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology**	28 MAIL CB 11 ⁰⁰ Staff Meeting	29 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	30 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	31 7 ⁰⁰ Benefit Concert Luz del Mondo

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).



JULY LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, July 4, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10 and Ps 48; Ezek 2:1-5 and Ps 123; 2 Cor 12:2-10; Mk 6:1-13

Sunday, July 11, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19 and Ps 24; Amos 7:7-15 and Ps 85:8-13;
Eph 1:3-14; Mk 6:14-29

Sunday, July 18, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
2 Sam 7:1-14a and Ps 89:20-37; Jer 23:1-6 and Ps 23; Eph 2:11-22;
Mk 6:30-34, 53-56

Sunday, July 25, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
2 Sam 11:1-15 and Ps 14; 2 Kings 4:42-44 and Ps 145:10-18; Eph 3:14-21;
Jn 6:1-21



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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 at
802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org

JULY



2021

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**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

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centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org

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Financial Secretary: Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org

Custodian: Emelio McCalla **Council Chair:** Lynn Herzog

Treasurer: Anne Fecto **Clerk:** Jenifer Ambler