INTERIM MINISTER'S COLUMN: Rev. Bert Marshall

Stop Making Sense

Weeping Water, Nebraska. Spring of '05. The weather is mostly clear, temperatures in the upper 80s and low 90s. Wind, as usual. Big sky. Fields are being planted – flat or gently rolling expanses of patchwork ground that stretch for miles in every direction. Fields where corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, and alfalfa will (hopefully) grow in profuse abundance. It's been a good spring so far. Sun and rain enough for a good start.

I drove out to my friend Jim's farm – 620 acres that he converted into a certified organic operation. We were going to Lincoln for the annual banquet of the Nebraska chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is on the board of directors. The keynote speaker was Robert Meeropol, the youngest son of Ethel and Julius Rosenburg. Meeropol lives in western Massachusetts. His parents, you remember, were executed in 1953 for conspiracy to commit espionage, at the height of the McCarthy era. I walked into the farmhouse and discovered that my friend has had a disastrous day trying to help a cow give birth. Her calf was trying to be born upside down and backwards. They finally had to call the vet, who had to do a C-section on the cow. The calf perished. Its mother survived.

At the ACLU banquet, Mr. Meeropol spoke about his parents' case and his memories of them. He spoke of the hysteria surrounding their case, the false testimony, the heartbreak and fear that he experienced growing up after their deaths, and the ever-fragile nature of our civil liberties.

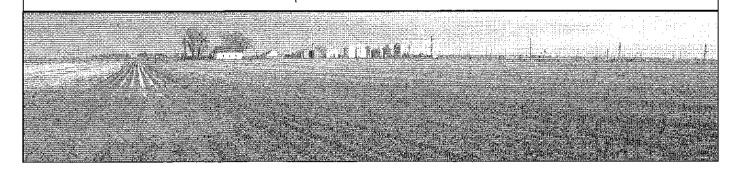
We went back to the farm and watched the Talking Heads concert video, "Stop Making Sense", which seemed to make sense under the circumstances. Quirky. Enigmatic. Big suit. Great songs. We talked late into the night. It's what we always do.

I kept trying to put all of this together: seedtime and harvest, birth and death, the struggle for justice, the destinies of people forged by events beyond their control, children becoming orphans, the poetics of avant-garde rock 'n roll. The world is unimaginably vast and deep. And regardless of what we believe about it, it is what it is, whatever that is. Sometimes I think the world isn't fallen or broken at all, but is *exactly the way it was meant to be*. We just don't know why. The world continues to unfold in surprising and unpredictable ways, even as we cling to the increasingly unlikely belief that history is a meaningful narrative of progress that we can somehow control through the use of coercive power and inflexible religious dogma.

Enter Jesus of Nazareth. My friend asked: If you strip away all the supernatural doctrine about Jesus – miracles, resurrection, etc. – is there anything you would still find compelling about him? No hesitation. Yes, absolutely! His life and teachings, his way of being in the world. Nonviolence. Love of enemy and neighbor. Solidarity with the poor and the weak. Radical forgiveness. Generosity of spirit. An enlightened faith that was true to tradition without being slavish to it. A life of authenticity, integrity, and truth, which is why people perceived the presence of divine spirit in him. His courage. His steadfast vision. I rambled on and on.

It's Lent. Try this. Try walking as Jesus walked, living as he lived. Focus on this path as the world's magnificent incomprehensibility swirls around us. Kierkegaard wrote that if you do that for a single day, you will be seen as a scandal in the eyes of the world. Maybe that's what faith is about: trusting the path in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, in spite of our doubts, our weaknesses, our fears.

Flashes of lightning flared around the horizons as I drove back to town in the wee hours of night. Even the sky had stopped making sense. And just beyond those far horizons, another scandal approaches. "Risen? we have not turned that page" [Daniel Berrigan].



From Council Chair, MATT KENNEDY:

Spring is here! It's the time of year when we celebrate nature coming out of its winter slumber and Jesus rising from the dead. I know Rev. Bert could do a better job than I expounding on the symbolism of both and the connections between them, so I won't. Instead, let me take this time to challenge everyone to use them as an impetus to take a moment and reflect on how we personally might change things up.

In many ways, we can be like mother nature. Just as nature hunkers down for the winter, we too can get comfortable with things the way they are, and settle into a safe routine. While there's nothing wrong with consistency — I know I often enjoy the comfort of routine — I encourage you to follow nature's lead and try coming out of your comfort shell, even just a bit. It could be something as simple as sitting in a different spot during worship. (It's not like 200 years ago when our names literally were on the seats!) Or, maybe try volunteering for something that you normally might not do.

It's important as the church changes and evolves that we sometimes go out of our comfort zone, and stretch ourselves, to help us find out who we really are as a church. This is even more important now as we search to define ourselves during this time of ministerial transition.

It is my hope that we can look beyond our walls, both figuratively and literally, and work in ways to promote the wider mission of Jesus.

April Lectionary Texts:

- 2 Ezek 37:1-14•Ps 130•Rom 8:6-11•John 11:1-45
- 9 Matt 21:1-11•Ps 118:1-2, 19-29•Isa 50:4-9a• Ps 31:9-16, 19-29•Phil 2:5–11•Matt 26:14- 27:66 or Matt 27:11-54
- 16 Acts 10:34-43 or Jer 31:1-6•Ps 118:1-2, 14-24•Col 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43•John 20:19-31 or Matt 28:1-10
- 23 Acts 2:14a, 22-32•Ps 16•1 Pet 1:3-9•John 9:1-31
- 30 Acts 2:14a, 36-41•Ps 116:1-4, 12-19•1 Pet 1:17-23•Luke 24:13-35

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

MUSIC NOTES

Some of you may have noticed that the choir has been rather small in numbers throughout February and March! Well, a long-lasting virus seems to have rotated its way through each section producing deep voices, coughs and limited singing capabilities! One Sunday we were missing all three tenors who were fighting off that nasty bug! Even with fewer singers, however, folks have rallied and done a wonderful job each week. It's kind of been like a potluck dinner...you're not sure what you're going to have until the actual day!! I'm hoping along with Easter, April will be a healthier month for Centre Choir folks.

Also, we are losing folks here and there to alluring warmer locales and I anticipate needing some more voices for Easter. So, if you're out there in the congregation and want to help us out, please consider joining us for Easter. (Of course, you are welcome anytime!)

Many thanks go to Alison Hale for adding her wonderful flute talents to our service. She has generously made herself available to play at Centre Church when she is not engaged with the Portland Symphony or other various "gigs." She joined me once in February and once in March and managed to find pieces neither one of us had ever played. Such fun!

If any of you out there are also instrument players and would like to participate, please let me know. We will also be looking for folks to fill slots for summer services when the choir is absent. Please consider sharing your musical gifts! Happy spring!

CENTRE BELLS

The Newsletter of Centre Congregational Church United Church of Christ April 2017

BOARD FOR MISSION & SERVICE

We are honored to have our Global Ministries partners John and Karen Campbell-Nelson participate and preach on April 30th at Çentre Congregational Church. The Campbell-Nelsons have been serving Global Ministries for the last 30 years in Indonesia. Prior to coming to CCC on the 30th, they will be speaking at the VT Conference on the changing face of Mission and what do churches think.

We are looking forward to hosting them after church for a POTLUCK and program to learn more of their experiences. Please plan on staying after church for this informative program and light meal.

*Priscilla Svec**

SEARCH COMMITTEE

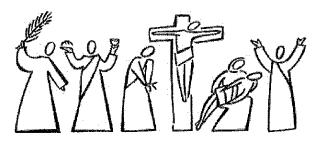
Our Search Committee has had our meetings moved around due to winter weather. We had a special presenter in one of our meetings. Matt Kennedy, Council Chairman, shared with us an overview of the Council's winter retreat. It was an important sharing of information that we will use in writing the Church Profile. We shared another meeting with Bert on the healing, growth and changes in our church since he arrived. We discussed the cottage meetings coordinated by the Pastoral Relations Committee and shared our thoughts on the benefits of having another series of cottage meetings. More on that as we progress. We are using the excellent write up by the Pastoral Relations Committee in our writing of the Church Profile. Thank you, Pastoral Relations Committee!

Each meeting we review our schedule and how to meet these goals. We continue to work together, sharing our thoughts and asking questions. For those of you that have served on a prior search committee you understand the bonds that are built during this process. The bonds built with this group of 8 members will be with us for life as we create our church profile leading to our call of our minister.

If you have questions or ideas to share with us, they are most welcome.

Anne Fecto

♦ WORSHIP SCHEDULE ♦ HOLY WEEK & EASTER



April 9—Palm / Passion Sunday
A liturgy of transition from palms to passion
Distribution of palms

April 13—Maundy Thursday
7:00 pm, Centre Church
A service of Tenebrae and Sacrament

April 14—Good Friday
12:00pm till 3:00pm
Guilford Community Church, UCC
38 Church Drive, Guilford, VT
Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ
By Members of the Brattleboro Area
Interfaith Clergy Association

Come as you are able...leave when you must or stay throughout. Those wishing to sing in the choir, please arrive at 11am. Everyone is welcome.

April 16—Easter Sunday Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE for CHILDREN

We're going to enjoy spring after that late winter storm we just had! One of the ways we welcome it in, is with a playground work party! This year, we will have it on Saturday, April 22 (Earth Day!), from 9am to Noon. If you'd like to join us, we need rakes, shovels, possibly a hose, and lots of elbow grease! Since many hands make light work, please let Nan know if you'd like to do something to help us out. If you think you'd like an "off site" job, or can't make it that morning, let Nan know and we can work something else out. Again, we thank you all for your generous and continuing support.

We also are looking for donations of sand and wood chips. If anyone has a "source" for us to ask, please let Nan know. We lost two of our sources from the last couple years, so we are on the lookout. Thank you!!

LOAVES AND FISHES

The Time for the Kitchen Improvement Plan has arrived.

A long time far away I knew a basement hallway with empty rooms exiting on each side. The kitchen stood, as it always has, next to Memorial Hall. The downstairs at Centre Church was dark and uninviting in 1980, when I first saw it. While the Memorial Hall spruced itself up over the years with well-planned renovations, the kitchen simply stayed the same, the same old kitchen.

Over the years there have been welcome upgrades to Memorial Hall, a space so important to us for our more and more frequent supper gatherings; the continued work of the Loaves and Fishes program, which our Mission and Service committee launched in 1983; AA meetings; and church receptions. We are hosting sacred memorial service receptions, and I want my Church to have a place for such services. Behind the new stage curtain, Carry Me Home has organized good used clothing to be shipped to needy people in Syria.

I invite you to join a new and enthusiastic effort to work on the kitchen. As you all know, SISP (Strategic Investment in Sacred Spaces) studied our Church building in relationship with our Community. The result of that effort was the spending of the \$5,000 grant for Stevens and Associates to draw up a plan for the renovation of the Kitchen. While a wonderful goal, the plan seems to be unattainable in total. But possible now are the new ranges and the large refrigerator, which are needed as updates to our Kitchen and are part of the Stevens and Associates long-range plan.

Would you please help? Let me tell you where we stand. Marion Abell, Dart Everett, and Peter Abell have received, after careful review of the possible solutions, a quote from Gillette Co. in Massachusetts for \$7,864.00 for the two ranges and a large refrigerator, which would be shared by Centre Church, Centre for Children, and Loaves and Fishes.

To pay for this improvement, a small step in a well-orchestrated plan for kitchen renewal, the KART (Kitchen Accessibility Renovation Team) committee has received \$4,500. Three generous pledges account for \$3,000; Loaves and Fishes will contribute \$1,000, and a recent grant which

we have applied for and expect to receive totals \$500. That amounts to \$4,500 toward the total goal of the \$7,864.00 kitchen renewal project. Would you make a contribution of whatever amount to KITCHEN, in care of KART, Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St. Brattleboro, Vt. 05301? This Church is dear to me, and I think that the Kitchen renewal project will contribute to the vitality of our Church and our Mission to the Community.

Mary Ellen Bixby
Treasurer, Loaves and Fishes
Member, Centre Congregational Church

From the Archives:

From: Bob Oeser To: Bronwyn DiPeri

While doing renovations in one of the rooms attached to the Loaves & Fishes kitchen at Centre . . ., I came across some old records and, particularly the attached. Might I presume that you were the author and inquire whether I might disseminate the writing with your permission?

From: Bronwyn DiPeri

To: Bob Oeser

I am so sorry for the long delay in replying to you, I have somehow gotten swamped this last month. Yes, you have my permission to use anything I wrote for Loaves and Fishes. Thank you for taking the time to track me down.

Every Friday I go down into the soup kitchen to prepare the bushels of excess food from various food distributors so people can keep eating good, whole meals even though the month's money may have run out. I am the youngest volunteer — most are retired already. (a very unusual generation; I'd like to add!) These people are amazing — I realize now I should have listened to my grandparents more, they have such wonderful stories to tell.

Working in the kitchen and serving people who need food forces me to cut across classes and learn about PEOPLE from a much more humanitarian point of view. With no ulterior motives to be "noble" or the "good Samaritan", this is a great experience for me — I've learned a lot about how much more I need to learn and I've laughed a lot about how much more I need to laugh.

-Bronwyn S. DiPeri (UVM Senior)

Bronwyn is now Service Learning Faculty Fellow, Department of English, at the University of Connecticut.



CHURCH LIFE

Everyone is invited to the MOMENT for PEACE Friday, April 7, •5:30-6:00PM Centre Church Parlor

This month John Ungerleider, just back from training Israeli and Palestinian youth programs, will tell about that work and share related music and activities. Dr. John Ungerleider is a professor of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro. John founded the SIT Youth Peacebuilding and Leadership Programs for teens from communities in conflict from around the world, which

The Second Sunday Offering for April 9 is Loaves & Fishes, Centre Church's own lunchtime kitchen for the needy, serving up to 300 meals each Tuesday and Friday noon. In addition to in-house diners, meals are shared with Centre for Children, and many take-out meals are supplied, especially on Fridays to tide people over for the weekend. Our support helps the volunteer staff provide delicious high-quality nutritious meals to people who might otherwise go hungry.

Centre Church's final Overflow Shelter meal of the season will be Sunday, April 9; please sign up on the hallway bulletin board to bring chicken dishes, side dishes, salads, and desserts. And join us to serve (5:30 p.m.) and clean up! it's fun and very appreciated!



Earth Day will be Saturday, April 22

... Stay tuned for upcoming plans for yard and garden cleanup on that weekend ... Cleaning chandeliers ... etc.

WOMEN'S SPIRIT

By the time you read this, the group will have finished HILL-BILLY ELEGY and the many issues it brought up for discus-



sion and will have started GOD IS NOT ONE by Stephen Prothero. Everyone is welcome each Thursday at 4:30 p.m. in the library.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION @ CENTRE CHURCH

Faith in Action during the worship service for ages 5+; nursery care provided during the service for ages 0-5. Every Sunday except Communion Sunday, the 1st Sunday of the month.

ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS

BOOK STUDY: Join a self-led book study group currently reading *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*, by Amy-Jill Levine. Copies are available at Everyone's Books for about \$15.00. Everyone is welcome in the church library!

Sunday mornings, 9:00-10:00AM

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS: Led by the Rev. Sandy Daly, a group of adults gather in Chesterfield, NH, at Hallelujah Farm to discuss how and where God is moving in our lives and what we are being called to be and do. Directions to Hallelujah Farm are in the church office.

Fourth Monday of each Month, 7:00-8:30PM



BROWN BAG GROUP

The group will again convene at noon on Wednesday, April 5. Come and spend an hour munch-

ing and conversing. Everyone is welcome.

"Snow in April is abominable," said Anne.

"Like a slap in the face when you expected a kiss."

— L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Ingleside

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.



Pasta Party —aka Spaghetti Dinner—on Friday, April 7, 6 p.m. at Centre Congregational Church. Choose from several sauces, add garlic

bread, salad, and Anne Fecto's famous chocolate sundaes. Come after Moment for Peace or before you head out for your First Friday arts walk. See your friends and support the church at the same time. Plus, have a yummy meal! Cost is \$10 for adults; \$5 for kids ages 5 to 12; and nothing at all for kids under five!

Fundraising meeting - Wednesday, April 12, at 3:30 p.m. in the Library.

Thanks to everyone who enjoyed a picnic bite at March 5's Doggone Brunch. While munching on grilled hot dogs and doggie bone cookies, folks completed a brief survey asking for thoughts, ideas, and suggestions about how to move ahead with two significant projects - kitchen improvements and handicapped accessible changes. Over thirty surveys were submitted, and they have been read by the Kitchen - Accessibility Renovations Team. New energy abounds! If you have additional thoughts, please submit them to the church office. We're actively researching sources for additional funds and continuing to consult with professionals in both fields. Centre Church again proves that we are a generous, caring group of individuals who are trying to be good neighbors invested in our larger Brattleboro com-

Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP) has opportunities in Windham County assisting local seniors who lack adequate food and transportation. RSVP volunteers are covered with excess auto and medical liability insurance while serving. www.rsvpvt.org (802) 254-7515.

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 January 25th.

IEANNE 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)292-9196

ROBERT & JANE REED

461 Grafton Rd., #201 Townshend, VT 05353 (802)221-4213

KAREN PETER

Langdon Place, 136 Arch Street, Room 152 Keene, NH 03431 (603)357-3902

Please let Hilary know if we've missed someone.



But it is a sort of April-weather life that we lead in this world. A little sunshine is generally the prelude to a storm. ~William Cowper, Letters of William Cowper: Chosen and Edited with

a Memoir and a Few Notes

The church is in need of the following item for dinners in Memorial Hall. Please leave your donations in the Church office.

Heavy-duty plastic forks & spoons (can be washed and reused.)

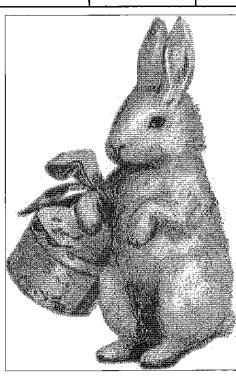
Paper hot cups and cold cups
Paper plates, large and small
Chinet dinner-size plates
Vanity Fair luncheon-size napkins

Thank you, everyone.

~Meg Harriman

APRIL 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	,					1 10∞BWC
2 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	3 12 ⁰⁰ Lenten Bible Study 4 ³⁰ Prayer Shawl	4 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	5 12 ⁰⁰ Brown Bag Lunch	6 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 13 ¹⁰ Quilting Ministry 43 ¹⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ¹⁰ Choir Rehearsal	7 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 6 ⁰⁰ Pasta Party 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	8
9 Palm Sunday 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FiA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	10 12 ⁰⁰ Lenten Bible Study 4 ³⁰ Prayer Shawl 7 ³⁰ AA District 8	11 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁹⁰ Meeting Night 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	12	13 Maundy Thursday 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Maundy Thursday Service	14 Good Friday 1130 Loaves & Fishes 1230 Centre Bells deadline 1200BAICA Service 730 AA Meeting	15
16 Easter Sunday 9 th Book Study 10 th Worship/FiA 10 th AA Meeting 6 th AA Meeting	17 4 ³⁰ Prayer Shawl	18 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	19 12 ⁰⁰ BAII 7 ⁰⁰ BCC	20 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	21 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	22 Earth Day/Clean- up Day at Centre
23 9 ¹⁰ Book Study 10 ¹⁰ Worship/FiA 10 ¹⁰ AA Meeting 6 ¹⁰ AA Meeting	24 430 Prayer Shawl 700 Spiritual Conversations	25 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	26 Centre Bells mailed	27 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	28 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	29 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 7 ³⁰ Rock Voices
30 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FiA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA						



BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Nancy DiMauro
- 9 Douglas Gray Cody Balin
- 11 Amy Balin
- 12 Kai-Ming Pu
- 14 Graeme King Judi Miller Deborah Brown
- 17 Arnold Young Aleksa Secrest
- 19 Beverly Webster Julie Ball
- 22 Margaret Harriman
- 24 Elissa Gray
- 25 Alison Hale
- 27 Anne Doesburg Dawn Pollard
- 29 Susan Cay

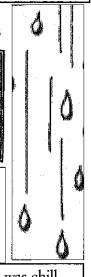




ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Dart & Joy Everett
- 4 Alice & Donald Stockwell
- 12 Holly & Matt Kennedy
- 13 Judi & Roger Miller

The sun was warm but the wind was chill. You know how it is with an April day. When the sun is out and the wind is still, You're one month on in the middle of May. —Robert Frost, "Two Tramps in Mud Time"



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

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

7102



JINAA

CHVICE SEKAICE REQUESTED

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

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 8
NON-PROFIT ORG.