

The Radius Center Congregational Church

155 Main Street • Torrington, CT 06790

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9 AM to 2 PM - Closed Friday Church Office: 860-489-8301
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STAFF: The Rev. Edward Falsey, *Interim Pastor* • Heather Valenti Miller, *Director of Family Programming & Admin. Assistant*
Anne O'Brien, *Director of Music* • Jay Potter, *Director of Youth* • Dianne Willard, *Bookkeeper* • Ken Bush, Jr., *Custodian*

April 2009



The Rev. Ed Falsey

Our Interim Pastor's Message

"Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here."

Mark 16:6

My wife, Daphne, and I were in the old Caldors looking at aquarium kits for our 6 year old son Peter. Peter had been lobbying for another pet. Our cat, Peepers, and dog, Caleb, were o.k. but they were family pets. Peter wanted a pet that would be his alone, a pet he could keep in his room. Peter was hoping for a hamster or a gerbil, a snake or an iguana. But his mother and I wanted a pet that didn't bite or slither, a pet that wasn't going to get loose in the house. We figured that tropical fish were the perfect low-maintenance pets. They didn't shed, they didn't bite. They were self-contained and largely self-sufficient.

Searching the aisles of the pet department, we found a ten-gallon aquarium outfit that looked like it had everything Peter would need to get his fish tank going. It had a pump and filter, artificial plants and thermometer, fish food and instruction booklet. It was packaged in a carton with bright colors and pictures sure to excite a child his age. On the side of the box was the propaganda for parents. On the side of the package was a list of reasons for buying your child an aquarium. Reasons like – "Teaches responsibility," "Helps children develop a love and respect for nature." But it was the last reason on the list that really caught my attention. It read: "Teaches children important lessons about life-cycle concepts."

"Teaches children important lessons about life-cycle concepts? What does that mean?" I asked Daphne. "It means the fish are going to die," was her frank response. "It means we are going to have to explain death to Pete when he goes to feed his fish and discovers that one of them is dead," my wife warned me. We got Pete the aquarium anyway, fully aware that Peter would soon be learning important lessons about "life cycle-concepts." Sure enough, two days after we added fish to the tank one of the little guppies was lying lifeless on its side at the bottom of the tank. "He's resting, Dad," Pete assured me. "No, Peter, he's not resting," I explained.

Peter had already encountered death in same the way many of us first encountered death - in a Disney movie. For me and my generation, it was in the movie Bambi when Bambi's mother is killed by a hunter. For Peter it was in The Lion King when Mufasa is killed by a stampede of wildebeests. I thought of telling Peter about life-cycles, the great circle of life Mufasa, the Lion King, told his son about. How we live, die and go back to the earth to become the food that nourishes the plants that other animals eat. But I wanted him to know an even more wonderful understanding of life and death. As we flushed Flounder down the toilet, we talked about death, the death of fish and the death of people. I told Peter that when fish die, their lives have ended but when people die we go to live with God in heaven.

For as Christians we do not believe that life is a cycle, a circle that leads from beginning to end and then back to beginning again. Our understanding of life – the life into which we were baptized with Jesus – is linear. We are born – we live – we die and in the fullness of time we will be raised to life eternal. That through Jesus we are delivered from death for eternity. That through Jesus, the worst that can happen to us in life, sin and death, have been forever defeated. That life is not a circle, but a straight line. A line that runs straight to God's embrace. That is the lesson of Easter. That is the most wonderful lesson we can ever learn.

Happy Easter. In Christ's love, Ed



Lenten & Easter Services *by Catherine McKenna, Deacon*

The Deacons of Center Congregational Church warmly invite you to participate in our special Lenten and Easter Services this year. These services are a wonderful chance to walk in Jesus' footsteps, tracing the final days of his ministry and the joy of his resurrection.

On **Palm Sunday, April 5th at 10:00AM** we will be celebrating the day when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, a symbol of humility and peace. As he rode, the people of Jerusalem honoured him, laying their cloaks and palm branches on the road in front of him as a sign of respect, and shouted "Hosannah," an exclamation of praise. When the Pharisees urged Jesus to put a stop to these demonstrative acts, he replied, "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40). Join us as we recreate this significant moment with palm branches, raising our own voices to praise our Lord and Savior.

Thursday, April 9th at 7PM our Maundy Thursday service, when Jesus celebrated the Jewish holiday of Passover, a day which commemorated the angel of death "passing over" the Jews' houses when they were held in captivity in Egypt, and the subsequent Exodus. At 7:00PM a service of tenebrae, or growing darkness, will be held at the church. This candlelit service dramatically renders Jesus' last hours as the story of his arrest and crucifixion is told via scripture readings. Importantly, Jesus gave new meaning to the celebration of Passover in that upper room with his disciples, taking the traditional elements of unleavened bread and wine and giving us the words now spoken throughout the world during communion services: "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:19-20). We will therefore also remember this transformative moment by having communion by intinction.

On **Easter Sunday, April 12th**, we will be holding two services to celebrate the day when the darkness was broken by the light of Jesus' resurrection, when tears were replaced by joy. Scripture tells us that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to discover it empty and, horrified, thought that someone had stolen the body away. A man whom Mary thought was the gardener approached her and asked, "Woman, why are you crying?" and upon her explanation, simply spoke her name. In that moment, she realized that this was no gardener, but Jesus himself, risen from the dead. Please come join us at either **9:00AM** or **10:45AM** and relive that moment of wonder and awe as we sing God's praises, who calls each of us by name.

Center Church Transitions

With this edition of the Center Church Radius, we are beginning a section called "Transitions." In this section we will be listing births, deaths, marriages and new addresses of our members. As some of these transitions may not be known to the church, please contact the church office at 489-8301 with any information you would like communicated in issues.

DEATHS:

Alfred Bartell October 6, 2008 *Joined March 29, 1956*
 Marie Thompson Nov. 10, 2008 *Joined Dec. 2, 1956*
 Lee Parmelee Feb. 26, 2009 *Joined August 3, 1987*
 Both Alfred and Marie were 50 year members.
 Vin Gioia died on March 7, 2009. He was the husband of Center Church member, Jan Gioia.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
What's Happening April 2009			1 7p-Benevolent Action	2 7:15p-Center Faith Singers	3 7p-Cub Scouts	4 7:30a-Men's Prayer Breakfast 11a-"Lunch with the Easter Bunny"
5 PALM SUNDAY 8:45a-Confirmation Class • 9a-Center Faith Singers 10a-Sunday School - Morning Worship 11:15a-Fellowship Hour • 11:15a-Celebration Choir 5:15p-Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship • 7p-Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship	6 6p-Glory Ringers 6p-"Praise & Pray with God" 6p- Boy Scouts 7:15p-Music Comm.	7 5:30p-Joyful Chimers 7p-Christian Education Team 7:15p-Centeringers	8 7p-Spiritual Seekers-Paul Gorski's home	9 7p - Maundy Thursday Service	10 7p-Cub Scouts	11
12 EASTER SUNDAY 8:45a-Confirmation Class- 9a-Easter Service 10:45a-Easter Service	13 6p-Glory Ringers 6:45p-Deacons 7p-Boy Scouts	14 5:30p-Joyful Chimers 7p-Personnel Committee 7:15p-Centeringers	15 "6:30p-Dining For Women" Deb Pokrinchak's home - 202 Torrington Heights Rd.	16 9:30a-Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:15p-Center Faith Singers	17 7p-Cub Scouts	18 7:30a-Men's Prayer Breakfast
19 8:45a-Confirmation Class • 9a-Center Faith Singers 10a-Sunday School - Morning Worship-Confirmation Sunday • 11a-Program Annual Meeting 11:15a-Celebration Choir 5:15p-Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship • 7p-Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship	20 6p-Glory Ringers 6p-"Praise & Pray with God" 7p-Boy Scouts	21 5:30p-Joyful Chimers 7p-Trustees 7:15p-Centeringers	22 7p-Spiritual Seekers-Paul Gorski's home	23 7:15p-Center Faith Singers	24 7p-Cub Scouts	25
26 9a-Center Faith Singers 10a-Sunday School - Morning Worship 11a-All Church Gathering-Interim Work-Potluck Lunch 11:15a-Celebration Choir 5:15p-Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship • 7p-Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship	27 6p-Glory Ringers 7p-Prudential 7p-Boy Scouts	28 5:30p-Joyful Chimers 7:15p-Centeringers	29	30 4p-Pasta Dinner Troop 3 7:15p-Center Faith Singers		

“Grinning Givers” – Our Generous Youth At Center Church

By Heather Miller, Director of Family Programming



Heather Miller

Easter is right around the corner and our youth are ready to celebrate by helping their community. The “Grinning Givers,” as they are affectionately called, are our Sunday School children who are active in Benevolent Giving.

Because of their interest in this part of church life, I have tried to make as many opportunities for giving as I can. Here are some of the projects we are currently working on:

Fill the Truck – The children bring in non-perishable food donations to fill up Mr. Barlow’s pickup truck. Mr. Barlow then drives the truck over to FISH where the children’s donations are joyfully accepted. In February, the first and second grade class brought in 50 items of food and the seventh and eighth graders brought in 20!

Heifer International – the children are collecting quarters in their Lenten folders to be dedicated on April 12, Easter Sunday. This money will go to Heifer International, an organization that has provided millions of struggling families with animals and training, and then those families pass on the gift of their new skills and animal offspring to neighbors in need.

Compassion International – For years, we have sponsored a little boy in Bolivia with money we raise in bake sales. Our next Bake Sale is on April 5 and the children love baking goodies for the sale and manning the booth during Fellowship Hour. Many of the classes have been writing to our little boy, Dennilson, and enjoy reading about what he has been up to.

Penny Herding – Beginning April 5, we will start an ongoing effort to herd pennies. This will be a project where not only do the children collect pennies from their own homes but they encourage that during spring cleaning, others collect and donate their pennies to the cause. We will even have Penny Herding days open to the community. We are still deciding where this money will go in the community but we are focusing on helping local children.

If you have any ideas or would like to volunteer to help our “Grinning Givers” call me at 489-8301

EASTER BUNNY LUNCH

On Saturday, April 4 at 11AM the Christian Education Committee is hosting a Potluck Lunch with Peter Rabbit, for all Center Church children through Grade 6. We will share lunch together, make Easter crafts, and hunt for Easter Eggs. Please bring with you a potluck dish to share (no desserts) a basket or a bag to collect eggs and one dozen plastic eggs (filled with candy or small toys) per child when you arrive. Please call 489-8301 to sign up.

“PARENTING THE EARLY YEARS”

We will begin a six-session series written by Les and Leslie Parrott called “Parenting the Early Years” This video driven study goes deeper than any technique of just getting kids to eat their broccoli and clean their room. It takes a Biblical approach into the traits parents want their children to have and what traits they want to see modeled in them. Heather Valenti Miller will be leading this class beginning at the end of April. Childcare will be provided. Please call 489-8301 if you are interested in joining this wonderful class.

Women's Fellowship News....

The exciting news is the re-establishment of the Women's Fellowship. A potluck breakfast meeting was held on Saturday, March 28th, 9AM-10:30AM to begin developing a new structure for this organization. The plan is to create the new Fellowship, open to all women members of Center Church, which will be under the leadership of an executive committee. This committee will be responsible for the planning of three meetings annually for the full Women's Fellowship. Under this umbrella will be a variety of small committees each with a specific focus including.....fundraising, Bible study, church beautification, community service and missions, shawl ministry, trips, church picture directory, book club, Dining for Women, walking/hiking and hospitality. We welcome any other ideas for small groups that any women would like to see included. The idea is to offer an opportunity for women to get involved as much or as little as is possible for them. By having a variety of small segments, you can choose to participate in one, two, or even all of them, depending on your time, energy and interest.

The smaller groups will choose a leader, prepare a schedule for meetings, set their goals and make plans for achieving those goals. They will make a report at the full Fellowship meetings to keep everyone apprised of all activities and to encourage involvement as well.

This also will be a time for the discussion of expenditures from the treasury which can be decided by the full Fellowship and sent to the Trustees for approval.

It is an exciting time for Center Church. The energy and commitment of our women have always been a blessing. With generous spirits and compassionate hearts, we hope to involve all the women of our church and to create programs that will make use of our talents, while building strong friendships.

Women can sign up for various committees on the church bulletin board....or for further information, please call Jane Slaiby at 482-8039.



Anne O'Brien



Musical Notes

By Anne O'Brien, Director of Music

The first article for the revised *Radius*... what shall I write? There are always many things happening but a few to 'note' are...

The music department of Center Church lost a long time member on February 25 with the passing of Lee Parmelee. For more than twenty years, Lee was very active member of Center Church. Lee served not only as a member of the Music Committee for several years but as its chairperson and also at one time, directed the children's choir. As an active ringer in our adult handbell choir for many years, Lee along with sister Lu and life-long friend, Bonnie Gilbert, were instrumental in having the Centeringers participate in the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers' Area 1 Conference/Festivals. The festival held every other year, is an intense four day conference of approximately 900 ringers from all over New England that gather for many rehearsals of three separate bell choir divisions, rehearsals of a 'massed' division choir (all ringers), workshops, classes, concerts and wonderful fellowship time. The conference/festival culminates with a concert of the Tins, Cop-pers, Bronze and Massed handbell choirs of the festival on Sunday afternoon. In spite of being one of the hottest and most humid times of June (or the summer for that matter!), the event whose location varies, is always fun, educational and beneficial to all. It is an event that we continue to look forward to participating in and will always be grateful to Lee for that. As a dedicated member of the Center Faith Singers, Lee was happy to be a part of the 'choir family' singing alto and always willing be one of the 'shakers' on anthems. The Sunday, just days before her death, Lee was in the choir loft singing and shaking the maracas to one of her favorite anthems, "Go and Shine God's Light". Both the Centeringers and Center Faith Singers participated in the beautiful memorial service for Lee, held on March 7, paying their tribute to Lee whose life was one where God and music were key.

What's coming next...

On Palm Sunday, April 5th, a new anthem Hosanna! Sing Praises!, will be featured combining the voices of the Center Faith Singers and the Celebration Choir (youth). Come hear this joyful anthem to signal the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Also on Palm Sunday at 4PM, St. Paul's Lutheran Church (837 Charles St. Torrington) will host the Lenten cantata Song of the Shadows written by the renowned composer Joseph M. Martin featuring "Unity in Harmony". "Unity in Harmony" is an ecumenical choir comprised of singers from more than eleven area churches including several members from Center Church. Joanne Swift, the music director for the Catholic Cluster, will conduct this dramatic choral cantata. There is no charge for admission and everyone is encouraged to attend. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the Torrington Area Council of Churches' Emergency Fund and the Torrington Soup Kitchen. Please join us for this beautiful cantata.

On April 12th Easter Sunday for the joyful celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, all three youth choirs – the Celebration Choir, the Joyful Chimers and the Glory Ringers, will be participating in the 9AM worship with the Centeringers and the Center Faith Singers ringing and singing for the later service. All five choirs have been rehearsing weekly for their part of making the Easter worship a joy-filled celebration. Come celebrate with us as we make a joyful noise to the risen Lord!

On Sunday, May 3rd join us before worship as our Praise Band offers some wonderful "Gathering Music" – a time to sing-a-long or sit and enjoy some contemporary praise songs. Come early and enjoy another way for us to sing our praises to the Lord!

Save the date...

Saturday, May 2nd another Music Committee's "An Evening With". Watch for more details for another evening of great music, refreshments and wonderful fellowship!

Meet Your Center Church PRUDENTIAL Committee

The Prudential Committee is the main governing body of Center Church and is charged with carrying out the business and mission of the church between congregational meetings. It meets once a month and acts on behalf of all CCC members. Participation on this Committee requires a strong commitment to CCC in both time spent and work accomplished. Members of this Committee are also expected to be deeply committed to Center Church, faithful in attending worship, interested in growing spiritually and willing to fully participate in all meetings.

Prudential is comprised of the Chairs of several committees and, as you can see, these Chairs have been extremely active at Center Church over a number of years:

Chair of Deacons, Gary LaStoria, has also previously served as Chair of Deacons, is currently on Welcoming and Stewardship and has been a member for 30 years;

Chair of Trustees, Gail Olsen, has been a member for 20 years, is serving on the Nominating Committee and has also served previously as Chair of Trustees;

Chair of Benevolent Action, Lisa Clark, a 28 year member, has served on Membership, Visitation ministry, worked on various church Fairs, Women's Fellowship, Temple Scholarship, Welcoming and on the church staff as Administrator of Parish Programs and Office Manager;

Chair of Christian Education, Gary Emmons, has been a CCC member for 12 years, has been a Sunday school teacher for 8 years and joyously sings with the Praise Group;

Chair of Welcoming, Shirley Gorski, is a 22 year member, has served on the Interim Search Committee, Visitation Ministry and has been an Usher;

Chair of Music, Norah Hodge, is a ten year CCC member, also serves as both a Deacon and a Trustee/Church Treasurer, is Chair of the Music Committee, has been a past Chair of Welcoming and a past member of the Christian Education Committee;

Chair of Fundraising, Deb Pokrinchak, sings in the choir, is Chair of the Nominating Committee, is on Music Committee, has served on Benevolent Action and Welcoming, Chairs the Fall Festival, was Church Secretary many years ago and has been a church member for 30 years.

Also serving on this Committee are:

Moderator, Mark Kopchak, (who presides at the meetings) is a 14 year member who has served as both Vice-Moderator and as Moderator, is serving on Welcoming and on Nominating and has served as a Deacon;

Vice Moderator, Dave Wilson, was a member of the 1960 Confirmation Class, has served multiple times as a Trustee, has been church Treasurer and has been an assistant scout master to Troop 3;

two Members-at-Large: Millie Waldron has been a member for nearly 60 years and was a long time Sunday school teacher, helped with a lot of the crafts for various CCC workshops and Fairs, and was on the Search Committee for Kahu; and

Lynne Wilson has served on the Music Committee, is currently on Personnel and Nominating, has Chaired Benevolent Action, has served as a Deacon and has sung in the choir – Lynne is a 27 year member of CCC.

Board of Trustees Report



Well, with no doubt...the first signs of spring are definitely uplifting to one's spirit and soul. The Board of Trustees has been busily addressing the finances of Center Church and although we face some tough challenges, we are determined to use creative thinking and due diligence to ensure the continued success of our church!!! Please know that we welcome any ideas and opinions that members may want to share with us and we intend to be open and approachable to all. On that note, let me list for you the current members serving with me on the Board of Trustees should you want to speak with any of us...David Wilson, Vic Muschell, Norah Hodge, Helena Langenheim, Frank Pokrinchak, Bill Helmstetter and of course, Pastor Ed Falsey.

Transition is not an easy time...and even more difficult when compounded by financial problems. The decline in our investments has impacted our stability, for sure. Under the leadership of Dave Wilson and our Investment Committee, the Trustees are better able to understand and monitor the investments and act in the best interest of the church when making disbursements. One decision made by the Trustees was to reduce the amount of scholarship money that will be awarded this year to our college students. This was a very difficult decision, but a necessary one in light of our available funds. Hopefully, with a positive improvement in the future of the stock market...we will be able to be more generous in the future.

We are certainly not out of the woods yet. And I can't stress enough how important our pledges and giving will be during the year ahead. Again, I ask each of you to rethink your pledge and consider the possibility of increasing your giving...even if only by

Interim all-Congregation Gathering

While the interim period (the time of transition between settled pastors) can be a time of anxiety about the future and anxiousness to call a new minister; it is also an exciting and creative time in which a congregation can discover new opportunities for growth, development and renewal. In calling an intentional interim minister, the Reverend Ed Falsey, Center Congregational Church made the conscious decision to use this God-given "in between time" to review and reflect upon our past, to prayerfully discern where God is calling us as a church and to move into that future in a proactive way.

We will begin our interim work as a congregation on **Sunday April 26th with an after-church pot-luck gathering for the entire church.** Our program will allow us, as a congregation, an opportunity to reflect on our history as a church, in order to distill learnings to guide us in our future. There will be a potluck meal before this meeting and in keeping with our church history theme – you are encouraged to consider what historic/classic church potluck dish you would like to bring to share. The Girl Scouts will be hosting a special program for the children of the church, ages 3 through 14.

Our next All Congregational Gathering will be on May 17 – where we will focus on our "Church Identity."



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Email your request to centerchurch@snet.net

cont'd from page 5- Trustees \$5.00 a week. Think of it, \$5.00 per week by 300 hundred active members can net the church an additional \$78,000.00!!!! Isn't that an incredible incentive?! Think of the change we can make collectively!! Can you do that for your church? If so, we truly appreciate it and thank you in advance!

We also have a beautiful building that is definitely showing its age and in need of repairs and updating. The Trustees are "re-building" the Building & Grounds Committee so we can start to address some of these problems. Anyone who might be interested in helping out on this committee would be appreciated and can contact Frank Pokrinchak. It would be helpful to have members who are available during the daytime and especially those with handyman skills!

With the Annual Finance meeting behind us, the next few months will be spent brainstorming a variety of original and imaginative ways to generate revenues that will assist us in covering our church expenses with less use of our investment money. We have a strong and dedicated Board of Trustees and I am proud of the positive energy we share. Center Congregational Church has a blessed history and will continue to grow as we go forward toward a gifted future.

Enthusiastically..... *Gail C. Olsen, Chairman*

THERE'S GROWING INTEREST IN OUR FIXED ANNUITIES

6.1%
 first year
4.1%
 years 2-3

Rates effective 3/18/09

Minnesota Life Insurance Company's SecureOption® Extra fixed annuity offers retirement savers competitive fixed interest rates, flexible features and power of tax deferred compounding. SecureOption® rates are guaranteed by the financial strength and claims-paying ability of a company with a 127-year history of keeping its promises to pay. Find out more about a unique way to save for retirement. For more information about Minnesota Life's SecureOption® Extra fixed annuity and latest rates contact:

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