

BRIDGE MINISTER'S COLUMN:

Minister's Message, May Church Bells

"But wanting to justify himself, [the lawyer] asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" (Luke 10:29). This line precedes the Good Samaritan parable. As soon as this lawyer asked, or as soon as any of us begin to question *who is my neighbor*, we signal we are looking for loopholes in the ethic of the Master. Never a good sign! Still, Jesus answered the man's question by telling his famous parable. The antipathy between Jews and Samaritans was so great, they did not like even to travel through each other's territory. The shorter route from the Galilee to Jerusalem took a traveler through Samaria, but most took the longer road through the Jordan Valley. To travel by way of Samaria risked catcalls, rocks thrown at you, all manners of danger. I suspect the Samaritans avoided Jewish territories for the same reason. The parable Jesus told does not say that the victim was a Jewish man, but we assume so. We can come up with all sorts of excuses why the priest and Levite did not stop to help the poor man who fell into the hands of robbers:

- They were in a hurry.
- To stop and help the man, were he dead, would render the two unclean and unable to work in the Temple.
- The robbers could still be nearby, waiting to entrap more victims.

There may have been other reasons, but only one man stopped. He was an unlikely choice. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans—looking down on each other and questioning each other's morality and religion—gave Jesus' story a surprise twist that made hearers stop to listen and think about his point. Such was Jesus' power as a teacher. The Samaritan could have used all the excuses of the other two, but he didn't. He gave the man clothing to cover his nakedness, cleaned his wounds with wine and oil, gave him water to drink, and took him to an inn. There he paid the man's board and spent the night with his charge. In the morning he gave the innkeeper two denarii and asked him to take care of the fellow. (A denarius was a coin and one-day's wages for a laborer.) When business was done in Jerusalem in a few days, the Samaritan promised to return and pay the innkeeper whatever other expenses he incurred caring for the man.

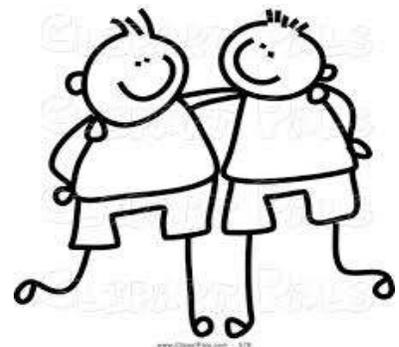
Jesus ended his story by asking which of the three was a neighbor to the man set upon by robbers? The answer was so obvious that the embarrassed lawyer must have lowered his head and muttered, "The Samaritan, the one who showed mercy." Jesus then said, "Go and do likewise."

Anytime we ask, "But who is my neighbor?" we are kidding ourselves if we think we are mature and clever disciples. We are not. In looking to make all the distinctions we live by—race, religion, sex, political party, job, where we live or went to school, well, you can all fill in the categories—we miss the point of discipleship. Neighbors show mercy to one another. The neighbor is whoever comes our way regardless of whatever differences between him or her and us. What are the stakes? Remember the lawyer's opening question to the Lord, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Eternal life, life with God: high stakes. Jesus answered by getting the lawyer to repeat Jesus' own two commandments. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." This was and is the distinctive ethic for Jesus' disciples.

His two commandments go together. We cannot love God and ignore or hate our neighbor. Nor can we fully love the neighbor without seeing the Creator's image in our neighbor. It is one of the *deceptively simple complexities* of our faith. Yet, like the lawyer in the story, we keep looking for loopholes.

I don't think there are any.

~J.D. Stinson



From Acting Council Chair, MARGO NEALE

As I begin to write this little column it is a grey, cold and snowy, **yes, snowy** morning here in Brattleboro. And yet, I trust that by May when you read this article, we will all be relaxing in warm spring sunshine.

In the meantime, we have launched into the rush of spring activities. The Fundraising Team worked to clean out the back rooms in the basement of our church. Marion Abell, Stephanie Cary, Anne Doesburg, Joy Everett, Meg Harriman, Gisela Robeck, and Judy Wagenbach organized what needed to stay, threw out what needed to go, and emerged two and a half hours later a little battered but unbowed. Many thanks to them for this clean out.

This work was the first step in an All Church Spring Spruce Up. A second big step took place April 21 when many people joined to clean in and around the church. It made for a very cheerful and satisfying Saturday morning that left the church interior and grounds looking pretty trim.

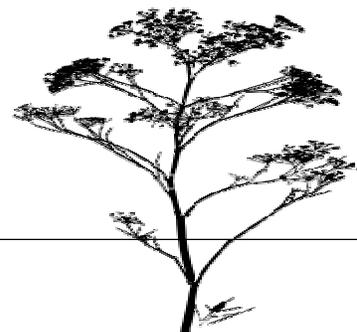
We had a wonderful celebration of Earth Day. By the time you read this you will have seen the exhibit of paintings and photos in our hallway, most of which are creations by members of our church. Priscilla Svec, the prime mover in this celebration, also arranged to have Fred Taylor, a poet teaching in Keene, conduct a writing workshop as a celebration of Earth Day in the church. Many thanks to Priscilla for this innovative approach to observing Earth Day.

A notable part of the Earth Day observance was the hanging of yet another gorgeous quilt in the front hallway. It brightens that space enormously and provides a warm and welcoming focus for all who enter our church. We are grateful for Anne Doesburg's skills and her generosity in sharing them with us.

Finally, Council had the last of its meetings exploring critical areas of our life together. We have examined issues around membership, the church school, stewardship, and the care of elders in our community. A booklet will soon be available containing the results of these brainstorming sessions. We hope that it can be used to kick off a conversation in the fall about directions for our church in the year/years to come and to inform some long term planning.

Once again, all best wishes to each of you.

Be safe and well and aware that you are held in the heart of Centre Congregational Church



LOAVES AND FISHES

Thanks to the generosity of the Brattleboro Food Co-op, Loaves and Fishes will be able to buy much needed items from the upcoming may 19th TRUCK SALE and from a specially discounted order of other products.

Our Loaves and Fishes cooks are writing up a "wish list" of things they need in order of priority. Our order and a single check for the amount we collect will be given to the Co-op on May 14th.

It would be wonderful if people would donate to this project and if we could participate in the Co-op's generous offer and buy all the supplies for Loaves and Fishes on their wish list. Write your checks to Loaves and Fishes and put Co-op Sale in the memo line. Or, write Loaves and Fishes Co-OP on the envelopes with your cash donations.

Thanks and God Bless,
Stephanie Cary

Board for Member Care

Member Care Memo

One of the things on our annual “to do” list is to reserve the Kiwanis Shelter at Living Memorial Park for the annual All Church Picnic. April is the month to do just that. I called in early April and was disappointed to learn that our usual Sunday, the second in June, was already booked by another group.

How did that happen? We’ve always managed to get the second Sunday in June.

The patient voice on the other end of the line explained that because of a new system, reservations can now be made before the new calendar year. I immediately asked if June 17th were still available?-----it was ----and so I booked it!

It’s also Father’s Day We might make a theme of “Hats off to Dads.”...or have the gals do the grilling!

We’ll write more of the details in the June Centre Bells. We just wanted you to know that the date has been set.

Next year I’ll call even earlier to get “our date” back on the reservation list.

Marion

Everyone is invited to the
MOMENT for PEACE
May 4th 2018 5:30-6:00PM
Centre Church Parlor

Athena Burke is a singer—songwriter who reaches deep into the divine to sing songs of hope and love. Imagine Nora Jones mixed with Aretha Franklin with a touch of Rumi, the Sufi mystic poet. Athena’s music sings us home.



www.athenaburkemusic.com

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

If you haven’t yet had a chance to view the Easter Service from this past month, go to Facebook, Friends of Center Congregational Church and you will see and hear the newly formed Children’s Choir. Jackson Grobe and Alex Day did a terrific job on their solos and the rest of the group sang their hearts out on Easter Sunday! What joy the children bring to the service!

On Sunday, April 22nd, the Children’s Choir joined the Adult Choir for a combined anthem entitled “Yonder Come Day”. This piece is from the Georgia Sea Islands and was chosen in recognition of Earth Day. In addition, the adults opened the service with a Native American introtit (The Earth Is Our Mother) and sang John Rutter’s “For the Beauty of The Earth” for the offertory. Earth Day was definitely celebrated through music.

We are winding down the choir season as the adults typically sing through May. The Children will also be singing sometime in May. After that, I look for folks who might be willing to share an instrumental or vocal solo during the summer. Finding volunteers has gotten to be quite the challenge as folks tend to be away during summer months. However, church doesn’t stop, and we still need music! So, please let me know if you’d be willing to help on a summer Sunday.

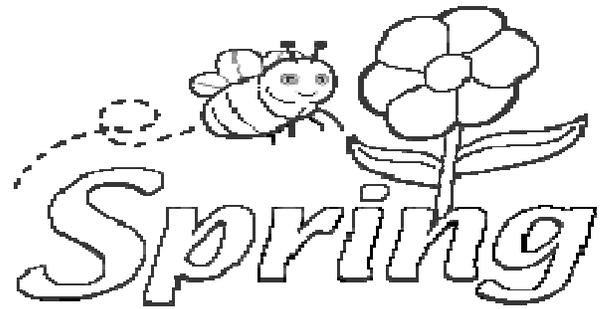
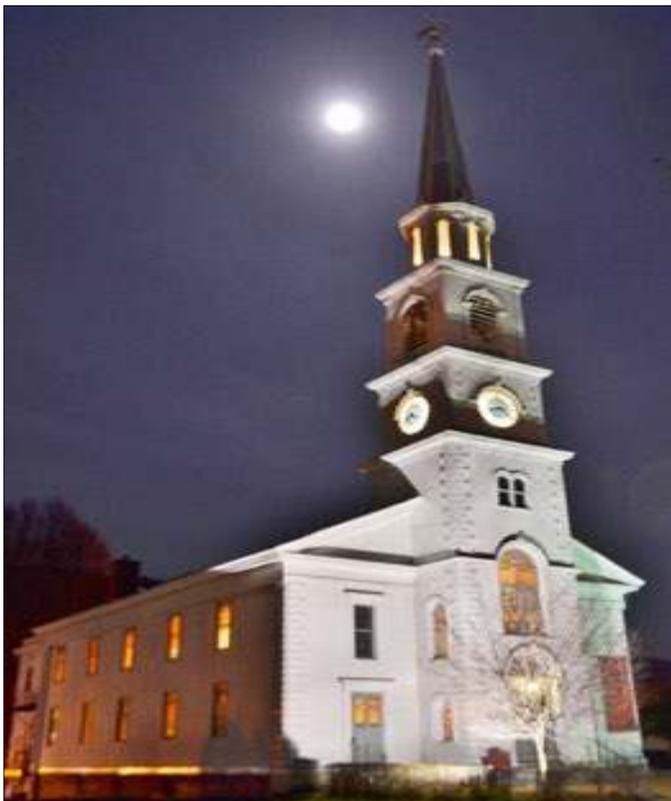
I’m always happy to rehearse with anyone who’s available.



BOARD FOR
BUILDING & GROUNDS

It won't be long before Skyline Engineers arrive with their 125 ft man-lift to begin work on cleaning, caulking and painting the front facade and steeple. As you recall, we voted at the annual meeting to borrow \$40,000 from the endowment to pay for this work. We also agreed to repay the endowment ASAP, so I write to request contributions. A member has offered to match contributions up to a limit of \$5000, so now is a good time to double your offering. Please make you check out to Centre Church, and on the memo line put "endowment restoration" or "steeple fund", so that the money doesn't get used for church operation. Sunday morning offering "counters" are requested to keep those checks separate from the regular offering. I am trying to keep track of these checks, and request that a listing of them be put in my box each week. Thanks!

Peter Abell for Building and Grounds



The Deacons will assist Mr. Stinson with preparations for the funeral of long time member Cynthia Terzariol on May 26th at 11:00. A reception will follow in the parlor. There are 5-6 individuals coming to Centre Church who would like to join. The Deacons and Mr. Stinson are planning to have a special dinner on May 15 so they can get to know people a little better. Hopefully joining in June. The Deacons will clean the Sanctuary on the Spruce Up Day as part of the Clean -up! We hope everyone will help!
Respectfully submitted,



The Brattleboro Creative writing group will meet Saturdays from 11am till 2pm in the Centre Congregational Church Library. The Brattleboro creative writing group is an informal group of local writers who meet to share their writing of novels, memoires, poetry and other forms of written word and see gentle feedback and support in the writing life.

The library can be reached by entering through the back door of the church. Go up the stairs and turn left. A short way down the hall is the library.

ALL ARE WELCOME

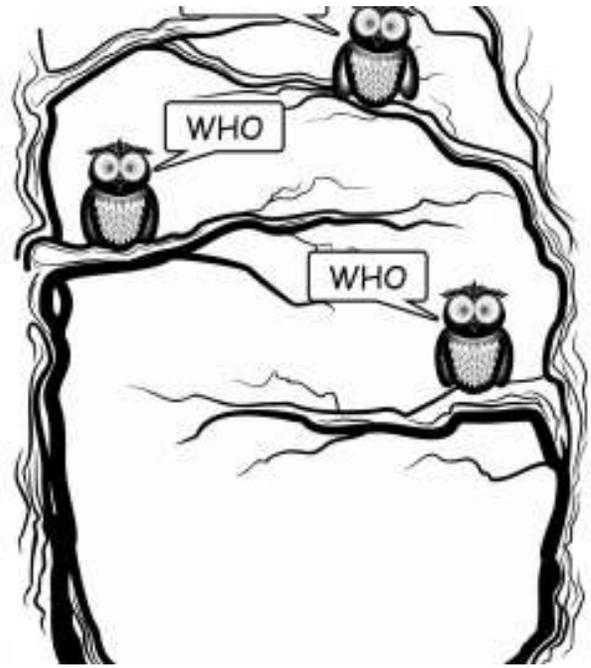
Resident Owl Asks Who

Last night, a resident owl hooted his presence in our woods. His call helped me think of all the people who have been tending to our church's building and grounds needs. Margo Neale has thanked everyone who recently helped out at our Spring Spruce Up Day. In addition, some folks find it easier to do some B & G projects when they can fit it into their busy schedules, and these individuals are greatly appreciated, too.

Ongoing building maintenance and upgrade workers include Bill McCarty, who is taking the lead working with Verizon, who will be installing a communication antenna inside our steeple. From this, we will gain rental money. Jenifer Ambler has been upgrading and updating our computer system and website. Anne Fecto is exploring ways in which we may broaden our funding base for the restoration of money we have borrowed from ourselves to clean and repaint our steeple. Dart Everett continues to supervise our fire safety upgrades. Recently, a team of fundraising ladies spent a morning sorting, discarding and organizing much of the accumulation of items in the basement Boy Scout room. Margo Neale did a super job of cleaning up the grounds outside of our church yard. She also removed old paint cans and dead fluorescent light tubes from our basement and took them to Brown and Roberts. We could use more people to do this. Peter Abell removed, repaired and reinstalled our the large church signs and adjusted the clock bell mallet to soften the "clang." Priscilla Svec helped us celebrate Earth Day by collecting and installing original paintings, photographs and a spectacular Anne Doesburg quilt in our main hallway. Priscilla also led the children in making creative sculptures of sea creatures. All the artists are members of our very own congregation! It's worth a trip down this hallway to see and appreciate their talents!

One more B & G news of national significance - "Partners in Sacred Places," in its quarterly publication, features on the cover "Vermont Churches Reclaim their Role in the Community." Centre Church was one of nine churches who partnered around self-discovery, our role in our community, and future opportunities to follow. We continue to engage in Brattleboro through ways in which our building complex is used and in our commitment to service to others. All this supports our church's mission - "to worship and serve God, following the example and teachings of Jesus Christ."

Marion Abell
Building and Grounds



Love, whose month is ever May,
~ Shakespeare

A word of Note:

The Annual Program meeting will be held after worship on June 3, 2018



Mr. Stinson announced a dinner for newcomers on May 15th, location to be announced. If you have been considering membership in the church, we hope you will come. For more information, please speak to Mr. Stinson.

Centre Bells is published monthly by
**Centre Congregational Church, United
Church of Christ**

News items and articles should be submitted to the church administrator. Please contact the church administrator with address changes or requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list at:

802-254-4730 / centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

Mission and Service

We want to start by looking back-- The Overflow shelter is now closed for the season and we want to THANK ALL who helped this year! We served one Sunday a month for 6 months, serving as many as 30 residents each week. Many of you came or supplied food EACH week. But all of you made the load light and the food plentiful. Only one very snowy, icy night did we need to order some pizza to supplement our meal. Thank you to the children and the cookie bakers who decorated Valentine cookies in February. So thank you one and all!

Heidi and Michael Mario, Susan Rowell, Jenifer Ambler, Judy Palmer, Bob and Dee Keller, Margo Neal, Lisa Keller, Anne Fecto, Ron Svec, Nancy DiMauro, Lynne Herzog, Amy Balin, Harvey Nystrom, Dennis Newman, Dart and Joy Everett, Nancy DiMauro, Joy and Dart Everett, Peter and Marion Abell

Last month's Second Sunday offering was Loaves and Fishes; \$ was raised. This month Second Sunday offering on May 13th will benefit the Summer Lunch Program in Brattleboro. Last year the Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro served lunch and dinner throughout the summer in downtown Brattleboro. Their location placed them next door to the Tuesday Farmer's Market, to which their chef, Shantell Rizziano, took kids once a week. Shantell and the kids picked out local vegetables and head back into the kitchen to cook dinner together, learning knife skills and culinary tricks of the trade. Breakfast and lunch are also available in Six other sites in Brattleboro. These meals help provide healthy meals to the most vulnerable in our community.

Thank you to all who donated art and participated in the writing workshop on Earth Day. The special music by the choirs, the pansies planted in the pots out front, and the beautiful art all help us appreciate the beauty of Nature around us. Please take time to enjoy these additions as they will be up through the first Sunday of the month.

Mission and Service hopes to sponsor a series of coffee hour luncheons in the coming months. the series entitled "Within our Walls" will highlight the amazing missions and services that spring from the many people who work within and from Centre Church. We also hope to highlight the member committees and the work that we as a church are doing. Stay Tuned!!:)

In Faith
Priscilla Svec

COMIC PAGE

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www.glasbergen.com



**"Yes, the disciples followed Jesus...
but not on Twitter."**



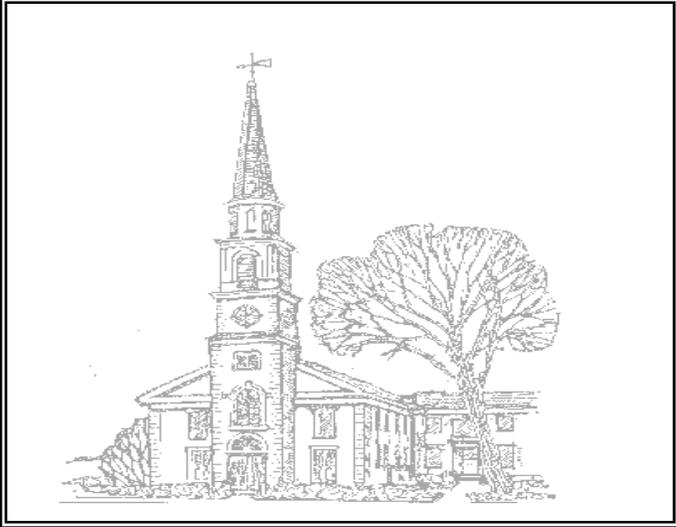
Church Mice.

© Randy Glasbergen / glasbergen.com



**"This would make a great reality
show for the religion channel."**

CHURCH LIFE



FAITH FORMATION *formerly* BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

It has been a busy and joyful couple of months for the church's children and Faith Formation! Haley Marcil has agreed to head up the programming for the children who are Faith In Action age. (typically 5+ years, though we have many younger kids joining in too these days) She has been coming up with a ton of activities and the children have enjoyed their time with her in the corner room at the back of the church. We are still in need of weekly volunteers from the congregation to help land a hand- either with her projects, or with projects of their own. Both are appreciated! Some of the children have also begun learning to sing with Mary Milkey May after the service is over. They have performed during the service twice now, the last time being on Easter Sunday, and have a song planned for Earth Day (April 22) as well. Many thanks to her for taking the time to teach them.

Easter Sunday also saw us hold the traditional Easter egg hunt on the front lawn for the children, which is always a good time. Photos from the egg hunt, videos of the children singing, and photos taken from Faith In Action can be seen at the church facebook page. Its been a fun month for the kids at Centre Church!



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 April 24th 2018. *If we've missed someone,*
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NANCY CLARKE
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Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-5005

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

ROGER KETCHAM
c/o 8 Williams Court
DOT ATOMANUK
665 U Dummerston Rd.
Brattleboro, VT 05301





*Holy Communion celebrated

		1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA meeting 6 ³⁰ MHWAC	2 6 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal	3 10 ⁰⁰ BWC 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	4 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	5
6 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 2 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	7 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	8 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Meeting night	9 12 ⁰⁰ ACA 6 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal	10 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	11 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting 5 ³⁰ NAVE WWAC 6 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal CB Deadline	12 11 ³⁰ -9 ³⁰ BWC CONCERT
13 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 4 ⁰⁰ BWC concert	14 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 7 ³⁰ AA District 8	15 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting TBD New member Dinner	16 12 ⁰⁰ ACA 12 ³⁰ BAIL	17 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	18 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	19 11 ⁰⁰ -4:00pm Shannon Kelley (Clothes)
20 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 5 ³⁰ PROGRESSIVE DINNER	21 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council	23 Centre Bells mailed 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	24 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	25 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	26 11 ⁰⁰ Service for Cynthia Terzeriol
27 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	28 OFFICE CLOSED 7 ⁰⁰ Spiritual Conversations	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	30 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	31 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal		

BIRTHDAYS

- 5/10
Hillary Atwood
- 5/11
Bernadette Meyer
- 5/16
Karen Rydant
Dawn Grobe
Jackson Grobe
- 5/17
Melissa Rice
- 5/18
Arthur Freeman
Frederick Lucies
- 5/20
Frances Burrows
- 5/21
Anne Brinton
- 5/26
Ronald Yudin
Albert Rydant
- 5/28
Irvin Bruneau
- 5/31
Anne Kinley

ANNIVERSARIES

- Carol and Fred Edmonds
- Linda and Brian Carley
- Marlene and Peter Jameson
- Robert and Joanna Rueter

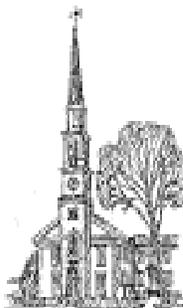


May Lectionary Texts:

**ACTS 10:44-48 ** PS 98 ** 1JN5:1-6 **
 JN 15:9-17 ** ACTS 1:15-17, 21-26 ** PS
 1 ** 1 JN 5:9-13 ** JN 17:6-19 ** ACTS
 2:1-21 OR EZEK 37:1-14 ** PS 104:24-
 34,35b ** ROM8:22 -27 ** ACTS 2: 1-
 21 ** JN 15:26-27;16:4b-15 ** ISA6:1-8
 88 PS29 ** ROM8:12-17 ** JN3:1-17**

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

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Margo Neale
Holly Kennedy / Constance Bresnahan

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