MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

On Saturday, May 21, I volunteered for the day (and much of the night) at **Outright Vermont's Queer Youth Summit** held at the Brattleboro Union High School. My experience on that day was profound. I attended primarily desiring to serve: lift tables and chairs, help direct, and ensure safety. I attended secondarily to observe and learn. I attended as an ally, a cis-gendered (denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity corresponds with their 'as designated at birth' sex), privileged, heterosexual, and neurotypical White male (pronouns he/him/his). As the minister of an **Open and Affirming** church, I intended to represent my church (yet, *not* promote it - I was there for 'them', not for us).

Due to the benefits of education, experience, and relationships, I have long ago ceased to be homophobic. I nonetheless felt very uncomfortable during much of the summit. I was not offended by the youth's varied sexual identities, but rather by their outspoken iconoclastic emotions, fashions, views, and general anti-normative behavior. For example, during the 'Speak-Out' the profanity shocked me (and I do not have virgin ears having grown-up on military bases my whole life). I was disturbed by the anti-parent, anti-family, anti-church, anti-political, anti-mainstream culture, and even anti-straight sentiments. Yet, I desperately tried not to judge. I continued to listen with an open mind and an open heart.

The queer youth have good reason to be angry; they had hurt no one, yet their parents, their peers, politicians, and society all misunderstand them, at best, and reject and humiliate them at worst. Many are driven to suicide.

Despite my discomfort, during the course of the summit I was moved to a position of greater sensitivity, compassion, understanding, and love. After the youths' catharsis throughout the day, as sunset came, the frustration, anger, and even confusion that made me so uncomfortable seemed to dissipate and I saw children and youth become 'recognizable' and relatable to me. During the evening 'prom', I saw kids being kids – just like I was. I saw them playing, dancing, and singing. I saw them giving and receiving love to one another. I saw **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** is all its wild diversity.

The children arrived profoundly angry as their entire existence felt marginalized by parents, churches, schools, politicians, and society in general. Yet, during the twelve-hour long summit they received solidarity, compassion, attentiveness, inclusion, acceptance, and respect. The children's spirits transformed before my eyes and my mind and heart also transformed. The day ended with me observing seemingly confused, concerned, and anxious - yet loving - parents waiting to pick-up their 'queer' children. I ease-dropped on countless respectful, articulate, and grateful youth express profound and appreciation to the leaders who sponsored the life-changing summit. No longer were these children iconoclasts to me.

So, I left the summit with a great sense of hope for these children and for me (that I may continue to grow and be open as my faith directs me). The summit undoubtedly prevented many unsuccessful and successful suicide attempts. Yet, I left with a profound sense of disillusionment. What this summit did for these children is what the church is supposed to do for these children! And we as the church, both wider and local, are woefully unequipped and unmotivated. As an Open and Affirming church, we are far behind. I, the minister, am behind the times! The church is hated by most of these children. (Although I heard one brave and prophetic child during the "Speak-Out" argue in favor of the Christian faith, thus contesting the vitriol expressed against the church by her peers, by quoting a portion of I John 4:7-21: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love"). Oh! If I could find that child, and repent, apologize, and say to her as Jesus did to the Syrophoenician wom-an 'you are actually more faithful to my calling than I am' (Mark 7:24-30). Friends, I pray we will be open to being moved by the Spirit to be more empathetic. May we be moved by the Spirit to be more inclusive. May we be moved by the Spirit to be more educated. May be moved by the Spirit to be more in solidarity with the queer community.

Love always in Christ, Scott

CENTRE BELLS July-August 2022

The newsletter of Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



Council Vice-Chair, SUE ROWELL

This is Sue Rowell, filling in for Lynn while she is enjoying some much-needed rest and relaxation. This month at Council we discussed a meeting that took place with Sacred Spaces, an organization that assists churches in transition. Specifically, they help churches to 'reimagine' how the church building can be used in the community. A few years back, we engaged them to help us reimagine Centre Church. That work was documented and now is in our archive. It seems that now is the time to pull that information out, look it over and put it to use as we move forward with our discussion for the Futures Committee.

As you will recall, Lynn has been spearheading this committee along with Mary Ellen Bixby to look at three options for the church to review and discuss: merge with another church, restructure the staffing, or sale of the church building. We are still in the beginning stages of this important work. Your input is needed and requested! Please contact Lynn at your earliest convenience to offer your insight and help. This effort needs all of us so together we can continue to **Be The Church**. In Faith, Sue

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

The choir enjoyed an evening of fellowship on June 1 at the Brattleboro Country Club. This was a great chance to wind down the season and enjoy each other's company without the pressure of preparing an anthem! (During our weekly rehearsals we REHEARSE and work!) What a fun group of singers we have!

Now that the choir is on summer break, we have switched to a summer music schedule which will include a variety of instrumentalists and singers as well. Alison Hale and Matt Kennedy gifted us with their talent in June, starting off the summer soloists. Stay tuned for many more special music Sundays including some welcomed new folks! Our last Sunday in August (8/28) will be a Union Service hosted by Centre when I will be looking for folks to sing in the choir. Please save that date on your calendars!

And, in September, we start it all over again!

DEACONS

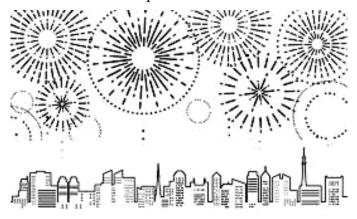
Thank you, Lord, for such a beautiful summer, when gardens are proud to show off their beautiful colors! We pray the congregation will share their flowers for other members to enjoy on Sunday mornings! There is a sign-up list in the Parlor or you can let Bruce, our Administrator, know when you would like to donate them and if you wish to honor someone.

Communion is served to everyone on the first Sunday of the month.

Union Services are:

July 24 at Dummerston Congregational Church August 28 at Centre Congregational Church

The Deacons are always looking for volunteers to read the scripture and lead the Prayers of the People on Sunday mornings. Please contact a Deacon or Rev. Couper.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Summer brings Christian Education (CE) children's classes to a close temporarily, but plans go on for the upcoming Fall. We have successfully survived the first year coming out of the pandemic (while still maintaining health and safety protocols) with a volunteer staff and are moving forward with a board made up of Nan Mann, Laura Slate, and Anne Doesburg, and child care staffed by Kate Weeks and support from Marion Abell and Priscilla Svec. We look fondly back on a year of well-given children's sermons which will continue through the summer, and classes for ages 4 to 12.

A 'Sunday Spirit' book study group has been meeting Sunday mornings at 9:00am, which is wellattended and self-perpetuating.

Other study opportunities abounded but CE focused on the work with the children. In September, the Ice Cream Social will again kick-off the Sunday morning church school classes, so be on the lookout for upcoming news about that!

Enjoy the season and stay well.

-Nan Mann, CE Chair

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

This summer we have a lot of people to thank as we continue to care for the many children in the Brattleboro area. We are working on a garden in the back and grateful to the helping hands of Centre Church's Garden Volunteer, Heidi Mario for her support and advice. The children love to eat food off the vines! We are looking forward to opportunities for water play on the front lawn all summer. When we are on the playground, we have volunteers from Key Bank to thank for a wonderful clean-up that they did for us as part of their Neighbors Helping Neighbors corporate volunteer day. And alumni staff member, Sharlene Braskie, donated a large chalkboard which the children love to draw on, and which is hanging on the fence. Also hanging on the fence is a sign in six languages, notifying the community, and especially the Afghan refugee families, when they may enter and play there after hours.

In addition to all of this, we are gearing up for a graduation of children going off to kindergarten—many of whom have been at BCC since they were infants. We have deep and loving relationships with these children and their families as we have been part of their whole lives. It brings smiles as we prepare to send them on the next part of their journey into life.

Nan Mann, BCC Director



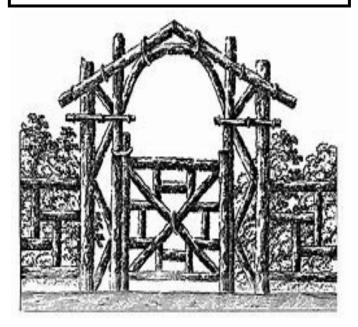
Finance Office

Chris Yost has served Centre Congregational Church for more years than I can remember as our Financial Secretary. As your Treasurer, I have had the honor and joy of working with her for the past four-plus years. During my tenure, she has processed hundreds of bills for payment, paid thousands of hours of labor, filed multiple quarterly and annual payroll tax reports and assisted in applying for two PPP loans! I cannot even guess how many emails she has received and written! Her kindness and skills have supported me in my position as Treasurer.

Many of us have worked with Chris over the years. Please take a moment to wish her well and thank her for her years of service to Centre Church. She transitioned to the east coast of New Hampshire to be closer to family in June.

Last fall, as Chris planned her move, she searched the area for her replacement. Chris brought to the Personnel Committee, Emily Houle. The interview with Emily went very well, and her references were terrific! She has worked at Vernon Advent Christian House, Inc. (in their Finance Departmen) since the summer of 2009. She is moving on to grow her accounting business. In June Emily cross -trainined with Chris on Centre Church's financial needs and processes. The Personnel Committee is excited to have Emily here. Her hours have not been confirmed as of this writing. Please introduce yourself and say hello to Emily Houle.

Anne Fecto, Treasurer





<u>GREEN@CENTRE</u>

Please put these events on your calendar...

Our July music will be performed by Athena. She has been a guest singer at church twice, and once, Paul Nickerson was ready to turn the service over to her. Her music is soulful and inspiring. The artist for July will be Stuart Copans. He does what he calls 'papercuts for peace'. Most of his papercuts contain the word 'peace' in English, Hebrew, or Arabic.

In August, we will host Lisa Constable and company, playing old jazz and blues. The artist for August will be our very own Emma Rueter, with a new group of dynamic photos.

Make sure you bring your appetites—our fundraising committee will be serving up a wonderful assortment of salads and treats that will satisfy any hunger. Please come and bring your friends. Invite and anyone you can. It is a guaranteed good time with lovely people.

Spreading love through joyful activity, Bonnie Girvan girvangardens@gmail.com.

MEMBER CARE

I am forever arranging and rearranging the spare bedroom on the second floor. It houses extra suit cases, summer clothes, greeting cards, notes and journals of years past, and some former *Centre Bells* issues.

I usually had a piece printed in the newsletter as 'Deacon Daley' and now 'Member Care Marion' (I like alliteration). Each church secretary and now 'Administrator' had their style in putting the newsletter together. I am most impressed by each month's publication, sent out under the skill and art illustrations of the present Administrator, Bruce Landenberger and Minister, Rev. Dr. Scott Couper, 'Scott' (I'm so old that I can never remember church members calling the minister by his first name!).

All of this browsing in old papers is an attempt to toss out papers long held in file boxes, mostly upstairs, (for me, that's a power-ride on my stair-chair) and decisions of what to keep and what to toss.

It was a pleasure to be able to attend the All-Church Picnic on the church lawn on June 5. So many people put in time planning, phoning, purchasing, preparing, setting up, grilling, and taking down. A big THANKS to all of you!

By the time you receive this, two memorial services will have been observed in our sanctuary. June 22 was the date for Dee Keller's, and June 25 was the day for Allen Vander Meulen's service. We do not know yet whose memorial service will take place in July.

In early July, the Member Care Board will have a lunch-time meeting at the home of Marion Daley in Putney. Judy Miller will be the contact person for July. Sen Pu will take that responsibility in August.

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 June 26.

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

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

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

Dear Friends at Centre Congregational Church,

Thank you so very much for your generosity and kindness for all the ways you supported our 35th AIDS walk. We were able to raise just shy of \$30,000 to continue our work in Southern Vermont.

With warmth and appreciation,

Karen Peterson, AIDS Project of S. Vermont



NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH Drew, Christina, and Dalia Kacik 1112 River Rd., Westmoreland, NH 03467 802.275.8567 / drewKaciK@gmail.com

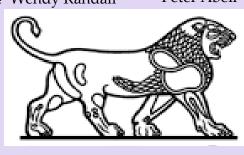
BIRTHDAYS

July

- 3 Anne Fecto
- **5** Darlene LaPlante April Harkness
- 9 Jeffrey Meyer
- 14 Jane Reed
- 15 Scott Hoese
- **16** Dennis Newman
- **19** William Pearson
- 26 Bob Pu
- 29 Seth Marcil

August

- 3 Patricia Reardon 15 Victoria Svec
- 4 Lynn Herzog
- 8 Carlene McCarty 17 Verne Bristol
- 10 Laura Slate
- **12** Margo Neale
- 13 Lisa Keller
- Carol Edmonds 14 Wendy Randall
- **16** J. Clyde Johnson
- 20 Sue Rowell
- 23 Patricia Neer
- 26 Dan Healey
- 31 Mary Bristol Peter Abell



ANNIVERSARIES

July

11 Jack & Mary Ellen Bixby 30 Bill & Carlene McCarty

August

- 3 Dawn & Tony Grobe
- 12 Al & Karen Rydant
- 27 Ron & Priscilla Svec





JULY-AUGUST LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, July 3, 4th Sunday after Pentecost 2 Kings 5:1-14 and Ps 30; Isa 66:10-14 and Ps 66:1-9; Gal 6:(1-6), 7-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Sunday, July 10, 5th Sunday after Pentecost Amos 7:7-17 and Ps 82; Deut 30:9-14 and Ps 25:1-10; Col 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

Sunday, July 17, 6th Sunday after Pentecost Amos 8:1-12 and Ps 52; Gen 18:1-10a and Ps 15; Col 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

Sunday, July 24, 7th Sunday after Pentecost Hos 1:2-10 and Ps 85; Gen 18:20-32 and Ps 138; Col 2:6-15, (16-19); Luke 11:1-13

Sunday, July 31, 8th Sunday after Pentecost Hos 11:1-11 and Ps 107:1-9, 43; Eccl 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-23 and Ps 49:1-12; Col 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

Sunday, August 7, 9th Sunday after Pentecost Isa 1:1, 10-20 and Ps 50:1-8, 22-23; Gen 15:1-6 and Ps 33:12-22; Heb 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

Sunday, August 14, 10th Sunday after Pentecost Isa 5:1-7 and Ps 80:1-2, 8-19; Jer 23:23-29 and Ps 82; Heb 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56

Sunday, August 21, 11th Sunday after Pentecost Jer 1:4-10 and Ps 71:1-6; Isa 58:9b-14 and Ps 103:1-8; Heb 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

Sunday, August 28, 12th Sunday after Pentecost Jer 2:4-13 and Ps 81:1, 10-16; Sirach 10:12-18 or Prov 25:6-7 and Ps 112; Heb 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

JULY - AUGUST 2022

**ZOOM events *Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				-	1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk / Green@Centre Bruce vacation	2
3 900 Book Discussion 1000 Worship*	4 ³⁰ Christian Ed Board	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ³⁰ BAILA 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	6 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 7 ⁰⁰ VT Humanities First Wednesday	7 10 ^{oo} UCC Devotional** 1 ^{oo} Quilting ministry 4 ^{oo} Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	8 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ L&F Board	9
	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	
10 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 11 ³⁰ Fellowship Hour 6 ⁰⁰ Deacons' meeting	11 7 [™] Pub Theology	12 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	13 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	14 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional ^{**} 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 3 ³⁰ BCC Board 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion ^{**} 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	15 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	16
	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	Bruce vacation	
17 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship	18 4 ^{oo} Compassionate Brattleboro 7 ^{oo} Christian Theology Bruce vacation	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team Bruce vacation	20 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ³⁰ NAACP Bruce vacation	21 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional ^{**} 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion ^{**} 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes Bruce vacation	23
04						20
24 10 ⁰⁰ Union Worship Dummerston UCC	25 7 [™] Pub Theology	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	27 11 ^{oo} Staff Meeting 12 ^{oo} Help Fund	28 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional ^{**} 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion ^{**} 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	30
31 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship	1 4 ³⁰ Christian Ed Board 7 ⁰⁰ Christian Theology	2 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ³⁰ BAILA 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	3 11 ^{oo} Staff Meeting 12 ^{oo} Help Fund 7 ^{oo} VT Humanities First Wednesday	4 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional ^{**} 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion ^{**} 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk / Green at Centre	6
7 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons' meeting	8 7∞Pub Theology	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	10 11 ^{oo} Staff Meeting 12 ^{oo} Help Fund 6 ^{oo} Mission & Service	11 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional ^{**} 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 3 ³⁰ BCC Board 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion ^{**} 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit	12 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	13
14 9ºº Book Discussion 10ºº Worship 11³º Fellowship Hour	15 4 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro Scott vacation	16 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team Scott vacation	17 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 6 ³⁰ NAACP Scott vacation	18 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit Scott vacation	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 2 ⁰⁰ BCC Graduatron	20 Scott vacation
21 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion		23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	24 MAIL CB 12 ^{oo} Help Fund	25 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional**	Scott vacation 26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	27
10 ^{oo} Worship Scott vacation	Scott vacation	7 ^{oo} Afghan Team Scott vacation	Scott vacation	100 Quilting ministry 400 Sermon discussion** 430 Women's Spirit Scott vacation	Scott vacation	Scott vacation
28	29	30	31			
9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Union Worship Centre Church		11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Afghan Team	11 ^{oo} Staff Meeting 12 ^{oo} Help Fund			
Scott vacation	Scott vacation	Scott vacation				

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurchvermont.org -or-

facebook page: <u>http://www.centrechurchvermont.org/audio--video.html</u>-orhttps://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).

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JULY/AUGUST

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CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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