

## MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

We will immerse ourselves in the season of **Lent** for the entire month of March, beginning in February (Ash Wednesday) and concluding in April (Holy Week). Lent is a season of introspection. We can repent individually and collectively. Lent is a time of preparation. We can prepare individually and collectively.

Some years ago for Lent, we read the Lenten devotional *Lent Is Not Rocket Science: An Exploration of God, Creation, and the Cosmos* by W. Nicholas Knisely (2019). We still have copies available in the Administrative office. I encourage you to ask for a copy (*gratis*).

A particularly fascinating devotion revealed that an atomic force microscope allows scientists to see and capture an image of a single molecule with a resolution of a nanometer (one billionth of a meter). Scientists discovered that the crude schematics we drew in high school chemistry class appear similarly to the actual water, carbon dioxide, ozone, and a benzene ring molecules. What we thought were almost modeled imaginings are incredibly accurate 'portraits' of the actual molecules.

Knisely points-out in his devotion that humans possess a creative genius that bestows upon us the ability to know that which we cannot yet see ("Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" – Hebrews 11:1). This imagination, this faith, this ability to discern what is without being able to see, touch, taste, or hear (molecules), is amazing. It demonstrates the spark of the divine within us and through us. This creative genius can be put to horrible and selfish use (to gain wealth or to kill) or it can be benevolent and creation-enhancing.

This Lent I am going to lament our capacity as humans to harm (the war between Russia and Ukraine) and celebrate our capacity to be a redemptive force (carbon capture and sequestration, wave energy conversion devices) in the world.

As you all know, I value relationships and their ability to deepen and broaden my faith life. Nothing in the realm of science is accomplished alone. All scientists stand on the shoulders of previous giants. There is a scientific community that collaborates, cooperates, and builds upon the strength of individuals to enhance the forward process of the collective. So it is with our spiritual community. At Centre Church, we learn from our ancestors in faith and we catalyze new horizons with our contemporaries.

This Lent, let us focus on how we can collectively see, here and now, how beautiful and grand our church is. Though the **Sacred Places Initiative**, Centre Church will 'see' what our church looks like and what it will look like. For the past two years, the Long-Range Planning Team drew the imagined schematics of our church and in doing so it described the idealized understanding of our church. The Sacred Places Initiative will continue the planning process by bringing 'atomic force microscopy' to our church, viewing the nuts and bolts, the space and resources, and thus engender a structural clarity of vision. In doing so, that which we imagined can be seen to be that which actually is and will be. The Sacred Places Initiative is a collective effort. It requires the participation of the entire church (both members and friends). Let us use the season of Lent and the Sacred Places Initiative to give ourselves and our community of faith a clarity of vision.

Be well.

Love always in Christ, Scott

## ***CENTRE BELLS***

**March 2023**

The newsletter of  
**Centre Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ**



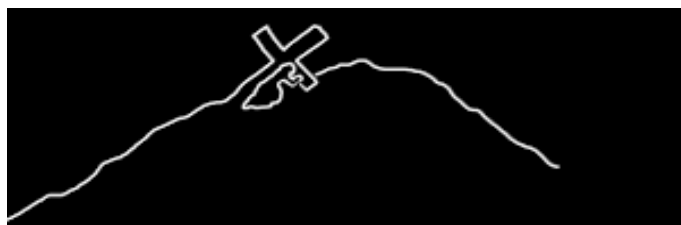
## Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

What would Centre Church be without its missions? This question was asked at our recent Sacred Places meeting, and again at our council meeting. We should all take some time to think about it. Is Loaves & Fishes just a bunch of people making a mess in Memorial Hall or is their work a vital part of our church? Is Brattleboro Centre for Children just a tenant who can't pay their heat or electricity, or are they children we want to care for? We could ask similar questions about our other missions. Are they an important part of our identity? Would our church be poorer in spirit without them, though richer financially? These questions are important right now because

1. we are evaluating the use of our space through the Sacred Places project, and
2. some are asking if we have too many missions – are we spreading ourselves too thin?

Think about it.

Sun, anyone? Or rather, solar power anyone? These warm and sunny February days remind us that climate change is proceeding relentlessly. Can we at Centre Church do our bit by putting solar panels on our roof? Building & Grounds explored this question a few years ago, but never got a satisfactory answer from their consultants. Perhaps it is time to look at this again. Is there anyone in the congregation who is enthusiastic about solar power and would be willing to investigate the feasibility of solar power at Centre Church? If so, please speak up.



## From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

The choir has shifted from Christmas music through Epiphany, and is now entering the season of Lent. Each week we aim to sing pieces that pertain to the sermon topics, the scriptures, or the appropriate liturgical season. I always look forward to Lenten music as it is so evocative!

I am happy to report that we are almost at the half-way point of our fundraising efforts for the piano in the choir room. Thanks go to Dart & Joy Everett, Alison Hale, Lynn Herzog, Dawn Pollard, and Wendy Randall for their generous contributions. Can you help us reach the finish line?

## DEACONS

The Deacons had a Pre-Spring Work Bee in February to ensure that our brass candle holders and lighters, cross and communion plates are shiny and bright, the altar candles are tall and glowing, the pews are stocked and welcoming, and the Deacons' storage places are organized.

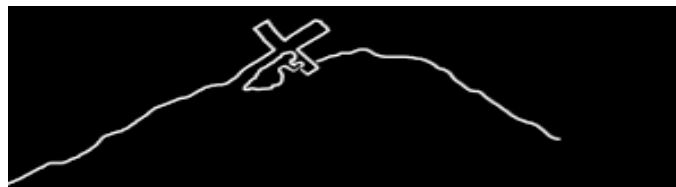
**February 22**, the Ash Wednesday Service will be held in our beautiful chapel. Please plan to attend to prepare yourself spiritually for Lent and Easter.

Members of the church are encouraged to honor loved ones or celebrate a special occasion by signing up on the list on the bulletin board in the hall for their date of choice and then bringing in a bouquet on that Sunday. Having beautiful flowers on the chancel is appreciated by all!

Did you know that our faithful team of Deacons use their own money each month to purchase wine, juice, and bread for Communion?

I want to thank Holly Kennedy, April Harkness, Kate Weeks, Lisa Keller, and Rennie Washburn for the time they spend making sure our weekly services run smoothly!

Joy Everett, Deacons chair



**Centred Yoga**, a new fellowship, began last month and continues every Wednesday in the chapel, from **4:15—4:45pm**, before Contemplative Prayer. **Jean Brodie** will lead. Bring your yoga mat and join us.



## **Women's Spirit**

is just beginning another book by Rachel Held Evans, *searching for sunday, loving, leaving, and finding the church*.

Her writings are refreshing, insightful, and provide for good discussion.

We always welcome new women to join us. You will find us in the Heritage Room on Thursdays from 4:30-5:30pm.

Nancy DiMauro: 802.257.4489 / [nedimauro1@icloud.com](mailto:nedimauro1@icloud.com)

## LOAVES & FISHES

Let's visit the Friday, February 3, Loaves & Fishes Board of Directors meeting where we gathered at 12:30pm, after all the hubbub of the serving day had subsided. Dennis Newman, president, opened the meeting with a prayer. Gathered around him at one of the many white Memorial Hall tables were the following Board Members: Rennie Washburn, treasurer; Mary Ellen Bixby, secretary; Scott Couper, Margo Neale, Ruth Tilghman, David Treadwell, and Jack Lilly. Bob Oeser and Bonnie Girvan were present in spirit. Remember that cold day when the temperature was -2 degrees by midday?

Although the Board meets every 2-3 months, February 3 was the 2022 annual meeting day, and the group demonstrates the partnership in mission between St Michael's Episcopal Church and Centre Congregational Church. Ruth Tilghman, David Treadwell, and Jack Lilly represent St Michael's.

In 2023 the non-profit entity Loaves & Fishes Inc., and St Michael's each voted to provide a 1/3 share of the Centre Church utilities attributable to the workings of Loaves & Fishes. Centre Church provides a 1/3 share. This good will offering, labeled as 'Rent', in the church budget was approved at the annual meeting; St Michael's did the same at their annual meeting.

Ruth Tilghman serves two roles: Head of Operations and Volunteer Coordinator. Our kitchen volunteers, who work every Tuesday and Friday in "this joyous setting," come primarily from St Michael's and the town at large, but there are several generous and steadfast members of Centre Church who are vital to the operation. Margo Neale works faithfully each Friday preparing food. Marion Abell often provides a coleslaw, salad, cookies, cakes, and other gifts for the serving table. During the COVID days Priscilla and Tori Svec helped in L&F, and now Ron Svec works on Wednesdays and Fridays managing the recyclables, cleaning and washing the floors, locking up, and doing most everything else. On January 22, David Treadwell of St Michael's and its vestry organized a work party from St. Michael's to clean the kitchen. Margo, Marion, Jack & Mary Ellen Bixby participated from Centre Church.

At that February 3 meeting many items were discussed. Donations and grants continue to come in: the Brattleboro Co-op sent us \$2,500 from their October 'Round Up' efforts; the December letter netted \$2,500; a \$15,000 check arrived as a payout from a local estate trust; the Foodbank will now charge L&F for a share of the food delivered. Discussed was the

use of Memorial Hall for fundraisers and on and on. Please ask any member of the Board for a complete report of business transacted.

It is our privilege to serve on the Board of an invaluable resource in Brattleboro preparing 1,000 meals each Tuesday and Friday for those who need food.

-Mary Ellen Bixby for the Board

## MEMBER CARE

### **Zooming in on CCC**

For many, many months during the long COVID crisis, members and friends did not meet in our beautiful sanctuary. In the ninth month of our church's 207th year of existence, we were called back to the building for worship in church.

It felt like 'coming home' - sitting on those pews with the blue cushions, a gift of the Women' Circle; observing the stained glass windows given by a family to remember a loved one; seeing other members of the church; meeting visitors; stepping on the carpet, well vacuumed by Emilio; observing that large wooden cross that hangs in the front of the sanctuary and the baptismal font safely in the corner. Long ago I was a Deacon and knew more about the gifts given to the church. They are recorded in the Book of Remembrance.

Now, because of my own transportation difficulties, I often watch on ZOOM. Lisa Terzariol in Italy, Mary Ann in Florida, Debbie in North Carolina, the Pu's in Georgia, and others are often doing the same. I wonder if they drink coffee or eat cereal while they are watching (I do!).

For me, the sound of the organ is distorted, as is the piano. I know Mary Milky May plays these beautifully. Often the people who speak from the lectern have their voices muffled coming across on ZOOM. Rev Scott's voice travels all the way out to Putney, clear as can be!

Watching on ZOOM is not the same as being there, but it is a whole lot better than missing the worship service entirely. Bruce Landenberger gets the hymns and the service of worship out to all on email every week. And a BIG THANKSs to Jenifer Ambler and whoever else that make it possible for some to watch from home.

Marion Daley, Member Care



If you would like to give one or more flowers for Easter, please fill out a form for each plant ordered and return the form(s) to the church office with your check made out to:

**Centre Congregational Church**  
193 Main Street  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

**DEADLINE: Sunday, March 26, 2023**

**EASTER FLOWER ORDER**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:  
IN HONOR/MEMORY/CELEBRATION OF  
IN THANKSGIVING FOR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6" pot tulips (+/-4 bulbs) \$10 each
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6" pot hyacinths (+/-4 bulbs) \$10 each
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8" pot tulips (+/-8 bulbs) \$16 each
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6" pot Easter lily \$14 each

CHECK TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

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**PEOPLE**

**BIRTHDAYS**

- 02 Priscilla Svec
- 03 Milton Eaton
- 05 Emma Rueter
- 06 Emmet Healey
- 07 Diane Bassett
- 18 Haley Marcil
- 20 Kathryn Fecto
- 22 Matt Kennedy
- 26 Addison Minott
- 27 Marilyn Young



**ANNIVERSARIES**

- 12 Deborah & Robert Cope
- 31 Verne & Mary Bristol



**NEW CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Byron & the Rev. Janis Dey**  
2 High Ridge Court  
Pawcatuck, CT 06379

**Adelaide & Addison Minott**  
[adelaideminott@gmail.com](mailto:adelaideminott@gmail.com)

**NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH**

**Terry Rounds**  
608 North St., Chagrin Falls, OH 44022  
[terrencerounds@hotmail.com](mailto:terrencerounds@hotmail.com)

**Jean Brodie**  
PO Box 1034, West Townshend, VT 05359  
[yogajean5@yahoo.com](mailto:yogajean5@yahoo.com) / 631.786.3218



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 November 26.

**Karen Getty Peter**—Pine Rock Manor  
3 Denny Hill Rd., Warner, NH 03278

**Alice Stockwell**—Vernon Hall  
13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354  
802.254.8091

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


# MARCH 2023

\*\*ZOOM events  
\*Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Action Corps Yemen Project 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 4 <sup>15</sup> Centred Yoga 5 <sup>00</sup> Contemplation Service 7 <sup>00</sup> VT Humanities First Wednesday	2 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Quilting ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	3 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	4
5 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship* 11 <sup>30</sup> Hospitality Time	6 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>30</sup> Christian Ed Board 7 <sup>00</sup> Pub Theology	7 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 12 <sup>30</sup> BAILA 7 <sup>00</sup> Dharma evening	8 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 4 <sup>15</sup> Centred Yoga 5 <sup>00</sup> Contemplation Service 6 <sup>00</sup> Mission & Service	9 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Quilting ministry 3 <sup>30</sup> BCC Board 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	10 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	11 10 <sup>00</sup> Vitality event
12 Daylight Savings 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship / FIA 11 <sup>30</sup> Hospitality Time	13 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 5 <sup>00</sup> Sacred Places Team** 7 <sup>00</sup> Christian Theology	14 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Dharma evening	15 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 4 <sup>15</sup> Centred Yoga 5 <sup>00</sup> Contemplation Service 6 <sup>00</sup> Church Council 6 <sup>30</sup> NAACP	16 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Quilting ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	St Patrick's Day CB DEADLINE 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	18 9 <sup>00</sup> Buddhist Half-day Sitting
19 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship / FIA 11 <sup>30</sup> Hospitality Time 5 <sup>00</sup> SOS Meal	20 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion** 4 <sup>00</sup> Compassionate Brattleboro 7 <sup>00</sup> PubTheology	21 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Dharma evening	22 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 4 <sup>15</sup> Centred Yoga 5 <sup>00</sup> Contemplation Service	23 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Quilting ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	24 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	25
26 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Discussion 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship / FIA 11 <sup>30</sup> Hospitality Time	27 4 <sup>00</sup> Sermon discussion 5 <sup>00</sup> Sacred Places Team** 7 <sup>00</sup> Christian Theology	28 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>00</sup> Dharma evening	29 MAIL CB 11 <sup>00</sup> Staff meeting 12 <sup>00</sup> Help Fund 4 <sup>15</sup> Centred Yoga 5 <sup>00</sup> Contemplation Service 6 <sup>00</sup> WWAC Salon	30 10 <sup>00</sup> UCC Devotional** 1 <sup>00</sup> Quilting ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 5 <sup>30</sup> Choir rehearsal	31 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes	

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: [www.centrechurhvermont.org](http://www.centrechurhvermont.org) -or- facebook page: <http://www.centrechurhvermont.org/audio-video.html> -or- [https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal) -or- From the website Welcome page, click Audio & Video in the top list (or click More or Other on the top right).

**PRAYERS FROM THE LABYRINTH**



"I pray to always easily know that I am loved; every little bit of me is honored and my instinct is toward self-acceptance in all situations."

"I pray my love [is] strong enough to beat this dope addiction."

"I pray my grandma will just accept me for me [and] not what the meds make me."  
"for Centre Church"

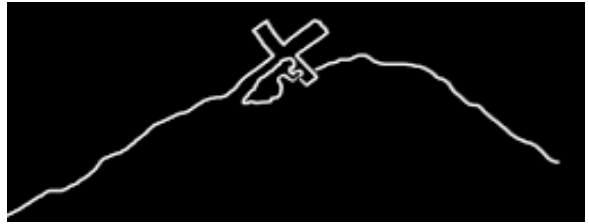
**MARCH LECTIONARY TEXTS**

**Sunday, March 5**, Second Sunday in Lent  
Gen 12:1-4a; Ps 121; Rom 4:1-5, 13-17;  
**John 3:1-17** or **Matt 17:1-9**

**Sunday, March 12**, Third Sunday in Lent  
Ex 17:1-7; Ps 95; Rom 5:1-11; **John 4:5-42**

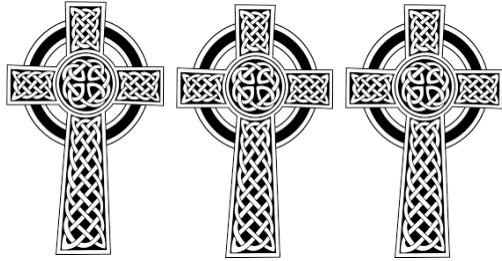
**Sunday, March 19**, Fourth Sunday in Lent  
1 Sam 16:1-13; Ps 23; Eph 5:8-14; **John 9:1-41**

**Sunday, March 26**, Fifth Sunday in Lent  
Ezek 37:1-14; Ps 130; Rom 8:6-11; **John 11:1-45**




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802.254.4730 / [admin@centrechurhvt.org](mailto:admin@centrechurhvt.org)

# MARCH



# 2023

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842

**Office Hours:** M – F / 8:30am–12:30pm

**Scott's days off:** Friday and Saturday

**Church Office:** 802.254.4730 / [admin@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:admin@centrechurchvt.org)

**Website:** [www.centrechurchvt.org](http://www.centrechurchvt.org)

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

**Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:**

VT Conference: [www.vtcucc.org](http://www.vtcucc.org) / National: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

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**Council Chair:** Lynn Herzog

**Treasurer:** Anne Fecto

**Clerk:** Jenifer Ambler