

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends,

Greetings in Christ's name!

I can hardly believe it! In mid-July, I will celebrate my fifth-year anniversary of becoming the minister at Centre Church. I have loved my position and role at the church and in the community. I feel very called and fortunate to serve as pastor and teacher of our church. I pray our faith journey will continue for many years in the future.

In the **Call Agreement** signed in July 2018 it states: "Our church will provide you with a **sabbatical leave** of three months after five years of full-time ministry with our church. During your sabbatical, we will pay for your full salary and benefits. We expect you to share with the Church Council, at least one year before beginning the sabbatical, the developing plans for your time away. Upon your return, we invite you to share with us and overview of activities and learning from your sabbatical. Unless otherwise agreed before the sabbatical, we expect that you will continue as our pastor and teacher for a minimum of one year after your return".

At least one year ago, I began the discussion of my sabbatical with Council. After much discernment, I proposed to Council in April that for one month, perhaps **August**, I spend serving the church in **El Salvador** with which Centre Church has had a relationship for over twenty years. I propose that for one month, perhaps **September**, I spend reading extensively and preparing for a '**Comparative Religion**' course I will teach for Community College of Vermont in 2024. I propose that for one month, perhaps **October**, I organize the Centre Church **archive** (located on the third floor adjacent to the AA/NA space) and glean it for homiletical material so that future messages I preach will tap into our local church history. During this last month, I would transfer the archive to the Paramount Building where I live (167 Main Street) and organize the archive before returning it to Centre Church at the end of October.

When I return from sabbatical, I will be able to report on the church in El Salvador, I will be able to better provide Pub Theology and Christian Theology topics and information learned from my Comparative Religion readings, and I will be able to show the church the organized archive and use material therein to inform my sermons.

The Deacons are negotiating with two ministers who will lead worship on a weekly basis (The Rev Dr Lise Sparrow) and to provide Pastoral Care on an as needed basis (The Rev. David Stinson or The Rev Robert Hamm). The Finance Committee will utilize a line item already in the church's budget to finance the remuneration of the two ministers.

I look forward to this time of productive rest and renewal.

Be well. Love always in Christ, Scott



CENTRE BELLS

May 2023

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

Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

It is time to start planning for the Annual Program Meeting, to be held in early June (the 4th or the 11th). At this meeting, we review our activities of the past year and plan for the future. One of the most important aspects of planning for the future is recruiting new people to serve on our boards and committees. This is becoming increasingly difficult as we age and our numbers decrease. Therefore, we will be considering changing our committee structure into three teams, roughly addressing Belonging, Believing, and Becoming (or Welcome, Worship, and Witness). The purpose of this is not just to reduce the number of committees/boards, but to engage those people who say, "I'm willing to help, but I don't want to be on a committee." The idea is that everyone in the congregation would be on a team, and could be called on to help whenever needed. At our council meeting, it was suggested that we try this for 6 – 12 months to see if it works better than our present structure. It would require suspending the By-Laws (that portion dealing with boards and committees) which could only be done by a vote of the congregation. We will discuss this in more detail next month and hopefully have a plan ready for discussion at the Annual Program Meeting. We hope many of you will be willing to serve God and the church in whatever way appeals to you. The more people helping, the less work there is for each one, and working together is a wonderful way to build friendships.



From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

Easter has come and gone and thanks to our choir and Alison Hale (flute) the music was uplifting and joyful. As has been the tradition for many years (before my time at Centre), we ended the service with the celebratory "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah". It's always a pleasure to have folks from the congregation come up and join us for this special piece. In fact, we would love to have you sing with us more often on Sundays.

The choir will be winding down this season in early June. As usual, I will be looking for folks to provide music during summer services. Please see me if you would be interested. Vocalists and instrumentalists are both needed. Also, this summer, the Union Service hosted at Centre will take place on the last Sunday in July rather than August. I will be putting together a community choir so I will need folks from Centre to participate. Please save that Sunday and help us out!

DEACONS

On April 8, the Deacons re-opened ALL the pews for use, hung the Easter paraments and Alleluia banner, and displayed the many beautiful, fragrant Easter plants. It was a blessing to see the 98 faithful folks who came together to worship and celebrate the Risen Christ on April 9! There were 8 more watching the service on Facebook.

A group of 8 gathered on the lawn around a welcoming fire pit to hear Rev. Couper give his 8:00am Son-rise message.

Our Summer Union Services calendar has been set:

May 28, First Congregational Church,
West Brattleboro

June 25, Guilford Community Church—Pride

July 30, Centre Congregational Church

August 27, Dummerston Congregational
Church

Joy Everett, Chair of Deacons and Lynn Herzog, Council Chair, are working together on arranging pastoral coverage for August, September, and October while Rev. Couper is on his sabbatical.

The Deacons would like to remind parishioners to sign up on the hallway bulletin board list to bring in flowers on a Sunday to celebrate or honor any occasion. Also, please say YES when asked to pray and read the liturgy on a Sunday morning!

Thank you.

MISSION & SERVICE

Thank you again for supporting the missions of our church. Whether you are making contributions to our Second Sunday offerings, volunteering at *Loaves & Fishes (L&F)* or *Carry Me Home*, making desserts for *L&F*, reading at *Brattleboro Centre for Children*, supplying food for the monthly *Groundworks* meal, serving on one of these boards, or supporting an event, *The Green@Centre...* THANK YOU!!! There are so many ways to be a part of our missions and service and we hope that you find a way that is possible for you to participate. Let us know if you need more information about any of these and others in which our church is active.

Second Sunday Offerings

March's Second Sunday Offering recipient was *One Great Hour of Sharing*, a '5 for 5' UCC offering and received \$517, which was sent to the Vermont UCC Conference.

April's Second Sunday offering was collected on Easter for the *PINS* program and for the *Summer Meal Program*. Both of these programs impact our local children who are most at risk. This total will be reported on next month.

May's Second Sunday offering recipient is the *Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP)*. The mission of *CASP* is to cultivate a supportive community for those seeking asylum the Brattleboro area.

June's Second Sunday offering recipient is *Out in the Open* as we celebrate being an Open and Affirming church and Pride Month.

We look forward to the events and arts of the *Green@Centre* which will be starting up in full swing in May. Andy Davis will provide music and instruction with a May Pole. The Artist in May is Ricia Gordon and Centre Church's Fundraising committee is providing a soup buffet. Bonnie Girvan has lead the organizing of this, with the fundraising committee offering food and refreshments over much of the summer. Mark Baxter and Bonnie have created posters and leaflets with the schedule which you can find on the Church Life bulletin board and around town. We hope that you will offer to help and to attend this amazing community outreach that our church is doing. Help is needed on the first Friday of each month, which coincides with *Gallery Walk*. Your presence and support makes the events more easily set up and broken down, as well as more fun for all! So let Bonnie know how you are able to help! Bonnie Girvan: 902.307.1623 / bonnie@girvangardens.com.

Groundworks meals will continue for Centre Church on May 21. Following the death of Leah Rosin-Pritchard, *Groundworks* staff has taken a much needed three-week 'pause'. During this time we have been asked to volunteer at several housing sites. Several Centre Church people did this. Now, as you receive this, *Groundworks* staff is back working at the various sites in Brattleboro. PLEASE pray for them. PLEASE let them know their work is appreciated and necessary to so many by sending a card, dropping off breakfast items, or donating to our May 21 meal. To sign up on line, use this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4dada82da6ffce9-groundworks#/>

You can also sign up on the bulletin board in the hall opposite the parlor. Food can be dropped off by 5:00pm (or brought to church that morning and given to someone who will be going at 5:00pm). Dishes should be fully heated and in disposable containers.

Questions? Contact:

Priscilla Svec: 802.505.8925 / svecpriscilla4@gmail.com or

Jenifer Ambler: 802.380.2805 / amblerj@sover.net

Please consider a donation.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The **Sunday Spirit Book Discussion Group** is now reading the late Vermont minister and author Frederick Buechner's *The Sacred Journey: a Memoir of Early Years* (1982). This group will continue to meet Sundays 9:00-10:00am in the Heritage Room including on all the union service Sundays. Newcomers are always welcome. For more information contact Judy Palmer: judithp41@gmail.com / 603.353.0590.

Everyone is invited to

The GREEN@CENTRE

Friday, May 5, Gallery Walk

Art: Ricia Gordon

Ricia's works drew from the colors, lines, and forms in the world around her, or simply from what emerged in the process of putting down paint. She frequently worked in series, exploring various approaches to an idea.

Music: Andy Davis

Andy's songs speak of life in New England, interesting characters, dear friends, and musings. Mixed in are some original waltzes, jigs, and reels.

Food: Soup Buffet

Plus: Maypole!



MEMBER CARE

I've been a Christian from my youth, to my mature years, and now old age. Having lived in various parts of the country, I have held membership in churches of four different Protestant denominations. I estimate that I have listened to or read over 4,000 sermons. I have studied the Bible and read Protestant theologians.

In my younger years, it bothered me that in church theology there were so many different interpretations. Each denomination had its own special form of government, its own jargon or what I labeled 'God talk', there were differing creeds, or no creed, certain doctrines emphasized, and different interpretations of the Bible.

"Why didn't Jesus leave written instructions? Wouldn't that have been simpler— saving controversies and splintering divisions even over the language used to talk about God?"

But later I read something that helped me put all this into a different perspective. I read that varying viewpoints in theology, although uncomfortable to one who wants a simple and easy choice, is the lifeblood of a vital religious life. Every Sunday morning there is written on the front of the bulletin the welcome of Centre Church:

WELCOME FRIENDS & GUESTS!!!

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you're welcome here!

To me that means we can share our thinking, our journey of faith, and our differing positions to find truth about life and Christianity in particular.

-Marion Daley, Member Care chair

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 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.

BIRTHDAYS

4 Bruce Landenberger
11 Bernadette (Mo) Meyer
16 Karen Rydant
18 Arthur Freeman
26 Al Rydant



ANNIVERSARIES

20 Fred & Carol Edmonds



NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Jin & Kyoung Han

89 Pine Ridge Dr., Putney, VT 05346
609.947.4525 (Jin) / 609.947.0661 (Kyoung)
jhh609@yahoo.com / kcho727@yahoo.com

Gianna Robinson and Ariella (grand-daughter)

959 VT Route 30
Newfane, VT 05345
802.380.4448 / giannarob@gmail.com

OBITUARY, PATRICIA NEER



Patricia Neer, 98, of Brattleboro, VT, passed away peacefully in her sleep on January 4, 2023 from complications of influenza. Pat was born in Richmond, Virginia. She was the daughter of Charles and Alma (Mett) Stainton. Pat lived in Englewood, NJ until she moved to Brattleboro in 1998 to spend more time with her grandchildren and Vermont daughter. Both homes are places full of wonderful memories. Pat thought of others first and will be remembered for her thoughtful, kind, giving, and caring nature. She was a friend to many throughout her life. She will be missed by her family and friends.

Pat earned a Master's Degree in nursing from Columbia University and practiced nursing until 1956 when her twin daughters were born. Pat loved being a mother and grandmother. Pat was active in numerous volunteer activities, and enjoyed riding horses, swimming, playing tennis, and ice skating with her family and friends. She became an avid golfer after moving to Brattleboro and enjoyed golfing with her friends and daughters. She loved music and animals; all her pets were rescues and she was often heard singing to herself. In addition, she was a talented artist, and enjoyed painting, sculpting, and interior design. She was a faithful member of the First Presbyterian Church in New Jersey and Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (UCC) of Brattleboro. Pat loved living in Brattleboro and was in awe of the incredible friendships she made there.

Pat will also be remembered as a strong and resilient woman, who just kept moving forward and bouncing back. Pat had many blessings in her life, but also some difficult times. Her father passed when she was in high school and she went to work at the fountain counter at Woolworths department store in Englewood to help support her mother and younger sister. Her younger sister also had some health problems. Pat cared for her, which Pat describes as leading her to a career as a nurse. She put herself through college and nursing school, and spoke about the hardships during WWII. After an unwanted divorce, she strived forward, and made a new life for herself. She made it through two bouts of COVID, but even though she fought it, she finally succumbed to the flu.

Pat was predeceased by her only sister Barbara Albertson of Irvine, CA and her former husband Charles S. Neer II of Vinita, OK. Pat leaves behind her two daughters and their husbands: Charlotte and Glenn Annis of Dummerston, VT, and Sydney and Peter Rowland of Haddam, CT. She also leaves behind her two precious granddaughters, Kathryn Annis and her husband Ben Crosby of Brattleboro, and Elizabeth Annis, of Dummerston.

Pat's celebration of life was held on **Saturday, April 22** at Centre Congregational Church, 193 Main St., Brattleboro. Memorial donations may be made in Pat's name to: **The Windham County Humane Society** (Brattleboro) or Centre Congregational Church's **Samaritan Fund**.



OBITUARY GARY CARRIER

Gary Lee Carrier, 81, beloved son, nephew, husband, father, grandfather, and friend died peacefully on February 10, 2023, in Orono, Maine after a long illness.

Gary was a proud Vermonter. Born in Burlington on September 4, 1941, he was the son of Clayton and Estella (Moore) Carrier. Raised in Jacksonville and Brattleboro, Gary graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1959 along with several treasured lifelong friends. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Vermont in 1963 and a Master of Education degree from Keene State College in 1969.

In 1965, Gary married Alice Lacoss of Hanover, NH, in Brattleboro's Centre Congregational Church chapel. Gary adored Alice, and they raised their family in Brattleboro, eventually celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with family and friends in the church parlor. The Carrier Education Play Area was named in recognition of their many years of dedicated service to the church and the Brattleboro Centre for Children.

Gary loved his community and the people in it. Even after moving to Maine to be closer to family, he always thought of Brattleboro as home. He worked for decades at Cersosimo Lumber Company in various roles, from lumber stacker during school vacation to Vice President, and he had many fond memories of his coworkers and the Cersosimo family. Outside of his professional life, Gary gave generously of his time and talents. He was active in local government, serving as a Town Meeting representative and Finance Committee member, and as a member of the Board of Listers. Dedicated throughout his life to his own, his family's, and others' education, Gary was also a long-time member and chairman of the Brattleboro Union High School Board, an Incorporator and Trustee of the Austine School, and a Trustee of Kurn Hattin Homes for Children. He took pride in helping others through his work as a Guardian *ad Litem* and as a member of the Diversion Board for Youth Services of Windham County. He was involved with many other organizations, including the Windham County Humane Society, Kiwanis, and the Masonic Lodge.

Gary loved his friends, downhill and cross-country skiing, Alice's dinner parties, vacations in Rangeley and on Bailey Island, Maine, hunting camp, and the University of Vermont; hiking in the woods, playing golf, riding horses, long exercise walks, and reading mystery novels; following Red Sox baseball, Patriots football, and his daughters' and grandchildren's field hockey, football, basketball, track, and lacrosse teams; and, above all, spending time with his family. He was charming and able to strike up a conversation with anyone, which he often did. He will be remembered by all who knew him for his integrity, work ethic, practicality, and wit, and by his family for the remarkable example that he set for his daughters and grandchildren.

Gary is survived by his two devoted daughters, Allison Lucy and her husband John of Orono, ME, and Christine Hume of South Portland, ME; and by five adoring grandchildren: Jack and his fiancée Christine, Thomas, Mark, Erin, and Paige. He is also survived by his sisters Patricia and Pamela, many nieces and nephews, and his orange tabby cat, Buddy. He was predeceased by his wonderful parents, loving wife, sister Penny, brother Peter, dear Patricia (Denton) MacMurtry, and many other loved ones.

Services will be held at 11:00am on **Saturday, May 13, 2023**, at Centre Congregational Church, UCC, in Brattleboro, with a reception and private burial to follow.

Donations in Gary's memory may be sent to:

Centre Congregational Church, UCC
193 Main St., Brattleboro, VT 05301 or

Windham County Humane Society,
916 W River Rd. #9089, Brattleboro, VT 05301



MAY 2023

****ZOOM events**
***Holy Communion**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Christian Ed Board	2 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ³⁰ BAILA 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	3 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 7 ⁰⁰ VT Humanities First Wednesday	4 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	5 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk/ Green @Centre Bruce vacation	6 2 ⁰⁰ Isabelle Mann graveside service
7 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time 2 ⁰⁰ Windham Union Spring meeting	8 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 5 ⁰⁰ Sacred Places Team 6 ⁰⁰ Deacons meeting Bruce vacation	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening Bruce vacation	10 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	11 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 3 ³⁰ BCC Board 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	12 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	13 11 ⁰⁰ Gary Carrier Memorial Service 12 ³⁰ Reception 2 ⁰⁰ Interment Service
14 Mother's Day 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	15 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion**	16 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	17 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 6 ³⁰ NAACP	18 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	19 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	20 9 ⁰⁰ Buddhist 1/2 day Sitting 10 ⁰⁰ AIDS Walk
21 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	22 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 5 ⁰⁰ Sacred Places Team	23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	24 MAIL CB 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer	25 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	26 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	27
28 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Union Worship 1st Congregational W. Brattleboro	29 Memorial Day OFFICE CLOSED 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion	30 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	31 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ WWAC Salon			

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: 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 -or-
From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).

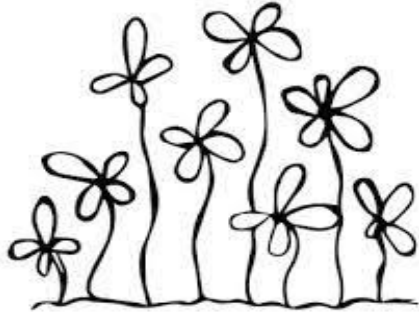


MAY LECTIONARY TEXTS
Sunday, May 7, Fifth Sunday of Easter Acts 7:55-60; Ps 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14
Sunday, May 14, Sixth Sunday of Easter Acts 17:22-31; Ps 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21
Sunday, May 21, Seventh Sunday of Easter Acts 1:6-14; Ps 68:1-10, 32-35; 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11
Sunday, May 28, Pentecost Sunday Acts 2:1-21 or Num 11:24-30; Ps 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Cor 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

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News items, articles, address changes,
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802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurhvt.org



MAY



2023

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BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301

**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
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

Website: 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 / National: www.ucc.org

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

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Treasurer: Anne Fecto

Clerk: Jenifer Ambler