

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends in Christ,

My sabbatical was all that it should have been: a time of rest, renewal, and restoration. I am thankful for such a privilege, which so many perhaps do not receive in our North American culture that often prides productivity and achievement more than overall quality of life and that often values 'doing' over 'being', or better, 'becoming'. Centre Church offered me a time 'to be' and 'to become' and I pray that it will enable me to serve the church more faithfully in the future.

My sabbatical consisted of three parts: El Salvador (August), reading for Comparative Religion (September), and the church archive (October). In El Salvador, I sought to travel (geography), learn (history), experience (worship), and relate (sister church parish at Las Cabanitas). I succeeded in all respects. My preparatory reading expanded my knowledge and appreciation of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity so that I can teach the same and other faith traditions (African, American Indian, and Celtic indigenous) at Centre Church and Vermont State College next year (2024). This month I have immersed myself in Centre Church history by organizing and more safely storing the archive.

I have learned a great deal from Joann Nichols and other former church historians who along with Marion Daley, Dot Vander Meulen, and Heidi Mario helped to author and illustrate our church history book *The Jewel on Main Main Street*. By combing the archive, I have learned more deeply what a beautiful jewel we have. I have learned many fascinating lessons, such as the historic trajectories of our church that started decades before my tenure began in 2018 and before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most of all, I have come away from the archive with an overwhelming sense of awe for the degree to which the saints of our church have served faithfully for so many decades. Some of the earliest names I see are Clyde Johnson, Dart and Joy Everett, Bill and Carlene McCarthy, Peter and Marion Abell, and too many others to list all - names that are woven again and again

CENTRE BELLS NOVEMBER 2023

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

through the minutes going back to the 1960s, to the era of The Rev Dr Allen Vander Meullen. I imagine my first sermon upon my return will be something along the lines of "Blood, Sweat, and Tears" or "Time, Talents, and Treasure". What I have learned from the faithful stalwarts I find throughout the archive (who still very much remain on our membership rolls, faithfully support our church, and grace the sanctuary with their presence) is the notion of transcendence. *The Church, even the local church (Centre Church) is transcendent*. The church transcends the personality of the minister, the politics of the age, the changing orthodoxy of the faith, the denominational polity of the era, and even the building in which the sacred is acknowledged and felt. The church is as transcendent as the Christ - superseding time, space, and even the person of Jesus. Yes! All that, I glean from seeing all of your precious names in the archive! *While we always seek to enable Centre Church to be more faithful to her call, we love her unconditionally and we do not forsake her.*

I look forward to continuing to serve our church faithfully upon my return in November.

Be well. In Christ, Scott

INTERIM WORSHIP LEADER, Lise Sparrow

Dear Saints of Centre Church,

When you receive this we will have already said our goodbyes and many thank you's. It was a fascinating and uplifting time for me, beset at times by grief at the passing of loved ones, later by the state of the Holy Land and, at other times, filled with joys: the images of earth, the baptisms of my grandchildren and the appearance of old friends at worship. Week after week, I found myself touched by the faithfulness of the congregation, by your flexibility and by your gentle welcome.

I have to say that Bruce and Mary were very important to that welcome. You are lucky to have Bruce. He is incredibly efficient and organized and fun to work with. Mary indulged my "what if s" and "how abouts" with grace, interest and lots of patience and creativity. Thanks to them both and also to Lynn Herzog for her guidance, to the deacons for their support at worship, the Mission & Service Board for their active collaboration with me and, of course, to Christian Education for their stories and care for the children. To each and every one of you with whom I had a moment of contact or conversation, thank you.

Thanks to you all for the Holy Adventure that was these last three months.

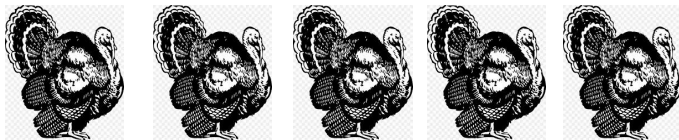
Yours in Faith, Lise

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

This Fall season is truly flying by. It is getting to be time to think about music for Thanksgiving and Advent/Christmas!

You may have noticed the choir has been presenting some new anthems during the last two months. It has been fun to learn some simple arrangements of folk songs. Since several choir members have been away, our numbers have been down which means simpler anthems are the way to go.

It has been a pleasure to work with Lise Sparrow. We have chosen hymns together and collaborated on anthem selections as well. She has made the interim period during Scott's sabbatical an easy transition. I wish her the best.



DEACONS

October 1 was World-Wide Communion Sunday when the Deacons served bread from three different nations and Bill McCarty decorated the balcony with a dozen colorful flags from around the world. Rev. Sparrow displayed her own Earth Flag and made sure we all felt the special connection with the rest of the churches that were celebrating.

October 8 we were grateful to welcome Rev. David Stinson who delivered a sermon on The Ten Commandments.

October 22 was Silver Bells Sunday and Past-Deacon Marion Daley honored those who have been members of our church for 25 years or more, a very special annual tradition.

On **October 29** Rev. Lise Sparrow was shown our great appreciation for her three months serving as our Minister.

November 5, we welcome back our Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper, from his time of rest and reflection during a 3-month Sabbatical.

This is also All-Saints Day, which is a time to remember our congregants, friends and family who passed away in the last year, with their names being read and a bell rung for each one.

Being in our season of Harvest and Thanksgiving, it is hard to believe, but the Deacons are now planning for Advent which begins December 3!

Blessings to All,
Joy Everett, Chair

Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

It is with much gratitude and some sadness that we celebrate Lise Sparrow's last Sunday with us on October 29. During her three months as Scott's Sabbatical replacement, she has not only led thoughtful worship services, but also attended meetings, led discussions and officiated at funerals (none of which was in her Job Description). We are very thankful for all she has done.

At our Council meeting, we discussed how to proceed with the recommendation of the Sacred Places project. The consultants' #1 recommendation was to strengthen space-sharing policies and practices. So we have formed an Asset Planning Team (or Task Force) consisting of April, Marion Abell, Jenifer Ambler, and myself. The team will follow through with the recommendations on how to better use our building to share our space, particularly with inter-faith and spiritual groups. We will, of course, keep you informed of our progress.

Stewardship season is coming up, and we are thinking of asking not only for your financial pledge, but also for an indication of other ways you would be willing to help the church. Could you bring flowers, bake, send greeting cards, play music, clean, read the scriptures, etc, etc? The willingness of our members to help is a big asset of the church. And it ties in with another project we have been mulling over – reducing our committees to only three, which would be titled Belonging (or, Welcome), Believing (or Worship), and Becoming (or Work). People would be assigned to a committee depending on their interests and skills. More on this later...

I believe we are all aware that COVID is increasing again. We ask that if you are feeling sick or have symptoms of a cold you attend worship service on-line and not in the sanctuary.

Thank you, and may we all stay well.



MISSION & SERVICE

Thank you for your continued support of our Second Sunday Offering. In August we sent \$441 to *Brattleboro Senior Meals*, September we collected \$160 for the *HELP Fund* and will send \$500 total, using our Local Outreach funds to boost the contribution. October was *Neighbors in Need*, a 5For5 UCC offering. This month is an important offering, *Loaves & Fishes*; our offerings are multiplied by the *Feed the Thousands* campaign, so what we give, both in food through our Harvest Sunday offerings (November 19) and through financial support through the Second Sunday (November 12). Please give generously. Our families may also be giving of their time and talents by picking apples that local people have offered.

GroundWorks meals continue to be on the third Sunday of each month. We seem to scramble to supply a full meal each month. Could you volunteer for the November 19 meal? Please consider being a new food volunteer. You can sign up on the bulletin board or on line. See the *eNews* in the coming weeks or contact Priscilla Svec: 802.505.8925 / svecpriscilla4@gmail.com or Jenifer Ambler: 802.380.2805 / busylittlemom@gmail.com for more information.

Thank you to all who wrote or signed letters to our Vermont congressional members asking them to support a cease fire in Gaza and Israel. Our support of these peaceful efforts is an example of us living out our designation of a Just Peace Church.

LOAVES & FISHES

Fair & Impartial Policing in Windham County: Proposed Changes around Immigration

I attended this meeting on September 12. About fifty people were present. It was interesting. I thought that what was being asked of the Sheriff's Department was reasonable: increased protections for immigrants in or passing through Windham County. People were mainly concerned that local law enforcement not report an immigrant's status to federal agents, fearing deportation. The Sheriff was putting up some resistance, fearing legal problems for his Deputies or for his Department.

In communities where this policy has been implemented, there have been no legal problems (over two or three years.) I think the Sheriff was probably technically correct, in his concerns. However he definitely listened to what people were saying.

-Dennis Newman



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The response from the congregation to our Children's Messages has been great. We have found the adults like the messages as well as the children. If anyone is interested in presenting a Children's Message, please let me know. We would be happy to have a variety of people presenting them.

We hope to soon offer occasional activities for young children and their parents on Saturday afternoons or evenings or Sunday afternoons. Some ideas we have are: movie night, game night, pizza party.

We have decided that we do not have enough children to hold a Christmas Pageant in December. We will be looking for ways to include the children in the Advent services.

-Laura Slate, Chair

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

Brattleboro Centre for Children has moved back into our old classroom. New, flood-free carpeting has been installed in two classrooms, and thanks to the church's insurance plan it was paid for in full. We are beyond pleased to be back on one floor together again and have started moving some children to new classroom groups as they all are getting older. New babies are starting and we are planning on our annual October 31 Pajama Day. It's always a fun and silly time. Thanks to all who helped us following our early summer flood! We are happy to have it over with.

-Nan Mann, Director



CCC QUILTERS UPDATE

The quilters at Centre Church (CCC) have invited friends, neighbors and community quilters to join us on Thursdays at 1:00pm at Carlene McCarty's home to quilt items for the fall craft shows. So far the ladies who have joined us include Joanne Clark, Patti Reardon, Marion Abell, Sheryl Willis, Meg Harriman, Margit Brosnan, Bonnie Girvan, Mindy Nadolski, Sharon Tyndall, Deb Brown, Janis Brown, Carlene McCarty, and Anne Doesburg

We have 19 items for sale; that is 800 pieces made. THANK YOU, LADIES

We will attend events:

November 11: Chesterfield Artisan Fair, 10:00am-2:00pm in the Chesterfield Grange

November 12: 11:15am in the Centre Congregational Church parlor

December 1 & 2: Centre Church Christmas Bazaar,

5:00-7:00pm Friday / 9:00am-4:00pm Saturday in the parlor

MEMBER CARE

Silver Bells Society

Last month we observed the 28th year of the **Silver Bells Society**—those who have been members of Centre Congregational Church for 25 years or more.

That original 1995 of 156 members and the 2015 roster are toward the end of the book "The Jewel of Main Street" written by Dot Vander Meulen. The 2015 list of members is printed on the opposite page.

When a team of researchers looked up membership back in 1995, we found that 156 people had been members 25 years and more—some much more, one having joined in 1911!

The idea of having such a list came about during the short ministry of John Potter, Laity Sunday was approaching when someone from the congregation usually presented the sermon. We had heard from several of the congregation during that time between when Jack Bixby left and someone came to take that position. So the idea came up that long-time membership had never been recognized. This would be the time to do it. Twenty-five years is the usual silver anniversary, hence the name Silver Bells Society.

So we searched those old yellow membership cards then kept in the church office, found the names of those people, created a list to be framed and hung in the sanctuary, and printed certificates to be handed out to all. Rev Potter's wife suggested members be given a carnation as they rose from their pew seat when their year was called.

And so, every October since, we have celebrated long term membership, with thanks and blessings to all have been members of this church for 25 years and more.

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 October 26.

Dorothy (Dot) Vander Meulen

1 Harvest Circle #301, Lincoln, MA 01773
781.430.6210 / 617.866.0953 (m)

Alice Stockwell—Vernon Hall

13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354
802.254.8091

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

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Judith Palmer
- 3 Joanne Clark
- 5 Fred Edmonds
- 7 Wayne Randall
- 8 Judith Myrick
- 13 David Henry
- 18 Kaitlin Rose Scott
- 19 Abigail Healey



ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Anne & Steve Fecto
- 27 Robert & Sen Pu



NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Holly MacLean: 802. 579.5628

Wendy Randall: wjrusty8@gmail.com

Mabel Peterson: mabelpeterson7@gmail.com

NOVEMBER 2023

**ZOOM events
*Holy Communion

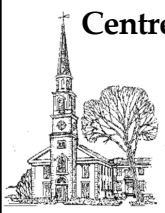
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 7 ⁰⁰ VT Humanities First Wednesday	2 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	3 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ³⁰ Muslim Prayer 5 ⁰⁰ Gallery Walk/ Green @Centre	4
5 Daylight Savings 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 11 ¹⁵ Hospitality Time	6 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Christian Ed Board	7 Election Day 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ⁰⁰ BAILA meeting 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	8 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	9 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 3 ³⁰ BCC Board 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	10 CB DEADLINE Veterans Day - OFFICE CLOSED 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ³⁰ Muslim Prayer	11 10 ⁰⁰ Crystal Bowl Meditation
12 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ¹⁵ Hospitality Time 5 ⁰⁰ Brattleboro Interfaith Youth Group	13 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion**	14 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	15 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 6 ³⁰ NAACP	16 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal	17 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ³⁰ Muslim Prayer	18 9 ⁰⁰ Buddhist 1/2 day Sitting
19 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time 4 ³⁰ Groundworks Meal	20 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion**	21 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	22 MAIL CB 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund	23 Thanksgiving Day OFFICE CLOSED 9 ⁰⁰ -6 ⁰⁰ Alcathon 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional**	24 OFFICE CLOSED 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 1 ³⁰ Muslim Prayer	25
26 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	27 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion	28 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	29 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 6 ⁰⁰ WWAC Salon	30 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ⁰⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir Rehearsal		

LISE'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurchvermont.org -or-
facebook page: <http://www.centrechurchvermont.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).



NOVEMBER LECTIONARY TEXTS
Monday, November 1 , All Saints Day Rev 7:9-17 and Ps 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt 5:1-12
Sunday, November 5 , 23rd Sunday after Pentecost Josh 3:7-17 and Ps 107:1-7, 33-37 or Mic 3:5-12 and Ps 43; 1 Thess 2:9-13; Matt 23:1-12
Sunday, November 12 , 24th Sunday after Pentecost Josh 24:1-3a, 14-25 and Ps 78:1-7 or Wisd of Sol 6:12- 16 or Amos 5:18-24 and Wisd of Sd 6:17-20 or Ps 70; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Matt 25:1-13
Sunday, November 19 , 25th Sunday after Pentecost Judg 4:1-7 and Ps 123 or Zeph 1:7, 12-18 and Ps 90:1-8, (9-11), 12; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Matt 25:14-30
Thursday, November 23 , Thanksgiving Day Deut 9:7-18 and Ps 65; 2 Cor 9:6-15; Luke 17:11-19
Sunday, November 26 , 26th Sunday after Pentecost Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24 and Ps 100 or Ps 95:1-7a; Eph 1:15-23; Matt 25:31-46

Centre Bells is published monthly by
Centre Congregational Church, UCC
News items, articles, address changes,
and requests to be added or removed
from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should
be submitted to the church office:
802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurch.org



NOVEMBER



2023

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 8
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

Minister and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper: 786.622.8473 (cell)
centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org

Music Director: Mary Milkey-May: music@centrechurchvt.org

Administrator: Bruce Landenberger: admin@centrechurchvt.org

Financial Secretary: Emily Houle: finance@centrechurchvt.org

Custodian: Emelio McCalla

Council Chair: Lynn Herzog

Treasurer: Anne Fecto

Clerk: Jenifer Ambler