



The Lighted Tower

LENT AT CENTER CHURCH

March 2018
Volume 3, Issue 3

www.centerchurchmeriden.org

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While I am personally partial to the seasons of Advent and Christmas, the traditional center-point of the Christian year is falls at the end of Lent: Holy Week, including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Special events in our lives usually require preparation. Holy Week is no different. That's why the early church set aside the forty days before Easter (excluding Sunday that are always celebrations of the Resurrection) as a time for prayer, meditation, self-examination and study.

The symbolism of forty days is biblically rich. Immediately we recall, and perhaps at this time of year even identify with, Jesus' forty days of spiritual struggle against temptation in the wilderness. Yet, there is more. Forty days also recalls Noah and his family enduring forty days and forty nights of rain (Genesis 7:4), the Hebrews wandering forty years in the desert (Deuteronomy 8:2, 4), Moses waiting on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18), Elijah walking for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb (I Kings 19:8), and the forty days that Jonah gave Nineveh to repent (Jonah 3:4). And there are the forty hours that Jesus lay in the tomb before his resurrection.

What all these experiences linked to forty have in common is that they are times of trial, introspection and preparation for something new to be born—a new attitude, a new hope, and a new relationship with God. To help Christian pilgrims enter into this dark time of transition three practices have been encouraged: fasting (Matthew 6:16-18), almsgiving (Matthew 6:2-4), and prayer (Matthew 6:5-6). These are not performed in order to be seen by others (Matthew 6:1), but rather as private and personal acts that help us to deliberately turn ourselves once again toward God and God's creation.

This season encourages us all through prayer, discipline and study to share again in the great drama of our Lord's ministry, death, and resurrection. We encourage you to prepare at home and in your own way—alone, with families, or with friends. We also encourage you to utilize the worship services and Lenten programs that we are offering to help you on your Lenten journey.

Lent came early this year, beginning on Ash Wednesday, which was February 14th. So by now we are half way through our Wednesday Lenten Suppers and discussions on being "The Body of Christ." It's not too late to join us—6:15 for dinner, 7 pm for the program—on March 7th, 14th, and 21st. No matter the way, let us all engage in the great drama of Jesus' ministry and way to the cross.

In Christ's love,
Kendrick

LENTEN SERVICES



SUNDAY, MARCH 4 8:30 & 10 Sermon "One in Christ" John 17: 11, 20-24

WED, MARCH 7 6:15-8 Catered Supper "Being the Body of Christ: the Shadow"

SUNDAY MARCH 11 8:30 & 10 "The Shadow"
Romans 7: 18b-23

WED, MARCH 14 6:15-8 Pot Luck Supper "Being the Body of Christ: TBD"

SUNDAY, MARCH 18 8:30 & 10
"The Fundamental Problem: Idolatry" Exodus
20:1-6; 32:1-4
Amy Cerbie Benefit Recital for Musical Training in Salzburg. 2 PM

WED, MARCH 21 6:15-8 Catered Supper "Being the Body of Christ: TBD"

SUNDAY, MARCH 25 PALM SUNDAY 8:30 & 10
Sermon: "Passion Type 1 or 2" Mark 11:1-11

THURSDAY, MARCH 29 7 PM MAUNDY
THURSDAY: Communion and Tenebrae service, an ancient Christian Good Friday service that makes use of gradually diminishing light by extinguishing candles to symbolize as the events from Gethsemane to Burial in the tomb are read from scripture.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1 8:30 & 10 EASTER Sermon:
"Resurrections" Matthew 28: 1-10) (Communion will be served on Sunday, April 8.)

Annual Meeting



The Church's Annual Meeting Will be held on Sunday, March 4, 2018

It is our chance to see what all the committees are doing. We will be voting on all committee reports. And the By-Law change "the Assistant Collector not be on the Trustees".

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Just a reminder, there are many ways for you to keep in touch with Center Church:

Website – Upcoming events, photos, the monthly calendar and The Lighted Tower
centerchurchmeriden.org

Facebook Page – Upcoming events and photos of some of our events Center Congregational Church UCC, Meriden, CT

E-News – Lists events and programs for the upcoming week.

And now, Twitter, which will provide some fun posts. The twitter name for is CtrChurch_UCC

Be sure to check us out at these sites!

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MISSION MOMENT

March 18th is our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Sunday. Donations to OGHS enable the UCC to reach

people and communities affected by disaster, displacement or poverty. OGHS provides assistance to families and communities around the world, helping them to become stronger, healthier and better equipped to address hardships and catastrophes. In the past, our donations to OGHS have gone to help rebuild homes in Haiti damaged by Hurricane Matthew, provide shelter to those in Fiji who are recovering from Cyclone Winston, and offer a 5-year agricultural project to improve lives through planting seeds that will bear abundant fruit for years to come.

The 2018 theme for the offering is “More Than We Can Imagine” - the church uniting to respond to the many critical needs present in our world today. OGHS supports partners in countries with ministries that fund health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries and both international and domestic disaster response. Offering envelopes are in your offering box, or you may use one of the envelopes in the pews.

In February, the Missions Committee donated \$250 to Shelter Now in Meriden, and \$500 to Rev. Norris for his outreach to those in need in our community.

Thank you for your continued generosity!

DEACONS

The Deacons are trying out a new idea as there are fewer Deacons now. We will now be working on a more "Group Participation" theory. SO STEP UP AND VOLUNTEER TO BE A DOER OF THE WORD AND NOT A HEARER ONLY! There will be a "Deacon of the month" who will be in charge of:

- GREETERS,
- LAY READERS,
- USHERS TO TAKE OFFERING FOR THE SERVICES THAT ARE NOT COMMUNION,
- COFFEE SERVERS FOR THE FIRST 2 SUNDAYS IN THE MONTH

ALSO, if you are a former Deacon and would like to serve Communion, please let the Deacon in Charge know.

The Deacon for March is Lorraine White and April is Christopher Tabor.

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

Thank you to all who participated in our Pancake Coffee Hour celebration of Shrove Sunday!



Kiva is an international organization begun in San Francisco in 2005, that coordinates the lending of small loans to help end poverty. They work in 83 countries, with over a billion dollars lent, and with a repayment rate of 96.9%. Center Church Youth Group began working with Kiva in 2010 with \$600 from Sunday school offering, lending funds to 15 microentrepreneurs. Kiva loans are made with 0% interest and paid back to lender in installments. Once money is repaid it may be lent to new people need of an opportunity.

We are very proud that Center Church has granted 57 loans thus far, with 7 new loans granted last month. Griffin DePlama said it best, “This feels great! We are really changing people’s

lives.” These small loans of as little as \$25, do change lives. Kiva loans can allow entrepreneurs to open their own stores, buy upgraded equipment instead of renting it, make profits that allow children to attend school, etc. In short, Kiva loans provide opportunities that is all hard-working folks need to become more financially stable. Kiva says, “Dreams are universal, opportunity is not.” You can join Kiva, too, by visiting their website Kiva.org.

Amy Cerbie will be holding a benefit concert on March 18th, at 2:00PM. Amy has been invited to study abroad in Austria, so funds raised through a free will offering at the concert, will help defray the cost of this amazing opportunity that has been afforded to her. The Board of Christian Education will be coordinating a reception for the event.



The Sunday school classes will be learning all about *The Feeding of the 5000* in March. *Palm Sunday* is March 25th. The children and youth will assemble in the Fellowship Hall at 9:45 to organize our distribution of palms. The CCC Youth Choir will be singing in the service on the 25th as well.



Confirmation class will meet on March 4th and talk about World Religions Basics. We will also be trying to organize two visits to different houses of worship in March. The CCC Youth Group will meet on March 18th. We plan to visit the Meriden Humane Society to volunteer for an hour or so.



The Youth Group is accepting donations from the congregation of pet food and supplies that we can drop off at MHS when we visit.



FELLOWSHIP NEWS

OTHERS: We will be going to Banana Brazil in downtown Meriden on March 8th at 6pm. We will just catch upon past birthday cards.

KOINONIA: on Tuesday March 13th we will meet in the parking lot at 10 am to carpool to Barkers Museum in Cheshire. We will tour the toys and then eat at Paul's.

On March 27th we will meet in the Federal Room at 10:30am to get cards and flowers for the shut ins.

CENTERITES SET SAIL ANEW Having had their February fill of fruits of the sea at **Westbrook Lobster** in Yalesville a few weeks back, the Centerites have weighed anchor and are charting their cuisine course toward the Italian port of **Portofino** in Kensington. We understand that **Portofino** is a fine port of call with some fine port to call on, and somewhat of import to us sorts or out-of-sorts restauranteers.

So, come join us in our shore leave for our march of madness through a Mediterranean menu of offerings on Thursday, March 8th starting at 6:30PM. As a slight alteration of format, we are planning to afterwards return a critique of this allegedly fine establishment. So, if you would like to participate and try your hand in the food critic arena, this may be that opportunity that has awaited you for years.

For further information and/or to reserve your chair at the table, contact Jim Chapman at [203-238-1590](tel:203-238-1590) or bfchap@sbcglobal.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Adult Bible Study – Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. in the Federal Room
- March 4 - Annual Meeting
- March 7 - Lenten supper and program
- March 6 - Deacons
- March 8 - Others
- March 8 - Centerites
- March 13 –Trustees
- March 14 - Lenten Pot-luck and program
- March 18 –Amy Cerbie Recital
- March 21 – Lenten Catered Supper and program
- March 22 –Church Council
- March 25 - Palm Sunday

Sunday Worship

- 8:30am - Chapel Service – enter by rear parking lot, 30-minute service – Communion 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month.
- 10:00 am. - Worship in Sanctuary
- Holy Communion first Sunday of each month and all are welcome

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS



Dorothy LeGendre
Betty Karpinski
Dorothy Churchill
Gloria Iwerks
Barbara Newell
Betty Weiland
Kay Janiga
Mary Volker
Ray Moore
Roger Cerbie
Christopher Brown



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

5	Veronica Forrest
9	Laura True Garbarsky
11	Bob Bell
	Sheila Faulkner
21	Debra Iwerks
25	Kenneth Harnois
27	Linda Hatch
28	Susan Dunleavy
29	Adam True

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning Committee has continued to work diligently on short term and long-term goals for our church.

In keeping with our accepted Mission Statement, we have identified areas of strength, weakness and opportunities for the near and distant future. We have developed DRAFTS of a Vision statement (who we strive to become as a congregation) and Values statement's (guiding principles to use in making decisions regarding activities and projects).

The DRAFTS of Vision and Values statements will be included in the agenda for a congregational vote at the Annual Meeting of March 4, 2018.

We are requesting your suggestions for activities and projects which you believe re beneficial to realize the resultant Vision for our church. We are grateful for your participation in this process so that the whole of our body is included in the short and long-range planning process. Thank You.

Respectfully, Jack Brooks, Mary Zysk, Karen Krick, Maggie Schillberg, Barbara Langner, Betty Leidy, Debbie Gaffney.

Mission Statement: The Mission of Center Congregational Church is to Honor God and Grow in Christ. Putting into action the message of God's love, welcoming all, serving the community and world through outreach ministry, and acknowledging the worth of All People.

Draft Vision Statement: (proposed statement to be approved by the congregation:
The vision of Center Congregational Church, UCC, is to be god's beacon of love, justice and hope in Meriden and beyond.

Suggested Project(s):

Suggested Activities:

Please return bottom portion of this form to the church office by the end of March (forms are also available in the Narthex of the church)



Easter Memorial Flowers



Place a memorial plant in the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday! Please use the following order form below. The names of those remembered will be listed in the Easter Bulletin. Help celebrate Easter, remember a loved one. Happy Easter!

IN MEMORY OF (please print): _____

In CELEBRATION OF (please print): _____

GIVEN BY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Tulips	# _____	\$ <u>18.00</u>	= \$ _____
Daffodils	# _____	\$ <u>18.00</u>	= \$ _____

Please make checks payable to C.C.C.

Total enclosed \$ _____

Place this order in the offering plate or mail to Center Congregational Church, 474 Broad St., Meriden, CT 06450. Your order **MUST** arrive by **March 18, 2018.**