



# The Lighted Tower

April 2018  
Volume 3, Issue 4

[www.centerchurchmeriden.org](http://www.centerchurchmeriden.org)

“Joy is the serious business of Heaven.”

Dear Friends,

Easter is just around the corner now. Alleluia! But if you have time our Communion and Tenebrae Service on Maundy Thursday (March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm) is quite touching and poignant, a fitting bridge between Palm Sunday and the Day of Resurrection. Please note that we have decided to not to offer Communion on Easter but will be do so the following Sunday.

C.S. Lewis wrote a short piece about “Heaven” that, no matter how many times I read it, never fails to make me wonder, ponder and think deeply. I am hoping it will move you as well and re-open your hearts to “the joys of Heaven.” It is densely worded and densely reasoned so you will need to read it slowly, carefully, probably more than once. It is well worth your time and focus, excellent thoughts to ponder as we prepare for Easter morning.

In Christ’s love,

Kendrick

Scripture and tradition habitually put the joys of Heaven into the scale against the sufferings of earth, and no solution of the problem of pain which does not do so can be called a Christian one. We are very shy nowadays of even mentioning Heaven. We are afraid of the jeer about “pie in the sky,” and of being told that we are trying to “escape” from the duty of making a happy world here and now into dreams of a happy world elsewhere. But either there is “pie in the sky” or there is not. If there is not, then Christianity is false, for this doctrine is woven into its fabric. If there is, then this truth, like any other, must be faced, whether it is useful at political meetings or no.

Again, we are afraid that heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to. There are rewards that do not sully motives. A man’s love for a woman is not mercenary because he wants to marry her, nor his love for poetry mercenary because he wants to read it, nor his love of exercise disinterested because he wants to run and lead and

walk. Love, by definition, seeks to enjoy its object.

## Inside this Issue

- 1** From the Minister
- 2** From the Minister cont'd  
Lenten Program
- 3** Trustees  
Mission Moments
- 4** Centerites
- 5** Fellowship News  
Christian Ed. News
- 6** Planning Committee  
Pastoral Search Cmte.
- 7** April 1 News
- 8** Upcoming Events  
In Our thoughts and Prayers  
Birthdays
- 9** Calendar

Center Congregational Church  
474 Broad Street  
Meriden, CT 06450  
203-235-1389

I do *not* think that the life of Heaven bears any analogy to play or dance in respect of frivolity. I do think that while we are in this 'valley of tears,' cursed with labor, hemmed round with necessities, tripped up with frustrations, doomed to perpetual plannings, puzzlings, and anxieties, certain qualities that must belong to the celestial condition have no chance to get through, can project no image of themselves, except in activities which, for us here and now, are frivolous.

For surely we must suppose the life of the blessed to be an end in itself, indeed The End: to be utterly spontaneous; to be the complete reconciliation of boundless freedom with order—with the most delicately adjusted, supple, intricate, and beautiful order?

How can you find any image of this in the 'serious' activities either of our natural or of our (present) spiritual life? Either in our precarious and heart-broken affections or in the Way which is always, in some degree, a *via crucis*?

No, Malcolm. It is only in our 'hours-off,' only in our moments of permitted festivity, that we find an analogy. Dance and game *are* frivolous, unimportant down here; for 'down here' is not their natural place. Here, they are a moment's rest from the life we were place here to live.

But in this world everything is upside down. That which, if it could be prolonged here, would be a truancy, is likest that which in a better country is the End of ends. Joy is the serious business of Heaven.

—C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*

## LENTEN SERVICES



**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.)

## TRUSTEES

Some info on the 303 East Main Street building: 3/19/18

I met with the electrician (Robert, the same one who wired the basement renovation) this morning and went thru the second floor. Almost everything needs new wiring, additional outlets, ceiling fixtures, bathroom exhaust fans, and possibly new circuit panels. Little of existing electrical system meets code. We weren't able to access the basement to see the circuit breakers, but when we can get the electrician back and see everything, he will give us a quote.

I also met with the realtor (Sandy Maier Schede) and went thru the first floor. I gave her the info she would need to list the rental, and she said she would be interested in listing it (the fee would be one month's rental, paid only if it is rented.) She then researched other rentals on the market and felt that we could go a little higher on our rent, currently at \$612/mo (since we include heat, parking, basement storage, store-front, etc.) . She suggested between \$670-\$750. **What would folks think about a \$700/mo. rental, with the length of the lease negotiable? And shall we go with Maier Real-estate to list it?**

I also had a very congenial talk with Steve Mastriano. We agreed that we have had a pretty good working relationship for 14 years, and that they had been a good responsible tenant (despite a "falling out" last year when coincidentally his son came on board). He has left the space in very good condition, needing only some cosmetic repairs. (I do not know, however, if we will also need to do some electrical upgrade until the electrician looks at it).

Jack

## MISSION MOMENT

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Blanket Sunday in February. Through your generosity, we collected \$498 for this Church World Service program.

In an effort to support youth programs, the Missions Committee voted to designate April's donations for The Meriden/Wallingford Campership Fund and the Silver Lake Summer Camp program.

The Meriden/Wallingford Campership Fund awards camperships to children in our area to attend a one or two-week session at a local non-profit camp. Participating camps are Meriden YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of Meriden, Girls Inc., Wallingford YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Ulbrich Boys and Girls Club.



Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT, is the home of the Outdoor Ministries of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC. During the summer Silver Lake hosts five conferences, or camps, for different age groups with different themes. The theme of the conference helps to shape some of the activities for the week. For more information, please contact the UCC. Center Church's donations will be used for

scholarships at Silver Lake.



## CENTERITES RESTAURANT REVIEW: *PORTOFINO*



Ah, Italia! Surrounded by artwork of the Italian shore, the Tower of Pisa, and the Colosseum of Rome, our brave band of Christians marched onward into the arena. But the lions did not come. Instead, we discovered and judgmentally devoured the local cuisine; thus, emerging victorious:

**Christians 5, Lions 0 – Venimus, Vidimus, Vicimus!**

The original Portofino (“fine port”) can be found on the Ligurian coastline, just east of Genoa (please insert salami joke here). It’s a picturesque fishing village and Italian Riviera resort. Our *Portofino*, on the other hand, is in Kensington; somewhat minus the ocean view. No coastline in sight, Chris had the waiter bring the sea to the table in the form of a very nice appetizer of mussels in a pomodoro sauce. A tasty beginning of the dinner.

Our intrepid expedition that evening included Chris, Jim, Steve and the Brothers White (Roger & Ken). We were there to enjoy food and fellowship, to research choice offerings from the menu, and to report our findings to the congregation. It’s a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

We all agreed that *Portofino’s* service was very good, though a little on the slow side. Pricing was a bit higher than at the restaurants we visited over the past several months, but the value received for dollar paid was good. As there were only five of us that night, we were not able to eat our way through the entire menu and, therefore, we went for purely random sampling; to whit:

Dipping oil with pepperoncinis: good. Pasta Faggioli: okay. Salads: tasty, lacking in originality a bit, but the house dressing did have a nice snap of anise seed to it. Entrees evaluated ranged from spaghetti with meatballs to sausage & peppers/onions, to two “ala orange” preparations: one veal, one chicken. The first two were delicious to the taste but a bit short on presentation and creativity. However, the ala orange entrees were excellent across the board and likely more representative of *Portofino’s* overall fare. We skipped dessert, so we cannot report out on that. Sorry.

As is the ancient Centerite tradition, we do not rate restaurants on a “star” scale, but rather use our time-honored 5-Spud Scale: a most scientific system which precisely measures each diner’s reactions to the food chemistry, aesthetics, service, environmental influences and myriad other factors. The algorithm behind the calculations is closely guarded, having been handed down from our Illuminati forebears – or maybe they were fivebears. Can’t remember – apparently lost count over the chianti.

**\* So, how did *Portofino* score? We gave them 4.02 Spuds out of 5.00 – it comes out to 80.35%. \***

Oh, yes. We go out to these restaurants to enjoy the fraternal camaraderie, too. From the dinner conversation, here’s some extremely important guy-stuff knowledge that oozed out across the table:

- The Leaning Tower of Pisa doesn’t lean as much now as before. Also, when they first found it was leaning, it was only partially built. Rather than tearing it down and starting over, they changed the direction of what constitutes “up” and bent the design. Next time you are in Pisa, check it out.
- When traveling in Italy from north to south, the espresso gets stronger and stronger, while the volume in your cup becomes less and less. It is a direct inverse relationship. Eventually it reached the consistency of coffee syrup.
- Event most looked forward to: a steel-cage death match between Alexa and Siri. Mutual assured destruction of the queens of artificial intelligence.

---

Come with us next month, all ye merry gentlemen – especially if you wish to feed your soul. Our Soul Food Sojourn takes us to ***Black-Eyed Sally’s***, Asylum Street, Hartford. Join us there at 6:30pm on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. For information, contact Steve at 860-916-1162 or [ccdeacon@comcast.net](mailto:ccdeacon@comcast.net)

## FELLOWSHIP NEWS

**OTHERS:** No Foolin' Others is going to Henrys for dinner this month. Henry's specializes in home style cooking. A short visit will have your mouth watering for his homemade desserts. Others is open to all women of the church and their friends. Join us for a spring dinner in this charming little Wallingford Restaurant. Other's will meet April 12th at 6 p.m. at Henry's. The birthday gal is Judy Karle. Please let Ardene know if you plan to attend by April 9th. Happy Spring to all.

**KOINONIA:** On Tuesday, will be April 17 at 10:30 am in the Federal Room. We will have presentation by Barbra Brooks of her Texas Travel-log.

## CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



Thank you to all who contributed to the great success of Amy Cerbie's benefit concert. Everyone who attended were treated to an amazing program showcasing the musical talents of Amy. We are so proud of Amy here at CCC and wish her well on her Salzburg adventures!



**Calling All Children!** We will have an **Easter Egg Hunt** following church on **April 1<sup>st</sup>**, Easter morning. This is a rain or shine event—if the weather cooperates we will be out in the front garden, or if it is stormy we will have our hunt inside.

The **Robert Wharton Scholarship Potluck Luncheon** will be on Sunday, **April 8<sup>th</sup>** after the 10am worship service. Hundreds of CCC families have benefitted from this scholarship fund and the Board of Christian Education is committed to continuing this practice. If you can, bring a dish to share. If you can't, come anyway—all are welcome!



The **Confirmation class** will be meeting on **April 15<sup>th</sup>** and **April 29<sup>th</sup>**.  
**LOL class** will be meeting on **April 15<sup>th</sup>**.

The **Sunday School** classes will continue to learn more about the Feeding of the 5000 in April. Families are invited to a **Family Bingo Night** on **Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**, 6:30-8:00PM.

There will be **lots** of candy and other prizes for winners.

Light snacks will also be provided for players to enjoy.

Admission is Free!



## From the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee is excited to announce an upcoming project which reflects our mission and vision statements.

From July 8-14, church youth groups from across the country will participate in a mission project hosted by First Congregational Church of Wallingford. During that week, these volunteers will repair 50-60 homes in Wallingford and Meriden. Center Church will support this initiative in a variety of ways.

**Afternoon Popsicles:** Popsicles will be given to workers at the Meriden sites on 4 afternoons. Funds are needed to purchase these cooling treats; we also need drivers to deliver them. This is a great opportunity to see first-hand the work the youth are doing and to connect with home owners in our community.

**Afternoon Snacks:** On Thursday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, we will provide approximately 425 snacks when the workers return to Sheehan High School. Volunteers are needed to distribute snacks from 3:00-4:15pm. Funds are needed to purchase snacks.

**Thank you notes:** During the next few months, there will be several opportunities to write notes expressing our gratitude for the work that is being done. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, workers will be given your notes when they receive their snacks.

**Job Site Work:** Opportunities for hands-on work will take place on Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed to finish any work that the youth groups did not complete during the week.

Watch the church bulletins, e-news, and upcoming issues of the Lighted Tower for more details and sign-ups.

We look forward to working together to benefit needy home owners in our area.

Thank you.

The Planning Committee: Debbie Gaffney, Jack Brooks, Kendrick Norris, Mary Zysk, Karen Krick, Maggie Schillberg, Betty Leidy, and Barbara Langner

## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

As part of his responsibilities as our Interim Minister, Kendrick is giving guidance to our Pastoral Search Committee, newly installed on Palm Sunday. As we begin this process toward finding our next "settled" Pastor, we will be asking members of the congregation for opinions and preferences toward moving forward. Feel free to address any of your questions to members of the committee. It is important to the current and future life of our covenant community that our direction reflect the desires of the congregation as a whole.

The newly commissioned committee includes:

Pauline Blakeslee, Roger Cerbie, Jim Chapman, Debbie Gaffney, Maggie Schillberg, Chris Tabor, Lorraine White, Roger White, Chelsea Trella (Secretary), Jack Brooks (Vice-Chair), Steve Gorman (Chair)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Adult Bible Study – Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. in the Federal Room
- March 29 – Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 pm.
- April 1 – Easter Sunday 8:30 am and 10:00 am Services
- April 3 - Deacons
- April 8 – Christian Ed 9 am
- April 8 – Communion
- April 8 – Pot-lunch for Scholarship Fund
- April 10 – Trustees
- April 12 – Others 6 pm
- April 12 – Centerites 6:30 pm
- April 13 – Family Bingo Night 6:30 – 8 pm
- April 15 – LOL Class
- April 15 – Confirmation Class
- April 19 – Church Council 6:45 pm
- April 29 – Confirmation Class

### Sunday Worship

- 8:30am - Chapel Service – enter by rear parking lot, 30-minute service – Communion 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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



### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

2 Tom Dunleavy  
Betty Wieland  
4 Margaret Roberts  
Josephine Harnois  
6 Judy Karle  
7 Amber Pinkerton  
10 Marylyn True  
11 Bryan Kline  
18 Frank Covey  
24 Roger Stolting  
25 Shawna Jakiela  
26 Christine Odgen  
27 Brittany Laurenza

Betty Wieland will be 96 on April 2, 2018