

GRACE NOTES

The Newsletter of Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, an Open and Affirming Congregation

From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

We encourage children to have dreams. Can you still dream of what could come into your life?

We ask kids dream-invoking questions like, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" We encourage their dreams and play along with their fantasies. We recognize that there is something irreducibly human about their aspiring.

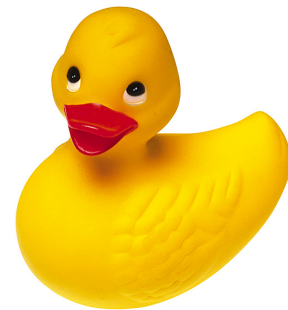
At some point, we begin to deal with the aspirations. We begin reminding children that there is a reality that limits us in important ways. What we had

been encouraging in a concrete form we now encourage in a metaphorical form, "So you see, we are all Santa, Santa's helpers!" More powerfully, we introduce in a myriad of mostly unconscious ways the limiting expectations and stereotypes of what boys can and can't do, what is possible for girls to try and what they should avoid. Beyond gender-based specifications, boundaries appear for class, culture, and apparent race. Children adapt to these boundaries and eventually claim them.

Then we witness an effort by well-meaning adults to shake the kids out of those boundaries of behavior, expectation, and thought. We insist that they can do anything they set their mind to doing. Athletes and performers inspire with their own stories. All of these are attempts to counter the very limits we have previously introduced.

So onward goes the maturing process. We move like a pendu-

Continued on page two



There will be a Duck Soup event at Grace Church on April 26 (yard sale, May baskets, make your own sundaes, children's yard sales, plants, and information booths) See page 3 for details.

Redevelopment Update

More than 30 surveys have been completed by Church members as part of Grace's Redevelopment process. Those surveys have now been sent in for processing and the results are expected back within a few weeks. Stay tuned for information on the next steps.

World Day of Prayer held at Grace

On March 7, more than 30 women from 12 different churches met at Grace for a service of prayer, music and education. It was a meaningful service and it was followed by a delicious luncheon prepared by our GWU ladies. World Day of Prayer is an annual event, taking place on the first Friday in March all over the world. St. Andrew's Church will be hosting next year's service.

Grace Notes

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April 2008

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From the Pastor

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lum between the power of passion and dream, on the one extreme, and the power of the “reality check,” the limits of our own authority, and the deep wisdom that tells us we are all “dust in the wind.”

The challenge facing us, in our church and in our lives, is to try to align all of the moving parts into some integrated functioning motivation. We want to be realistic and visionary, open to change and passionate about something we hope will have staying-power, wise as serpents and tender as doves.

Congregational Meeting is Sunday, June 8

Grace Church’s congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, June 8, at 11:30 AM. The agenda will be sent out in mid May. A light lunch will be served and child care will be provided.

Annual Reports from Ministry Teams and some Task Teams are due by May 15. Electronic versions may be sent to Kab at office@gracechurchucc.org. Leave typed reports in the office mail slot.

How does your faith affect your management of these extremes? Do you let the words of the Bible, the learning of our Christian tradition, your own insight about how God is present in the world, and your power of reason have an impact on your motivation? Do you avail yourself of the power of consultation with others? I don’t mean to load these questions (although that is inevitable, I see.) Also, I don’t intend these to be questions asked for dramatic effect. I am interested in your replies.

While you are thinking about that, I offer this prayer for you this day:

Dear God of All, you are so present at this moment. Deal kindly with the readers of this Grace Notes! Open to us the way forward in our lives that leads to your realm of abundance. Let us follow you on the narrow path that requires from us all of these; commitment, generosity, passion, self-knowledge, understanding that comes from listening, and the confidence that comes with celebrating you, all creation, and the risen Christ. Amen.

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

Church calendar - April

| | | | | | |
|----------|---|--|----------|--|-----------------------------|
| April 1 | 7:30 PM | Central Council | April 18 | Turning Point Shelter | |
| April 2 | 7:00 PM | Healing Worship | April 20 | 8:30 AM 10:00 AM | Singer rehearsal Worship |
| April 5 | 8:00 AM | Men’s Group | April 21 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study |
| April 6 | Cans for Communion 8:30 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM | Singer rehearsal Worship Membership 101 mtg. | April 23 | Set up for Duck Soup! Eat at Eagles! 10:00 AM Book Club 7:00 PM Worship | |
| April 7 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study | April 24 | Set up for Duck Soup! | |
| April 9 | 11:30 AM 7:00 PM | GWU Worship | April 25 | Set up for Duck Soup! | |
| April 13 | 8:30 AM 10:00 AM | Singer rehearsal Worship | April 26 | 10:00 AM | Duck Soup Event |
| April 14 | 10:30 AM 7:30 PM | Bible Study Women’s Lectio | April 27 | 8:30 AM 10:00 AM | Singer rehearsal Worship |
| April 16 | 7:00 PM 7:30 PM | Worship Stewards | April 28 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study |
| | | | April 30 | 7:00 PM | Worship |

Duck Soup!



A Ducky Array of Family Activities at Grace Church

Saturday, April 26 • 10:00am to 2:00pm



- Trash & Treasures (Yard Sale)
 - May Baskets
 - Homemade Baked Goods
 - Special Children's Yard Sale
 - Books, DVDs, CDs
 - Make Your Own Sundaes
 - Spring Plants (including Pansies)
- Important Information on Darfur and Earth Day
 - Recycling Resources
 - and much more . . .

*Paint-the-Duck
Contest for the
Children!*

(Rain or Shine)



Your help is needed (this is an all-church event)

Grace's annual Trash and Treasure Sale is being expanded this year. In addition to offering traditional Yard Sale items, there will be extra activities and tables. Here's how to help:

- Get that spring cleaning underway and bring your yard sale items (in good condition) to church beginning April 23.
- Help out with setup/staff a table. Lend a hand - for the whole event or a few hours.
- Make something for the Bake Table (always a popular money maker!)
- Plant some seeds (now!) or re-pot some house plants for the plant table.
- Help with cleanup.
- Spread the word! Help hang fliers.
- Stop by and bring friends. Be sure to enjoy a home-made sundae.

Special this year: Grace children can have their own yard sale – and keep the profits (or donate to the church). This is a great chance to clean out those old toys (as long as they don't buy as much as they sell!) **Note:** Items not sold need to be taken home afterwards.

Speak to Jean Burr, Lynn Burdett or Beverly Ablondi with general questions. **Children:** Contact Linda Hilliard if you want space for your own yard sale.

Set-up/drop-off hours:

April 23 (Wed.): 2:00 to 4:00

April 24 (Thurs): 3:00 to 6:00

April 25 (Fri): 3:00 to 7:00

April 26 Saturday: Set-up starts at 8:00

Ministry Teams

Christian Ed. MT
Rob Lovewell
Daleen Perkins
Ronda Yeomans
christianed@
gracechurchucc.org

The Christian Ed
End of the Year
Party is scheduled
for June 8.

Please participate in
our faith community
by prayerfully
considering jumping
into the joys and
challenges of
teaching Christian
Ed in the month of
April.

April 6th,
U2charist
service at First
Congregational
in Natick

Christian Education

- CEMT and the whole Grace Community would like to thank **Laura and Carl Buck, Mary Memmott** and **Linda Hilliard** for teaching Sunday School classes in the month of March. We truly appreciate your commitment to shaping the hearts and minds of our young people by sharing God's word with them. What better gift can anyone give than to enlighten children to the blessings and support of Christ's love. Our faith gives meaning to our lives, the tools to live our lives to the fullest, the strength to survive it's trials, and the awareness to rejoice in it's goodness. The children also had opportunities to participate in services during Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter.

Please participate in our faith community by prayerfully considering jumping into the joys and challenges of teaching Christian Ed in the month of April. At the writing of this article, to my knowledge we still have openings for teachers and helpers for April 13, 20, and 27. Please e-mail Ronda at MRCE.Yeomans@verizon.net or call me (508)-877-7504 to volunteer to live our faith by teaching our children.

- Because our calendars fill up so quickly, this is advance notice that May 4th (ordinarily a family / community / communion service) will be a Sunday School lesson Sunday. **Jean Burr, Lynn Burdett** and **Ronda Yeomans** will be teaching the curriculum lesson of Paul and the early church. Paul traveled to teach people about Jesus. To bring this lesson to life for the children and to reinforce our core values, we will be assembling school kits for the Church World Service to distribute to needy children. Thank you!

Youth Happenings

- The youth got together after the presentation on Darfur and came up with some great ideas for an event to be held in May to take advantage of our outdoor space. We'd like to get as many people involved as possible! Some of the ideas were: Getting a speaker to come, running a looped presentation on Darfur, setting up some workstations to sign on-line petitions, a letter writing table, a young kids section, Oly-mini's to tie in with the Olympics, sell foods found in the region, developing a poetry page, or a poetry / song contest or coffeehouse. If you'd like to work with the youth in planning and / or serving at this event, just let one of us know!

- On April 6th, the youth will be attending the U2charist service at First Congregational in Natick followed by a community forum with Rev. Liz Walker on the work being done by "My Sister's Keeper" in Darfur. We will be leaving Grace at 4:30 and return at approximately 9:30.

- The Grace Youth Group is open to all youth in grades 6-12. It is open to members of Grace and their friends, regardless of faith tradition. For more information, contact **Pastor Brad** or **Terri Taylor**.

Ministry Teams

Missions MT
Eleanor Crawford,
Chair
Mary Memmott
*mission@
gracechurchucc.
org*

THANK YOU to everyone who sent in food, or came to our TGAL meeting for Darfur. The program was well-attended, educational, and nourishing -- the Missions Team would like to thank the whole congregation for their support, our young, enthusiastic soup chefs for excellent work (Meghan Taylor, and Ellen and Amelia Burton), and especially to Linda Dunbrack for preparing the educational and action materials. We hope to have follow-up soon -- stay tuned

Mission

One Great Hour of Sharing – March 30th

By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you connect with communities suffering from poverty, illiteracy, illness, and the dangers of wars and disasters all over the world. By the time such a crisis becomes news, your offerings are already at work. This year the focus of the OGHS campaign is “sharing resources/ changing lives.” For stories of how your donations change lives, you can check out the UCC website at: <http://www.ucc.org/oghs/>.

Checks can be made out to “Grace Church,” just note “One Great Hour of Sharing” in the memo line. We will take up this collection on Sunday, March 30th.

Turning Point Meals – Help Needed

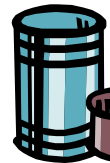
On the third Friday of each month, Grace Church delivers a home-cooked meal to the Turning Point shelter in Framingham. This commitment has been continuing for many years and has involved many excellent Grace church cooks. Can you help us keep up this tradition?

Faith In Action

Although no formal meetings have been held lately, things are still happening with Faith in Action. Grace’s List has been launched; T-shirts are being worn (and are still available); hand-out welcome cards are now available for visitors; and, perhaps of most importance, members have collected lots of children’s books for care packages being sent to Appalachia. Stay tuned for our next meeting --we invite all to join us in making a difference!

We are also looking for cooks and/or delivery persons for the months of May-September. Please speak to any member of the Missions Team if you can help.

Cans for Communion – Sunday, April 6



The pantry is especially seeking pasta and spaghetti sauce.

*Thank you! --
Your Missions Team.*

About Us

Women’s Lectio

Women’s Lectio will be gathering on Monday, April 14th at 7:30. All women are invited to come and share as we explore scripture using the ancient art form of Lectio Divina.

Women’s Retreat Date Set!

The Women’s retreat will again be in Cohasset, sharing in the hospitality of the Sisters of St Joseph. This wonderful retreat site is on the ocean and they have an outdoor labyrinth for walking meditation. The dates this Year are Friday May 2- Saturday May 3rd.

The cost is determined by the number of attendees, but a \$20 deposit will hold your place. All deposits should be given to **Ellie Crawford**. The retreat date is earlier this year to allow for graduations and participation in the Gay Pride parade. The retreat is open to all women. There is limited space (12 slots) so it will be first come first served.

See **Ellie Crawford, Terri Taylor or Laura Buck** for additional information.

Ministry Teams

Deacon MT
Ruth Carney, Chair
Joanne Larkins
George Tynes
Karolyne White

deacons@
gracechurchucc.
org

Deacons

People of Grace,

Spring is here! At least on the calendar, it is here. Soon we will see the evidence in our yards.

Holy Week has come and gone. Have you wondered why Easter was so early this year – March 23rd? As you may know, Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox (which is March 20th). This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrew people used to identify Passover, which is why it moves around in date on our Roman based calendar. Here are a couple of things you might be interested in! Based on the above, Easter can actually be one day earlier (March 22nd), but that is pretty rare. Here's the interesting info. This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above!). And none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier! Here are the facts:

1. The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 (220 years from now).
2. The last time it was this early was 1913 (so if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones that were around for that!).
3. The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now).
4. The last time it was on March 22 was 1818.

So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!

We extend our thanks and appreciation to all who participated or lent a hand behind the scenes for making our services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter so special. We also want to thank all who participated in the Redevelopment Event on March 9th.

We are still in need of volunteers to be a lay reader, usher, greet or to prepare and serve coffee for the fellowship time after worship on Sunday. (Thank you to all who have signed up or just pitched in.) Please take a moment to sign up for one of these opportunities. You will find the sign up sheets on the bookcase that holds the hymnals and Bibles.

Please do not forget that we care about your wellbeing and want to walk with you celebrating your joys, holding you in your sorrows, and just being there when you need us. God is with us and among us. God does and will provide.

*May you always feel
God's blessings,*

Deacons Ministry Team

Membership 101

On April 6, after worship, we will have an orientation session to begin conversations around membership. This will be a first step in the process in learning about membership. It will include the history of Grace, the United Church of Christ and what membership means. If you ever have had questions or would like more information, this gathering is for you. Just because you come, doesn't mean you will decide to become a member or you may already be a member and would like more information or have some questions answered. Membership 101 is for you. Membership 101 will be an ongoing gathering the first Sunday of each month. For more information, please speak to **Pastor Brad**.

This and That

Upcoming Music Events at Andover Newton:

There are two opportunities for great music coming up at the Wilson Chapel on the Andover Newton campus (www.ants.edu).

- On Saturday April 5th at 7:30, Rabbi David Zaslow will be interpreting the **Psalms of King David** through music, poetry and humor. There will be opening performances by Kimberly Salico-Dielh and Kurt Walker, both ANTS students and wonderful musicians. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$15.

- On Tuesday evening, April 15, from 7-9, John Bell of the Iona Community will be leading a **"Big Sing"** featuring New Hymns, Interfaith and World Music for all who love to sing - regardless of singing ability! A \$5 offering is requested.

Legend of the Dogwood

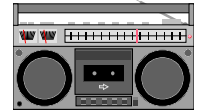
submitted by Ruth Carney

There's a legend that the dogwood was once the size of the oak and other forest trees. It was so strong and firm that it was chosen as the timber for Christ's cross. This greatly distressed the tree. Jesus, nailed upon it, sensed the tree's regret and told it:

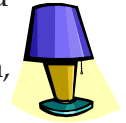
"Because of your sorrow for my suffering, never again shall the dogwood grow large enough to be used as a cross. It shall be slender, bent and twisted. Its blossoms shall form a cross - two long and two short petals. And at the outer edge of each petal will be nail prints, brown with rust and stained with red. In the center of the flower shall be a crown of thorns. And all who see it will remember"

Grace's List starting to make sales

Grace's List (the church's variation of Grace's Closet and Craig's List) is up and running - and starting to bring in some money for the church. You can check out the postings in the Fellowship Hall!



If you've been thinking about putting something on Grace's List - but have been suffering from inertia about gathering the information on your item - get over it! It only takes a few minutes to fill out the form. Name your product - create a brief description - and set a price. It's easy! With the yard sale coming up at the end of April - and lots of visitors - you might be surprised at how easily those items (computer, camera, object d'art, sofa, radio, kitchen sink) will sell.



Take a few minutes - and get your saleable items posted on Grace's List! And then check the list regularly for items YOU might like to buy.

Joke of the Month

Submitted by Laura Buck

The Pastor received a call from the IRS...

IRS: "Hello, is this the Church?"

Pastor: "It is."

IRS: "This is the IRS. We need to verify some tax information submitted by one of your members. Can you help us?"

Pastor: "I think I can, what's your question?"

IRS: "Do you know a Ted Hooligan?"

Pastor: "I do."

IRS: "Is he a member of your congregation?"

Pastor: "Yes."

IRS: "Did he donate \$10,000?"
(pause)

Pastor: "He will."

Grace Congregational Church, UCC

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<http://www.gracechurchucc.org>

www.macucc.org (Mass Conf.)

www.ucc.org (UCC)