

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Three Upcoming Events

- April 27th :Foam Recycling Day at Grace  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Remove all tape, labels & food particles from your Foam



- April 27th: Earth Day April 27th 11 AM to 3 PM

Grace will have a table at the town Earth Day event at Framingham Common. Four Cleaning Products Baskets will be raffled at both events (two baskets at each location). And we will promote the May 10th event.

*As always, volunteers needed and appreciated. Speak to Jean Burr if you can help at either location.*

- May 11th: Green Cleaning Workshop (Afternoon)

It's spring cleaning time -- would you like to replace some of the harsher chemicals in your cabinet with safer, more earth-friendly products?



Join us for a hands-on afternoon workshop where you can "make and take" your own green-cleaning solutions and learn more about why you should try to go green and avoid certain household chemicals. If you'd like to help prepare for this workshop -- look for inexpensive or re-used spray bottles around your house that can be re-filled and re-labeled. We'll be collecting these in April to convert into our "green-cleaning" devices for the workshop.

This event is free and will be open to the public.

*Spread the word about these events!*

## Congregational Discernment Begins

As most of you already know, Grace Church has chosen to participate in an intentional process of discernment to answer question, 'What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and place?' through the Crossroads Massachusetts program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC, and part of a larger denominational effort called "New Beginnings."

On March 20, we began our journey with a visit from Doug Pfeiffer, our contract assessor from Crossroads. Doug is planting a new church in Papillion, Nebraska, part of the greater Omaha area, and I found him to be curious and insightful.

Doug started his work with a "windshield tour" of Framingham as I drove him all over town. We went to Harmony Grove (where Fredrick Douglas came to speak), Cushing Park, the women's prison, public housing projects, Town Hall, the hospital, our former church building, Framingham Center, Route 9, Framingham State, Saxonville, Nobscot, and Stearns Farm.

He also spent some time reviewing church finances and

*Continued on page four*

Grace Notes Volume 15, Number 4

April 2013

• Pastor's Column.....2	• Missions.....4
• Church Calendar.....2	• Deacons.....5
• Green Team.....3	• Grace Women United.....5
• Kermit's Korner.....3	• Faith in Action.....5
• Christian Ed.....4	

## From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

A question I have been asked before is why do we read texts from 2,000 and 3,000 years ago and why do we care about them? I think it is a fair question for people like us at Grace Church who expect to discover our religion and to practice religion that is nurturing and challenging to us and the lives we live today. We are not a people who are very patient with a faith that we have merely received. In fact, many of us, many in our community, have turned away from the denomination in which we were raised. Others of us were raised in the congregational tradition, including Grace Congregational Church, yet we find that what we accepted as faith when we were children has little immediacy in our 21st century lives.

For me, vast stretches of the Bible are desert-like. I don't visit them often or ever (have you ever read any part of the book of the prophet Haggai?) I don't look to them for nourishment or wisdom. The Bible so frequently becomes like the Constitution of the United States, something we gesture to and hold with some esteem but something few of us have read and fewer of us read with any frequency. We know our favorite parts ('And there were shepherds abiding in the fields', 'We the People') and are content.

As for Grace Church, we have spent great effort discerning our future and discovering our present. We ask the question again and again, what will we be or what can we be? Sometimes, we phrase the question,

to what new life is God leading us? These are good questions and there are others like them which we'll continue to use to peer into ourselves, our community, and the future. Does the Bible have a role in these conversations? Does our received faith, all our various faith stories from our varied pasts, inform our motivation?

There is no collection of writings that comes close to the power and depth of the Bible. Line by line, story by story, book by book, the Bible captures the conversation of people with that which is more, with the one who is God. Over and over again are images and assertions, promises and praise that do nourish, do enlarge, and do express our lives. As we move from this day into the next, let us not neglect our foundation. Let us find that which affirms or challenges, that which expresses or demands response from us in our Biblical texts!

Okay, I'll start.

Listen to the words of the prophet Haggai and draw them into your heart for your consideration and joy this day. For as the Lord spoke then, so the Lord is still speaking.

'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty." - Haggai 2:9

*Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad*

## April Calendar

April 1	7:30 PM	Leadership Ministry Team	11:30 AM	Green Team/FIA meeting	
April 4	7:30 PM	Public Meeting on General Chemical Cleanup	April 15	7:30 PM Women's Lectio	
April 6	8:00 AM 11:00 AM	Men's Breakfast Group Service honoring Susan Dickerman at Plymouth	April 17	2:00 PM Service at Carlyle House	
April 7	Cans for Communion 9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship/Communion	April 21	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 6:00 PM	Singers rehearse Worship Confirmation
April 8	7:30 PM	Women's Lectio	April 24	10:00 AM	Book Club
April 10	11:30 AM	Grace Women United meeting	April 27	10:00 AM 11:00 AM	Foam Collection at Grace Earth Day -Framingham Common
April 14	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship/Communion Sunday School	April 28	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship/ Sunday School

## Green Team Update

- **MassSave.**

Karolyne reported that MassSave was at the church in mid February and returned again last week. They are unsure how to categorize the church (i.e., a house or a church). Another representative from MassSave will be coming to look at the building again - no date yet.

- **Transition I Love Framingham Day - March 2.**

This was successful event (at the Framingham High School) with good attendance. Although Grace did not have a display table, our members (wearing their Grace Cares badges) were much in evidence.

Note: Grace's SS kids want to plant a fruit tree at the church using funds that were set aside in the budget several years ago. Mary met someone at the Transitions event who may be able to help the kids get a tree - or two.

- **Mass ReLeaf**

Karolyne proposed that for Arbor Day, Grace participate in planting some trees in town (as we've done before). Karolyne will assemble a team and make it happen this spring.



See page one for announcements on Foam Collection, Earth Day and our May 11th Cleaning Products event

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## Kermit's Korner

We all heard or read about how Corporate America puts profit above everything else; some even say, "greed." Well, here's an inspiring article I read in ISM's\* (Institute of Supply Management) monthly magazine, *"Inside Supply Management."*

It encourages, even urges companies to take the following environmental outlook: "They \*\* (zero waste) requires a conscious shift in corporate thinking, focusing on three initial shifts necessary to reduce landfill waste.

First, the "pay and forget" era is over. Today, companies must take responsibility for the by products generated from their activities and ensure materials are reused, re-purposed or recycled.

Second, in nature, "waste" does not exist; rather, a perpetual life cycle rearranges molecular structures so the finished by products for one use is the basis for its next life.

Third, once a company accepts the first two shifts, the mind-set must move from the singular "I" to "we". The impact of our actions extends beyond our organizations to the entire community and beyond."

Let's hope top management reads and abides by this save the earth approach.

\* ISM is an international purchasing / economic research institute for manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries.

\*\* Zero waste is recognized to be impractical. 90% is the goal.

Frank Carney

### Reminder:

For those who receive their  
Grace Notes electronically before Sunday

**Easter Sunday  
at Grace Church  
March 31st • 10:00 AM**

**Celebrating the resurrection of  
Jesus Christ with communion;  
we will be bringing the Alleluias  
back to worship.**

## Missions Ministries



### Cans for Communion

For April we will collect SOUPS, STEWS, and CANNED VEGGIES and FRUIT - but all types of non-perishable, un-expired food is welcome.

If you would like to help deliver this month's collection to the Hope Food Pantry downtown please speak to Mary Memmott.

## Congregational Discernment

*Continued from page one*

learning more about the church property. We provided him with copies of the feasibility study, many financial documents, and the summary of the previous work from our congregational conversations.

Many active participants in the church attended a session of appreciative inquiry. The purpose of the session was to help our contract assessor Doug Pfeiffer understand the many unique and positive aspects of our congregation and its life together so that he could incorporate them into the report. The session was facilitated by Associate Conference Minister Peter Wells, and included powerful contributions by many people. A spirit of creativity and playfulness was in the air, which made the event more enjoyable for all.

In April, the church will receive will receive a comprehensive report from Doug of our congregation's strengths and challenges and a concrete, realistic picture of possible directions for the future. In May, the Leadership Team will attend a retreat with other congregations in Massachusetts to be trained on how to engage in a discernment process in order to choose a new direction for the church.

*Linda Dunbrack*

## Christian Education

- The Sunday School students have been very busy this month learning about Lent and how participating in the season could help us to learn and grow. We should all be especially proud of the students and parents who made so many (60?) sandwiches and rolled numerous pairs of socks for the Worcester Fellowship Outdoor congregation. Recipients were impressed that such a small congregation made such a generous donation. They were especially happy that we included lettuce in the sandwiches since it is rare that they get fresh vegetables.

- The confirmands plus one more Grace Church youngster brought all of the above to the WFO congregation yesterday. While it was a sunny day, it was still windy and cold. We arrived early and the kids waited patiently for Pastor Liz Magill to arrive. All the kids and adults helped carry our donations over to the worship site. All were actively involved in both the distribution of goods and also in the worship service itself. It was impressive to see the students acting in such a mature fashion.

- Those involved in the "Plarn" project were happy to give the first sleeping mat constructed of reused

plastic bags to a homeless individual. Pastor Liz requested that our next project would be to plarn (crochet out of plastic yarn) 3 more mats to cover the metal park benches where the service participants sit. We are happy accepted this task. Thank you also to all the adults who helped plan, coordinate and supervise our field trip. It was a true team effort.

- In April, the first two Sundays, April 7th and 14th will be intergenerational. Thank you to all those involved in planning worship for designing interactive opportunities for congregants of all ages and abilities. We so appreciate your thoughtful care. Pastor Liz Magill is currently scheduled to be a guest speaker at the April 21st service, so it is unclear if Sunday school will be held that week or not. More info to follow via email. Families please tell Mary or Ronda if you expect to be away on Sunday April 21 so that we can estimate class size if Sunday School is held. Sunday School is also planned for April 28. Teachers and helpers are always needed, so please let Mary or Ronda know when you are available. Thank you.

*Ronda Yeomans*

## Deacons

People of Grace,

Well, the calendar says it's spring, but looking out the window the landscape says that it is doubtful. So, if the weather turns on us once again and we need to cancel a service or activity, tune to WCRB channel 5 for our listing. We will also use other sources (i.e.: email, Facebook, etc) to get the word out. If there is a power failure and you cannot access TV or internet, there is always the telephone (I have a landline so you can call me at home.).

Please join us on Easter Sunday - March 31, 2013. We will be celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ with communion and we will be bringing the Alleluias back to worship.

On April 6, 2013 at 11:00 AM, there will be a service celebrating the life and ministry of Susan Dickerman at Plymouth Church in Framingham. Susan has had a long connection with Grace and will be missed greatly.

Please do not forget that we care about your wellbeing, if we can be of any help, please be in touch with one of us. Please keep our congregation in your prayers. God is with us and among us! God does and will provide!

May you always feel God's blessings,  
Ruth Carney for the Deacon Ministry Team  
(Ruth Carney, Karolyne White)

## Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney. She can order them from our new florist (\$43 or higher or lower depending on what you would like) or you may bring flowers yourself. If there is a special event in the life of Grace that you would like lifted up and acknowledged with flowers, just let Ruth know and she will arrange it. (We do have funds donated for this purpose.)



*For those who are helping with the Church World Service project, the Health Kits should be brought to the church by April 21st. They can be left in the basket in the library. The full information for these kits was in the last issue of Grace Notes.*

## Grace Women United

GWU will meet on Wed April 10th at 11:30 We would like to have all toiletry kits turned in by Sunday April 21st (see below).

*Lynn Burdett*

## Book Club



Book Club will meet on April 24th. Book TBD

Meetings are held in the church library at 10:00AM and are open to all readers.

Refer questions to Lynn Burdett.

## Faith in Action

In February, Faith in Action met with the Green Team in order to discuss the upcoming joint effort to promote "green" cleaning products at the Earth Day Festival on April 27. We will also help with the planned workshop in May, which hopefully will bring interested people to Grace Church to learn how to make their own solutions. Because the Green Team has no budgeted funds with which to work, we are supporting these efforts financially as well.

Because of the above, our team will again meet with the Green Team on April 14, following worship, combining the two agendas. Please attend, if at all possible.

*Jean Burr*