

Grace is a Green Church!

GRACE NOTES



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

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Grace Congregational, UCC
PO Box 1481
76 Salem End Road
Framingham 01702
508-872-3342

churchoffice@
gracechurchucc.org

www.gracechurchucc.org

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org

Mass Conference
www.macucc.org

Leadership Team
Linda Dunbrack (Moderator)
Nancy Brown, Frank Carney,
Ruth Carney, Mary Memmott,
Terri Taylor, Brad Watters

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The Christmas Season at Grace

On Christmas Eve, we will have one service at 7:00 PM, which will be a service of Candles, Carols and Communion. Please plan to come and bring the whole family!

On December 28, the Sunday after Christmas, we will have a casual lay-led service. We will share stories and you will have a chance to pick a hymn or carol that you have wanted to sing or sing again. You are also invited to bring in any left-over baked goods to share at our fellowship time.



For additional Advent dates, see the Deacon's column on page five

Pathways Shelter Christmas Gifts



Gift tags for the children of Pathways family shelter may be picked up after church on November 30th and December 7th. Please return your unwrapped gift with the tag attached by December 14th. Note: No Cans for Communion in December; we'll focus on the gifts.

Warm Feet for Worcester January Sock Drive Special Collection

In January, Grace Church will be collecting NEW men's white athletic socks for the Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church that serves the homeless. These are especially needed in the winter months. Woolen hats are also welcomed.

There will be a special collection for these items at the "Season of Sharing" Epiphany Service so put "socks" on your shopping list, if you can, and help us exceed our goal of 200 pairs!



Dear Ones,

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

Excerpts from
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

The opening lines of the Book of Ecclesiastes identify the voice as that of “the teacher” who is also the “son of David.” Perhaps, then, it is Solomon who is sharing this wisdom. Well, Solomon has November figured out for us.

November has the last harvest, the last leaves to fall, and the ending of long days. November also has the putting away of seeds for next year, the feast we call Thanksgiving, and the beginning of the Christian Church Year with the waiting of Advent; the time of preparing for the coming of the light. Some of us look upon the “holiday season” with dread or at least some tightening of the gut as we contemplate the burdens of planning, shopping, decorating, entertaining, and doing it

all with a humble, delighted, spirit of Christmas.

Are you skillful at managing holiday stress?

Sometimes, I have seen holiday pressures like a series of hornets or yellow jackets getting too close and demanding my attention. When that happens, I employ (emotionally) a technique I use when real bees or wasps are too close. I brush the air and the insects gently with my waving hands. My idea is to imitate how the branches of a tree gently brush the air as a breeze comes by. So I’m trying to signal to the dangerous things that “nothing out of the ordinary is happening.” Just the wind gently moving something that moves you away. Same thing with stress bombs. I see your prickly danger and, O look, the breeze is just gently brushing you away.

The message of the teacher in Ecclesiastes is that it is futile for us to stake our lives on the honor and respect that will last after we die. Everything, says the text, is known and managed by God, so there is no usefulness to your worry or your grandiose plans to be remembered. “All is vanity.” I hope that slightly dour message will relax you. Also the teacher goes on to say,

I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

Then let that be your permission, right out of the Bible, to enjoy a happy, safe, productive, and loving Advent season this year!

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

Stewardship Corner Offering Envelopes Contribution

Each year, those of us who pledge a regular contribution to support Grace Church receive a little box of pledge envelopes, one for each Sunday. The boxes appear about Christmastime all neat and with name labels put on by Nancy Brown, our Financial Secretary. They are one way we remind ourselves of our promises to give to church.



Did you ever use these when you were little to make your offering in Church School?

There is another, less visible practice that some of us follow. We make an additional contribution of \$5.00 to pay for the cost of our box of envelopes.

If you would like to join this practice, just make sure you indicate in some way that your additional gift is targeted for this purpose. Thanks!

Grace's Mini Christmas Fair

December 7th and 14th



Let us help with your Christmas baking and shopping!

We're having a Holiday Fair after church for two Sundays in December (7th and 14th). Featured will be a table of small* baked goods, relishes and jams and re-gifts*

(*new gifts received that you/family don't want/need)

We will NOT have collectible, used items, rummage, crafts or decorations (unless new).

** We are looking for donations of small baked goods - cookies, bars, fruit, breads, fudge, etc. Please no large pies, cakes, etc. (they simply do not sell).*

We will set up for the Fair on Saturday, December 6th at 10:00 AM.

For details, speak to Lynn Burdett or Jean Burr

Mission

Transition Framingham.org

Building Community and Local Resilience



Save the date

Transition Framingham will be sponsoring a "How to Save Electricity at Home" workshop at the Main Framingham Public Library on the afternoon of Sunday, Jan. 25. Exact time to be announced.

NSTAR rates are about to go up, but with some simple changes in your electricity use habits, you might even see your bill go down!

Mary Memmott

GWU Pot Luck is December 11th

All women of Grace Church are invited to Grace Women United's annual Pot Luck Luncheon and Yankee Swap on Thursday, December 11 at Evie McGuirk's home.

Let Evie know if you are coming. If you want to bring a dish to share, please let Lynn Burdett know so we will have a variety.

The party starts at 12:00 Noon See you there.



- Sunday, November 30
First Sunday in Advent
 11:30 AM Faith in Action mtg.
 Get your Pathways gift tag
- Saturday, December 6
 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
 10:00 AM Mini Fair setup
- Sunday, December 7
Second Sunday in Advent
 9:00 AM Singers rehearse
 10:00 AM Worship
 11:30 AM Mini Holiday Fair
 Get your Pathways gift tag
- Thursday, December 11
 12:00 PM GWU Yankee Swap
- Sunday, December 14
Third Sunday in Advent
 9:00 AM Singers rehearse
 10:00 AM Worship
 11:30 AM Mini Holiday Fair
 Return your Pathways gifts
- Sunday, December 21
Fourth Sunday in Advent
 9:00 AM Singers rehearse
 10:00 AM Worship
- Wednesday, December 24
 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
- Thursday, December 25
 Merry Christmas
- Sunday, December 28
 10:00 AM Lay led service
- Saturday, January 3rd
 Foam Collection

How to Save Energy with Appliances

The appliance that uses the most energy is the refrigerator.

- How cold is your refrigerator? Having it too cold can be a waste of energy. It is recommended that the temperature for the refrigerator is 37 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and that the freezer is 0 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Is your refrigerator full? A fuller fridge ensures the temperature is evenly distributed. If you have a lot of room in your refrigerator, fill some containers with water, and fill in the space. If that doesn't work, consider a smaller fridge.
- Make sure that your refrigerator has a few inches of space behind it so air can circulate around the condenser coils. Dusty condenser coils (sometimes exposed in older models) cause your refrigerator to work harder, leading to higher bills, and a shorter life for the fridge. Clean them with a vacuum, duster, or a cleaner every three months to ensure it is running efficiently. If you have pets

clean it every month.

- Make sure your fridge gasket is clean and does not have any holes or cracks in it. The gasket's job is to keep the cold air in and the warm air out. If it is not working properly the refrigerator will work harder keeping the air cold, and thus lead to a larger energy bill.
- Wash clothes in cold water if possible. Most of the energy used for machine-washing clothes goes to heating the water.
- Is the lint screen on your dryer clean? A clogged lint screen makes the dryer use more energy. In addition to that it can also become a fire hazard.
- Dry one load right after the other. This will reduce warm-up and drying times.

Kermit and WikiHow

Did You Know.....

- That Whole Foods takes several things for recycling, which many of us have been putting into the trash? They take Brita filters, corks (real ones, not plastic), plastic containers & utensils with the No. 5PP on them, which includes Stonyfield yogurt cups, and cell phones! The bins are inside the store's cafe, close to the door nearest Route 9.
- If you don't have a computer but would like to stop receiving pre-screened offers of credit in the mail, you can call the consumer reporting agency toll-free, at 1-888-567-8688.

Foam Recycling Day

Saturday, January 3rd

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Volunteers Needed to Lend a Hand
 (Come for an hour, Come for the day!)

Speak to Jean Burr

Deacons

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

- Isaiah 9: 6 NRSV

People of Grace,

As I write this, Thanksgiving is looming in our future. Trying to prepare, making lists, grocery shopping, baking and cooking. The tasks go on and on. I hope whatever plans you have turn out to be wonderful and my wish for you - Happy Thanksgiving! And we all know there aren't any calories in the food we eat on Thanksgiving!



Advent at Grace

As November ends, our church year begins - Advent is the beginning of the church year:

- On November 30, the first Sunday in Advent, we will explore Awareness. Are we waiting watchfully or sleeping? Do we know that we are waiting?
- On December 7, the second Sunday in Advent, we will explore Willingness. Are we waiting patiently or impatiently?
- On December 14, the third Sunday in Advent, we will

explore Preparation. Are we preparing or procrastinating?

- On December 21, the fourth Sunday in Advent (also known as Christmas Sunday), we will explore Expectation. Are we waiting eagerly or with dread?
- On Christmas Eve, we will have one service at 7:00 PM which will be a service of Candles, Carols and Communion. Please plan to come and bring the whole family!
- On December 28, the Sunday after Christmas, we will have a casual lay-led service. We will share stories and you will have a chance to pick a hymn or carol that you have wanted to sing or sing again. You are also invited to bring in any leftover baked goods to share at our fellowship time.



Please continue to keep the world in your prayers. While you are praying, please keep our country in your prayers. Pray for our community, pray for our church as we continue our next steps in our future story.

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

As the winter winds begin to

blow and the weather becomes increasingly cold, we wish you a blessed Christmas!

Shalom - how magical the sound.

Pacem - how lofty the thought.

Salaam - how welcome the feeling.

Peace - how far the journey.

(Foerster, 2003)

May you always feel God's blessings,
Ruth Carney, Deacon

Storm Closings

If the weather turns on us and we need to cancel a service or activity, tune to WCVB-TV 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.).



Ruth Carney

Book Club



Book Club will meet on Wednesday, January 28th at 10AM. We will be discussing *The Emperor's Children's* by Claire Messud.

Lynn Burdett

Stearns Farm History and a Request for Support

Editor's Note: Grace Church has been a member of the Stearns Farm Cooperative since 2007. We just finished our 8th season.

According to Mary Memmott, the church has sent anywhere from 6-20 volunteers each year, most church members but not all. There have been at least 10 non church members who have helped with a work day or a pickup at some point. All of your youth have been there multiple times. And many at worship have enjoyed the produce.

A Message From Stearns Farm

The season has drawn to a close, but the work on our farm continues. As we prepare these fertile grounds to rest for the winter, our attention turns to a busy offseason with a number of priorities. Two of our greenhouses need to be covered with new plastic; we need to replace the dilapidated collection of structures that provide storage, kitchen, and office space; and we want to build a tractor shed to house our equipment and protect it from the elements.

This year two longtime sharers have pledged a generous donation to our general

Faith in Action

There will be a Faith in Action meeting this Sunday, November 30th, immediately after church. This meeting is a follow-up to several projects/tasks that were assigned at last week's meeting.

operating fund of \$3600, and they have challenged the Stearns Farm community to match or even double this gift!

On behalf of the Board, and in support of the entire farm community, we ask you to please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Stearns Farm. You can make a one-time or recurring donation via PayPal here, or send a check payable to Stearns Farm CSA.

We are all stewards of this unique place, and it is with this in mind that we ask for your support with this annual appeal.

History of Stearns

Records show that Timothy Stearns bought a large tract of land here in 1723. The cellar hole from his house is where our sheds are now located. Stearns' daughter married Col. Nixon and their son, Capt.

Thomas Nixon, Jr. built the house, c. 1787, across the road, that still stands. The land remained in the Nixon family until Margaret Welch assumed ownership in the early 1900's.

Penelope Turton, an English friend of Mrs. Welch, founded Stearns Organic Farm in 1954, and farmed it until 1990. The 10 acres of farmland and an additional 70 acres that adjoin Callahan State Park were given to Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) in 1975 by Mrs. Welch. In 1990, Penelope started a CSA as part of Stearns Farm in addition to the regular farmstand. There were ten shares that year.

In 1994 "Stearns Organic Farm CSA" incorporated as a non-profit organization. Since then it has been governed by a sharer-elected Board of Directors.

