

GRACE NOTES

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

Congregational Meeting held on January 31

by Linda Dunbrack, Moderator

Two major pieces of business were addressed at the January 31 congregational meeting: approving a budget and endorsing a plan for considering our future as a church.

I was happy with the positive tone and respectful way that varying perspectives were presented. Thank you to the Stewards for a comprehensive yet understandable presentation on our financial status and budget. Members who would like a copy of the budget Powerpoint slides can contact the church office.

As part of an ongoing process of making decisions about the future of our church, Linda Hilliard and Jean Burr will be spear-heading an initiative to be looking at various scenarios and begin putting some meat on the bones of proposals and ideas that have been floating around the church for some time, as well as other scenarios that we haven't even thought of yet. Please contact one of them if you are interested in being part of this effort.

The Leadership Ministry will continue to facilitate congregational conversations, with the next one after church on February 28. The conversations will provide a feedback loop about the progress and ideas by the groups looking at scenarios. In addition, they will provide a venue for us to discuss and discern our collective vision for our church.

Please be ready to participate as you can, and to pray for our church as we go through this period of discernment. Thanks.

World Day of Prayer

Saturday, March 6, 2010

11:00AM

Plymouth Church

Lunch following for \$5.00

(Please pre-register for lunch)

Registration at 10:45AM

Refer questions to Judy Sebastian at
508-877-0175

From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

"I clothed you with embroidered cloth and with sandals of fine leather; I bound you in fine linen and covered you with rich fabric." Ezekiel 16:10.

The Lord tells the people how much he loves them, reminding them through the metaphor of clothing them in the finest!

Can you remember getting a new pair of shoes or sandals or boots?

I have a new pair of boots. Some of you may have seen me wearing them. They are big, clunky, and very warm. I can brave snow and ice and even a few inches of slush with them and never really feel a thing. With my new boots, I feel like I can go anywhere, like barriers of winter and storm are not barriers to me!

What new shoes do you remember? What shoes put you into a whole other realm of possibilities? What shoes took you on a journey as soon as you had them on?

We come to moments in our

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February 2010

Missions

Feb. Cans for Communion – February 7th

Please bring SOUP, STEWS, and PASTA SAUCE for Super Bowl Sunday! The Framingham Food Pantry continues to see a great need for food in our community. Please remember that expired, damaged or unlabeled cans cannot be safely donated. All are welcome to sign up on the bulletin board to help deliver our monthly collection on a Saturday morning – see Mary Memmott with any questions.

Save the Date – March 14th -- Trip to Worcester Fellowship

The Sunday school students will be making a trip to Worcester to join in their outdoor worship service and deliver sandwiches and snacks next month. Parents, students, and all who would like to join us, please save this date. We will meet at church for sandwich-making at 10 during Sunday school time, leave for Worcester by 11, and be back in Framingham around 2:30 p.m.

Mary Memmott

Christian Education

Thanks very much to Daleen Perkins (just back from successful hip surgery!) and Ronda Yeomans for teaching “Bible 101” Sunday School lessons in January. Many enthusiastic thanks to Mary Memmott for volunteering to teach Sunday School in February! Daleen has ordered new (Christian) games and crafts to use in the near future. Please contact Mary to let her know if you think your children will not attend Sunday School during the February school vacation Sundays lessons (Feb. 14 and 21). Thank you also to all the other members of Grace who have taught us all Christ’s message through their words and actions this month. It is very inspirational and encouraging to participate with a group of such dedicated, hard working Christians.

As always, the Sunday School team is seeking volunteers to lead lessons in March, April, May and June. Molly Wyatt has consistently been a wonderful assistant in Sunday School. Her hard work has greatly facilitated the Christian education of our children. Thank you Molly! The Sunday School “Come Join the Circle” curriculum units for upcoming Winter and Spring lessons include: “Lost and Found,” parables which remind us of God’s unending love and forgiveness, “Women of the Resurrection,” describing the women who first told of Jesus’ resurrection, and “Go and Make Disciples,” about Jesus commissioning of Phillip to go out to baptize people and establish churches elsewhere. Your volunteer teaching is even more vital this spring than usual since Daleen will again be undergoing surgery and will be unavailable to teach for several weeks afterwards. Thank you!

Faith in Action

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 7, following worship, and we sincerely hope to see many of you there. You are all invited. We will be discussing any and all ideas for the spring lecture series, including subjects, dates, etc., and will welcome input from everyone.

Hopefully, by then, we will have received many valentine messages on the red hearts provided, and begin displaying them throughout the building.

The next styrofoam recycling day is scheduled for April 24, just after Earth Day and FIA will also be open to offers of related additional activities to offer the public on that day.

If you are unable to participate in the meeting but would like to give us some feedback, please contact Jean Burr.

Grace Women United

GWU will have its annual soup lunch on Wednesday, February 10 a 11:30 AM.

Women’s Lectio Group Feb 8

The Women’s Lectio group will gather on Monday evening, Feb 8, at 7:30. Each gathering opens with a short worship followed by reading and meditating on a scriptural text. Come join us as we explore how scripture speaks to us today using this ancient art form of Lectio Divina.

In Case of Cancellation

Winter is here and if the weather turns on us, we are connected to WCVB, Channel 5. If a service or event needs to be cancelled because of weather, tune to Channel 5 for our cancellation listing.

Thanks for styrofoam effort

The following email appeared on Framingham, a town web discussion page.



A huge thank you is due to Grace Church in Framingham and Refoamit LLC (a local private Styrofoam recycling company) for holding their second, very successful, Styrofoam Collection Day Saturday, the 9th of January. Church members and other volunteers were on hand to receive the mounds of Styrofoam brought to them by local homeowners and businesses.

The collected material was taken to a recycling center where it will be crushed and remolded for use in a variety of products, such as insulation, packaging, automobile bumpers, structural forms, etc.

I, along with others whom I met when I was there, are grateful for the opportunity to see that this material can be kept out of the landfill and put to another use. We were thanked, in return, for taking part in this effort.

Those who went to the church that day were given a slip of paper informing us that the next collection day is scheduled for April 24, at the church at 76 Salem End Road. I join them in urging everyone to save their Styrofoam material and bring it there instead of trashing it.

Debbie Greenslit



The Book Club is reading Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray and Love*. The next meeting will be February 24.

Grace Women United

Church World Service Kits being prepared for Haiti

One of the projects which GWU supports is that of providing various kits to Church World Service. This year - the kits will go to Haiti.

We are urging every individual, family, and/or team to participate in this program this year. Although we have already purchased the items needed for 20 school kits, we are asking for help from the congregation to assemble as many Hygiene Kits as possible for Haiti.

Each kit costs about \$10 to assemble and GWU will absorb the shipping cost of \$2 per kit. The requirements are very specific, and the instructions urge that no one vary the contents in any way.

Each hygiene kit should include:

One hand towel measuring about 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels); one washcloth; one wide-tooth comb; one nail clipper (no metal files or emery boards); one bar of bath size soap in wrapper; one tooth brush (in original packaging); 6 band-aids.

All should be sealed in a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure.

Please leave your kits supplies in the office as soon as possible. Contact Lynn Burdett or Jackie Mague with any questions.

Grace Church calendar - February

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|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| February 1 | 11:00 AM | Bible Study | 10:00 AM | Worship |
| February 6 | 8:00 AM | Men's Group | February 15 | 11:00 AM Bible Study |
| February 7 | Cans for Communion | February 17 | 7:30 PM Stewards | 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday |
| | 8:45 AM Singers | February 21 | 8:45 AM Singers | 10:00 AM Worship |
| | 10:00 AM Worship | February 22 | 11:00 AM Bible Study | |
| | 11:15 AM Faith in Action | February 24 | 10:00 AM Book Club | |
| | 11:30 AM Leadership Meeting | February 27 | Breakfast | Leadership Meeting |
| February 8 | 11:00 AM Bible Study | February 28 | 8:45 AM Singers | 10:00 AM Worship |
| | 7:30 PM Women's Lectio | | 11:15 AM Congregational conversation | |
| February 10 | 11:30 AM GWU Soup Lunch | | | |
| February 13 | Breakfast | | | |
| February 14 | 8:45 AM Singers | | | |

People of Grace,

We hope you are staying safe and warm this winter! This month's column is mostly thoughts and stories you might enjoy.

Be a love bird

Valentine's Day will soon be upon us on February 14th and many stories about the origin of Valentine's Day have come down through the centuries. There's no definitive story, but most revolve around the imprisonment of Valentinus (St. Valentine) for his disregard of Roman laws.

Many legends are also associated with Valentine's Day. For example, because birds seemed to arrive and mate in some countries in mid-February, human couples came to be called "love birds."

In 1667, the first recorded Valentine card was printed. Today, people will give their sweethearts countless millions of cards and acres of heart-shaped boxes filled with candy. But why wait for Valentine's Day to share love with others? Remember Jesus' words in John 13:34 (NRSV): "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."

Thinking of Lent

Advent prepares us for Christ's birth; Lent prepares us for Christ's resurrection. Churches have special services during the weeks of Lent (beginning on Ash Wednesday), but it's what each of us does regarding our spiritual life that makes Lent most meaningful.

Lent is a good time to read, study and inwardly digest the four Gospels. (The word Gospel

means "Good News.") Be filled with laughter and amazement at the brilliant son of God, who was only in his 30s. Get to know the Good News.

We will gather at 7:00 PM on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2010, for our service that begins the 40 days of Lent.

An every day God

A missionary was telling a Native American about Christ, the Son of God, and how we gather every Sunday to worship our Creator. The man was curious why Christians worship together each week. "Does this God come only on Sundays?" he asked. How would you have answered?

The role of faith

"Fear imprisons, faith liberates; fear paralyzes, faith empowers; fear disheartens, faith encourages; fear sickens, faith heals; fear makes useless, faith makes serviceable — and, most of all, fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in its God."

—Harry Emerson Fosdick

"Faith doesn't get us out of trouble; faith gets us through it."

—Anonymous

In conclusion

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney. You may bring flowers or if you wish to have her order flowers from our florist, the current price is \$35.00.

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. God is with us and among us. God does

and will provide. May you always feel God's blessings,

Ruth Carney
Karolyne White

From the pastor

Continued from page one

lives when the Spirit seems to have taken over. Events turn into improbable coincidences and we say, "No way!" The light shifts and we notice what was always there but not seen before. Someone says something that opens a new way and we join.

God is waiting for these moments. God is hoping that we turn and look. This is the eager joy of eternity when one of us embraces the meaning of the moment.

In the moment of God's joy at our turning toward life, God provides us with the newest, best shoes. They fit us just right. God loves each of us so much that when we respond, even a little, God is there in the moment.

When the moment comes, put on the shoes. What new life waits for you?

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

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