

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Work continues to prepare 76 Salem End Christmas Eve Service a special time for Grace Church congregation

Grace Church held its first full service at 76 Salem End Road on Christmas Eve. This candlelight and communion service in our new sanctuary was lovely. Our worship space was packed with members, friends and visitors.

Throughout December, Grace has been gathered during the week at its new home. We had several Tuesday night Advent Services and a Longest Night Service on December 21. In addition, Ministry Teams and other groups have been meeting at Salem End throughout the month.

We are already feeling at home. Our final service at Union Avenue will be on January 14 and we will officially move into our new church home on January 21.

### Kudos to . . .

A round of applause to several task teams which have been working hard to get 76 Salem End Road ready for occupancy. A heartfelt thanks to Walter Brown and the Construction Team, which has tirelessly coordinated all the cosmetics fixes on the property. It's been a huge undertaking (see list on page four) and they have done an exceptional job.

Also thanks to the Physical Asset Team, which coordinated the transportation of our belongings from storage (another day will be spent in January bringing our Union Avenue possessions to Salem End Road). The Decorating team has set up the parlor and has already added decorative touches to make the place feel homey (e.g., candles in the windows and wreaths on the door

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## Epiphany Sunday at Plymouth Church

At 10 AM on Sunday, January 7, the congregations of Edwards, Plymouth and Grace churches will gather at Plymouth Church for our annual combined service in celebration of Epiphany. Please join us at Plymouth Church on Edgell Road. Note all three churches will be collecting for Cans for Communion.



## Congregational Meeting on January 21

Grace Church will have its congregational meeting on Sunday, January 21 - immediately after the service (11:30 AM). This is also the day we will have our first full service in our new home. A celebratory lunch will be served.

The agenda for the meeting will include the 2007 budget and updates on the property as well as a report from the Core Value team.

A congregational call letter will be sent out in the next few weeks.

### Grace Notes

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January 2007

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## Pastor's Paragraph

December 26, 2006

Dear Ones,

It may or may not be the result of global warming but we are certainly having a warmer winter. While some of you may never look forward to the difficulties of dealing with snow, none of us has a basis to claim we're tired of it!

We know it's coming. After all, we live in New England. We make some preparations for deep snow, for wet snow, for icy conditions, for snow that stays, for snow that comes in a "white out", as well as for the delicacy and magic and plain old fun of snowfall.

Have you recently read Matthew 25:14-30? Do so now.

I'll wait.

All set? Okay, now there are some problems with this story and it would be fun to focus on them. But I'd like you to consider the main message. Jesus is talking about what it will be like when the world we experience has adopted the ways of God's realm. In that realm, we will see that we have been given time, talent, and treasure but given these things with the expectation that we will do something appropriately expansive with them.

In the story, the servants each get a sum of money. The expectation turns out to be that they should do something appropriately expansive with the money. They have been given steward-

ship for the money. What turns out to be the appropriately expansive action? For these servants, the action was putting the money to work and increasing the value of what they had been given.

In your story, you have been given things with expectation from your God. How will you surprise God with your stewardship of these gifts? As you make your New Year's resolutions or pause to consider what you accomplished and experienced in 2006, consider this parable. The expectation of our God that lies within the parable is that we do something appropriately expansive with what we have. Jesus does not teach us to keep what we have safe until he comes again. No. The path of faith is a spendthrift path. So open the doors, give away the extra clothes, bring double your normal cans for communion, find a long lever and shift this world toward justice and peace with your effort, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera!

For he comes; like snow in a New England winter that we know is on its way, like the passing of the years, like the passing of our lives. He comes as a child, as a teacher, and as the one who carried his own cross. He comes to you with eagerness and hope like a child on Christmas morning, unable to contain himself with the anticipation of what you have done with your precious life.

May you find the ways to take appropriately expansive action in this new year.

Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad

## Church calendar

December 31	10:00 AM Worship (lay led service) Cookie, Carols and Coffee (please bring some of your leftover Christmas cookies to share)
January 2	7:30 PM Central Council
January 4	7:30 PM Women's Lectio
January 6	11:00 AM Thanksgiving for the life of Florence Sommer at 73 Union Avenue
January 7	10:00 AM Epiphany Sunday at Plymouth Church with Grace and Edwards
January 10	11:30 AM Grace Women United 7:00 PM Deacons
January 14	10:00 AM Worship Our final service at 73 Union Avenue
January 15 week:	Move from Union Avenue
January 17	7:30 PM Stewards (TBD)
January 18	Eat at Uno's (all day)
January 19	Turning Point Shelter
January 21	10:00 AM First service at 76 Salem End Celebration luncheon 11:30 AM Congregational meeting
January 24	6:30 PM Deacons
January 28	10:00 AM Worship

# Core Values Update – Yes, we are still working

We'd like to welcome Larry Butler as our newest addition to the team! It's been quiet on the outside, but bustling within the team, preparing for the third stage of the core values process. The third stage is when we go out and speak with people "on the fringes" who know Grace Church and had been a part of our congregational life but are now not regular participants. This allows us to check that the values we are claiming ring true as we are now and are not being equated with our aspirations.

## Why Core Values are Important

Core Values are the preferences or choices churches make in their life together. The way we behave reflects what we truly value as a congregation. Values are not an idea, nor a program, nor a goal. Core values are reflected in the consistent choices we make in our Church [and our daily lives] on a daily, monthly and yearly basis.

The discernment of core values may not be easy. First we must move beyond our understanding of how Jesus wants us to be to discover how we actually are. Second, we must move beyond how we imagine we behave to discover the truth of how we truly behave. Third we must move beyond how we market ourselves to the public to discover how the public truly perceives us. Core Values are not a matter of wishful thinking or projected self image. Core values are a matter of consistent choices that shape the daily, monthly and yearly behavior of the people in our congregation – both collectively and individually. Once the core values have become clear, we can begin to address issues of morale, method, relationship and cooperation.

The results of the second stage focus groups were lists of words that had much in common as we shifted the focus from personal values to those that the congregation can embrace. The consolidated list from those groups (no priority intended) is:

- Joy, laughter, hope, love
- Compassion, forgiveness, healing, love
- Spirituality, faith, praising God through music, from "I" to "we", healing, humility
- Commitment, perseverance, steadfastness, unity of purpose

## Discerning and Celebrating our Core Values A Journey of Discovery

**Congregational Gathering  
Successfully Completed!**

**Focus groups  
October 23- November 5th  
Successfully Completed!**

**Interviews  
Moved to January  
Various Times**

**Consensus and celebration  
February 2007**

- Respect, inclusion, accepting, welcoming, tolerance, embracing, diversity, valuing differences
- Community, family, love, children, unity of purpose, fellowship
- Courage, boldness, doing, action, integrity
- Mission, service, outreach, social justice
- Trust, honesty, integrity
- Empowerment, support, create, catalyze, generate

It has been difficult work, going from lists of words to statements that evoke the common feelings we can ascribe to those words. The team has met several times over the past few weeks and we still have more work to finalize our next working list. The time has been filled with insight, laughter, frustration and joy – as are most times spent on tasks worth doing.

Here are some examples of value statements that have been generated:

- We embrace the diversity of all God's people.
- We value the contribution of differing abilities.
- We welcome people in all of their diversity.
- In the presence of this community, we find love, forgiveness, closeness, and care as a family; even in the presence of disagreement and wildly different personalities.

The following was gathered from the lists of "neg-

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## Salem End

*Continued from page one*

have added a warm holiday feel to the building). The Deacons have set up the worship space and it is warm and inviting. And the Sign team is helping us find our way around.

### Construction/PAT Update

Drive by 76 Salem End Road at almost anytime and you'll see a lot of activity.

- The inside walls and ceilings have been painted.
- All the rugs have been washed.
- The inside of the building has been cleaned
- There is a new roof.
- Overgrown shrubs and trees have been cut back.
- Siding is about to be installed.
- Our belongings are now out of storage and either set up in the building - or in a POD in the yard.
- A new sign was posted. Unfortunately, it has been stolen but a permanent sign will go up in early January.
- The phones have been moved from Union Avenue to Salem End.
- Our Union Avenue belongings will be moved the week of January 15.

### Reaching out

- There has been a door-to-door canvas of the neighborhood and informational brochures have been left at neighbors' doors.
- Pastor Brad has talked to representatives of the college.

### In the works

- The publicity team is developing a press kit.

## Task Teams are convening

Many of the Task Teams that were formed around the building are already functioning. Several have not yet been convened - partly because of the holiday season and people being away. By January - all should be active and functioning.

- Reaching Out Team/Reverse Welcome Wagon Team: Brad Watters will convene these teams in January.
- Strategic Plan Team: This team is open to all, but will be convened out of Stewards by Dianne Belloli.
- Newbury Street Team: To be convened by Jean Burr in January.
- Safety Team: Tim Taylor will convene this team.
- Physical Asset Team: Already operational under Daleen Perkins.
- Publicity: Linda Hilliard has convened this team.
- Kitchen Team: Grace Women United will start work in January.
- AV/ alarm: This team is part of Construction Team.
- Beautification Grounds Team: Melissa Ellis will convene in January.
- Celebration/Party: Lynn Rodriguez has convened. Plans are underway for January "We've Arrived" event as well as spring gathering.
- Decorating Team: Already working under the leadership of Beverly Ablondi and Jackie Mague.
- Signage team: Jean Burr has convened; team already working.

- A letter is being written to be sent to friends, neighbors, former church members and the community.
- The Events team is planning a January 21 event, as well as an open house in the spring.
- The signage team has ordered multiple signs.
- The decorating team is planning window treatments.

### Working with the town

- Our attorney continues to work with the town offices for the site plan approval. It is

likely that the Planning Board (not the ZBA) will call for a public hearing. Under advice of our attorney, Grace continues to move cautiously. Any changes to the property are strictly cosmetic and we are taking great care to follow all town guidelines.

### Join us. . .

On Sunday, January 21 at Salem End Road. It will be our first Sunday service in our new home. There will be a special luncheon - and our congregational meeting. A busy day for the new Grace Church.

## Ministry Teams

Missions Ministry Team  
 Mirlande Butler  
 Christine Collins  
 Eleanor Crawford,  
 Chair  
 Victoria Ellis  
 Mary Memmott  
 Missions Ministry Team

*mission@  
 gracechurchucc.*

Christian Ed.  
 Laura Buck, co-chair  
 Ronda Yeomans,  
 co-chair  
 Clair Ball  
 Daleen Perkins  
 Lynn Rodriguez

*christianed@  
 gracechurchucc.org*

Stewards  
 Dianne Belloli,  
 chair  
 Lynn Burdett  
 Frank Carney  
 Judy Sebastian  
 Tim Taylor

*stewards@  
 gracechurchucc.  
 org*

## Mission

### January Cans for Communion – help re-stock the pantry!

The next Cans for Communion collection is Sunday, January 7th. This will be a joint collection with Edwards and Plymouth Churches at the Epiphany Service at Plymouth Church. All donations of non-perishable foods are welcome, especially pantry “staples” (pasta, sauce, peanut butter, cereal, tuna, soup, etc.) to help the Metrowest Harvest Food Pantry at SMOC re-stock after the holiday rush. Please contact Mary Memmott if you would like to help deliver our collection.

### Grace Women United

GWU/ Circle 13 will meet Wednesday January 10th at Salem End Church, 11:30AM. Please bring a bag lunch, coffee will be served. We plan to have a talk on bird watching from Barbara Kimball as part of our program.

### Women’s Lectio

This month’s meeting will be on Thursday, January 4 (location to TBD). This group is open to all women of Grace and their friends. For information please contact Laura Buck or Terri Taylor.

### Fund-raising Update

- The mini fair took in \$256.25. Thanks to everyone who donated baked goods and gifts - and to all those who shopped at the Holiday Fair.
- Our checks from Uno’s for October and November were \$60.60 and \$39.30 respectively. However, Uno’s is not really about the money; it’s more about friendship. Hope to see more of you this month (January 18). Our regular night is the 3rd Thursday of each month. Don’t forget to invite your friends and neighbors!

## Christian Education

### Donations needed

CE is looking for donations of a changing table and a pack and play for our new nursery. If you or someone you know has one in good condition, please contact Laura Buck at 508-875-4781. Thanks!

### Stewards

Happy Holidays to all from the Stewards Ministry Team. Thank you to all who have sent in pledges for next year. and a reminder to those who have yet. Kindly do so as soon as you can.

Thanks you to Brownie and the construction Team for getting almost everything ready for us at Salem End Rd. what a great job they did!! Hopefully the new office will be up and running before we “officially” move in. There is still a lot of work for us to do and with patience it will get done.

Peace to all  
 Dianne

### Financial Update - 2006

AMOUNT PLEDGED 52 WEEKS \$60,500

AMOUNT RECEIVED 52 WEEKS \$55,582

PLEDGED FOR 2007

46 PLEDGES = \$55,414

15 PLEDGES ARE DUE

*Financial Secretary,  
 Nancy H. Brown*

## Ministry Teams

### Deacon Ministry Team

Larry Butler  
Ruth Carney, Chair  
Glenn Colpitts  
Melissa Ellis  
Joanne Larkins  
Brian Winsor

deacons@  
gracechurchucc.org

The Deacons are pleased to announce that our interim music director, Susan Minor, will be dropping the word "interim" from her title. As of January 1, she is now our Music Director.



## Deacons

People of Grace,

We wish you a Healthy and Joyous New Year!

We had a wonderful celebration of the Birth of Jesus at the 7:00 PM Candlelit Service on Christmas Eve at Salem End Road. We literally had a packed house with standing room only! The service was filled with carols and lessons. The warmth and excitement of the congregation was felt by all.

Our last service at Union Avenue will be on January 14, 2006. We are planning a service of "Joys and Sorrows." We want this service to be a "good" goodbye to the facility that has been our home for many, many years. If you have any suggestions for this service, please speak to Pastor Brad or one of the deacons as soon as possible.

At some point in time, we will be getting "real" winter weather. If we have to cancel worship or any other activity, tune in to channel 5 for our cancellation listing.

Is there anything that touches you in worship? Concerns you? What the Deacons need from you is feedback. We need you to tell us! Please let Pastor Brad or any of the Deacons know. We need both positive and negative feedback. This is especially important in our new worship home. We will be try-

### Thank you to our Carolers!

We had voices from some of our youngest to some of our most seasoned joining together to bring the joy of Christmas music to some of our shut-ins. It is always a wonderful gift we receive, the light seen in these faces as we share the story of Christmas in song.

The caroling team this year: George, Ellen and Amelia Burton, Mary Memmott, Meghan and Terri Taylor, George Tynes, Karolyne White and Eleanor Yeomans.

ing different set-ups in our worship space to find what best suits our congregation. As with the rest of the building, everything will be a trial and error process to see what works for us. We need you to communicate with us.

There is still time to be a part of the New Member Classes. If you are interested in joining Grace or just would like more information, please contact Pastor Brad or one of the Deacons. Attending the classes does not commit you to join Grace, but will let you know what it means to be a member. The classes will be scheduled after our move to Salem End Road.

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 there when you need us. God is with us and among us. God does and will provide.

*May You Always Feel  
God's Blessings,  
Deacon Ministry Team*



## Poinsettias donors

The following poinsettias were donated for our shut-ins.

- Mary Lou Bonfiglio in memory of her parents, Irene and Jim Powers
- In memory of our parents George and Rose Hoey from Jack & Joyce Fisher.
- Judith Dow in memory of her mother, Dorothy Dow.
- Jean Sherbeck in memory of her mother, Evangline Pugsley
- Ruth Bodge in memory of loves ones.

## Core Value

*Continued from page three*

ative values” – those values resulting in behaviors that we are not proud of, but we know we often fall into them in times of crisis.

- We sometimes forget when a problem is too big that it is God in control and not us.
- We struggle to keep God’s will in front of us and get distracted by getting the job done our way, quickly, without considering other views, thoughts or feelings.
- We don’t intend to hurt, but it happens anyway.

In our initial timeline, we were hoping to have the congregational gathering for consensus and celebration in Janu-

ary. We will not be ready to do that in January, and perhaps that is just as well – as you’ve read this issue of *Grace Notes*, you know there is a lot happening. We will give a detailed update at the congregational meeting and you can always speak to any of us if you have additional questions.

We invite all who love and cherish Grace to continue with us in the journey of discovery so that we may build a strong future together!

*The Core Value Facilitation Team  
(Larry Butler, Frank Carney, Melissa Ellis, Rob Lovewell, Terri Taylor, Brad Watters and Karolyne White)*



## Youth Group News

Another year has come upon us and we find it a changed world for Grace. We will be saying a final good-bye to the building of 73 Union Avenue and start worshipping in our new Church at 76 Salem End Rd.

Youth Group has started back up again after essentially a two year sabbatical. On Dec 10th, we worshipped at Hope Church in Jamaica Plain and then went to Ana’s Taqueria for dinner . Our schedule for the next few weeks:

- Jan 7th: 6:30-8:30 at 76 Salem End Rd. A Twisted Yankee Swap – where you get to trade away that gift you didn’t really want, or just bring a gag gift (\$10 maximum value). We will have food and games, discuss mission trip options and fundraising options – see below.
- Feb 3rd 8:00 p.m. Saturday through church on Sunday morning, February 4th: Lock-in and “Super Subs” fundraiser.

**Fundraising after service each Sunday in January:** We have a wide variety of house pins that are good beyond the holiday season to sell. We are taking orders for wooden replicas of both 73 Union Avenue and 76 Salem End Rd and taking orders for Super Subs.

All of these fundraising efforts will support our summer mission trip to either Philadelphia at the end of June or North Carolina at the beginning of August. Our goal is to raise at least \$1800 dollars before the end of May!

**A bit more on the Super Subs” fundraiser:** For a couple of weeks before Superbowl Sunday (February 4th), the youth group, will be taking sub (sandwich) orders from people in the church. Then we (the youth group) will spend Saturday evening making subs. On Sunday after church, the subs are ready for folks to pick up!

**And a bit more on the wooden replicas:** If the interest is high enough (there are minimum order requirements), the youth group will be selling wooden replicas of 73 Union Avenue and of 76 Salem End Rd. An example (of a different church) will be available for viewing at the table with the pre-order sign-up sheet (we have two signed up already!)

The youth group is open to all Grace teens and their friends.

Peace,  
Terri and Brad  
Grace Youth Group Team

# Storm closing



A blizzard outside on a Sunday morning? Treacherous driving?

If it's necessary to cancel a church service due to inclement weather, Grace Church will be included on the cancellation listing on WCVB-TV (Channel 5).

If it's bad weather for a week night Ministry Team or Task Team meeting, check with your chair.

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### Music Director

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