

GRACE NOTES

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

Think water

Epiphany Service at Edwards on January 3



On Sunday, January 3, 2010, 10:00 am, the three United Church of Christ congregations of Framingham—Edwards, Grace and Plymouth—will gather in one sanctuary to celebrate Epiphany.

Over the years, we have explored what it means to journey with Jesus, from Matthew’s story of three Magi entering the home of Mary and Joseph twelve days after Jesus’ birth to the story of Jesus’ baptism (found in all four gospels). We have shared “Aha!” moments with each other and sought to be baptized by God’s love.

This year, we invite you to help make this year’s Epiphany extra special. Our theme for 2010 is simple: water. Water is everywhere; water cleans, quenches thirst, washes away. Water is holy. You are invited to send in photographs of water to Gregory Morisse at revmorisse@gmail.com. Bring your creations of art or crafts inspired by water. Help us to explore—with all our senses—the blessings of God’s baptismal water. On the day of our worship, as part of your offering, we invite you to bring a package of clean socks to be donated to Worcester Fellowship—an outdoor ministry for the homeless and under housed.

We look forward to seeing you at 10:00 am on January 3 at Edwards Church!

Congregational Meeting January 31

We will hold our January Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 31, immediately after the worship service.

Our agenda includes:
Financial Reports on 2009
Financial Status Report
Proposed Budget for 2010

*Child care will be provided.
A light lunch will be served.*

ESL at Grace Again?

By Pastor Brad Watters

At a series of Congregational Conversations this fall, we focused on the opportunity to partner with an English as a Second Language program. The program is the brainchild of Corey Spaulding, a Framingham parent who chose to respond to the need of some parents. These are parents of kids in the Barbieri Elementary, Two-Way Bilingual program whose primary language is Spanish. The program had been unable to find space at the school and so was seeking another physical home. We expanded the topic to include our adoption of the program as part of Grace, not just a tenant. After lengthy and healthy discussion, we voted on December 6 to enter into sponsorship and shared ministry with this new ESL program.

The very next week, the principal at the Barbieri school did find suitable rooms for the program to

use at the school. This is, of course, what Corey and her program had wanted in the first place, since it takes advantage of a location with which both learners and teachers

Grace Notes

Volume 12, Number 1

• Missions.....2	• Christian Ed3
• Stewards.....2	• Church Calendar3
• Styrofoam Day #2.....2	• Deacons.....4

January 2010

Continued on page six

Missions

Warm Feet for Worcester – January Sock Drive – Special Collection at Epiphany Service

Looking ahead to the post-holiday sales -- in the month of January we 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. There will be a special collection for these items at the "Season of Sharing" Epiphany Service at Edwards Church on January 3rd, but socks can be dropped off anytime at Grace during this cold month. So put "socks" on your shopping list, if you can, and help us exceed our goal of 200 pairs! (Note: we will put aside our can collection for the pantry this month to focus on this sock drive.) Details on the date of our trip to Worcester this winter will follow closer to the date.

Thank You – for Sharing Christmas Cheer

Thank you to all the members and friends of Grace who brought gifts for the children of Pathways Shelter this December. We brought 20 children very special presents from their wish lists on December 13th. Special thanks to Ellie Crawford for organizing the list, and for Laura Buck and Robert Lovewell for making the delivery. Many elves make light work!

Mary Memmott

In Case of Cancellation



Church services were cancelled on December 20 due to stormy weather. Remember Grace is 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.

Stewards

We will meet on January 13 to finalize the preparation of our 2010 budget, which will be presented to the congregation at the January 31 Congregational meeting. Anyone who wishes to include an amount should contact us ASAP if they haven't already done so.

Because of the snow storm on December 20 and the cancellation of worship, our annual Christmas offering has been postponed. If you weren't able to bring it to one of the Christmas Eve services, please remember it the next time you come to church.

Our Financial Secretary reminds everyone to pick up their 2010 offering envelopes, which she has placed in the fellowship area.

Pastor Brad has a request for a special collection (to be held in mid January) to benefit the UCC Christmas Fund. This long-standing fund benefits retired UCC clergy and other employees who find themselves in need of financial assistance. The actual date for this collection will be announced later, and more information will be forthcoming from Brad.

Jean Burr

Save your Styrofoam, especially the packing stuff from Christmas boxes!

Grace Church in conjunction with REFOAMIT, LLC,

Styrofoam Collection Day

Saturday, January 9 • 10 AM to 3 PM



We will also be recycling lead acid batteries
(used in cars, trucks and lawnmowers)



Please remove all tape, labels & food particles from your styrofoam

Christian Education

Sunday School News:

The Grace Faith Community would like to thank Linda Dunbrack, Brad Watters, Laura Buck, Karolyn White, and Ronda Yeomans for all the thoughtful worship planning and Christian education in December. We all had lots of fun with Donkey and Angel and all the various biblical stories so aptly performed by our own Grace Church members. Sadly, snow kept the 4th Advent play, "Las Posadas" (the inns), from being offered in worship on Dec. 20, but with any luck we will use it in future. Perhaps Christmas Eve? It has been so nice to see so many children and adults alike so happily and actively involved in worship.

There will be no Sunday School at Grace on January 3rd as we're all joining the congregations of Plymouth and Edwards at Edwards Church for a shared Epiphany Service. Regular Sunday School classes will resume either Jan. 10 or 17 depending upon the scheduling of the "Light of the World" Bonfire service. A "Light of the World" Bonfire brief service/ dinner /Christian education activity is tentatively planned for January or February. Daleen Perkins will be teaching "Bible 101" during Sunday School in January. Daleen is ordering Come Join the Circle Curriculum units for teachers in

late January and February. Please contact Daleen or Ronda if you are available to teach in Jan. Feb. or Mar. Please also let us know your family's vacation plans if the children will miss Sunday School. Again thanks to all those, children and adults, who taught via word or example during Advent.

Rev. Dr. Matthew Boulton will be teaching a one day seminar about Christian Education in Lent and Easter on Thurs. Jan. 7. Ronda Yeomans hopes to attend, but is unsure of her availability. She would love to learn what was presented in order to share with the other Sunday School teachers and in worship planning. Please contact her if you attend. For more information on the seminar please contact the conference or go to the website. Thank you!

Ronda Yeomans

Holiday Fair: Well done!

The Holiday Fair brought in more than \$1,000. Thanks to all those who helped out. It was a lot of fun with good camaraderie.



The Book Club is reading Anna Quindlan's *One True Thing*. The next meeting will be January 27.

Grace Church calendar - January

January 3	10:00 AM	Shared Epiphany Service at Edwards Church <i>Bring socks</i>	January 17	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship
January 4	11:00 AM	Bible Study	January 18	11:00 AM	Bible Study
January 9	8:00 AM	Men's Group Styrofoam Collection Day	January 24	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship
January 10	Cans for Communion 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship	January 25	11:00 AM	Bible Study
January 11	11:00 AM	Bible Study	January 27	10:00 AM	Book Club
January 13	11:30 AM 7:30 PM	GWU Stewards meet	January 31	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship Congregational Meeting

People of Grace,

We hope your Christmas brought you many happy memories!

Beyond Christmas at Grace:

- We will once again join with our brothers and sisters at Edwards and Plymouth churches for our joint Epiphany Service on January 3, 2010 at Edwards Church at 10:00 AM.
- We will have a Blue Jean Sunday / De-greening of the Church on January 10, 2010. Please wear comfortable clothes to church and stay to un-decorated the church and put all those Advent and Christmas items away. There will be something for everyone to do, no matter what your age or physical abilities.

As we begin another year, here are some thoughts for the New Year...

- Some anonymous wise person penned the following directions for living without bringing pain to others or oneself:

"You will never be sorry — for thinking before acting, for hearing before judging, for forgiving your enemies, for being candid and frank, for helping a fallen brother [or sister], for being honest in business, for thinking before speaking, for being loyal to God and the church, for standing by your principles, for refusing to participate in gossip, for holding your words when tempted to demean another, for not entertaining impure or hateful thoughts, for sympathizing with the afflicted, for being courteous and kind to all."

A half century ago, Milward Simpson was the governor of Wyoming. He was a Christian

who trusted God without question. He and his wife often shared this statement of faith:

*The light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
And the presence of God watches over us;
Wherever we are, God is.*

Having a positive statement of faith can be helpful in many situations. Why not create one for yourself and your family — or use the prayerful statement the Simpsons recited.

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." —J.M. Barrie

It is at this time of the year, we look back and (hopefully) see the positive happenings in our lives. To all the People of Grace, thank you for all you do for our church! You see something that needs attention and you take care of it. You are asked to participate and you say: yes! There are many things that happen "behind the scenes" that no one sees or knows about and, consequently, no one says thank you. Here is your "thank you." Without our wonderful, dedicated, devoted congregation, we would not be able to do the work God calls us to do. Is there someone in your life you need to thank? There is no better time than now.

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. Our New Year's Wish for you is to have a happy and healthy year!

*May you always feel
God's blessings,*

Deacons

Ruth Carney, Karolyne White

ESL

Continued from page one

in the ESL program are familiar, with plenty of parking, etc. Clearly, our willingness to partner with this ESL program helped the school to come up with an even more appropriate response.

Will there be further chapters? Time will tell. As things stand now, Grace will not be engaging in the ministry of ESL on our premises. That is disappointing. At the same time, we can feel strong in our response to this opportunity. Our answer to a defined community need was measured, thorough, and powered by a vision of the future, rooted in our past, of a Framingham where language is not a barrier to relationship. What will the next opportunity be?

Grace Congregational, UCC

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

www.gracechurchucc.org
www.macucc.org (Mass Conf.)
www.ucc.org (UCC)

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org