

GRACE NOTES

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

Governance proposal approved by Congregational Meeting June 7

The Grace Church congregational meeting was held on Sunday, June 7, immediately after church. Twenty-five members were enough for a quorum.

- The 2008-2009 Annual Reports were presented. Vote was unanimous to accept
- A Governance Proposal was put into motion by Eleanor Crawford with an amendment added by Tim Taylor:

Governance Motion: For a period of 6 months, Grace Church will re-form Central Council as a transitional leadership team, staffed with current Central Council membership who choose to continue and other interested church members. The transitional leadership team is charged with:

- managing the existing responsibilities of the current Central Council
- continuing the development of gift-based staffing of all ministries
- proposing adjustments to the church's structure to meet the church's changing needs
- bringing a recommendation from the leadership team membership to the congregation no later than 6 months from today [June 7, 2009].

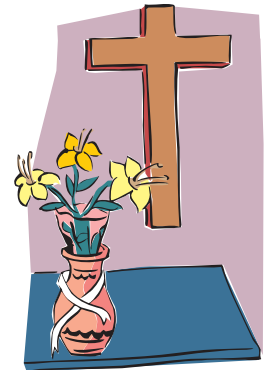
Further that the existing Ministry Teams, staffed by those who choose to continue in their ministry and with other interested church members, meet as needed during this transitional period, supported by the transitional leadership team, as appropriate. Members will not be nominated to serve on ministry teams and there

Continued on back page

Season of Sharing at Edwards Church on July 26

On July 26, the Grace, Edwards and Plymouth congregations will worship together at Edwards Church in Saxonville, beginning at 10:00 AM.

A plan is also being developed to have representatives of all three churches attend the Worcester Fellowship that afternoon. They will bring sandwiches and worship with the Fellowship.



July 27 - August 14

Grace Church will be closed during town sewer project

The town sewer project appears to be proceeding as planned. The church will be closed from July 27 until the project is completed, probably no later than August 14.

During this period, access to our building and grounds will be prohibited other than for response to an emergency situation.

Until the shed has been moved to its new location, all items now there will be stored at an off-site storage area. Hopefully, the shed CAN be moved. However, if it can not be salvaged, the Stewards will be looking for a replacement.

Grace Notes

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July 2009

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Car Wash and Help Wanted



See Page Three

Dear Ones,
The Bible contains the wisdom book we call Ecclesiastes. It is the source of some well known passages, ("Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." "To every thing, there is a season ...") They reveal that the writer, and those who valued this scroll, held a sense of the powerlessness of humans to control fate, alongside their focus that hope lies in keeping the laws of God. The wisdom books of the Bible reveal also that these people who lived over 2000 years ago understood that there are prudent ways to live life, that there are ways to avoid deceit, and that it is correct to be shrewd!

We are like that too. We have our sometimes unconscious expectations of how to do business with each other, how to be careful about entanglements, how to consider setting precedents (if I let her borrow my clippers do I have to let him?)

I came across one piece of analysis about how the world works in Ecclesiastes Chapter 9.

I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed important to me. There was a little city with few people in it. A great king came against it and besieged it, building great siege-works against it. Now there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. So I said, 'Wisdom is better than might; yet the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heeded.'

Does that sound right to you? Is that the way the world works?

I think it does work that way. I think that those in power, and those close to them, "consult upwards." We accept the advice from the powerful far more readily than from the poor. Tevya, the father in "Fiddler On the Roof," sings, "When you're rich they think you really know!"

I do not refer to those times when one person consults another person who has some expertise. When we invite a speaker to come make an address, we have tried to choose someone whose

knowledge we have reason to respect.

Rather, I'm thinking about how we dismiss or condescendingly demur when someone makes a suggestion who has less status in some way. Perhaps the person is younger, even a child. Perhaps the person is "the woman in the board room." Perhaps the suggestion comes from a person for whom English was not the language learned first at home. In these cases, the attitude with which we listen to the other person is already determined before we hear what he or she has to say.

I propose that this is not healthy, not Biblical, not helpful, and not kind. I believe our task is to acknowledge that we have bias and prejudice about who can offer wise counsel, a good suggestion, or a proposal. If we grow our understanding of our own tendencies, we fulfill our Grace Church legacy of insisting on facing the truth – about the world, about God, and about ourselves. We have chosen to avoid deceit. We can therefore accept that we will tend to deceive ourselves, which is what unconscious prejudice and bias do, and yet we will act in a way to counterbalance that disabling tendency.

I propose that we become the ones who are willing to ferret out our hidden bias, to own up to our bias whether hidden or visible, and to act to reverse the negative effects of our bias. I propose that we accept the mantle of history that calls on Grace Church to act in opposition to those who despise the words and

From the Moderator:

Thank you so much for granting me the privilege of serving as moderator for the next couple of years. What enormous shoes I have to fill! Thank to Linda Hilliard for her steady hand as moderator for the past few years after transition upon transition.

So now what? Most of you know that I am a person with many questions and ideas. Expect to hear many of the questions in the coming months, because I want to hear your ideas. So don't be surprised if I sit in on an unexpected meeting, or pigeon-hole you during coffee hour to chat about them.

Here are a just few of them to think about. What are your hopes and dreams for Grace Church? What can we do to change the world together as a community? How can you use your time and talent in a spiritually meaningful way, together with other partners in ministry? What do we need to do to further build a sense of community in our congregation?

Peace, Linda Dunbrack

Continued on page three



Grace Kids' Care!



Car Wash



Supporting "Amazon Promise"
Health Care Mission to South America

\$6/wash

\$5 w/can of non-perishable food for the Framingham Food Pantry

Sunday, July 12 • 12-2 p.m.

Rain date: Sunday July 19 • 12-2 p.m.



Grace Church parking lot



HELP WANTED

Brainstorming, no experience required. Applicants must be open-minded and enthusiastic. Positions are temporary and part time and all applicants will be accepted. Teams will work with the Stewards Ministry Team. There will be no pay, but the benefits are immeasurable!

1. PLAYYARD TEAM:

Needs to assemble ASAP. Due to the upcoming town project, the existing set-up must be moved. Now is the time to decide WHERE and, possibly WHAT we need for our children.

2. GROUNDS TEAM:

Will critique grounds, make recommendations regarding long-range plans and current up-keep and improvements. This team will not be expected to become the "work team."

3. SIGN/CROSS TEAM:

Charged with making recommendations to the membership regarding designs and placement of signage & cross(es) to make our space more recognizable.

Contact any member of the Stewards Team, Pastor Brad, or Moderator Linda Dunbrack.

Pastor Note

Continued from page two

wisdom of those with less status or standing. I propose that we learn to hear anew: with our ears and heart, as I know we all try to do, and also with ever-deepening knowledge about our own tendencies to prejudge.

Let us be shrewd in this way. Let us implement this instance of how following the way of the Bible will set us free. Let it not be said of Grace Church that anyone's words are not heeded!

Dear God, grant us the courage for self-examination and the will to grow in response to what we learn. Continue to bless us with your grace that we may deepen our lives in love and service to you and to our neighbors. Amen.

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

Ministries

**Mary Memmott,
Member at Large**

Missions

July Cans Collection: July 5, 12, 19

This month the food pantry has especially requested: CEREAL and CANNED VEGETABLES. To give everyone a chance to donate as you come and go on vacation, we will collect cans throughout July. The need is great this summer, so please give generously. There will be no can collection in August. Please remember that expired, damaged or unlabeled cans cannot be safely donated – the food pantry must dispose of these types of cans and this trash removal adds to their expenses. Thank you for your continued support of the Framingham Food Pantry!

Fun at the farm? All invited with produce pick-up July 3, 17, 31

You are welcome to sign up for produce

pick-up at Stearns Farm on alternate Fridays – see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Pick-up is at your convenience, any time between 2-7 p. m. -- a great way to enjoy some nature at the end of a work week. Half of our produce will be shared with the pantry and the other half will come back to Grace for all to enjoy and share.

We've already sampled the first strawberries of June and made a wonderful delivery of lettuce, greens, and herbs to the pantry, which was much appreciated. Look for veggies at church for all to share on July 5 and July 19th. Free-will offerings toward the cost of the farm-share program are welcome.



Deacons

People of Grace,
The calendar says this is summer! Hopefully, soon we will say the same! Whatever your plans are – have a wonderful, safe, healthy, happy summer.

Pastor Brad will be on vacation for the first two weeks in July. If you have or know of a pastoral need or emergency, please be in contact with Ruth Carney. Ruth will have the list of contacts that will provide emergency coverage while Brad is away.

Looking ahead to the summer Sundays:

- Each Sunday in July, we will be collecting the “cans for communion” – even on the Sundays when we are not celebrating the sacrament of communion!
- July 5th – We will have an Intergenerational Laity Worship Service. We will not have communion at this service. The “first fruits” from Stearns Farm will be available after worship.
- July 12th – We welcome back the Reverend Larry Iannetti to worship. Larry will lead worship, which will include communion. Camp Grace will meet during worship.
- July 19th – Brad’s back! Camp Grace will meet.
- July 26th – We will worship with our brothers and sisters from Edwards and Plymouth churches at Edwards. There is a plan to make sandwiches and

all three churches are invited to go that afternoon to the Worcester Fellowship to deliver the sandwiches and worship with them.

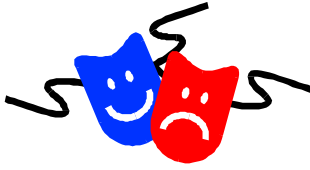
- August 2nd & August 9th – Grace will officially be closed! The town will be installing a new sewer line through the church property and we will not have access to any part of our property beginning July 27th. There are alternate worship plans being discussed. Watch for an announcement.
- August 16th, 23rd & 30th – Back at Grace. Camp Grace will meet during worship.

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth. You may bring flowers from your home garden or if you wish to have her order flowers from our florist, the price is \$35.

Please do not forget that we care about your well-being and want to walk with you celebrating your joys, holding you in your sorrows, and just being there when you need us. God is with us and among us. God does and will provide.

May you always feel God’s blessings,
The Deacon Ministry Team
Ruth Carney, Karolyne White

Faith in Action



• Have you spoken to Daleen yet about being involved in the fall production by our very own NOT READY FOR ANYTIME PLAYERS? All plans are still in the early stages, but the excitement is mounting!

• We are now compiling a list of possible speakers/ subjects for a 2010 spring series of events, similar to the one which was so successful recently. Let us know if you have any subject or speaker you would like us to consider.

• NANTUCKET anyone?? Ruth Bodge has suggested that it would be fun to arrange a Grace Church mini-vacation on Nantucket Island. Although the summer months are financially prohibitive, there is an October 9 and 10 package being offered by the Nantucket Inn which seems very tempting. The price of \$299 includes two nights for two people, full breakfast both mornings and a \$50 voucher for a dinner at either of two fine restaurants. (Children stay free with parents but are charged for breakfast.) The Inn has a free shuttle to town, great pool and fitness room. More information available at www.nantucketinn.net. Additional costs include ferry tickets, for \$33 per adult round trip (less for children) and a \$12 per day parking fee per car in Hyannis. Ruth will help us arrange some activities, but there would be free time for family & vacation "stuff". Tentative sign-ups will help us to determine if there is interest in this activity. You can indicate your interest by phone or e-mail to the office, or sign-up on the bulletin board.



• Our next meeting will be after worship on July 19. All are invited!

Stewards

See Sewer Project article on page one.

• The Newbury Street property will be mowed and cleaned up as soon as the weather cooperates.

• **Help will be appreciated on July 18 - 9:00 AM to move the shed contents to the storage area. We need muscles!**

• We are asking for volunteers to form new task teams and urge everyone to consider giving of their time in any area of choice. *See page three.*

Recycling News: Save Your Styrofoam!

Contrary to what some believe, styrofoam is NOT recyclable. When it is put into bins, it is transferred to the trash and eventually goes into landfill where it will remain for MANY years. However, Dave Sherman and a colleague are now in business, the primary purpose of which is recycling styrofoam.

At the next Earth Care event at Grace Church (probably August), he will be here with his truck to collect as much styrofoam as we can gather. (There will be other events as well, all intended to help save our environment.) If you don't have room to save yours, contact Jean Burr as she has half of her garage available. Dirty items cannot be taken, so please rinse off any bits of food! Please call Jean with any questions.

Grace Church calendar - July



Happy Fourth of July!

July 3	Stearns Farm pick up (food to Grace)	July 17	Stearns Farm pick up (food to Grace)
July 5	Cans for Communion 10:00 AM Worship	July 18	9:00 AM Shed cleanout
July 6	11:30 AM Worship Planning	July 19	10:00 AM Worship Guest preacher Camp Grace 11:15 AM Faith in Action <i>Car Wash Rain Date</i>
July 12	10:00 AM Lay Worship Camp Grace Grace Church Car Wash!	July 26	10:00 AM Worship at Edwards
July 15	7:30 PM Stewards	July 31	Stearns Farm pick up (food to Pantry)
		July 27 to August 17-	Grace Church building closed for town sewer project on the property.

Congregational Meeting *Continued from page one*

will be no term limits.

This was passed unanimously as a vote of confidence by the congregation.

- A motion was put forth to suspend Article VIII Section 2 (Representation) and Article X (Ministry Teams) of the current bylaws. The congregation unanimously approved this motion.

Clerk: Lynn Burdett
Clerk of Membership: Nancy Brown
Treasurer: Walter Brown
Assistant Treasurer: Jean Burr
Financial Secretary: Nancy Brown
Historian: Grace Kimball
Vote by the congregation was unanimous.

Nomination Slate of Church Corporate Officers
Moderator: Linda Dunbrack

Mary Memmott and Terri Taylor discussed What is Your Ministry (See article below).

What is Your Ministry?

We have been exploring spiritual gifts for almost a year now. Several of you have used the tools of Natural Church Development to help discover those gifts. This involved reading *The Colors of Ministry*, answering a survey of questions, choosing two others to also answer questions on how your gifts are expressed, analyzing the answers to identify manifest (already seen) and latent (potential for exploration) gifts and then meeting with Pastor Brad to understand the gift or gifts that speak to you and how they might be used to further the ministry of the Church and of Grace.

If you are interested in discovering your spiritual gifts, but the book and question method just doesn't work for you, talk to Brad about other ways of discovery.

So now that we are understanding spiritual gifts, how do we determine where we should be applying them? What should our ministry be? In May, we spoke of how finding/forming a ministry requires both a passion and a partner - that is someone who shares that passion with you. We also gave several examples of current ministries of Grace that are outside the old "ministry team" structure. Ministries like: Stearns Farm, Faith in Action, Grace Women United, Women's Lectio, Worship Planning and more.

At our June Congregational meeting, we introduced a rainbow bulletin board for people to start declaring ministries that are of interest with hope that others might also connect with some of those ministry ideas. And that the "passions" will then find "partners." So explore the ministries that are posted. If you find one that appeals to you, add your name and seek out and talk to others who have included their names. If the ministry you are seeking is not yet on the board, write it on a cloud (available in the holder on the hymnal bookcase) along with your name so that others who might have that passion can join up with you.

We will be doing a lot of exploring over the summer, come and help us on the journey!

Grace Congregational, UCC
PO Box 1481
76 Salem End Road
Framingham, MA 01702
508-872-3342
www.gracechurchucc.org
www.macucc.org (Mass Conf.)
www.ucc.org (UCC)

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org

Moderator: Linda Dunbrack
moderator@gracechurchucc.org

Christian Education:
Ronda Yeomans
christianed@gracechurchucc.org

Deacons: Ruth Carney
deacon@gracechurchucc.org

Stewards: Jean Burr
steward@gracechurchucc.org

Members at Large: Terri Taylor,
Mary Memmott
atlarge@gracechurchucc.org

Office Administrator:
Kab Rabinowitz
office@gracechurchucc.org

Music Director: Susan Minor
musicdirector@gracechurchucc.org

Missionary in Indonesia:
Susan Frans
sefrans@kupang.wasantara.net.id

Book Club will not meet in July or August. We are reading *Mary Called Magdalene* by Margaret George. We will have our first fall meeting on Wednesday September 23 at 10:00AM.



Grace Women United will not meet over the summer. Their next meeting will be September 16 at 11:00 AM with a potluck luncheon.

A Note of Thanks

Thank you to my Grace Church family for the silver cross necklace you gave me as I stepped down as moderator. It is lovely and will I cherish it.

Linda Hilliard