

Grace is a Green Church!

GRACE NOTES

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

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Celebrating our Time in Ministry Together

On Sunday, July 26th, we will celebrate in worship and fellowship our time in ministry together with Brad. We will celebrate first in worship sharing our stories, our songs and communion. If you have a story that you would like to share or a reading that you were introduced to during Brad’s time (scripture, poem, essay) or even a piece of art that has become more meaningful during these past years in ministry together, please let Terri or Ruth know. It is our shared stories that enrich and renew us.

Starting at noon, we will celebrate in a time of fellowship that invites the wider community that has also been touched by Brad’s time with us. This includes our UCC siblings at Plymouth and Edwards, the Mass Conference and the Framingham Interfaith Clergy Association. We will have a tent and a charcoal grill for burgers (beef and veggie), hot dogs and brats. We invite you to contribute with salads, sides, baked goods if you can. Mary Memmott is setting up an online “sign up genius” to coordinate this effort and will act as contact person for those without easy computer access.

We hope you will join us as we say goodbye and Godspeed to Brad and Debbie and remember well the ministries we have built together.

Frequently Asked Questions About the Search for an Interim Minister

Who is on the Search Team?

Members of the Search Team include Frank and Ruth Carney, Linda Dunbrack, Linda Hilliard, Mary Memmott, and Terri Taylor. Thanks to all who volunteered for this important responsibility.

What is the current status of our search?

On June 23, we submitted our Interim Ministry Profile to the Mas-

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From the Pastor

Dear Ones

Perhaps you have seen one of those question lists on Facebook or in a magazine that purports to reveal something cool about you in an unusual context based on your answers. Answer these ten questions and learn, “What Disney princess are you?” What wild animal? What member of Tolkien’s Fellowship of the Ring are you? They are not particularly rigorous in their analysis! They are just a fun diversion that maybe you share with your friends and that maybe prompts you to think a little differently about how you think about yourself. I believe I’ve seen one in which the questions identify you as just like one or another person in the Bible. Do you wonder whom you are most like?

As I leave Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, I’m thinking about who I’ve tried to be for you, for us as a congregation, and for the sake of the one whose name we say when we say we are a church “of Christ.” It may come down to love, in the end. I have loved you well enough for me. Have I loved you well enough for you? Have I loved you as Jesus loved?

We have done some amazing things together! We have added to the history and honored the legacy of Grace Church in Framingham. We have faced some sad times together. We have lost friends and loved ones. We have gained some new friends. We

Want to Help with Food, Set-up, Cleaning, or Grilling at Pastor Brad’s Retirement Celebration?

If you’d like to help feed the crowd for Pastor Brad’s Retirement Celebration (July 26), please let Mary Memmott know what you can bring or how you can help (set-up, clean-up, grilling?) OR sign up at www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0849A4AC29A31-pastor.

have had some good laughs too.

I’m sure that there are some themes of worship, homily, meeting behavior, and conversation that you could identify as “that’s the sort of thing Brad would say.” I hope those memories are sweet and healthy for you. Like any other person, I have some life-lessons to share. Like any one of you, I’ve learned some ways of being a human that I believe other people could learn from. It has been a privilege for me to have your permission to share my thoughts, my perspectives, and some of my prescriptions with you. Thank you for bearing with me as I’ve struggled to know what our “still speaking” God is still speaking about.

When it comes to philosophy or practices of being a leader, I intend to choose the way that creates more space for leadership, more opportunities for other people to lead in one way or another. I hope that you have found that Grace Church is a “permission giving” church during my watch. I hope you have grown your sense of purpose,

your sense of personal power, and your sense of personal responsibility.

I’m not sure exactly what I’ll be doing in August and September or in 2016 and beyond. I’m pretty sure that you all will be okay! I think I will be too. My guess is, that even though circumstances have changed, we will go on being who we are, and becoming more true to our true self every day.

When you see each other, look the other person in the eye and know that you are loved. You are loved by me for sure. At Grace Church, we continue to strive to love each other more deeply. Most importantly, you are loved by an ancient love that began before any beginning, before any language could (fail to) name it. You are continually invited to invite that love into your life.

I never found the ten questions that would tell me who I am most like in the Bible. So I’ll pick the verse about a guy that I hope tells you who I’ve tried to be for you and who I will always be

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Foam Recycling Day

Saturday, July 25th • 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Volunteers needed*

We now accept #4 LDPE and #5 Polypro along with #6 EPS (more commonly called Styrofoam®); also bubble wrap and packing peanuts, packaged separately.

All foam items do not need to display the recycling symbol (including food and beverage items).

We will also be collecting donations of canned goods for the Food Pantry.

* Speak to Jean Burr if you can help out



Grace receives Mass UCC Award

Several years ago, the Mass. Conference Environmental Ministries launched an initiative to certify local churches as Green Congregations with three levels of achievement. At this June's Annual Meeting, Grace received this prestigious award for achieving level three. Grace is one of five congregations in the state to achieve this level.

Transition Framingham Upcoming Events

- **Fourth Annual Garden Tour** Saturday, Aug. 22nd, 9:30 am to 1 pm. Tour local home and community gardens. We will start at the community garden at First Parish UU, on the Framingham Center Green.
- **Fourth Annual Locavore Picnic** -- Sunday, August 30; 2 to 4 pm, Butterworth Park. Bring a dish with at least one local ingredient to share.

Congregational Meeting held June 14

This meeting was held concurrently with worship. Moderator Linda Dunbrack convened the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

- Linda read the names of those currently serving as officers and on teams. **Note:** There is an opening for a Central Association delegate. Motion to affirm this ministry team was unanimously approved.
- The minutes of the January 25, 2015, Annual Congregational Meeting were approved unanimously.
- The Annual Report was unanimously approved.

FAQs

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sachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. We are currently waiting to receive profiles from those who might be interested in serving as our Interim Minister.

What are the next steps in the search?

In July, the Search Team will review candidate profiles and set up interviews. After the interviews are complete, we will arrange to hear finalists preach in a neutral pulpit so that we have a sense of them as a worship leader.

Who will lead services between the time of Brad's departure and when we find an Interim Minister?

On August 2, 9, 16 and 30th, Kathryn Byers (Kate) will provide worship leadership. On August 23rd is our joint service with Edwards and Plymouth Churches which will be on our back lawn.

Linda Dunbrack, Moderator

From the Pastor

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for you in my heart and my prayers.

There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement").

Acts 4:36

Peace and Blessing,
Pastor (Brad) Barnabas

Litany of Witness and Celebration

Editor's note: At a recent service, this liturgy (written by Linda Dunbrack) reminded the congregation of how special we are as a church and of the difference our "small but mighty" church makes within our community. What was especially moving was to hear the number of Helpers in the congregation that day who responded "I did" and "I have."

One: The facilitator challenged us to come up with a concrete first step that could be accomplished in about 3 weeks and that impacted the building or property.

All: After discussing a few different ideas, we decided to build an elevated garden bed.

One: We imagined gardens as a natural intergenerational gathering place where people from all cultural, ethnic, economic, and geographic backgrounds could connect and share their traditions and beliefs.

All: Many minds and hands made the box garden project a success. We designed and built it. We figured out what to plant and donated plants. We bought or found other plants, purchased dirt and fertilizer, and planted everything.

One: That was just the beginning.

All: We watered daily and weeded as needed. We invited people in the community to share in the harvest. Some did. It became a visible symbol of our congregation's outward focus.

One: Who helped with this important first in some way, small or large?

Helpers: I did.

All: It seems like such a small thing. We wonder how much we can really do. Are we really making a difference in Framingham?

One: Oh yes. I hardly know where to start. Our donations of fresh produce from Stearns Farm to the local food pantry have begun to build bridges. The food pantry clients look

forward to the fresh produce, and know that someone cares. Staff and volunteers from Stearns Farm have been inspired by this ministry, and connections have been built between us.

All: Many of us are part of the Stearns Farm story. We volunteered on work days, picked up produce from the farm, and delivered it to the pantry.

One: Who helped with this project in some way?

Helpers: I did.

All: Still, it seems like just another small thing. Are we really making a difference?

One: A huge difference as far as the food pantry is concerned. Many of you donate food on "Cans for Communion" Sundays. Our steady support of the food pantry is something that they really count on, especially in typically low-donation months. We are their biggest consistent donor.

All: We did that? It seems amazing that a small group of people like us can have such a big impact. How much more can we do?

One: You would be surprised how much more, especially when we partner with others in our ministries. Several of us attended an event held at Grace Church by Transition called Fresh Food for Framingham. There were about 40 people here, all working on promoting gardening in Framingham.

All: 40 people? Who was there from Grace?

Helpers: I was. I attended, contributed my ideas, and got involved. A couple of us helped plan and organize it.

One: Several projects burst forth from that event which members of Grace Church are supporting.

All: We donated tomatoes and created raised beds for the after-school program at Pelham apartments. A Seed Library will be

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Litany of Witness and Celebration *Continued from previous page*

hosted in the Public Library next spring, with programs on gardening that will be hosted there and at Grace. Other projects involving growing food on public lands, and about connecting experienced gardeners with beginners are ongoing. There is an air of excitement and lots of positive energy.

One: Who from Grace is involved with these projects in some way?

Helpers: I am.

All: Maybe we really are making a difference in Framingham.

One: Oh, there is much more than that. Many of us have done things to increase awareness about social and economic justice and other causes. We co-hosted a program on criminal justice reform with Plymouth and 25 people from the community came. Grace Church has been represented on awareness walks and marches for domestic violence, hunger, homelessness, climate change, #BlackLivesMatter, and cancer. We have attended community discussions on racism and advocacy meetings on homelessness and criminal justice reforms. We advocate for children with different abilities.

Who from Grace has participated in these kinds of activities?

Helpers: I have.

All: We really are making a difference! That's a pretty long list.

One: There is even more! We give Christmas gifts to the children at the Pathways Shelter, donate socks to Worcester Fellowship and some of us worship with them. We make up emergency kits for Church World Service, gather school supplies and books for children in Appalachia, donate diapers to Family Promise Metrowest, and donate cash to a variety of causes.

Who from Grace has participated in these kinds of activities?

Helpers: I have.

All: Don't forget about Foam Recycling and our commitment to being a green church. Those are also a part of our present and future story. How can one small community of faith accomplish so much?

One: It is amazing, isn't it? Obviously, God has a large role in the fruitfulness of our ministries. However, there is something special about who Grace Church is as a community that lifts us up as we do our ministries. Our mission statement has something to say about that. Would you say it with me now?

All: Grace Church exists to embody God's love in Jesus Christ in the diverse human family. We worship the living God and celebrate the sacraments together. We nurture personal spiritual journeys and affirm individual differences. We commit ourselves and our resources to our community and the world. We invite all people to contribute to our family of faith.

One: Our collective light shines in Framingham because we celebrate and nurture one another's ministries when we gather as a community of faith.

July Calendar

*Farewell
Party for
Pastor Brad*



*Sunday, July 26th
Service a 10:00
Cookout at Noon*

Earth Morning: The Tiny House Report

Editor's Note: Christine and Seth Terramane are building a tiny house on Grace's back property. This is Christine's blog.

Welcome aboard, Grace Church!

If you've ever been to a large city's suburbs, you know the houses are packed together like sardines. Many houses don't even have yards. And while a tiny house is teeny compared to a regular house, one thing that you need when you're building is space. You need space to put the trailer, and then you need space around the trailer so you can lay out your walls and cut lumber and store tools. And one thing that Boston does not have is space.

Seth and I are Boston-area transplants. We're not used to having neighbors in every direction, peeking down into our business. So when we were figuring out the logistics of building, we knew we didn't want to try to build in our apartment driveway, where half the town could see what we're doing, and the other half could probably hear it. On top of that, we're renting and our lease just doesn't line up.

We were at a loss for a good part of the winter. We had some promising leads that didn't pan out, and I'm

not gonna lie – morale was low. The avalanche of snow didn't help much either. Our dreams of starting in April were dashed.

But thanks to some good luck and good people, we've teamed up with Grace Congregational United Church of Christ in Framingham to build on their property starting this month.

Grace Church is an Open and Affirming church located about ten minutes from the farm. In fact, they have a share through Stearns Farm, which they pick up weekly and drop off at one of the area's food pantries. They organize a Styrofoam recycling day several times per year, facilitate several community garden plots around town, and love dogs (that one's for you, Pastor Brad).

When Seth and I met with Grace Church's congregation to talk about building our little house in their backyard, I asked why they would

so generously offer their space for nothing in return. Mary, the volunteer coordinator, said, "Well, I read your e-mail and your proposal and I thought, 'Tiny house, tiny church! It just seemed right.'" And we laughed, because the Grace Church is indeed small. However, our values line up quite well, and we had a good discussion about eco-friendliness and sustainability in addition to logistics.

We'll be building in a little field behind the church and then moving the house once it's complete. Because after all – it's on wheels.

I feel lucky to have found this unexpected community in our quest for the tiny house. Seems like the flowers opened up just for us on this one. Thank you Grace Church!

*Christine and Seth
(and Lily) Terramane
www.earthmorning.org*

Special Stearns Farm Work Opportunity

Friday, August 7, 9:45-noon we will have a work shift at Stearns Farm with about a dozen young gardeners from "Our House" community center at Pelham apartments. If you'd like to come work in the fields with the older children, help keep the young ones entertained in the Children's Garden, or provide popsicles or another treat for the children's picnic lunch, please contact Mary Memmott (memmottm@gmail.com).

Deacons

Thoughts:

Worrying doesn't take away tomorrow's troubles. It takes away today's peace. - Unknown

Good and Gracious God, please help me to remember today that you are with me and no matter what happens, we can handle it together. - Unknown

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known. - Unknown

People of Grace,

I know there is anxiety in the air. We have made such a friendship with Pastor Brad on our journey together and it is so hard to see him leave. Please plan to be at Grace on July 26th as we celebrate his ministry with us and our ministry together.

You may be wondering what are our next steps? While most of the Leadership Team will be searching for our Interim Pastor, life still will go on at Grace. If you have a pastoral emergency or a need, please be in contact with me. If I or someone else at Grace cannot handle it, I will contact a minister we would have "on call."

Our worship in August is covered:

On August 2, 9, 16 and 30th, Kathryn Byers (Kate) will provide worship leadership. On August 23rd is our joint service with Edwards and Plymouth Churches which will be on our back lawn.

You may remember Kate - she was the seminarian at Edwards Church and she preached at Grace last summer. Kate has graduated from Boston University and is doing her clinical pastoral chaplaincy this fall.

This decision to have one person for almost every Sunday in August would allow the members of the interim search to be able to go and experience worship with a potential candidate at another location.

At this time, we do not know when we will have an interim pastor in place. If we still need to have coverage for worship in September, Terri and I will take care of it. If both of us need to be away, Kate said she is available and we also have a pulpit supply list that we can use.

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 Interim Search Team, pray for our church as we continue our next steps in our future and please keep our congregation in your prayers.

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

*May the sun bring you new energy by day,
May the moon softly restore you by night,
May the rain wash away your worries,
May the breeze blow new strength into your being,*

May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life.

- Apache Blessing

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