

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Informational Meeting May 31

In order for members to hear more about proposed governance changes before the June 7 meeting, there will be an Informational Meeting after church on Sunday, May 31. Linda Dunbrack will lead this discussion along with Linda Hilliard and Pastor Brad Watters.

Note: Linda D. will be away the weekend of the congregational meeting, so we encourage everyone to attend the May 31 meeting so that you can hear this presentation with Linda participating.

## Congregational Meeting June 7

The congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, June 7, immediately after church. The purpose of this meeting is to accept the annual reports, vote on the Nominating Committee recommendations, and vote on proposed new governance changes. Linda Hilliard will be stepping down as Moderator at this meeting. Linda Dunbrack has said that she is willing to assume the Moderator position.

A light lunch will be served and child care provided.

## Children Lead Worship on June 14

*(Followed by an intergenerational picnic)*

The Sunday School and Worship Planning teams will be working together to help our children create and lead worship on Sunday, June 14. This promises to be a wonderful experience with the voices of young people sharing our sacred stories in word and song.

After the service, we'd like everyone to join us in the meadow for a picnic lunch. Bring your favorite picnic food, blankets and lawn games to share!

Note: There is plenty of room in the upstairs kitchen refrigerator to store food during worship.

## Faith in Action hosts T-shirt Sunday on June 14

Got a favorite T-shirt? Plan on wearing it on June 14 when Faith in Action hosts T-shirt Sunday at Grace.

This event is to give everyone a chance to show and/or tell the rest of us about any "passion" they have for some cause, person, or organization.

- Shirts can be already imprinted, like the FIA ones.
- Plain shirts can be hand printed or with words or pictures pasted on them.
- Wear a plain shirt with a sign around the neck.
- It's okay to wear several shirts!

Kids and adults are encouraged to participate and everyone is urged to come and dress casually for the day!



### Grace Notes

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Dear Ones,

May the spirit of fellowship and joy that people have encountered for over a century at Grace Congregational, United Church of Christ be with you this day and through your whole life!

We are connected. We who have been guests, been regulars, been members, been employees, and those who would describe their connectedness with Grace Church another way, we are connected.

We live a life where communication is possible and normal; across oceans and continents, across boundaries and time zones, across languages and histories, and across chasms of imagination and time itself.

"Whoa!" you say? "I was with you until that last part, Brad!" you say? "How do we communicate across time chasms and what does it even mean to communicate across 'chasms of imagination?'" you say!

I'm simply referring to the way that I feel connected to a character in a work of fiction that feels real to me. Perhaps this happens to you, when you are touched by the softening of the hard heart of Ebenezer Scrooge as he gazes upon Tiny Tim and sees the boy for the first time.

*He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.*

*"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."*

*"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."*

*"No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."*

In a similar way, consider the words of Abraham Lincoln from his Second Inaugural speech in March, 1865, the Civil War virtually over.

*With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.*

The compassion Abraham Lincoln exhorted from his country inspires me today and connects me across time with him and that moment. How about you?

One of the great tasks of civilization is to expand human compassion. Christians have a particular source of energy to fuel the 'passion' that makes compassion both an attitude and an act. Never forget, dear ones, that we draw on the power, the example, and the essence of Jesus. The burden of knowing and caring about others in our community and around the world grows ever more daunting and exhausting. Our compassion is not adequate to the task. So we turn to beautiful Jesus who loved his disciples and loved "the least of these." We bring our overtaxed compassion to the one who asked for our burdens. As we love Jesus, we are refreshed and renewed. Indeed, the whole Christian project should be about helping all who seek renewal, transformation, purpose, and passion to find the living water waiting for those who love Jesus, love to tell the story, and seek the holy in every place.

Seek the holy in every place. Tell the story. Love Jesus. Be refreshed in your compassion. And may you find this day,

Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad

## Women's Lectio: Three events

### End of "season" Lectio and Potluck June 8th

Women's Lectio will gather on Monday June 8th starting at 7:00. We will share a meal of whatever we bring and then explore scripture using the Lectio Divina art form. All are welcome to join us!

### Mini-retreat with Open Spirit, May 31

Women of Grace are invited for an evening of fellowship and spiritual exploration. We will meet at Grace on Sunday, May 31st at 4:30 and enjoy a meal together. After dinner we will attend the new worship offering "Open Spirit" that is a collaborative effort of the UCC that combines visual, musical and other forms of art in an integrated and interactive worship experience in the Christian tradition.

### Women's Retreat

This year our 24 hour retreat will be held in September - Friday the 18th until Saturday the 19th - in Cohasset. This is the retreat center we have used the last few years to our great benefit.

If you have any questions about the Lectio group, contact Laura Buck or Terri Taylor.

## Darfur Action needed – immediately

*By Linda Dunbrack*

We've spent a significant amount of time praying for Sudan and Darfur as a faith community. Here is another way you can help.

In the last two weeks, the Sudanese government prevented Darfur delegates from traveling to a peace conference, appointed a man wanted for war crimes as the governor of a critical border region between North and South Sudan, and has yet to make good on promises of unfettered access for humanitarian groups to provide clean water, sanitation and essential health care services. It's become clear that the Bashir regime is not committed to peace-and that peace is dependent on President Obama's leadership.

Sign Save Darfur's citizen open letter to President Obama, urging the President to address the immediate humanitarian crisis in Darfur and to achieve long term peace through a political solution for all of Sudan.

It isn't just one voice that will get our leaders' attention, but thousands of voices speaking as one. The rainy season in Darfur is coming soon, and it will only make matters worse for the over 1.1 million people at risk due to Sudan's expulsion of major aid organizations. We can't wait another day. That's why I just signed this letter from the Darfur activist community to restore aid and end the violence, and I hope you will take a minute and do so as well.

**You can sign messages to President Obama and other legislators electronically on the following website - [www.addyourvoice.org](http://www.addyourvoice.org)**

### Ministries

### Christian Education

May was a busy month for Christian Education at Grace. Grace Women United representatives, Lynn Burdett, Jean Burr and Beverly Ablondi, prepared school supplies and led the children in assembling school bag kits to send to the Church World Service. Lynn and Jean led a lesson around the importance and function of Church World Service and mission work in general. It was great for the kids to participate in a hands-on way and thus experience the pleasure of taking action to solve a problem and of helping folks in need. Our sincere and hearty thanks to GWU for providing this opportunity to, and for teaching important lessons to our children.

We all learned many more important lessons from the inter-generational service presented on Mother's Day. Our enthusiastic thanks for this beautiful service goes to the worship planning team of Brad Watters, Terry Taylor, Linda Dunbrack, Karolyne White and all others who helped. CE especially appreciates the specific efforts to include the children as active participant-leaders as this conveys our appreciation and respect for them as members of our faith community. Our gracious thanks to Daleen Perkins and her helpers for teaching the weeks on Pentacost: Earth and Fire from the Come Join the Circle curriculum. This introduction to and in-depth exploration of Pentacost really helps our children to more fully

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**Mary Memmott,  
Member at Large**

### **Cans for Communion – June 7th**

This month the food pantry has especially requested: CEREAL, TUNA, and PEANUT BUTTER. 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.

### **Ready for fun at the farm? – All ages invited! Saturday, June 6**

This is our third year as members of Stearns Farm, Framingham, and you may wonder why we encourage our members to join us in digging in the dirt at a farm just down the road.

*Where's the mission?* If you join us, we think you'll find the answer. Each year when we show up to dig and plant, someone from the farm remarks that we must have a large church – to find so many folks willing to kneel in the dirt on a Saturday morning. We're proud to tell them that we are small but mighty. Weeks later, when we make our first delivery of beautiful berries, lettuce, and greens to the Framingham food pantry, we get to enjoy the "oohs" and "ahhs" of surprised clients patient-

ly lined up for the usual canned goods. Faith in action doesn't get much more hands-on than this!

Children can get into the planting work or spend time in the children's garden sand-box and trying out the big swing. For those with slightly older knees, there are always some "seated-at-the-picnic-table" jobs available, under a shady tree. We'll keep you supplied with water and good company – and hopefully we'll keep our reputation for showing up in force when needed at the farm!

This year's work date is Saturday, June 6, 9:45 a.m. – 12 noon. Please sign up at church by May 31 if you'd like to join us, or email Mary Memmott. If you'd like to get breakfast and car-pool, meet at Grace at 9:00 for bagels and juice and we'll leave at 9:30 for the farm at 862 Edmands Road, Framingham. You can stay for "stone soup" lunch at noon (highly recommended!), or head home when the lunch bell rings. Dress for the weather – only if it's a steady, heavy rain will the day be cancelled.

Even if you can't make the Saturday work-day, all members of Grace are invited to the farm's Opening Celebration and Orientation on Sunday, June 7, starting at 11 a. m, with a potluck lunch at noon. As the season continues, we will be looking for members to sign up for produce pick-up on alternate Fridays, starting June 19th. 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.

Looking forward to the first strawberries of June– if you come to the farm,



## **Christian Education**

*Continued from page three*

appreciate the intergenerational celebration in service May 31, and to develop spiritually as well as intellectually. Thank you enormously for your selfless caring and compassion. June will be full of celebrations and rejoicing.

The summer Christian Education Program, "Camp Grace," will be held July 12 and 19, and August 24 and 30. The DPW work on the sewer lines July 26, and Aug 2, and 9 will require us to worship away from our current site. Big thanks (and a loud cheer!) for Mary Memmott who is organizing the summer Sunday School program. Mary is happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Daleen Perkins, Ronda Yeomans**

## Ministries

### Stewards

Jean Burr, Chair  
Frank Carney  
Judy Sebastian  
Tim Taylor

stewards@  
gracechurchucc.org

## Stewards

Thanks to those who willingly gave of their time and muscle to work on the yard clean-up in early May. Help is still needed to keep the weeds down, so feel free to pull! (Just be sure to watch out for poison ivy.) When a load of mulch is delivered, we will be looking for assistance as well. Also, if anyone

has extra annuals, we could use them to brighten up the area.

It appears that the sewer project reported in the last issue of Grace Notes will be taking place during the last week of July and the first week in August. Alternate plans for worship and other activities will be announced as available. Because of the extent of damage to the parking lot, we will be fortunate in that a new one will be provided at no cost to us. Any other resulting damage to the lawn, fences, play yard will be repaired or replaced.

Now that summer is approaching please remember to keep your pledge giving up to date if at all possible. Vacation time often means a delay in giving, putting pressure on our cash flow.

Please attend the congregational meeting on June 7, read the annual reports, and offer your time and talents to one or more of the programs at Grace! We are small and to remain mighty, we all need to lend a hand.

## Faith in Action

Faith in Action is having a busy and fun spring! This issue will go to print before the presentation on May 26 by Nutritionist Camille Hendsbee but we are looking forward to it and hope it will be as successful as the lectures in March and April.

Because a few have asked, and because it's so much fun, we have talked about a bringing back the NRFATP group. (If you've been around for several years, you'll know what that means. If you don't know, ask around!) We are currently discussing the logistics to make this possible.

Our next meeting will be following worship on June 28. Please join us for some conversation!



## Grace Church calendar - June

|        |                                 |  |         |                                 |   |
|--------|---------------------------------|--|---------|---------------------------------|---|
| May 31 | 10:00 AM<br>11:15 AM<br>6:00 PM | Worship<br>Informational Meeting<br>Women's Lectio<br>Mini Retreat | June 10 | 11:30 AM                        | GWU meeting lunch<br>at J.J. MacKay                   |
| June 1 | 1:00 PM                         | Worship Planning   | June 14 | 10:00 AM<br>11:30 AM<br>1:00 PM | Worship<br>Church School Picnic<br>Confirmation class |
| June 2 | 7:30 PM                         | Central Council  | June 15 | 1:00 PM                         | Worship Planning                                      |
| June 6 | 8:00 AM<br>9:30 AM<br>6:30 PM   | Men's Group<br>Stearns Farm<br>Confirmation                        | June 17 | 7:30 PM                         | Stewards  |
| June 7 |                                 | Cans for Communion   | June 19 |                                 | Stearns Farm pickup                                   |
|        | 10:00 AM<br>11:15 AM            | Worship<br>Lunch and<br>Congregational Mtg                         | June 21 | Confirmation Sunday<br>10:00 AM | Worship   |
| June 8 | 1:00 PM<br>7:30 PM              | Worship Planning<br>Women's Lectio<br>Pot Luck                     | June 24 | Eat at Eagles<br>10:00 AM       | Book Club   |
|        |                                 |  | June 28 | 10:00 AM<br>11:30 AM            | Worship<br>Faith in Aciton                            |
|        |                                 |  | June 29 | 1:00 PM                         | Worship Planning                                      |

## Grace Women United luncheon

GWU members will be going to JJ McKays Restaurant on Route 30 in Cochituate for its June luncheon on Wednesday, June 10th. We will meet there at 11:30.

All women of Grace Church are members of Grace Women United and are encouraged to join this fun event. If you plan on attending, please notify Lynn Burdett so she can make reservations.

## Linda's daughter to go on medical mission to Peruvian Amazon

Linda Hilliard's daughter, Dorothy McGrath, who is a physician's assistant, is going to Peru with a medical team to help out villagers along the Amazon. Many of you know Dorothy, who was raised and confirmed in Grace Church. Dorothy and her husband live in Amesbury and have two children, ages 3 and 5. Dorothy's letter says:

*Dear Family and Friends,*

*It is with great excitement that I write to tell you about my plan to travel to Peru with a medical team for two weeks at the end of July. I have been accepted into a program called Amazon Promise ([www.AmazonPromise.com](http://www.AmazonPromise.com)), which takes medical volunteers into the remote jungle of Peru to give medical care to the natives along the Amazon River. This expedition provides desperately needed medicine, education, and training for the villagers, some of whom have never received health care.*

*This expedition is an amazing opportunity to help others, as well as gain invaluable knowledge of local culture and tradition. My team will be accompanied by a local shaman who will teach us about medicinal plants and traditional healing practices that have served these communities for hundreds of years.*

*It is with a humble heart that I ask for your help with the cost of this trip. Donations will assist with travel expenses (all volunteers pay their own way) and the purchase of much needed medical supplies. Amazon Promise has access to basic medical items for our team to use on the expedition. Donations will be used to bring additional supplies and medicines to further our care capabilities.*

Of course - any financial donations would be appreciated - but Dorothy also has a list of things she would like to bring- clothing, shoes, T-shirts, school supplies, sewing kits and so on (all have to fit in her suitcase). Speak to Linda for more information.

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The Book Club's summer reading is *Mary, Called Magdalene* by Margaret George.