

Grace is a Green Church!

GRACE NOTES

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

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In this Issue

- Congregational Mtg.....1
- From the Pastor.....2
- Church Calendar.....2
- 21-Day Challenge.....3
- Missions.....3
- Kermit's Korner.....4
- Faith in Action4
- Transition movie.....4
- Christian Ed.....4
- GWU/Book Club.....4
- Help the Homeless.....5
- Deacons.....6

Congregational Meeting

Dear Grace Community:

As moderator, I am calling a congregational meeting to be held on Sunday, June 15 to convene concurrently with the worship service at approximately 10:00 am.

The June meeting provides an opportunity to reflect on our work and ministries, both as individuals and as a congregation, and to consider our path ahead, given our newly redefined mission.

The agenda will include the following:

- Acceptance of the congregational meeting minutes from January
- Hearing reports from those leading various ministries and accepting the Annual Report
- A financial update
- Affirmation of Leadership and Stewardship teams, Officers, and delegates
- New Mission: Our path ahead
- How shall we minister to Ivan Ray?

Come celebrate another year of Grace Church in ministry together. We are at our best when we are gathered so I encourage you to attend our worship/celebration/meeting on June 15th.

*Blessings,
Linda Dunbrack, Moderator*

Note: Following the meeting, the Sunday School will host its annual end-of-the-program-year celebration - with ice cream for all!

From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

How is your memory of the Book of Genesis? With all the drama, epics, and archetypes, Genesis is just packed! Let's run through a few.

Creation, creation again, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood (creation yet again,) the Tower of Babel (that would be another creation story,) Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, Lot & Co., Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, playing host to angels, wrestling with angels, brother-betrayals, famine, journeys to Egypt, and a whole mess of "begats!" Some of these moments, characters, and plots resonate with my life.

How about yours?

One dramatic moment happens when Joseph was first a servant, a slave, for Potiphar, who was "an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard." Joseph gets on well in his job until the day he is falsely accused of inappropriate physical contact by Potiphar's wife.

And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison. Genesis 39:20

There was no trial, no evidence-gathering, no judge, and certainly no jury. The way Egypt worked in those days was the way that authoritarian systems work most of the time. The most important factor in the economic, justice, and social system is the relative power of each person. What is important is who has power, who carried

the day, and can be expected to show power in the future. The playing field isn't even supposed to be level. It's supposed to be the way it is.

In our time and nation, we hold to ideals of a justice system that is based on something other than the preferences of those in power. We have tried, with varying degrees of success, to establish a law enforcement that is just. It may be that for you law enforcement has been just, appropriate, reasonable, consistent - fair. That wasn't the case for Joseph.

Joseph needed circumstances - fate - to turn around for him. That's just what happened. He made his way back into trust, out of jail, and upward in the Egyptian realm until he was as powerful as anyone, anyone who wasn't the Pharaoh himself. Actually, the Bible attributes the turnaround with its well-known explanation, "because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper." In fairness, the text also gives some credit to Joseph's skills, although if we say Joseph was a gifted steward we might have an inkling of who gave Joseph the gift.

Have you been falsely accused?

Have you been in a position where you didn't and couldn't move forward in your job or your relationship with someone? Have you ever been stuck? If you have longed for deep sustenance through the difficult

Continued on page three

June Calendar

Sunday, June 1

(Cans for Communion*)
9:00 AM Singers rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

Saturday, June 7

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast

Sunday, June 8

(Cans for Communion*)
9:00 AM Singers rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

Wednesday, June 11

11:30 AM GWU luncheon
at Dolphin, Natick

Sunday, June 15

9:00 AM Singers rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship and
Congregational Mtg.
11:30 AM End of program year
celebration - ice cream
for all

Wednesday, June 18

2:00 PM Service at Carlylse
House

Saturday, June 21

9:00 AM Stearns Farm Workday

Sunday, June 22

9:00 AM Singers rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

Sunday, June 29

9:00 AM Singers rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

Wednesday, July 2nd

Book Club

* The Food Pantry needs:
Cooking oil
Basic oatmeal (no sugar)
Tuna
Pasta
Re-sealable spaghetti sauce

Could you be a “Farm-to-Food Bank” Volunteer?

Grace Church partners with Stearns Farm and the Framingham “Hope” Food Pantry to provide a share of fresh fruits and vegetables to the pantry throughout the harvest season. This helps pantry clients supplement canned and dried goods with fresh food as much as possible.

Farm-to-Food Bank Volunteers need to be available on a Friday afternoon (anytime between 2-7 p.m.) to pick up fresh produce at Stearns Farm (Edmunds Road in Framingham). This involves weighing and bagging produce, and sometimes some light “pick-your-own.” The process takes about one hour. Produce is bagged, labeled, and stored in a cooler that is then delivered by the volunteer to the pantry (Concord St., Framingham) the next morning (Saturday) at 9 a.m. for distribution during pantry hours. If you are not available to bring the food to the pantry on Saturday, drop-off on Friday can sometimes be arranged.

We are looking for volunteers every Friday through mid-October. Volunteers always take home a sample of fresh herbs, flowers, and their favorite fruit or vegetable --some berries just have to eaten that day! For more information see Mary Memmott or talk to Linda Hilliard, Terri Taylor, or Ronda Yeomans -- all past volunteers. See you at the farm!

Note: The Stearns Farm Work Day is Saturday, June 21, beginning at 9:00 AM



Pastor's column

Continued from page two

time, I urge you to consider your heritage as a Christian.

You inherit the love of God that God has for all creation - open yourself to how that can buoy you up. You inherit a practice of praying for just what you need (your daily bread) and no more - open yourself to that hope. You inherit a way of living in which each of us shares with each other (see Acts 4:32) - open yourself to your brothers and sisters in faith that they might know your need and share with you their strength.

Joseph did find his way out of the fix where he was stuck. May this be your story too! May you always find your way through the stuck places you encounter and realize that those stuck places do not completely define your life. Your life is alive in the very being of God, the Holy One, the Source. *That* is where you live and move and have your being. The place where you're stuck? That's just a place you are in for now.

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

21-Day Challenge

We are well on our way to meeting our 21-Day Challenge. What “21-Day Challenge” you ask? Let me remind you!

We have done the hard work and redefined our mission. Part of the validation of that work is to “put your money where your mouth is,” “You talked the talk now let's see you walk the walk,” and “Go big or go home.” Well, maybe not that last one, but you get the idea.

So our process included taking up a challenge that would be tangible and have a visible effect on our physical property. Our choice is to build and plant a garden bed accessible to someone using a wheelchair.

The first part of the work was to build the elevated bed.

1) Brownie and Brad searched the web to find design ideas and building advice.

2) Frank and Carl pored over that material and chose a simple design and set of plans for our prototype garden. See the plan at <http://www.addicted-2decorating.com/how-to-build-an-elevated-garden.html>

3) Brad and Tim spent 4 hours one Saturday (making a few design choices and) building the prototype and you can see it at church.

The second part of the work is to plant the garden. This work is happening May 29-June 1st. Look for updates on the church Facebook page at “Grace Church Framingham” and check out the Accessible Garden at Grace Church!

Brad Watters



Being "Green"

At few years ago, I was quoted saying: "Being green isn't easy." Things have changed since then, especially in Framingham and surrounding towns. Green is becoming the key word to help us live in a cleaner world; a least where we all live. The good people of Transitions, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and other volunteers have done a great job cleaning up the area around my home. I'm not at liberty to say where that is; let's just call it "Stream - Lake - Pond". I see solar panel's warm hugs embracing roof tops, home and community garden plants waving their green arms in the spring air, and smiling neighbors dropping their foam waste off to be recycled.

There's still a lot to be done, but I just want to thank you humans for helping to make a little "green" frog's day.

Kermit

Christian Education

6/1 -- Ronda teaches SS
6/8 -- intergenerational worship/communion
6/15 -- Father's Day and end-of-year ice cream celebration

We may have some Sunday school dates in the summer -- TBA!

Grace Women United

GWU will meet on Wednesday, June 11th at noon at the Dolphin (Natick) for the annual end of the year luncheon.



Book Club

The Book Club next meets on July 2nd. Book to be announced.

Lynn Burdett

Grace Notes

There will be no July Grace Notes. The next issue will be out in early August.

Faith in Action

The May 31 production by the Not Ready for Anytime Players was a huge success. An overwhelming thank you to our Director, Daleen Perkins! Also, of course, thanks to the cast, kitchen cooks and crew, audience (40 people attending!) and, of course, Framingham Green for allowing us to use their function room.

Although there was no actual meeting of the Faith in Action team in May, there was no lack of Grace Church members putting our faith into action throughout the month. The only reason we seem to need meetings is when we are planning a specific project, requiring "details", or to evaluate an event which has occurred. What began as the name for a team has become a valid description of what we are all about here at Grace Congregational UCC.

Jean Burr

Transition Framingham
Invites you to a free screening of
A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil

A Host City of the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™
ALL IN ONE RHYTHM™
12 June - 14 July

Monday 6/30/2014, 7pm
Framingham Public Library—Costin Room
49 Lexington Street, Framingham, MA

There is hope! This inspirational documentary shows a city where urban solutions are not just theory, but a reality. The film shows innovations in the areas of transportation, recycling, social benefits (affordable housing), parks, and the great philosophy behind the successful leaders that transformed Curitiba into a model green city.

Please join us for a discussion after the movie!!

<http://transitionframingham.org/>

A Big Thank you to our Spring Movie Series Co-Sponsors!

- Grace Church ▪ Framingham Sierra Club ▪
- Transition Wayland ▪ Transition Ashland ▪
- Edwards Church ▪ Open Spirit ▪
- Vegan MetroWest Network ▪ Plymouth Church ▪
- Climate Action Team of First Parish in Framingham UU

Hope for Homeless Families with Children

Ronda Yeomans

The AVERAGE age of a homeless person in the US is 8 years old. This is the startling sort of fact I've learned by forging a Grace Church connection with the Family Promise Metrowest organization and the Family Services Coalition. Both of these groups serve families struggling with insufficient shelter and basic living supplies in Natick and Framingham.

Family Promise Metrowest is a "cooperative, interfaith partnership offering hope to homeless families with children through safe transitional shelter, meals and supportive case management as they seek permanent housing." The Family Services Coalition is an "all-volunteer coalition that provides a wide range of services to meet the needs of families placed in the Travelodge Motel in Natick."

I know we are all very busy, but I also know that helping families in need of shelter is just the

... we could hand out lunches at the Travelodge between 11:30 and 12:30 for four Thursdays in July. I want to step up to this challenge and am hoping you are also interested in helping....

sort of thing the compassionate hearts of Grace Church would really find gratifying. Especially since there is a wide range of volunteer jobs, some of which are an ongoing commitment, but some are just a one time thing and do not require a big time commitment.

One example of a brief, limited time commitment is handing out lunches to kids at the Travelodge for an hour once a week for 4 weeks in July or August. With summer vacation a few weeks away, homeless children need to figure out how they'll eat when free school breakfasts and lunches aren't provided over the summer months. Betsy Griffin of the Family Services Coalition (FSC) explained that Project Bread will donate free food to the approximately 113 youth and children at the Route 9 Travelodge for July and August, but only if FSC can find volunteers to distribute the meals each day. Betsy's hope is

FSC Volunteer Opportunities

Ronda can send interested church members a detailed copy of this volunteer listing or go to: www.familyservicescoalition.org

- Twelve Summer Food Program Volunteers
- Summer Food Program Coordinator
- Summer Program Coordinator
- Distribution Coordinator:
- Education Coordinator
- Volunteer Tutors
- Transportation Volunteers
- Van Volunteer Drivers

to have community organizations such as Grace commit to distributing food one day each week for one month.

For example, if Thursday is convenient for Grace Church volunteers, we could hand out lunches at the Travelodge between 11:30 and 12:30 for four Thursdays in July. I want to step up to this challenge and am hoping you are also interested in helping. High school juniors and seniors are welcome. Volunteers must attend a training session. I will find out when the trainings be held and what happens when a volunteer is unavailable.

FSC has a long list of volunteer opportunities (above) which I am happy to forward to anyone who asks. Upcoming meetings will be held at 1pm at the First Parish UU in Framingham on June 19, July 31 and Aug. 28. They are open to the general public.

Please contact me (508-877-7504; mrce.yeomans@verizon.net) and let me know you are interested in helping on this or other projects to benefit these families.

Each time the Family Services Coalition meets, they send me meeting minutes, a list of volunteer opportunities, and an action item sign up sheet.

For more information about the Family Promise Metrowest organization, go to: <http://www.familypromisemetrowest.org/history.html> or call Carole Brodrick 508-318-4820.

For more information about the Family Services Coalition, go to: <http://www.familyservicescoalition.org/homelessness-facts.html> or call Eva Benda at (508) 872-7125.

Deacons

*May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.*

—St. Therese of Lisieux
(1873-1897)

People of Grace,
Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit descended onto Jesus' disciples. While they were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festival of Pentecost, the disciples saw flames among and on them, heard a rushing wind and began talking in many languages. As a result, the disciples were able to share the good news of Jesus in the native tongues of all the pilgrims assembled in the city.

Even today, the power of the Holy Spirit fuels the "flame" that ignites Christians' outreach efforts. Only by the Spirit's power can we know Christ and make him known throughout the world.

Poet William Blake (1757-1827), who's been described as a

passionate, Pentecost kind of person, wrote this poem about the Spirit's power:

*Unless the eye catch fire,
The God will not be seen.
Unless the ear catch fire,
The God will not be heard.
Unless the tongue catch fire,
The God will not be named.
Unless the heart catch fire,
The God will not be loved.
Unless the mind catch fire,
The God will not be known.*

June 8 is Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church, the day we commemorate the disciples being filled with the flames of the Holy Spirit, the day the Christian Church began. The liturgical color for Pentecost Sunday is Red. Please wear something red on June 8th to join in the celebration - "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me." Amen.

June 15 is Father's Day and we wish all fathers and all who have taken on the role of father a Happy Father's Day!

As we journey on our Mission Redefinition with our immediate project of raised beds, let us remain in prayerful discernment of how we can continue provide something different for our community. Our first raised bed being planted on the first of June will be a beacon to everyone who passes by our church.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."

—Robert Louis Stevenson

Pastor Brad will be on vacation the latter part of June. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact me. If I cannot help, I will be able to contact one of the clergy that will be on call.

Please do not forget that our church cares about your well-being, if the church can be of any help, please be in touch with one of us. Please keep our congregation in your prayers. God is with us and among us! God does and will provide! Our prayers are that you find time to replenish yourself - mind, body and soul - and join us at church!

*Have Hope in your Heart
Have Peace in your Soul
Have Love in your Life
Have Joy in each Moment
Now and Always.*

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

Storm Closings

WCVB-TV channel 5 carries the Grace Church cancellation listing. Or check email, Facebook or call Ruth Carney at home.

Altar Flowers

Ruth Carney can order altar flowers from (approximately \$43) or you may bring flowers. If there is a special event in the life of Grace that you would like acknowledged with flowers, let Ruth know.