

GRACE NOTES

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

World Day of Prayer

Saturday, March 6, 2010
11:00AM
Plymouth Church
Lunch following for \$5.00
(Please pre-register for lunch)
Registration at 10:45AM

Refer questions to Judy Sebastian at
508-877-0175

Bonfire Party at Grace!

Actually, more of a pot fire in our firepot!

Saturday, February 27
7:00 PM

*This will be low-key fun
for everyone!*



We'll have

- Fire pot
- Firewood and toasting sticks
- Marshmallows and chocolate
 - Graham Crackers
 - Hot cider

What should you bring?

- Flashlights
- Warm clothes, gloves, hats, snow boots
- Friends

Refer questions to Pastor Brad

You're Invited to Write an Essay About Grace Church

How do you feel about Grace Church? Why have you committed to Grace through your pledges, your attendance, your attention, your joining to work on worship, a meal, a small group, the yard, and so on?

During Lent, the Grace Research and Discovery Team invites you to write down a few thoughts that reflect your feelings about your church.

This is a spiritual exercise for those who choose to participate. Take pen to hand - or hands to keyboard - and tell us (in 200 words or less) what it is about Grace Church that feeds you, why have you stayed with our church, what makes you proud of Grace Church and its members? When you speak of Grace to others, what do you say? What is it that nourishes your life here? What about Grace feels like the presence of God? Consider Grace now and into the future - not the church of the past.

You don't have to be a great writer to participate. In fact, if you would prefer to be interviewed, we can arrange to do that.

With your permission, some of these essays will appear in *Grace Notes*. Others may be read at a Sunday service. If we receive enough, they may be put into a booklet form. Or - you can journal your feelings - and opt not to have them go public at all.

Below is an essay that former member Sharon Kenrick send to us a while back. It's a terrific way to launch this program.

"I want to answer the question, 'What does our town and the world need from Grace Congregational UCC?' How do I say it? We need to be

what we have always been - out front!!! That means that we will be small because we don't fit the mold. We push the edges. ALSO though, we have the ability to get

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Pastor's Note

Dear Ones,

Are you familiar with this passage?

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

It comes from the second chapter of Luke and, since Luke is such a good read, you might pull out your Bible and read the whole chapter to get the context. They are the words, a song really, from an old man. His name is Simeon.

We had an old car in the family when I was a child. It was a Buick that had once been blue. I guess it was about a 1930 model. I never rode in it on a proper road. Once a year, my father would fire it up and we'd go for a ride through the orchard roads in rural Maine. It always seemed like an indispensable part of summer. That car was still working long after most of its brothers and sisters had been turned into rust, or perhaps scrap for World War II. That car had a name. It was Simeon.

Simeon, the Buick, made it into the late '60's when my Dad sold it to a guy. Dad wanted to find a home for the car that would lead to its restoration. I seem to remember that a few years later, he saw a refurbished Buick in about the right part of Maine that he was pretty sure was Simeon with a new lease on life. What new adventures did that car have as its life took a new turn? We don't know. I'd like to think that Simeon is still brought out for 4th of July parades, somewhere, and

that kids still get to ride in the old fellow.

When Simeon, the man, sang his song, he had just held a baby in his arms. It is the only moment of his life we know about at all and the reason we know is because the baby was Jesus. What happened to Simeon after this moment is anybody's guess. I'd like to think that he lived on for some years, long enough, perhaps, for Mary or Joseph or even Jesus to catch a glimpse of him moving through the streets the way old men move, shining through the daylight the way one shines who has seen God at work in his own life.

Simeon was waiting for the messiah. Are you waiting for something too? Let us pray: *O worker of wonders, we are waiting. Come fill our lives with the breath of forever. Come lighten our load by trading it with yours. Come create again in our lives Amen.*

Peace and Blessing,

Taking Stock

Stores check their inventory on a regular basis to enable them to figure out what's selling and needs reordering. Churches can do that too.

Two years ago, we gathered the Grace Church family at the UCC Conference center to check our inventory. Were you there? We had some food and some brief talk about redevelopment. Then we filled out the Natural Church Development survey. The results have been useful in setting priorities for our redevelopment work over the past two years. Notably, many of us have worked through "The Three Colors of Ministry" and its spiritual gifts assessment (a personal inventory of sorts!) We have also altered our organizational structure, made changes in our worship life, and modified our processes for starting new ministries.

It is time for us to convene again in that mode. Again we'll talk about redevelopment and retake that survey. We'll also share some food and provide child care.

Watch for a meeting date to be announced soon. And please plan on attending this important meeting.

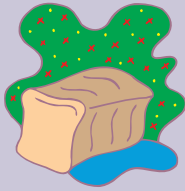
Essays *Continued from page one)*

the other churches to work together. And that may be our next mission. We are not a threat so we can, may ask them to work with us.

When I was last in church with Brooke, I said to her that Grace was a church that reflected the church that God would have wanted. We don't match!!! We are old and young, black and white, smart and challenged, moneyed and poor, very religious and not, etc. I would not be the person I am today if I had not been a member of Grace. And who am I? A person still becoming a child of God and still learning!!! I am so blessed to have walked to that church and found all of you.

Send essays to Jean Burr or Linda Hilliard. We would appreciate receiving them by the end of March

Bread Sale on Palm Sunday and Collection for Appalachia



Don't miss Grace Women United's annual Palm Sunday Bake Sale on Sunday, March 28, immediately after church.

This is a two -part event:

- Moneys earned from the bake sale will go toward the Appalachia Project.
- We are also looking for the donation of gently used shoes, sneakers, children's books and school and art supplies to send to Appalachia.

The Appalachia project is spearheaded by Anke and Frits Geurstin of Holliston who sponsor four elementary schools in Appalachia. They send packages of supplies weekly to the schools (at a cost of \$40 to \$70 per shipment).



This is an opportunity to buy delicious, home-made breads, and muffins for Easter - and support an important cause.

Volunteers are needed to provide baked goods and help with set up and sales. Speak to Lynn Burdett if you can lend a hand.

Faith in Action Presents Exploring End of Life Decisions


Saturday, April 17
10:00 AM to 2:30 PM

This free public seminar is designed to help you and your family deal with end of life issues.

- Estate Planning Attorney Tracey Ingle will discuss Avoiding Probate, Estate Planning, Wills, Health Care Proxies, Medicaid, Veteran's Benefits, Power of Attorney, Charitable Planning.
- A funeral home representative will review making funeral arrangements. Learn how to plan ahead for a funeral, what to expect when dealing with a funeral director, how to make this difficult time a little easier.
- Reverend Bradford Watters of Grace Church will talk about dealing with the culmination of our lives, preparing a funeral or memorial service, and talking with friends and family about your wishes.

Watch for details in the next Grace Notes.

Grace Church calendar - March

March 6	8:00 AM 11:00 AM	Men's Group World Day of Prayer	March 17	7:30 PM	Stewards
March 7	Bring Sandwich Supplies for Worcester trip (see page4) 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship	March 21	One Great House of Sharing 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship
March 8	7:30 PM	Women's Lectio	March 24	10:00 AM 5:30 PM	Book Club Eagles
March 10	11:30 AM	GWU to Keefe Tech	March 28	8:45 AM 10:00 AM 11:15 AM	Singers Worship Congregational conversation
March 14	8:45 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM	Singers Worship Faith in Action Trip to Worcester Fellowship			 Palm Sunday Bread Sale

Missions

One Great Hour of Sharing – March 21st

By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you connect with communities suffering from poverty, illiteracy, illness, and the dangers of wars and disasters all over the world. By the time a crisis becomes news, your offerings are already at work. This year the focus of the OGHS campaign is “feed my sheep.” For stories of how your donations change lives, you can check out

the UCC website at: www.ucc.org/oghs

To help you focus your giving, please consider using the attached “giving calendar” (page six) from the UCC, for a week or two, or as long as you are able. Envelopes are included with the printed issue of *Grace Notes*, and checks can be made out to “Grace Church,” just note “One Great Hour of Sharing” in the memo line. We will take up this collection on Sunday, March 21st.

We hope as many families as possible will be able to join us on March 14th for this special service and worship opportunity. Parents, due to the relatively young age of our “youth group” we need a high ratio of adults to children on this trip, so we hope you can join us. Other adults from the church family are welcome, too! We will meet at church for bagels to fuel us up, and lunch preparation at 10 during Sunday school time, leave for Worcester by 11, and be back in Framingham around 2:30 p.m. Please contact Mary Memmott with any questions.

Stewards

We would like to remind all parents and Sunday School leaders to be sure the children are aware of what to do should there ever be a fire in our building. Be certain that they are aware of the exits and where they should go outside in the event of a drill or, of course, a real need to evacuate the building. There are maps posted to indicate the exits.

It isn't too soon to be thinking about how we might like to spruce up our grounds this spring. If you have suggestions, or would like to brainstorm with a team, please contact one of the Stewards. (This doesn't mean you are committing to dig and weed.) Also, if you ever have a concern about the building or grounds, please contact us.

Grace Women United

Grace Women United will be going to Keefe Tech for lunch on March 10. Speak to Lynn Burdett or Nancy Brown to reserve a space.

Cans for Communion – Sunday, March 7th – Special Collection of Snacks and Sandwich Supplies for Worcester Fellowship

Instead of cans, this month we will collect snacks and sandwich-making supplies. This will help us provide lunch for our friends at Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church on Worcester Common that provides spiritual care and community in downtown Worcester. Pick a snack or sandwich item from the board in the fellowship hall, then bring your item to church for “Cans for Communion” on March 7th. If you don't get a chance to pick a particular tag, extra packets of peanut-butter and cheese crackers or juice boxes are always welcome. Lunch will be delivered Sunday, March 14th. See Mary Memmott for details.

March 14th -- Trip to Worcester Fellowship

The Sunday school students have started talking about their planned mission trip to Worcester this month as we study “lost and found” stories in the Bible.

Earth-Care Event – “Low- Carbon” Cooking Workshop

Save April 11 for an afternoon of exploring low-waste, vegetarian cooking in a fun and family-friendly atmosphere in the kitchen at Edwards Church, 1-4 p.m. on Sunday April 11. Bring a freezer-safe container and leave with some tasty home-cooked items. If you can't make it, look for samples of our efforts at the recycling day on April 24. Sign-up information and more details to follow!

Mary Memmott

**Next Styrofoam
Collection Day**

**April 24
Watch for details**



Deacons

People of Grace,

Advent prepares us for Christ's birth; Lent prepares us for Christ's resurrection.

- The Lenten Journey began on Ash Wednesday (this year February 17th) and continues for forty days. Have you decided on a Lenten practice yet? In the last issue of Grace Notes, we suggested that it is a good time to: "read, study and inwardly digest the four Gospels. (The word Gospel means "Good News.") Be filled with laughter and amazement at the brilliant son of God, who was only in his 30s. Get to know the Good News."

Have you begun yet? Did you think of another meaningful practice? If so, please share this with Ruth C. We would love to list the Lenten Practices of our congregation in the next issue.

- Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, March 28 and continues with Maundy Thursday (April 1), Good Friday (April 2) and concludes with Easter Sunday, April 4. More information will be coming about these services in the Sunday bulletins.

What is Faith?

"Sight is not faith, and hearing is not faith, neither is feeling faith; but believing when we neither see, hear nor feel is faith; and everywhere the Bible tells us our salvation is to be by faith. Therefore we must believe before we feel, and often against our feelings, if we would honor God by our faith."

-Hannah Whitall Smith

If you wish to donate to defray the costs of the Easter plants for our home-bound, any amount would be gratefully appreciated. Just put your donation in an envelope and place it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail it to Nancy B. Please indicate on the envelope it is for the Easter plants for the home-bound. Thank you.

In conclusion

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.

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.

May you always feel God's blessings,

*Ruth Carney
Karolyne White*

About Us!

Among the friends we are keeping in our prayers are Marjorie Parmenter, Daleen Perkins, Karolyne White, and Ruth Bodge.

In Case of ❄️ ❄️ ❄️ Snow Cancellation

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.

Faith in Action

WOULD YOU LIKE a good book, or a fun jigsaw puzzle to do during some of the cold, stormy days ahead? Lots of good books, puzzles, and a few tapes are available in the Grace Church library, so check it out next time you are in the building and be prepared for the next storm! Just borrow whatever you like for however long you like! (No card--no fees!)



The Book Club's
next meeting will be
March 24.

Grace Congregational, UCC

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Sharing Calendar

Both urgency and joy fill the work of One Great Hour of Sharing. The calendar below highlights some of the challenging situations we address when feeding and clothing God's sheep in the U. S. and around the world. Each day suggests a duration of time or bills. Your household can decide what unit is best for your situation each day.

"If we want something to be done, we must first do something—one thing, one small thing. The problem is that so few people really believe that small things have any kind of effectiveness at all. And yet what else is there to do? Except, of course, to do nothing—which is the most potent kind of doing that there is, perhaps, and the most limiting of all, because it dooms us to a worthless present. To do nothing is clearly doing." — Joan Chittister, writer and spiritual thinker

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NUTRITION	Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." Tell of a time when someone showed care for you by giving you food. Give two units in thanksgiving.	One in four children in developing countries is underweight. Give one unit for each pound your weight differs from your ideal.	Demand of food banks across the United States increased by 30% the most recent year for which statistics are available. Give one unit for every five cans of food in your kitchen.	The cost of "a night on the town" for a couple can provide emergency food supplies for a family of five for a month. Give one unit for each "date" or celebratory outing you had last month.	In the U.S. each month, 28 million low income people receive government supplemental nutrition assistance ("food stamps"). Give one unit for each time you ate out last month.	Malnutrition and child malnutrition cause more than one-third of child deaths. Give one unit for each meal you eat today.	In the United States, 40-50% of all food ready for harvest never gets eaten. Give one unit for each meal you ate today whenever you did not finish what was on your plate.
HEALTH	Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." Tell of a time when someone cared for you when you were sick. Give two units in thanksgiving.	Close to half of all people in developing countries suffer at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits. Give one unit for each faucet in your home.	More than a billion people worldwide do not have access to clean water. Give one unit in thanksgiving for each glass of water you drink today.	More than 2.1 million people die each year from water-borne diseases. Most of them are children. Give one unit for every time you turn on the faucet today.	Between 2000 and 2007, measles deaths worldwide, primarily due to vaccination, increased. Give one unit if you have been vaccinated for measles.	Worldwide, 4 million newborns die each year within the first month of their life. Give one unit for each child you consider part of your family and extended family.	Two-thirds of U.S. Americans are overweight, and half of those are considered obese. Give three units as a sign of commitment to help improve U.S. health.
REFUGEES	Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." Tell of a time when someone helped you through a rough time. Give two units in thanksgiving.	Nearly 11.4 million people have become refugees—fleeing conflict and persecution by occupying forces internationally. Give one unit for each year you have lived in your home.	The United States admits approximately 50,000 refugees each year. Give one unit for each person you know who came from another country.	Worldwide, 28 million people are "internally displaced"—fleeing their homes because of conflict and persecution by escaping to another part of their own country. Give one unit for each time you have moved in your life.	2.5 billion people live on less than \$2 per day—less than the cost of many meals. Give one unit for each cup of coffee or soda you drink today.	400 million fewer people live in absolute poverty today than in 1980. Give one unit in gratitude for this improvement.	Many poor villages still lack reliable electricity. The United States uses 22% of all electricity consumed in the world. Give one unit for each electrical appliance in your home.
EDUCATION, BASICS	Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." Tell of a time when someone taught you something you have found helpful in life. Give two units in thanksgiving.	Nearly a billion people entered the 21 st century unable to read a book or sign their name. Give one unit for each time you write your name today.	Providing an education to girls and young women is one of the strongest ways to end cyclical poverty. Give one unit in thanksgiving as you name each girl and woman important in your life.	The cost of a video game console can provide a sewing machine and job training to a poor family can start their own business and become self-sufficient. Give one unit for each video game your family owns.	Worldwide, over 100 million elementary school-aged children do not attend school. Give one unit for each year of formal education you have received.	One out of every three urban dwellers lives in slum conditions. Give one unit for each bedroom in your home.	Clean water reduces disease and improves nutrition. 1.6 billion more people can get safe drinking water today than in 1980. Give one unit in gratitude for this improvement.

Sources: Church World Service, United States Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Health and Human Services, United States Department of Homeland Security, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, The Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, The World Bank