

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Transition Framingham Invitation

“I Love Framingham” -- Sat., March 2nd  
9:30am-1:30 pm at the Framingham HS cafeteria

Join us for a morning of fun, community, learning, and loving our town! Together, we will start the conversation about how we can come together, as neighbors helping neighbors, to address issues that are increasingly shaping Framingham: economic instability, volatile (but rising) energy costs, and increasing extreme weather events. What can we do, right now, to make Framingham a stronger community?

Coffee, tea, pastries, lunch, and free kids’ activities all provided. Please RSVP online to help us plan for lunch options and stay updated in case of bad weather at: [www.tinyurl.com/iLove-Framingham](http://www.tinyurl.com/iLove-Framingham)

Grace Church will be particularly recognized as a sponsor of this event.

## World Day of Prayer March 2nd • Edwards Church

Edwards Church and the Community of Saint Luke will host our Framingham World Day of Prayer event on Saturday, March 2nd, at 4:00 PM at Edwards Church. The committee will serve a light meal of soup, bread and cheese as part of the event.

This year’s World Day of Prayer service includes an “open table” communion at which all are welcome to share communion. The program was written by the women of France - “I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me.”

The World Day of Prayer Committee would appreciate knowing how many people plan to attend and what churches will be represented. Please contact Judy Sebastian at Grace Church if you plan to attend.

## Congregational Discernment Enters New Phase

As those who attended January’s congregational meeting already know, we have applied to participate in “Crossroads Massachusetts, a new Conference ministry...[that] is designed for congregations that ...want to intentionally discern their path forward...toward a preferred

*Continued on page six*

## Lent at Grace Church

- 3rd Sunday in Lent - March 3 (Communion Service, White socks for Worcester Fellowship)
- 4th Sunday in Lent - March 10 (Communion Service, White socks for Worcester Fellowship)
- Palm Sunday - March 17 - Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We will observe Palm Sunday one week earlier than most calendars indicate.
- Passion Sunday - March 24 - we will re-hear the the story of the difficult last days of Jesus, the man of Nazareth. Buddies will be able to pick up plants for their Easter deliveries.

- Maundy Thursday - March 28 - we will again have a Seder Meal (time to be determined).

- Easter Sunday - March 31 - celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ with communion and we will be bringing the Alleluias back to worship.

• Pastor’s Column.....2	• Faith in Action.....4
• Church Calendar.....2	• Missions.....4
• Green Team.....3	• Deacons.....5
• Kermit’s Korner.....3	• Grace Women United.....6
• Christian Ed.....4	• Thank you, Grace!.....6

## From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” ’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

I can remember a moment when I was about 19 years old when I snapped irritably at another student in the college cafeteria. An acquaintance happened to be passing by and gently chided me for the tone of voice and the words I had just used. As you can see, I have never forgotten that he spoke to me although I’ve forgotten his name.

Our lives are shaped in small ways by many voices, many interactions. From our parents to those who teach, from our best friends to acquaintances, from famous people and even from briefly encountered strangers, the people in our lives are where we learn how to function in a complex world.

This year, six of our Grace Church youth are engaging in what we call Confirmation Class. Confirmation Class is a program; a schedule of study, shared class time, service activities, retreats, worship, reading, and conversation. Its purpose is to respond to some of the questions the participants are newly prepared to ask about the meaning of their lives, about Christianity as inherited and practiced at Grace Church, about other

religions, church history, the authority of the Bible and other parts of our tradition, etc. Ours is an interesting group and they are well-known to many of you.

Andrea Buck, Ellen Burton, Joshua Dunbrack, Zachary Dunbrack, Meghan Taylor, Cameron Yeomans

Each of these people will also have a specific mentor, someone in our community with whom they will have some specific, structured interactions over the course of the class. We expect a lot from the mentors and we can all be grateful that six adults in our community have agreed to serve in this way.

In the story of the calling of Samuel, Eli was a mentor, teacher, and guardian to the young boy Samuel. Samuel was the one who was getting messages from God. Samuel is the star of this part of the story.

Samuel knew what to do; he was not perplexed. He heard the voice calling him and he knew it had to be Eli. This could have gone on all night! Eli trusted in two things. First, he trusted that Samuel was not playing some prank. That’s why he did not scold Samuel for waking him up two, three times. Let me underline this point. Samuel’s mentor Eli did not dismiss Samuel out of hand. He paid attention. Second, Eli had learned that sometimes God does call. Eli discerned what was happening and gave Samuel the assurance and tools to accept the call when God would call again, now for the fourth time.

*Continued on page four*

## March Calendar

<p>March 2</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">8:00 AM Men’s Breakfast Group</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:30 AM Transition Framingham</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4:00 PM World Day of Prayer</p> <p>March 3 Third Sunday of Lent</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:00 AM Singers rehearse</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 AM Worship/Communion</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">11:30 AM Confirmation Mentors mtg</p> <p>March 4 7:30 PM Leadership Ministry Team</p> <p>March 10 Fourth Sunday of Lent</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:00 AM Singers rehearse</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 AM Worship/Communion</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Sunday School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">11:30 AM Green Team Meeting</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6:00 PM Confirmation</p> <p>March 11 7:30 PM Women’s Lectio</p> <p>March 12 7:00 PM Ecclesiastical Council Natick</p>	<p>March 13</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">11:30 AM Grace Women United meeting</p> <p>March 17 Palm Sunday</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:00 AM Singers rehearse</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 AM Worship</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6:00 PM Confirmation</p> <p>March 20 2:00 PM Service at Carlyle House</p> <p>March 27 10:00 AM Book Club</p> <p>March 24 Passion Sunday</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:00 AM Singers rehearse</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 AM Worship/ Sunday School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">11:30 AM Trip to Worcester Fellowship</p> <p>March 28</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">7:00PM Maundy Thursday</p> <p>March 31 Easter Sunday</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9:00 AM Singers rehearse</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 AM Worship</p>
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**Level 3 status:** Mary Memmott is working with the Conference about Grace's status as a Level Three Green church (i.e., some of the items on their list do not apply to Grace because we are so small).

- **Mass Save** Karolyne White coordinated a February 19th energy audit at the church. Pending what Mass Save has to say about us, we will then plan to re-address our Level Three status.
- **Green Cleaning.** Mary purchased a book on green cleaning products. A brainstorming discussion led to the concept of Grace having a day in which we would make our own green products and have them available to the public. We will pick a day in May in which the community can come (with empty bottles) and get free cleaning supplies. We will announce this at Styrofoam Day and Earth Day (and other venues).

At Styrofoam Day, we might raffle off one or two gifts baskets of cleaning green supplies as well as copy of Mary's green products books. This would also give us an email list to notify people who might come back in May for more green cleaning solutions. Although we would like our cleaning woman, Gloria, to use our homemade products, we will proceed slowly on this - introducing one product at a time.

- **Transition.** Mary reminded the group of the Love Framingham Celebration (sponsored by Transition Framingham) at Framingham High School cafeteria on Saturday, March 2nd, 9:30 am. - 1: 30 p.m. See article elsewhere in this issue.
- **Movie** - It was noted that the Transition 2.0 movie that was held last month at Grace was well received and with good attendance.
- **Next Meeting (open to all):** March 10 - 11:30 AM

*Linda Hilliard*

**Grace Congregational, UCC**

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## Compost Adventure

In Needham, the Watters family has composted food waste for years. We bought a large, black, plastic composting bin that sits on the ground in our backyard. Whenever we plant new things in our yard, we dig some rich, dark humus out of the bottom of the compost bin.

The way our kitchen waste ends up in the compost bin is like this. We have two plastic containers in the cabinet under the kitchen sink. They are about 6-8 quarts in capacity. I bought them in the grocery store so they are nothing special. But they have lids that snap closed tightly and they are dishwasher-safe.

All food waste goes in these containers except meat/poultry/fish bits and bones. Those go into a plastic bag and are put in the freezer. Eventually, this frozen bag goes in the trash. Coffee grounds and coffee filters go in the containers. Eggshells can be composted but they compost very slowly and I don't like to see them hanging around in my garden. So, I throw them out with the trash. (Still working on that.) We try never to put anything down the garbage disposal to avoid adding to that waste stream. But back to the compost.

Whenever one or both of the containers is full, my dog and I take it and head out to the backyard. Actually, she is not very interested in the compost. She is much more interested in any bunnies or squirrels who might have danced through the yard or maybe still be there! I dump the container into the compost bin. Every couple of weeks I pull one of those big leaf bags out from the garage which has dry leaves leftover from last fall. I put a layer of these leaves on top of the food waste. Back on goes the lid, back to the kitchen goes the container to be washed, and I'm ready to peel potatoes again!

At odd intervals through the year, Debbie or I will use a compost turning tool that we have. This is a tool that one plunges down into the compost bin and then twists and pulls to stir up the layers.

In the spring and summer, when we are planting, we open the small "doors" on the side of the compost bin and dig out some of the good humus. We mix it with the dirt in the hole we've dug for whatever we're planting or spread it around a flower bed. And that's our compost story.

*- Pastor Brad*

## Mission: Sock and Sandwich Supplies Needed

“Cans for Communion” will Return in April - in March we Seek Socks and Sandwich Supplies

We will collect cans again next month - this month we are asking all to help us collect food for lunch with Worcester Fellowship on March 24th as well as new men’s white athletic socks. New men’s socks have been especially requested by Worcester Fellowship and we have set a goal of trying to collect 200 pairs - can you help us reach it?

Worcester Fellowship is an outdoor ministry “dedicated to ending isolation through spiritual care and community.” Our confirmation class will join them for lunch and worship on Sunday, March 24th.

Worcester Fellowship typically hands out over 100 bag lunches on a Sunday afternoon, and we have committed to providing 60 on this Sunday. If you can’t come with us, or even if you can, please consider supporting this ministry by providing bread, sandwich fixings (deli meat, lettuce, peanut butter, or cheese, no mayo-based fillings please), paper bags, sandwich bags, soft brownies or cookies, juice boxes, or fruit cups with spoons. Our Sunday school members will assemble the sandwiches during worship on March 24th, but adult helpers are also needed and welcome. We will have a sign-up list at church for helpers and supplies in the fellowship hall, or email Mary Memmott (memmottm@gmail.com) to find out what is still needed.

### From the Pastor *Continued from page two*

Who have been mentors in your life? Were there formal mentors? A mentor might be someone who is also your teacher or your supervisor. A mentor can be someone in your family but we typically use the term to speak of someone outside one’s immediate family. So let me ask again, have you had a mentor in your life, or more than one?

We all, in the Grace community, have a responsibility for being wise and helpful and interested in each other. Yes, in each other. While a mentor is a relationship that stands out and, in the case of the confirmation program, is a formal role, that is not the only time we are responsible for being wise and helpful to each other. So bear yourself with some care as you move through your interactions. You are having a formative effect and you may as well be a force for good!

When my acquaintance “gently chided me,” he chose his words carefully so as not to provoke me into a defense. He chose wisely. His words returned me to myself. I was able to shake it off, go “make it better,” and, I think, become a better person. Through such wise interactions, we may all become more and more the people who God is leading us to be.

Who will you interact with carefully and wisely today?

*Peace and Blessing,  
Brad*

Although our team did not meet in February, many of us were at the Green Team gathering on the 3rd. From that, as well as some e-mailing, we have decided to partner with the Green Team on two levels. Because of the importance of the work that Transition Framingham is doing, we are going to sponsor the I Love Framingham event on March 2 to the extent of \$100. Secondly, we will be working with them on hosting a workshop in May. Instead of a separate meeting in March, I’m hoping as many as possible will join the Green Team meeting on Sunday, the 10th.

*Jean Burr*

**Christian Education**

Sincere thanks to all those who taught or assisted teaching Sunday School this month. Grace Church children participated and learned valuable lessons during both the intergenerational services and Sunday school lessons. We welcomed in the season of Lent and discussed it’s meanings. We also discussed how different people might choose to participate in the season. The children also discussed how they might use funding raised for them by the former students of Grace Sunday School. No final decision has yet been made, but different ideas are being explored.

In March, Sunday School will be held on March 10th and March 24th. Intergenerational services will be held on March 3 and 17th. On March 24th, the children should come up to the kitchen upon arrival at 10AM in order to make sandwiches to bring as well as socks to the people of the Worcester Fellowship for our field trip after service. Thanks again to all who help to teach our children.  
*Ronda Yeomans*

## Deacons

People of Grace,

Well, February has brought us a mixture of weather. We hope you have kept safe and warm especially during the snow storms.

A piece of trivia: What's with the cross? Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians typically display a crucifix – an image of Jesus hanging on the cross – to remember his death for the sake of the world, while Protestant churches often favor the empty cross, commemorating Jesus' resurrection.

**See page one for service schedule.**

How are you doing on your Lenten Prayer Practice? Each Sunday in Lent, up to and including Easter, when you come to worship, there will be a small card with a prayer request on one side. This prayer request will list a celebration or more likely a concern that has happened that week and everyone will have the same prayer request. On the opposite side of the card, we invite you to write your own name and place that card in the Prayer Basket (if you want to participate in this Lenten prayer practice). When we ask for prayer celebrations and concerns during the service, we will pass the basket around. If you

## About Us

Long-time Grace Church member, Grace Kimball, recently passed away. Many will remember Grace as our dedicated church historian. The Norton Funeral Home will be hosting visiting hours 8:30-9:30 AM on Friday, March 1, followed by a Service of Celebration of the Life of Grace Kimball at 10:00 AM.

have put a card in, take a card (avoiding your own) back out. We want you to take the card home with you and pray for the person within our congregation listed along with the weekly prayer request. Your prayer for the person, let's call him Jeremiah D, can be as simple as "God, please watch over Jeremiah today" or as extensive as you feel called to do, and whatever you feel appropriate for the pre-printed request. We just ask that you pray daily for both. Each Sunday you will get a new card with a new name and request. You may pray just for the listings on the new card and, if you wish, you can also continue to pray for the people and events on your previous cards. The power of prayer can be transforming for those we pray for and for ourselves. Please enthusiastically join in this Lenten Prayer Practice!

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. Please keep our congregation in your prayers. God is with us and among us! God does and will provide!

May you always feel  
God's blessings,

*Ruth Carney  
Deacons*

*Ruth Carney. Karolyne White*

## Book Club



On March 27th we will be discussing **THE RED HOUSE** by Sarah Messer. This is a memoir of the history of the house and her connection to living in it.

Meetings are held in the church library at 10:00AM and are open to all readers.

*Lynn Burdett*

## Grace Women United

Grace Women United will meet on Wed, March 13th at 11:30AM. Bring your lunch; dessert and coffee will be served.

During March and April, Grace Women United will be putting Hygiene Kits together for Church World Service (CWS). These kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families in the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty. They are sent wherever in the world they may be needed, whenever they are needed. We invite you, as families, or as individuals, to participate in this mission by also assembling a kit, or donating items to help others. Following is a list of items needed, but feel free to pick up a bag (list enclosed) from the bookcase in the fellowship hall.

Please do not vary the items in any way, or add any additional items. CWS is very specific in their instructions. GWU will pay the \$2 processing cost of each kit.

Each kit needs: One hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28"; one washcloth; one wide-tooth comb; one nail clipper; one bar of soap (bath size in wrapper); one toothbrush (in original packaging) and six standard size band-aids. Items are to be put into a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure.

Please leave any donations at the church and we will collect and store them until it's time to send them off.

*Jean Burr*

## A Thank You and an Update from ReFoamit

Dave and I have several things for which we want to thank you, the Grace Church family. First of all, even though it's past history thank you for hosting our very first Styrofoam collection day on Make a Difference Day in October, 2009. That event really did make a difference, not only in our personal and business lives, but it also alerted the local community to the need to recycle foam. Since that day, we have succeeded in keeping several tons of foam out of the landfill. Needless to say, your quarterly collections have contributed to not only that, but they have also helped to educate the public. Thank you!

Secondly, we are grateful to you for allowing us to park our trailer (or sometimes 2 of them) on the Newbury Street property. This has saved us numerous long road trips, which would have been costly, both in fuel and hours of our time.

Now, for the update—ReFoamit now has its own facility! This is not only exciting, but a bit frightening as well. We are located at 1 Sculley Drive, Ayer, MA, where we share a large building with All American Recycling. We are now processing all of the foam which we collect and that which is delivered to us. Small amounts of foam (hopefully in bags or boxes) may be dropped off Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 to 2 and appointments can be made for large drop offs. All American Recycling is proving to be a good “house-mate”, dealing primarily with electronics and appliances, which can also be dropped off during those same hours.

*Gratefully, Barbara & Dave Sherman*

## Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney. She can order them from our florist (\$43 or higher or lower depending on what you would like) or you may bring flowers yourself. If there is a special event in the life of Grace that you would like lifted up, let Ruth know and she will arrange it. (We have funds donated for this purpose.)

## If the weather is bad

If you wonder if we have canceled a service or activity, tune to WCRB channel 5 for our listing. We email, Facebook, etc. to get the word out. If there is a power failure and you cannot access TV or internet, try calling Ruth Carney at home.

## Congregational Discernment Enters New Phase

*Continued from page one*

future” It seemed like a perfect fit for where we are in this stage of our faith journey. Sometime in March the community will have the opportunity to meet with Crossroads staff to share information about the church to inform the assessment of our church. We do not have a schedule yet, but will be sure to announce information in church and the Thursday emails as we know it.

Here are some more clips from the Crossroads Massachusetts brochure to give you a broader sense of the program:

“Crossroads Massachusetts asks congregations to consider entering into an intentional season of assessment, discernment, bold decision-making and implementation...The assessment and follow-up training is intended to help congregations gain a realistic picture of their resources for ministry, their demographic strengths, their potential for change, and their potential for vital ministry.”

“New Beginnings is a program of our denominational partner, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The program has a history of helping local churches answer the question, ‘What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and place?’

From New Beginnings you will:

- receive a comprehensive report of your congregation's strengths and challenges and a concrete, realistic picture of possible directions for the future.
- be trained on how to engage in a discernment process in order to choose a new direction for your church.
- discover available ministry opportunities in the community.
- learn to make a compelling case for change based on realistic options for the future.
- discover how to discuss change in a healthy, open manner.
- set a course for strategic and visionary ministry planning.”

Most importantly, what we expect to receive is mentoring from people who have engaged many congregations in this process with positive results, and connections with other congregations with similar challenges who are also engaged in the process. We also expect to be able to help other churches along their faith journey, because our prior work and conversations have given us a significant head start in the process.

*Linda Dunbrack*