

GRACE NOTES

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

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Grace Congregational, UCC
PO Box 1481
76 Salem End Road
Framingham 01702
508-872-3342

churchoffice@
gracechurchucc.org

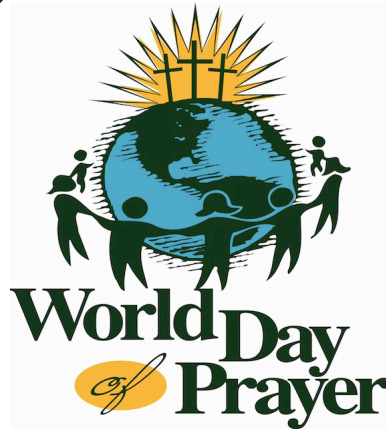
www.gracechurchucc.org

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org

Mass Conference
www.macucc.org
www.ucc.org (UCC)

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World Day of Prayer 2014!

Friday, March 7th

Grace Church, UCC

9:30 AM Gathering; 10:30 AM Service

Materials for World Day of Prayer 2014 were prepared by the WDP Committee of Egypt, who invites us to search out "Streams in the Desert."

Grace's Future Story Retreat: Save April 11 and 12

Why is this retreat so important? The purpose of this retreat is to set the trajectory for the future of our congregation. This retreat will lay groundwork for many key decisions in the church in 2014 and beyond, including ministries, staffing, and building. There will be revisiting the major decisions that are made on this retreat. It is time to move forward, together.

Please come, no matter who you are or where you are on your journey with our congregation. Come if you have just started to come, or come occasionally. Come if you are a long-term member, no matter your age and ability. We need all hands on deck, and everyone's input is absolutely critical for the success of the retreat.

Please plan ahead, and re-arrange your schedule as needed. If you need a ride, ask the Leadership Team to arrange one. If you normally work on Saturday, request the time off from work. If your kids play sports or are involved in activities, ask teammates to bring your kids to their games and activities. If a family event might conflict, ask your family to bump it until Sunday. Whatever might get in the way, figure out a solution now.

Here is the schedule:

| | | |
|----------|---------------|---|
| Friday | 7:00-8:30PM | A Time of Spiritual Preparation |
| Saturday | 9:00-Noon | Learning from our Church's Neighbors |
| Saturday | 12:00-1:15pPM | Lunch Break |
| Saturday | 1:00-4:00PM | Identifying the Future Story and Steps to Get There |

“We are in the midst of a significant conversation and discernment process about the kind of church we are and want to be. To continue your preparation for these conversations and, in particular, the Grace’s Future Story Retreat in April, read the article below. I found that it captured several key aspects of our church life and I’d like you to reflect upon them too. So even though I’m not the author, consider it a note from me!”

Peace and Blessings, Brad

Doing Community Ministry in the Small Church

by Joy F. Skjegstad

Sometimes I interact with small congregations that assume that any significant community ministry effort is beyond their reach. They often keenly feel their limitations as they work to keep internal church programs going with limited staff and volunteers. So how could they ever engage the community in any significant way?

With the right approach, it is possible for a small group of people to make a big impact. It will take focus and clarity about what you are trying to accomplish, but the small church can make a big impact in the world through partnerships, creative use of resources, and a focus on relational ministry. Small congregations have unique strengths that can result in strong and effective community ministry.

Focus.

A small congregation has to be more disciplined about not “biting off more than it can chew.” Identifying just one thing to focus on (tutor kids at the local public school, collect diapers, sponsor a community garden) may well help you be more successful, as you will have clear outcomes in front of you. I think sometimes there is a temptation for larger churches to make ministry efforts bigger and more complex than they need to be. Internal ministry programs may have many bells and whistles, so we think we need to do that with work in our community as well – right? Wrong! Sometimes simpler is just what the community needs.

Relationships.

Another advantage of being small is that your church may be better at relational ministry than larger churches, and it is the relation-

Continued on page seven

Saturday, March 1

8:00 AM Men’s Breakfast

Sunday, March 2

(NO Cans for Communion)

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship/Sunday School

Wednesday, March 5

7:00 PM Ash Wednesday service

Thursday, March 6

7:00 PM Demographics Webinar

Friday, March 7

10:30 AM World Day of Prayer

12:30 PM Edwards: Tasting Vegan

Sunday, March 9

First Sunday in Lent

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

11:30 AM Worcester Fellowship

Monday, March 10

7:30 PM Women’s Lectio

Wednesday, March 12

11:30 AM Grace Women Mtg

Sunday, March 16

Second Sunday in Lent

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

11:30 AM Green Team

Wednesday, March 19

2:00 PM Service at Carlyle House

7:30 PM Stewards Ministry

Friday, March 21

7:00 PM Movie at Edwards

Sunday, March 23

Third Sunday in Lent

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Multi-age Service

11:30 AM Faith in Action

12:15 PM Lunch At Zaftigs

Monday, March 24

7:30 PM Leadership Team

Wednesday, March 26

10:00 AM Book Club

7:30 PM Leadership Team

Sunday, March 30

Fourth Sunday in Lent

One Great Hour of Sharing

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship/Sunday School

Faith in Action

At our February meeting, we discussed the plans for the February 22 movie to be shown at Grace, and our part in setting up and helping with the advertising and refreshments.

There is no up-date on the Not Ready for Any-time Players, but stay tuned for more information about this upcoming production.

Twelve of us enjoyed the February “lunch out” at the new 99 Restaurant on Route 9. Our next FIA get together for lunch is planned for March 23, at 12:15, at the Zaftigs Deli at the Sherwood Plaza. This event will follow our monthly FIA meeting. We hope everyone will consider joining us on that day for either, or both, our meeting and lunch.

Please put April 26 on your calendar to be sure you are free to attend the Earth Day Festival & our foam collection. If possible, plan to help out for an hour or more at either one.

Jean Burr

Foam Recycling Day

Saturday, April 26th

10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Grace will also have a table at the Earth Day Event at Framingham Common

Grace Women United

Hygiene Kits

It's that time of the year when Grace Women are ready to shop for the hygiene kits for Church World Service. Last year, along with those which GWU assembled, members generously filled and donated 13 additional ones. (As we did in 2013, GWU will pay all shipping costs.)

Each kit needs one each of the following: hand towel measuring approximately 16”x 28”; washcloth; wide-tooth comb; fingernail clipper; bar of soap (bath size, in wrapper); toothbrush in original packaging; and 6 standard size band-aids. Items are to be put into a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure. The money earned at our Christmas sale defrays costs, so hopefully, we will be sending more kits this year. Kits can be left at the church during March and April.

Appalachia

Our friends from Holliston, Anke and Frits Guersten, continue to send packages weekly to four schools in Kentucky. In the past Grace members have helped with donations of gently used children's' books, new art and school supplies, reusable sneakers (Frits cleans every pair) and warm fleece blankets. If anyone has something to contribute, please speak to Jean Burr.

Webinar on Community Demographics Planned for March 6th

The next phase of our congregation's Mission and Ministry Planning is going to involve thorough research of our church's community. The overriding question in this phase is, “Who is our neighbor?” Without understanding our neighbors, our church cannot clearly discern God's preferred future for the congregation.

Anyone who has a genuine interest in the future of the congregation and a heart for the community is invited to attend. Anyone who is involved in leading or planning ministries is strongly encouraged to attend, because it is anticipated that it can help us connect our ministries to the community more effectively. Everyone will receive an overview and inter-



pretation of relevant demographic information about Framingham and learn how to go out and do research in our community. “Scouts” will be prepared to talk to people, make observations and gather research about the needs facing people in our community. We will need people with

the ability to connect meaningfully with others and have good observation and/or listening skills to be scouts.

The webinar will held on March 6th from 7-8:30 pm. You may attend with a group at the church or login from home. Please let someone from the Leadership Team know if you are interested in attending.

Green Team

The Green Team met on February 9th to discuss the upcoming environmental movie showing at Grace Church, "Last Call At the Oasis" on February 22nd at 2pm. This documentary covers the global water shortage and is part of the Spring Movie Series hosted by Transition Framingham.

Reverend Brad Watters also proudly announced that the St. Andrew Solar Power Sharing Proposal is moving forward and he has received the draft contract.

Katie Michaud

Christian Education

Upcoming Teaching Schedule

Sun. March 2 -- Ronda teaches
Sun March 9 -- Communion/multi-age trip to Worcester Fellowship
Sun. March 16 -- Ruth's teen SS
Sun. March 23 -- Multi-age Service led by the children
Sun. March 30 -- Mary teaches

Ronda Yeomans, Christian Education

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 new 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 and acknowledged with flowers, just let Ruth know and she will arrange it. (We do have funds donated for this purpose.)



Storm Closings



This is the season to think about church closings due to bad weather. If we need to cancel a service or activity, tune to WCVB-TV channel 5 for our listing. We will also use e-mail, 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.



Kermit's Korner

On Saturday, February 22, a film was shown at Grace Church. It was about our WATER. The film was called "Last Call at the Oasis."

Water is something we have taken for granted believing it would always be available. Because of climate change and the large global population, we could be running low and in the future running OUT. Can you imagine NO WATER!

The film showed many places where rivers are showing strong signs or running lower, especially in the Midwest where so much of our food is grown. The docks on some of the rivers in the United States are already above the rivers themselves. California has been without rain for many months. I know that the worlds OCEANS seem to be available and that option is being used. When the salt is taken out of ocean water, then what are left are piles of salt and that has to be taken care of. Is there anything more that we can do? Turn's out there is but we can only slow what is happening.

USE RECYCLED WATER. For most of us that will take an attitude adjustment. The water recycling plants do a good job of removing solids and most chemicals. We can also conserve the way we use our water. Not flushing our toilets so often. Don't use the hose like a leaf blower on our driveways. Make sure we have no water leaks.

The Astronauts use recycled water all the time they are in the space capsule. WHY CAN'T WE???

Nancy Brown

Eco-Friendly Tips

- Conserve water: Don't let faucets run. Place a brick in old toilets. Take low flow short showers. Run the dishwasher only when it is full. Install low-flow devices for toilet, shower, faucets, gardens.
- Wash dishes by hand in a basin, and then use the dish water for outdoor gardens.
- Watch leaky faucets, which can cause a significant increase in the the water bill. An average of 120 liters of water can be wasted due to a dripping faucet.

Worcester Fellowship Trip-- Sunday, March 9th

Join us in outdoor worship with the Worcester Fellowship church in front of Worcester City Hall, after our service on March 9th. Bring a sandwich or snack and carpool from Grace. Help serve sandwiches and pass out socks in Worcester at 1 p.m., followed by worship, and expect to be back at Grace by about 3 p.m. Worcester Fellowship is a church among men and women without homes "dedicated to ending isolation through pastoral care and the nurturing of community."

Collection for Worcester Fellowship



In addition to new, white, men's athletic socks, we are also collecting new or gently used warm gloves, scarves, and dark-colored winter hats. Men's sizes. We will collect through March 9th.

Thank You ...

... to everyone who helped set up the room, darken the windows, make the coffee, and welcome our guests for the "Last Call at the Oasis" movie in February. One couple traveled all the way from Plainville just to see the film. It was thought-provoking, funny, and inspiring. More great movies in the series to come -- we hope you will be inspired to join us!

Mary Memmott, Missions

5TH ANNUAL WALK AWAY HOMELESSNESS

Saturday, April 12, 2014

Natick Common

Registration at 8:00 AM Walk Begins 8:30
Wrap up, Prize Drawing 10:30 AM

If interested in forming a Grace Team,
speak to Ronda Yeomans

A TASTE OF COMPASSION

Curious about plant-based eating? Come taste a variety of vegan dishes prepared by passionate cooks and learn how to include more plant-based options in your repertoire.

Saturday March 8, 12.30-2.00

Edwards Church 39 Edwards St in Saxonville
Next to Stapleton School

Suggested donation: \$5

Sponsored by:
Transition Framingham,
Vegan Metrowest Network
Open Spirit



Transition Framingham

invites you to our

Spring Movie Series

Meat the Truth Friday, March 21st, 7pm
Edwards Church
39 Edwards St, Framingham, MA

Crude Awakening Monday, April 14th, 7pm
Framingham Public Library, Costin Rm
49 Lexington St, Framingham, MA

More Than Honey Wednesday, May 14th, 7pm
Plymouth Church
87 Edgell Rd, Framingham, MA

A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba June (TBD)

Please visit our website for additional details!

<http://transitionframingham.org/movie-series-2014/>

A Big Thank you to our Co-Sponsors:

* Grace Church * Framingham Sierra Club *
* Transition Ashland * Edwards Church *
* Vegan MetroWest Network * Plymouth Church *
Climate Action Team of First Parish in Framingham UU

“On particularly tough days when I feel that I can’t possible endure, I remind myself that my track record for getting through bad days is 100%.” - unknown

“What most people need to learn in life is how to love people and use things instead of using people and loving things.” - Unknown

“No matter what sin we have committed, no matter how terrible it may be, God loves us.” - Billy Graham

People of Grace,

We hope you have been able to get through all the ups and downs of weather that has come our way this winter. Please keep safe and don’t take any unnecessary chances. Remember Spring begins on March 20th.

Lent will be upon us very shortly. Lent, the season of the church year that’s associated with repentance, begins on Ash Wednesday. While some people deny themselves by giving up something for Lent, others prepare for Easter through special Bible studies or devotions or a special prayer time. Have you thought about a Lenten Practice for this year?

Many Christians observe Lent for these reasons:

- It causes us to STOP. Lent says, “Stop and rest awhile,” as well as “Stop doing wrong.”



- It tells us to LOOK. Look inward for an honest self-examination. Look upward to see the cross of Christ offering healing and love. Look forward to the hope of the Resurrection.
- It tells us to LISTEN. Listen to the words of Christ. Listen to the voice of God. Listen to the winds of the Spirit of God.

Stop, look and listen. These three words aren’t only important for our safety in travel; they’re also helpful for our journey through the 40 days of Lent.

Our Lenten Journey

Our Lenten Journey begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th, with a service at Grace at 7:00 PM.

1st Sunday in Lent - March 9, 2014 (Communion Service with Cans for Communion and it is not too late to bring in winter hats and gloves for the trip to Worcester.) Don’t forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 8th - daylight savings time begins.

2nd Sunday in Lent - March 16, 2014

3rd Sunday in Lent - March 23, 2014, our young people will be leading worship

4th Sunday in Lent - March 30, 2014, One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be received

Palm Sunday - April 6, 2014, Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We will be having this service one week earlier than the calendar indicates.

Passion Sunday - April 13, 2014, we will re-hear the passion story with many of the readings from Tennebrae.

Maundy Thursday - April 17, 2014, plans are in process

Easter Sunday - April 20, 2014, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ with communion and we will be bringing the Alleluias back to worship.

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!

During these winter months, our prayers are that you stay safe and well and please don’t take any unnecessary chances.

*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 (Deacons:
Ruth Carney, Karolyne White
deacon@gracechurchucc.org*

Pastor's column

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ships that you can build with people in your community that will make the greatest impact. People who are drawn to attend smaller churches are often there because of the “family” feel; in your small congregation, you can really get to know each other, go deep in your relationships, and bear one another’s burdens. A pastor of a rural congregation in West Virginia told me that his small church is “a place of gathering, celebration, and common community. We still celebrate each person’s birthday here!” Carrying that affinity for relationship into the community may well help you make a greater impact than if you brought hundreds of volunteers or thousands of dollars. Everything you’ve learned within your own congregation about really listening to one another and devoting time to relationships will bless your community in myriad ways.

Partnerships.

Small churches often have no choice but to partner with others to carry out ministry, and partnerships, if done well, can result in exponentially greater impact in the community. You aren’t limited to the gifts and perspective within your own congregation; you can seek others who make up the other half of what you don’t have. Particularly when working on complex community issues when all kinds of people, expertise, connections, and resources are needed to move forward, the small church can truly shine as

one piece of a more complex partnership puzzle. Recently, I worked with several smaller churches that were developing partnerships with public schools. We started with a goal of recruiting just ten volunteers from each church, and they met that goal. Next people from the church started going into the school every week, learning about the needs of students, interacting with teachers and other staff, and making an impact by being faithful. A small group of people who are willing to keep at it can make a big difference!

Ownership.

In a small church, members may also feel a greater sense of ownership for the ministry. Without many paid staff, it is up to church members to develop the vision and the plan, find partners, and enlist other church members to get involved. You can’t just look around and say, “Pastor So-and-So is going to do that.” In a small church, when you look around, you might only see yourself and a few of your friends. If you don’t do it, no one else will! This strong ownership by lay leaders can help ministry be sustainable over the long term, long after paid staff members have moved on.

Accountability.

Finally, those in small churches may be better able to hold each other accountable for follow-

To Consider

(Editor’s Note: From Inspirational messages for every day living.)

Air it Out

“Minds are like parachutes; they only function when open.”

Thomas Dewar

You will need: Tolerance, Open Mindedness

It is very reassuring when we surround ourselves with people who think as we do. Real growth, however, occurs during times of discord, when another person questions what we believe. While it can feel unsettling, having our ideas and actions challenged at times can expand our minds and hearts and help us realize more about ourselves.

Simple Steps:

- Avoid getting defensive when someone questions the way you do things. Rather than viewing it as an attack, look at it as a growth opportunity. Listen to what they have to say before responding.
- When a co-worker challenges an idea you have, ask yourself if her views have merit. If so, take time to rethink your position before bringing your idea to the table again.

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Pastor's column

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ing through on ministry goals and commitments because you are small. If just a few of you are working on a project and two of you don't show up, it's pretty obvious who isn't holding up their end of the work! It is harder to be anonymous and go back on what you've agreed to. It is harder to give up when your friends are on your case!

Small churches are all too aware of the challenges facing their ministries – the limited funds, only a small number of church members, and a building that needs work. But even in the face of such challenges, your small church may be able to start some very powerful community ministries. Take stock of what you do have rather than what you don't have, and build on those assets. Be creative about finding partners, raising money, and securing

in-kind donations. And most importantly, keep going. Some of the most successful community ministries programs are small and focused and don't require lots of money and people.

Joy F. Skjogstad is a consultant who works helping churches develop programs to meet community needs. This material is excerpted and adapted from *7 Creative Models for Community Ministry* by Joy F. Skjogstad. Copyright © 2013 by Judson Press. Used by permission of Judson Press. The book is available at Amazon, Cokesbury, or Judson.

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Deacon's Fund

The "Deacon's Fund" is a non-budget item that is replenished by the church family either by a designative donation or by a special offering. This fund's purpose is helping those in a particular need or in an emergency; it is not intended for an ongoing need. Monies collected feed the pastor's discretionary account so Pastor Brad will have the means to help individuals within and outside our congregation.

The use of these monies is confidential. Many who have benefited have given back any funds they received when their need has reversed. Please prayerfully consider donating to this fund. It could help the person sitting next to you, across from you or even yourself at some point. Remember, God loves a joyful giver and the amount of your donation doesn't matter. Thank you!

Grace Women United

Grace Women United will meet on Wednesday, March 12th at 11:30AM. Please bring a bag lunch. Coffee will be served.

Book Club



Book Club will meet Wednesday, March 26th (Book TBD) at 10AM in the library. *Lynn Burdett*

If you receive your Grace Notes by Mail

Thanks to the several readers who have volunteered to receive their Grace Notes issue electronically (thus saving the church money on paper and postage). Of course we're happy to mail you a copy, but if you have an e-mail address that we could use instead, please send it to lmhilliard@aol.com so she can switch you over. Also, if you would prefer not to receive *Grace Notes* at all, please let us know. Thanks

Grace Church Leadership Team

Linda Dunbrack (Moderator)
Frank Carney
Ruth Carney
Mary Memmott
Terri Taylor
Karolyne White
Brad Watters