

GRACE NOTES

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

Upcoming Events

• May 11th: Green Cleaning Workshop (2:00-3:30 PM)

Sponsored by the Grace Church Green Team.

It's spring cleaning time - would you like to replace some of the harsher chemicals in your cabinet with safer, more earth-friendly products?

Come to a hands-on workshop where we will use simple ingredients to make our own cleaning products that are inexpensive, effective, and safe for us and the planet. Free but you are encouraged to bring your own empty spray bottles to fill. All ages welcome.

Join us for a hands-on afternoon workshop where you can "make and take" your own green-cleaning solutions and learn more about why you should try to go green and avoid certain household chemicals.

This event is free and will be open to the public.



Not Too Late to Pledge Walk for Hunger

The Walk for Hunger is this Sunday. Instead of cans for communion this month, please consider sponsoring a walker. Members of the Grace Walk Team include Pastor Brad, Frank Carney, Mary Memmott and the Confirmation class (Ellen, Andrea, Cam, Meghan, Zach and Josh).

You can donate online at <http://walkforhunger.org/>. Click on "donate" and search for a team - our team is "Grace Church Framingham" and you can give to the whole team or any individual walker. Checks can be made out to "Project Bread - the Walk for Hunger."

If you would like to join the Walk Team, please speak to Pastor Brad or Mary Memmott for more information.

Congregational Discernment Enters New Phase

As most of you already know, Grace Church has chosen to participate in an intentional process of discernment to answer question, 'What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and place?' through the Crossroads Massachusetts program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC, and part of a larger denominational effort called "New Beginnings." On March 20, Doug Pfeiffer, our contract assessor, met with us to gather data for our congregational assessment report from Crossroads.

Members of the Leadership Ministry Team are attending the Crossroads Cluster Event, scheduled for May 3-4, 2013, with other congregations in the conference. The event will help congregational leaders discuss the report and strategize further conversations within the congregation. Attendees will lead small group conversations with fellow local church members in the next phase of the New Beginnings process. After the cluster event we will have a better sense of what the timing

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From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

I'm still glowing with the past few days at Grace. Yes, I suppose it has something to do with the suddenly fine weather, the blossoms of the season, and recovery from a bad cold. I also think the glow comes from the many ways I saw Grace Church being Grace Church. Let me count the ways.

On Saturday, all kinds of people gathered to collect foam. This event showcases the unusual and excellent, albeit informal, partnership between Grace Church and Refoamit. Granted, Dave and Barbara Sherman of Refoamit are also Dave and Barbara Sherman of Grace Church. Still, private, for-profit companies partnering with non-profits is bold. The people who come to help span the ages of our congregation. The people who come to help come from both sides of the porous "member-line." The people who bring their foam are grateful and relieved to do what feels like the right thing with this material. The whole feeling is bold.

Also on Saturday, all kinds of people gathered as part of Framingham's Earth Day celebration. Framingham Sierra Club was there. Transition Framingham was there. I saw folks from the Lutheran Church and from Edwards Church. There were folks from FACES, the Framingham community action group. And you were there - that is, Grace Church was there. Our booth, partner booth to Refoamit's booth, was a magnet for kids. It was colorful and

busy and plarny. Whoever thought a box of markers and a roll of paper would be such an innovation? Whoever doubted it? Bold, improvised goings on, to be sure.

Sunday morning was bright and church was full. We shared and shared and worshipped and it took us over an hour to get through it all. There was laughter and solemnity, beasts who hunt and all crawling beasts, there were lots of songs, and there was a Psalm calling ye sea monsters to praise God. That was all pretty bold.

For me, Sunday afternoon began with confirmation class. We pray a little, we sing a little, and we talk a lot. We reviewed "the history of the world," (otherwise known as Framingham's eighth grade social studies curriculum.) We discussed worship at Grace and worship other places and which parts we value the most. We shared Chinese food. We discussed Faith in Action boldly.

That's what happened.

The real story is that so many of us found a part to play in this weekend's drama. The real story is that we did so many things together. The real story is that our story continues to unfold with energy and enterprise and action. I wonder what next weekend will bring?

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

May Calendar

May 3, 4	Leadership Crossroads meeting	May 12	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship/Communion Sunday School
May 4	8:00 AM Men's Breakfast			
May 5	Walk for Hunger 9:00 AM Singers rehearse 10:00 AM Worship/Communion Jim Brownell guest 4:00 PM Central Association UCC Annual Meeting	May 13	7:30 PM	Women's Lectio
		May 19	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship
		May 22	10:00 AM	Book Club
May 6	7:30 PM Leadership Ministry Team	May 26	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Singers rehearse Worship/ Sunday School
May 8	11:30 AM Grace Women United meeting	May 30	2:00 PM	Service at Carlyle House
May 11	2:00 PM Cleaning Product Workshop			

Green Team Update

The two teams met together for the second time, in order to discuss two upcoming events.

The first of these was the Earth Day Festival and Grace's participation in it on April 27. Word has it that the booth featuring Ronda's "plarning" project was one of the busiest booths of the day. Thank you Ronda, Eleanor, Karolyne, Mirlande, Candice and Brad! Hope I didn't miss anyone.) Let's hope someone has lots of pictures! Equally busy, back at the church, where the quarterly foam collection was being held, several members greeted old and new friends and not only filled the trailer with foam, but had to wait for Dave to bring another vehicle to take the rest! Kudos to Frank, Laura, Josh, Zach, Lynn, Evie, Beverly, Andy & Jean for working hard, but also to all of you who brought carloads of foam!!!

The details of the workshop coming up in May are on page one. Don't miss this! It will be fun and informative!

The Green Team is reviewing the completed challenges from the MA Conference to be sure that we are continuing to be current with our commitment to be a "Green Congregation" Even if some of you aren't actively involved with the team, please check out the board in the fellowship room and be involved with the activities listed there!

Three of us attended the showing of the movie, Gasland, last month. This was a documentary film about the results of fracking for natural gas in the United States. Even after reading and talking about this for several months, this film was an eye-opener to us! The harm to the land, farmers' crops & cattle, as well as the people and their homes, is unspeakable. Dates for the upcoming meetings of the Green Team and Faith in Action haven't been set, but when we meet again, we'd love to have you all there!

Jean Burr



Kermit's Korner

This month, Kermit is wondering if he should be planting anything. After all, it's Spring, right! Transition Framingham is inviting us to engage in some resilient, local actions like making gardens and growing our own vegetables. All kinds of garden center and yard care sales are showing up in his mailbox. It seems like we are past having overnight frosts. And just the other day, Kermit wore shorts all afternoon!

There are one or two problems with planting things. First of all, Kermit lives in an apartment so there are no swaths of grass available for digging up for a bit of garden. Second, Kermit (who actually does have a green thumb) has miserable luck with growing things. Plants in his care go wrong in many different ways. Some are weak and don't produce fruit. Some get "leggy" and can't support the tomatoes, or whatever, when some do show up. And the quantity of produce he has from any plants in the past has clearly not been worth all of his time.

What should Kermit do?

Send your suggestions to the church office! churchoffice@gracechurchucc.org Until you send Kermit your good ideas, here is his tentative plan.

Kermit loves flowers. So, he's going to buy a plant in a pot that will produce flowers. What kind? Kermit plans to do something unusual for such a clever, self-sufficient guy. He's going to ask a friend, someone who knows more than he does about plants, to go with him. How about you? Would you go with Kermit to buy a flowering plant for his apartment?

Brad Watters

Confirmation Prayer

written by Zack and Josh Dunbrack

Dear God,
Thank you for leading us here even as our journey continues. Let us discover our journey, even as we explore others' journeys. Guide us on our path to the unknown future. Amen.

Submitted by Karolyne U. White

April's been a busy month for CE. Many thanks to all those who have taught any others in the congregation whether through word or deed. Many thanks to those teaching via service, song and Sunday School lesson. Thanks also to the children who often teach us adults many important lessons whether they realize it or not.

As we continue through this season of Easter, we thank the children and adults who participated in our many mission teaching vehicles such as helping at the pantry, the farm, mixing eco-safe home cleaning products, crocheting plarn (and teaching how to crochet), making t-shirts and walking the Walk for Hunger on May 5. Official volunteers are always needed to help us to maintain our Safe Sanctuary policies.

Please contact Brad, Mary or Ronda if you can volunteer to assist in Sunday school, confirmation class, or at field work such as foam collection day, Earth Day, or the Walk for Hunger. Thank you!

Ronda Yeomans

Update on Church World Service Hygiene Kits

GWU members are happy to say that we have received an additional 13 filled bags (and counting) from church members to add to the 20 which we have assembled. These bags will be sent, along with those from churches all over the country, to areas where and when they are needed the most. Picture someone, somewhere unknown, with a smile on his/her clean face and you will be well rewarded for doing a very kind deed.

Grace Congregational, UCC
PO Box 1481 • 76 Salem End Road, Framingham 01702
508-872-3342, churchoffice@gracechurchucc.org
www.gracechurchucc.org • www.macucc.org
(Mass Conf.) • www.ucc.org (UCC)

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org

Congregational Discernment

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should be for those meetings. Participants will engage the conversation to discuss what they believe is God's mission for the church. Through conversations about these following questions, we will begin to name and claim what we feel God is calling you to do and be in our community:

1. About what are the people in our congregation deeply passionate?
2. At what do we need to be the best, given our particular context for mission?
3. What resources do we have that will ensure that the ministry is sustainable?

Please keep the Leadership Ministry Team in your prayers this week as we engage in this important work.

Linda Dunbrack

Mark Your Calendar July 27, 10a.m.-3p.m. Summer Foam Recycling Day

Grace Church parking lot, 76 Salem End Rd. To volunteer to help load the truck or sort foam, contact Grace Church. Scout groups, families, individuals, all ages welcome. In partnership with ReFoamIt, LLC.

Deacons

People of Grace,

Spring is upon us! Weather cooperating, spring bulbs blooming, magnolias and dogwood in bloom, forsythia arrayed in yellow, azaleas in many colors, tree pollen everywhere, soon the rhododendrons and lilacs will be joining the chorus of colors in our yards. This is the time of year where we are being pulled into spring yard work and house airing and cleaning (Does anyone still participate in the spring cleaning ritual?).

This time of year also brings outside activities in our communities near and far. Our thoughts and prayers remain with everyone who has been touched by the events on Patriots Day. Members of our congregation will be participating in the Walk for Hunger/Project Bread on Sunday, May 5. Our Confirmation Class (Andrea, Cameron, Ellen, Josh, Meghan and Zack) along with Pastor Brad, Frank and Mary will be walking this year. All would appreciate any financial support you can give them. Please keep these and all the walkers in your prayers.

Since Pastor Brad is going to be in Boston walking on May 5, we will have a guest preacher, the Reverend Dr. James Bronwell. Jim has been a settled pastor, an intentional interim pastor and "officially retired" (for the second time) at the end of December 2012. Jim (who is an avid Red Sox fan) is looking forward to being with us on the 5th. We will also have a guest at the piano, Roy Helander, the first two Sundays in May. Roy has been at our keyboard several times filling in for Susan. Our Susan will be playing and directing the orchestra for evening and matinee performances of "The Sound of Music" those two weekends.

May 19 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 May 19th to join in the celebration - "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me." Amen.

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
for the Deacon Ministry Team
Ruth Carney and Karolyne White*

Grace Women United

GWU will meet on Wednesday, May 8th. We will finish putting together any additional health kits we receive. We will meet at 11:30AM. Dessert and coffee will be served. Plans will be finalized for our annual June luncheon.

Lynn Burdett

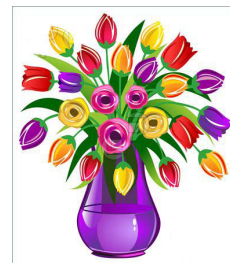
Book Club



Book Club will meet on Wednesday, May 22 at 10:00 AM in the library. We will be discussing "MRS LINCOLN AND MRS KECKLEY" by Jennifer Fleischner. Book for June TBD

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.)