

GRACE NOTES



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

Two Important Events at Grace Month

Next Step Living Seminar

Free Seminar Open to the Public

Saturday, November 2 • 10 AM to Noon

Light refreshments beginning at 9:30

The Town of Framingham has partnered with local home energy-efficiency leader Next Step Living to create the Framingham Better Buildings Program. This program’s purpose is to raise awareness about no-cost Mass Save® Home Energy Assessments and other energy-saving actions residents can take to reduce their carbon footprint and save money.

Collecting Donations for Cityreach

Grace Church is participating in a clothing and toiletries drive to benefit Cityreach Ministry for the Homeless in Boston. Our brothers and sisters in Boston need adult clothing, especially men’s clothes, to help them stay alive outdoors this winter. Clearly marked donations may be brought to Grace Church before November 7. Also, you can drop donations off at the Yeomans or Buck homes and, if needed, someone can pick up donations from you. Ronda can be reached at mrce.yeomans@verizon.net or 508-877-7504.

Not Needed. We are not collecting children’s clothes, dress clothes, slippers, bathrobes, pajamas or out-of-season clothing. **Needed.** Think about what you would wear camping or hiking. That’s the kind of comfortable, rugged clothing needed now. CityReach expects about four times the number of male guests as female guests, so about 80% of what you bring should be for men or unisex. Large sizes (XL, XXL, and XXXL) are very much in demand, but all sizes are needed. Hooded sweatshirts and sweat pants in both very small sizes (a few for the women) and very large sizes are much appreciated.

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Please bring:

- All kinds of carrying cases such as backpacks, tote bags, fanny packs, small suitcases with wheels (used and in good condition)
- Travel-size toiletries such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, Chapstick, toothpaste, and shaving cream in small sizes, as well as tooth brushes and disposable razors, and tampons in small quantities (please no aftershave or mouth-wash containing alcohol).
- New white socks (there can never be too many of these)

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From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

You shall also love the stranger - Deuteronomy 10

You will recall that before coming to Grace Congregational United Church of Christ in Framingham, I served as the pastor at Lake View Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Worcester. Lake View is a dear congregation with people who care about their church family, their church building, and the projects that bring everyone together through the church year. I could tell you wonderful stories about all those people but this week I am reflecting on one of the peripheral people, a young man named Kyle, a stranger.

Kyle came to church at rare intervals to sit with his Grandmother Lucile. He came because it always pleased her so. Lucile was shameless, and totally charming, about making sure Kyle shook hands with me and had a little chat. I like to think our worship kind of stuck with him in the intervals. Lucille couldn't wait for him to visit again. I know he appreciated being held in the prayers of Lake View Church. You see the intervals between his visits were long because during my time at Lake View and after my leaving, Kyle was a soldier.

You noticed my word choice in that last sentence, didn't you? Kyle was a soldier until on May 8, 2007 he died. The family has drawn comfort from knowing that Kyle was dedicated to the Army

and this country of ours and that he was on the job when the improvised explosive device blew up his vehicle. There are other particulars about Kyle that make him come alive in a way that still makes his death matter six years later. And one website informs a reader that there are 39 other service members with the first name Kyle listed as killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. A soldier's death is such a normal thing.

So, was Kyle a stranger or was he one of the family? The lines of family are usually pretty clear and we see them clearly when we talk about our church family. Yet, the rationale for Grace Church to continue to exist in the world has something to do with blurring or ignoring the line between stranger and family. Who is welcome here? You are welcome here. That's what we say and I mean it. Most of us mean it. Are you one of the ones who really means it when you say it?

Soldiers and marines, sailors and other service members who have seen service in these never ending wars are coming home. Many of them have faced decisions, seen things, and taken actions that were awful. For some, these experiences have killed something in them in a way that they will always have a hard time believing we can understand. Maybe we can, maybe we can't. We only honor Kyle, now. But Kyle's service brothers and sisters, some of them, may lament like the singer

Continued on page four

November Calendar **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

- November 4, 18, 25
11:00 AM Bible Study at Coffee Loft in Marlborough
- November 2 (NO Cans for Communion this month)
10:00 AM Next Step Living Seminar
- November 3 Bring donations for CityReach
9:00 AM Singers rehearse
10:00 AM Worship
11:30 AM Faith in Action meeting
- November 4
7:30 PM Leadership Ministry Team
- November 9
8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
- November 10
9:00 AM Singers rehearse
10:00 AM Worship
11:30 AM Green Team meeting

- November 11
7:30 PM Women's Lectio
- November 13
11:30 AM Grace Women United
- November 17 Let's Go Out to Lunch at 11:30!
9:00 AM Singers rehearse
10:00 AM Worship
- November 20
10:00 AM Book Club
2:00 PM Worship at Carlyle House
7:30 PM Stewards Ministry Team at the Brown's house
- November 24th
9:00 AM Singers rehearse
10:00 AM Worship
11:30 AM Greening of the Church
- November 26
7:30 PM Thanksgiving Service at St. Andrew's Church



Kermit once sang, "It's not easy bein' green."

The people of Grace are on the path to be "green" even as scientists grow ever more specific about the challenge of a changing climate.

As Gwynne Dyer reports, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is made up of over 800 Scientists from all over the world. They meet regularly to assess the changes of our climate.

"...the Second Assessment of the IPCC, published in 1995, said that it was more than 50% likely that human emissions of greenhouse gases were contributing to global warming. The Third Assessment, in 2001, raised the likelihood to 66%. The Fourth, in 2007, upped the ante to 90%, and the Fifth, this week, says 95%.

But how do you make a headline out of that? How much warming? How fast? And with what effects on human beings? The latest report runs to thousands of pages, and the answers are buried among the statistics."

We should listen carefully to these IPCC reports and stop burning fossil fuels and cutting down

forests. If we tried to do this, our planet would stay livable much longer. The consensus of the IPCC scientists is that changes in atmosphere, ground cover, etc. that have already happened will cause the overall temperature of earth to rise 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than today.

The next part gets scary (to me!) "The feedbacks are natural sources of warming that we activate by raising the average global temperature just one or two Celsius degrees. There are three main ones."

"As the highly reflective ice and snow that covers most of the polar regions melts - the rate at which the sun's heat is absorbed goes up steeply [and creates] a new warming engine that we can't turn off."

We will probably see an ice free Arctic Ocean by 2020. After the ice melts, then the permanently frozen ground and coastal seabed (permafrost) begins to melt. When this melts it releases a huge amount of methane gas that has been locked up for millions of years. When the oceans warm, they release carbon dioxide "simply because warmer water can contain less dissolved gas."

I find all this information rather depressing, BUT the human race is very resilient and our job will be to learn how to live in a warmer climate or maybe even on another planet!

Yes Kermit, it's not easy being green, but it is clear to me it's what we have to do now!

Nancy Brown

Gwynne Dyer. "No time to be trigger happy on climate." www.shorelinebeacon.com 26 September 2013

ReFoamit Update

ReFoamIt, Grace's partner in foam recycling, is one of three finalists for the "People's Choice Award" in the business category from Mass Recycle. This group (check out www.massrecycle.org for more info) recognizes outstanding achievements by individuals and various entities in the Comm of MA annually.

The winner will be determined by the number of votes cast.

If you are a Facebook member, please give ReFoamIt your vote. Voting ends at midnight on November 3 and the awards will be presented at the very green Hanover Theater in Worcester, on Tuesday, the 5th, between 6 and 9 p.m. The link is below. If you don't want the app posting on your behalf, but want to vote, say yes to the first question, no to the second, and uncheck "share" near the vote button. The voting cannot be done from a mobile device!

Here is the link: <http://t.co/UY6oj2HHgH>.

*Thank you!
Barbara & Dave Sherman*

**Blue
Jean
Sunday &**



**Come one, Come all to Church
on November 24**

Wear comfortable clothes and stay to decorate the building for Advent and Christmas! There will be something for everyone to do, no matter what your age or physical abilities!

Thanks to all who contributed to all of our education as Christians over the past month. Special thanks to Ruth, Mary and Ronda for leading Sunday School and also to Raechel for assisting. In November regular Sunday School lessons will be held after the sign of peace twice a month on the first and fourth Sundays of the month (Nov. 3 and 24). Ruth will meet with the tweens and teens on Nov. 17.

An adult helper adds presence and assistance at each Sunday School lesson! You can do it! Please see Ruth, Mary or Ronda if you are available to assist. Thank you.

Confirmation mentor and mentee, Ronda Yeomans and Andrea Buck, are off on a mini-adventure of sorts to St. Paul's on Tremont St. on the Boston Common. They are joining youth and adults from Plymouth, Edwards and other area faith groups to learn about and help people without homes. The church groups will arrive the

evening of Friday, Nov. 8 to participate in the CityReach program organized by Ecclesia Ministries and the Common Cathedral. After prayer and hearing a speaker who has been homeless in the past, they will join with others to seek out people living "rough" in the park to invite them to the church the following day. Ronda and Andrea will sleep over on the floor of the Cathedral over night. Saturday morning the group will prepare meals and clothing and later distribute it to those in need. More information is available at www.ecclesia-ministries.org/cityreach.html.

Ronda Yeomans

Note: Reaching out to the community and helping those in need is part of how Grace Church exercises our faith in action. It's not just Ronda and Andrea who are taking this step of faith in action on November 8. You are part of the effort too! So check out the article on page one of this issue for the details on how you get involved. Then, c'mon! Pitch in! Thank You!

From the Pastor *Continued from page two*

in Psalm 69, who is singing about God as a soldier might sing about his or her nation:

*It is for your sake
that I have borne reproach,
that shame
has covered my face.
I have become
a stranger to my kindred,
an alien
to my mother's children.*

We're coming up on Armistice Day or Veteran's Day. We might want to reflect that service extracts a lifelong cost from those who go and serve, in peace or in war. For some veterans, there is always the suspicion that they are a stranger to us, unreachable. Maybe there are some who are unreachable. And yet ...

We are the ones who can

make a stranger welcome. We have more power in our hesitant smile, our partial turning of the body, our gentle inquiry, our expectation that the one we don't know could become one that we do know; more power than most of us accept. You are the light of the world, beloved, the Light of the World said so!

Keep in mind, too, that there is more at stake than just being welcoming to any stranger. That stranger could be someone who served our country in military service, someone who is going to be a great friend of yours, someone whose life you are going to change for the better, or someone else. Consider Matthew 25 in which we see the Holy One face to face and ask, "And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?" Then Jesus

will answer, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

So strangers become known to us and those we know become those who change us, affect us, matter to us, and become family. It's taken me six years to write this letter to you, beloved, and it has been hard to write it today.

It's okay. Be at peace. Be of good cheer. I can close this with a delightful detail you will love. You see, the Red Sox are in the World Series as I write this and that stranger/son/grandson/husband/father/boy-soldier, that man Kyle Little? He had a Red Sox tattoo on his arm! It wasn't only the army to which he was dedicated!

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

Deacons

People of Grace,

“Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.” —Henry Ward Beecher

There has been a nip of the chill in the air and curling up with a hot beverage in the evening is something to look forward to. The World Series is also upon us (Go Sox!) and watching it in the comfort of our homes is preferred - unless you are given tickets to a game - then dress warm and enjoy! Hopefully, by the time you read this, the Red Sox will have won. But no matter what the outcome, both teams earned the right to be in the series.

We will celebrate communion on first two Sundays in November (3rd & 10th). On Sunday, November 24th, we will have a Blue Jean Sunday. Wear your jeans to church (or anything you are comfortable in) and stay after the service to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas.

Soon, it will be time for us to pledge our commitment to Grace

Grace Women United

Grace Women will meet on November 13 to plan our Yankee Swap luncheon in December
Lynn Burdett

Book Club



Book Club will be reading *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder for our Nov 20th meeting. (10 AM)

Lynn Burdett

for 2014. Please prayerfully consider what you can offer of your time, talent and treasure as we move forward into 2014.

I leave you with this prayer that came my way some time ago:

Loving God,
Our faces are sometimes full of lines with worry, our days are full of stress and struggle. Yet we come to you, grateful in the midst of this crowded and troubled world, children are still born and bring hope to us. Surprise us now with your presence; renew our sense of wonder; keep us open to the gift of your spirit present in our singing, prayers, speaking and living. 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!

*Shalom - how magical the sound.
Pacem - how lofty the thought.
Salaam - how welcome the feeling.*

Peace - how far the journey.
(Foerster, 2003)

May you always feel God's blessings, Ruth Carney (Deacons: Ruth Carney, Karolyne White)

Altar Flowers If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney.

Faith in Action

The Faith in Action team met after church on October 20th. Top on the list was preparations for the October 26th Foam Day, which is also Make a Difference Day. In addition to collecting Foam, several special informational tables were set up, including a clothing and toiletries collection for CityReach (see page four), a food collection for the Food Pantry, representatives of Transitions Framingham and a representative from Next Step Living.

Plans were also made for the upcoming November 2nd Seminar (10am to noon) at Grace Church with Mike Cucchiara of Next Step Living. See page one for details.

The next After Church Lunch will be on November 17th, location to be announced.

Check out the latest issue of Wise Giving magazine, which is available in the church library. This useful publication from the Better Business Bureau provides invaluable information about the many charitable organizations that so often seek donations from all of us. Don't write a check, until you take a look at this magazine!

Next meeting November 3rd

Check out the Grace Church Library

Our church library has a wide array of excellent books available. There are no formal library procedures: simply come and take a book (or magazine) and feel free to leave some books (but no romance novels as space is limited). Or sit in one of the comfortable chairs and read a book in this quiet oasis.

Thanks for the Help!



Our October 26th Foam collection day was a huge success all around, including the added stations for Make a Difference Day.

Lots of clothing came in for the CityReach project (and promises of more to come); folks, as usual, responded to the request for food for the pantry; the Transition Framingham table was busy all day with questions and interest in being part of it; Next Step Living signed up some homeowners for energy audits and, there was lots and lots of foam!

The weather even cooperated. Many thanks to all of the hard working volunteers. It couldn't happen without lots of helping hands. *Jean Burr*

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!

Cityreach Donations

Continued from page one

- New underwear (again, there can never be too many and be sure to bring 80% of the underwear for men)

- Sleeping bags & blankets (clean and in good condition)

Used Clothing Donations:

- Warm coats
- Sweat shirts and sweat pants (especially hooded sweatshirts)
- Sweaters
- T-shirts
- Long-sleeve shirts
- Jeans, khakis and other casual pants (80% for men)
- Waterproof boots, comfortable shoes, and sneakers
- Hats, waterproof gloves, coats
- Belts

Food Donations

- Bread, peanut butter and jelly or fluff, cold cuts, tuna fish, egg salad, cheese.
- Cookies, brownies, granola bars or other individually packaged dessert.
- Hard boiled eggs and fruit that is easy to chew (oranges, bananas, grapes, but not apples)
- Gallon bottles of juice or water
- Juice boxes
- Large size can of coffee
- Tub of hot chocolate mix with NO marshmallows (the kind to which water is added---about the same size as a large can of coffee); not individual packets
- Package of extra-large (60 gal) garbage bags
- Hot cups + cold cups
- Paper towels, sponge, dish soap
- Sandwich bags
- Plastic/paper/shopping bags

Storm Closings

If we need to cancel a service or activity due to weather, there will be an announcement on WCVB-TV channel 5. We will also use e-mail, Facebook, etc. If there is a power failure, try calling Ruth Carney.



Grace Congregational, UCC

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