

Grace is a Green Church!

GRACE NOTES

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

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Living Into Our Future Story: Next Steps

On October 26, we met after worship to discuss how Grace will move forward with its new mission: enabling authentic, positive connections among people of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. We plan to accomplish this mission by fostering relationships and connections between gardens, gardeners, people who want to garden, and people who need access to healthy food.

Building on ideas generated on October 5th, we generated a list of ways that we could move forward with our vision prior to the spring planting season. It looks like an ambitious list, but each idea listed below has at least one person willing to support it in the next 6 months.

1. Increasing our own cultural proficiency

- Supporting participation in justice-related leadership training offered by the UCC's Justice & Witness Ministries
- Hosting programs that build cultural awareness (film series, book studies, etc.) possibly partnering
- Integrating a culturally aware lens more intentionally into worship activities, including Advent

2. Gardens

- Exploring options for affordable, self-sustaining watering
- Building more garden boxes
- Exploring feasibility of gardening on our lot
- Planning the front garden for the spring
- Starting seedlings for planting

3. Bridge building

- Partnering with other churches in hosting programs for cultural awareness
- Exploring possibilities for connecting with New Life church
- Reaching out to potential hosts for box gardens (nursing homes, assisted living, local businesses, SMOC, food pantry, Wilson school, etc.)
- Exploring feasibility/organizing a field trip to Stearns Farms with Food Pantry patrons

Continued on page two

Dear Ones,

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him.

- Exodus 34:29-30 (NRSV)

In my neighborhood, and maybe in yours, it has been the season of Halloween for a few weeks. People have mounted giant spiders on doorposts and humorous gravestones have sprouted in yards (“I. M. Gone,” “Kay Davver,” etc.) Not visible yet are bags of candy bars, costumes, and masks. There are lots of things that evoke Halloween Trick or Treating and the one on my mind is those masks.

When we mask something, we cover it. So much of the time, masks conceal the identity of the wearer. Who is that short person behind the Spider-man mask? Who was that coyly masked woman in the beautiful gown? That can be fun, alluring, and exciting.

We are all familiar with the masks of everyday life that allow us to manage certain relationships. These masks are formed out of voice inflection and facial expression, although they may be enhanced by choices in our clothing. In these cases, we are selecting a part of ourselves to emphasize for a purpose.

For some who don't Halloween gear, this selecting is also operative. If one is going to wear a costume, with or without a mask, one may choose a character who is in some way evocative of part of us. Sometimes that small person in the pirate costume is bold! Sometimes that half-size version of Princess Elsa can cause trouble!

What are some characters you would choose to dress as to emphasize part of you?

Go ahead! Pick more than one. Who do you have lurking within you even a little bit? Sherlock Holmes? Madame Curie? Winston Churchill? Mother Theresa? The costume, the mask you imagine may already be one that reveals itself to those around you. The effect on others might be hilarity, recognition, surprise, or even (moo-ah-ha-ha-ha!) fear!

There's another time when what other people see in us changes. It's when others have an effect on us. When we encounter someone who puts us down, our outward appearance may show the hurt or defeat. When we encounter someone who delights us, we may wear an unconscious smile and walk with a lighter step. It's not a mask or costume exactly. Yet it is a visible change that reveals.

It will be a little rarer that we are part of a scene like the one where Moses returns from talking with God and blows away Aaron, Miriam, and the rest of them. What they saw was the effect on Moses of encountering the holiness at the center of our lives.

Perhaps you will give this a try. Before you encounter the masked and costumed wanderers on Halloween, how about if you pray - you know, that time when you open yourself to God and seek a deeper awareness of how close, how very close to you is the deep holiness, the source? But if you do pray and go deep, be careful to smile gently so as not to scare the little ones!

Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad

Living Into Our Future Story

Continued from page one

- Creating a clearinghouse of information about gardens, gardening, garden-related events
- Vegetable growing contest for children

4. Communicating about our new mission

- Sign/banner for the church

If you are interested in helping out with these projects or have an idea for one of your own, please let Linda Dunbrack or Pastor Brad know so we can connect you with other people with the same interests.

Linda Dunbrack

Faith in Action

Twelve people attended the FIA meeting in October.

Our focus was on ideas for programs or projects we might consider in order to pursue Grace's commitment to "cross borders" in the upcoming church year. In the coming month, we will be looking at the following:

- Movie night (documentaries of interest and importance to the wider community)
- A joint service or program with New Life Church
- Contact with Framingham's Recycling Coordinator for possible speaking engagement
- Letters to local supermarkets concerning their choice of packaging materials
- Contact with the MA Extension Service to ask about speakers and/or available information useful to gardeners
- Designs for a sign for Grace Church
- Hosting a seminar about organizing one's home or office
- A field trip to a local water farm.

If you have some additional ideas, or have any interest in helping with any of the above, be in touch and please, join us at our next meeting on November 23 following worship.

Jean Burr

Foam Collection is Grace's Make a Difference Day (October 25)

What a way to begin our sixth year of collecting foam! Many of you will recall our (and Re-FoamIt's) first public collection on October 24, 2009 at Grace. Dave tells me that what we collected that day was the equivalent of enough to fill about one-third of his box truck. This time, the foam and the couple of new items, which we can now take, would completely fill the same truck three times. Be proud! We are making a difference!

Thanks to all who helped us at this last event. In addition to those of us from the church, we were blessed to have others who came to volunteer--two boys & a mom from the Charter School, the representative from Next Step Living and an woman who came all the way from Foxboro to help us out! It was very busy, but really lots of fun! Put January 3 on your calendars now for the next one. Do you believe that's only two months away?

Jean Burr



Mission

Cans for Communion - November 2nd and 9th

All non-perishable food welcome, but especially canned tuna and canned fruit.

Note that we will not do can collections in December/January as we will focus on Christmas gifts for Pathways and socks for Worcester Fellowship.

Transition Framingham

Transition Framingham will be using the Grace building for a planning meeting on Sunday, November 16th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Mary Memmott will be hosting and Grace Church members are invited to attend and learn more about Transition Framingham.



Christian Ed

Youth and Young at Heart Invited ...

... to help make "Bible lessons in a box" to have available for our youngest Sunday school students and "drop-in's."

We will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 11th, the Veteran's Day holiday. Time to be determined. Contact Mary Memmott (memomttm@gmail.com) if interested in helping.

Mary Memmott

Saturday, November 1

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast

Sunday, November 2

(Cans for Communion)*

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday, November 9

(Cans for Communion)*

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

Wednesday, November 12

11:30 AM GWU meeting

Sunday, November 16

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

7:00 PM Transition

Framingham meeting

Wednesday, November 19

10:00 AM Book Club

2:00 PM Service Carlye House

7:30 PM Steward's Ministry mtg

Sunday, November 23

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

11:30 AM Faith in Action
Let's All Go to Lunch!

Blue Jean Sunday - Let's decorate the church for the holidays!

Framingham Community Inter-faith Thanksgiving Service is on Sunday, November 23, at 5:00 pm at the Lutheran Church

Sunday, November 30

9:00 AM Singers rehearse

10:00 AM Worship

Unsure about the Bottle Bill?

For a impartial summary of the pros and cons of the bottle bill (question 2), go to www.thegreeningofwestford.com and read "Making Sense of the MA Bottle Bill".



Five Reminder Tips to Make Your Home More Green

Excerpted from <http://blog.redfin.com/blog>

1. Enroll in online statements and get off junk mail lists: Most utility providers, cable companies and financial institutions offer the option to receive online instead of printed statements. Log in to the company's website to change your preferences. Opt out of unsolicited commercial mail, credit card offers and insurance offers. Call toll-free 1-888-5-OPT-OUT (1-888-567-8688) or visit www.optoutprescreen.com.



2. Leave your shoes at the door Leaving your shoes in the entryway of your house will not only help you avoid getting stains on the carpet, it will reduce the toxins and pollutants coming into your home. Your shoes pick up all kinds of things that are unhealthy to breathe, from antifreeze and oil to fertilizers and allergens.

3. Create recycling stations: You won't recycle if you don't make it easy. Have bins for trash and recycling in every room, not just the kitchen!

4. Use native and adapted plants to landscape your yard: Make your home more green - literally. Using native trees and plants to landscape your yard is one of the best things you can do for the environment.

5. Install low-flow showerheads and toilets: Showering accounts for nearly 17 percent of residential indoor water use - for the average family, showering uses 40 gallons per day! Low-flow showerheads, such as those with the WaterSense label, use no more than two gallons per minute, which conserves water and cuts down your water bill.

Toilets are the main source of water use in the home, accounting for nearly 30 percent of an average home's indoor water consumption. Older toilets use as much as six gallons per flush, while newer, more efficient toilets use 1.28 gallons or less. The average family can reduce water used for toilets by 20 to 60 percent, and save \$110 per year in water costs by replacing old toilets with newer WaterSense labeled models

Thanks! Kermit

Deacons

There has been a “nip” in the air, although not every day, and a forecast of (possibility) of snow mixed with rain within the week. Coming home and curling up with a hot beverage in the evening is something to look forward to.

Soon, it will be time for us to pledge our commitment to Grace for 2015. Please prayerfully consider what you can offer of your time, talent and treasure as we move forward into 2015.

We will celebrate communion on first two Sundays in November (2nd & 9th) and we will receive “cans for communion” at both services.

On Sunday, November 23rd, 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. I invite you to think about how we can use our decorations, perhaps in a different way. There will be something for everyone to do no matter what your age or physical ability.

At this time of year as we approach Thanksgiving, many turn their thoughts toward what they have to be thankful for in their lives. At church we sing hymns of thanksgiving. Do you know some of the histories of any of these hymns? After retiring from the ministry in Eng-

land, the Rev. Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) became a prolific hymn writer. Some people have compared his talents to those of Charles Wesley, co-founder of the Methodist Church. Green’s popular Thanksgiving hymn “For the Fruits of All Creation” calls worshipers to move beyond gratitude to their responsibilities for other people and for God’s creation. The hymn’s closing lines sum up why Christians can give thanks throughout the year: “For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us, most of all that love has found us,

thanks be to God.”

Please continue to keep the world in your prayers. While you are praying, please keep our country in your prayers. Pray for our community, pray for our church as we take our next steps in our future story.

Please do not forget that we care about your wellbeing, if we can be of any help, please be in touch. 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,

Storm Closings

WCVB-TV channel 5 carries the Grace Church cancellation listing. Or check email, Facebook or call Ruth Carney at home.



Altar Flowers



Ruth Carney can order altar flowers from (approximately \$43) or you may bring flowers. If there is a special event in the life of Grace that you would like acknowledged with flowers, let Ruth know.

Grace Women United

GWU will meet on Nov.12th at 11:30AM we will be planning our annual Yankee Swap luncheon for Dec.10

Book Club



Book Club will meet on Wednesday, November 19th at 10:00AM. We will be discussing BENJAMIN FRANKIN’S BASTARD by Sally Cabot. This novel is based on historical facts. Book Club will not meet in December. The book for the January 28th meeting TBA.

Lynn Burdett

What Shall We Do Together? - A Stewardship Note

On page one of this *Grace Notes*, our moderator Linda Dunbrack describes a series of project groups and projects.

We have been dreaming of our future and now we are planning it. We have been bold! How shall we get these all done? Here are three key components.

1. First:

Each of us needs to figure out which projects will claim some of our time in the coming months. We are not so many that there is room for any of us to stay on the bench!

2. Second:

We will be reaching out beyond our small-but-mighty congregation to form alliances with other church groups, with Transition Framingham, with businesses, schools, clubs, etc. and with individual people who we think will make good allies.

3. Third:

We need to fund our efforts. We need to show our acceptance, approval, support, and enthusiasm for the new church we are becoming. We need more people to pledge financial support. All of us who already are in the habit of strong giving to Grace Church need to step up that giving to new levels. We need to show ourselves that we mean it when we say:

Our community's deepest need is for authentic, positive connections among people of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds, and Grace's new mission will be responding to this need.

For this year, 2014, we have together pledge \$42,000. Let us each look to our resources to see how we can grow that number for 2015!

From Our Pledge envelopes

Editor's Note: Many of us use pledge envelopes, but do you ever read them? There are some good messages:

- We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.
Winston Churchill
- I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.
Maya Angelou
- Jesus is well-schooled in the transformative generosity of God and in the conviction that if you share your bread with the neighbor, the world will be made new. He knows that generosity isn't something you just think about, it's something you do.
Walter Brueggemann
- I don't think you ever stop giving. I really don't. I think it's an on-going process. And it's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life.
Oprah Winfrey

Sunday,
November 23rd
Blue Jean Sunday
After Church



Wear your jeans to church (or anything you are comfortable in) and stay after the service to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. There will be something for everyone to do no matter what your age or physical ability.